

U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [X] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Tiffani Elise Jackson
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Airline Park Academy for Advanced Studies
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 6201 Camphor Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Metairie State LA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 70003-3697

County Jefferson

Telephone (504) 888-0969 Fax (504) 454-6281

Web site/URL https://www.jpschools.org/airlinepark E-mail Tiffani.Lebouef@jpschools.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. James Gray Ed.D E-mail james.gray@jpschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Jefferson School District Tel. (504) 349-7600

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Chad Nugent
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 50 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 8 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 10 High schools
 - 7 K-12 schools
- 75 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	23	37	60
K	29	22	51
1	23	29	52
2	21	31	52
3	33	19	52
4	29	36	65
5	28	37	65
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	186	211	397

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 18.9 % Asian
 - 9.3 % Black or African American
 - 8.3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 63 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: <1%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

<1%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	1
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	378
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Urdu, Spanish, Arabic, Italian, Cambodian, and Telugu.

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16 %
 Total number students who qualify: 64

8. Students receiving special education services: 5 %

19 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>6</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	15
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 26:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	98%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Our school's mission is to provide a safe, secure, caring environment where, with high expectations, all students are challenged to develop academically, socially, and emotionally.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

During the 2020-2021 school year, we have operated with three hundred in-person students and approximately one hundred virtual students. The homeroom teachers have been tasked with teaching both groups, virtual and in-person, daily. Parents were allowed to choose whether their children would attend school virtually or in person and parents were allowed to make changes at the beginning of each quarter during this school-year. As of the 4th nine weeks, we still have over fifty students who remain in the virtual instructional model.

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Airline Park Academy for Advanced Studies (APAAS) is an Advanced Studies Academy (ASA) where the students must test to be admitted. ASAs were created to expose the most highly-capable students to challenging, rigorous, and accelerated curricula. Applications are obtained on-line at the Jefferson Parish Schools’ website or at the Jefferson Parish Schools’ office building. Once completed, the application must be submitted in person to the Jefferson Parish School System.

After applying, parents receive a letter indicating the student’s testing date, time, and location. Upon receipt of test scores, students are invited to attend APAAS beginning with the 99th percentile, in descending order, until the number of openings for each grade level has been filled. The lowest percentile to be accepted is the 85th percentile. There is usually a waiting list for class openings. Students who attend APAAS must maintain a 2.0 grade point average to remained enrolled.

PART III - SUMMARY

Airline Park Academy for Advanced Studies (APAAS) is located in a suburban community within the metropolis of New Orleans, Louisiana. Community members have lived in this area for generations. Upon meeting testing criteria, students come from all over the district. Our students are high achievers who are eager to learn.

We enjoy high family involvement. Our families are caring, nurturing, goal-oriented, competitive team players who are invested heavily in their children's learning experiences. These families place a high value on education, evidenced by the high percentage of attendance in our demographics. Additionally, APAAS families represent a variety of diverse cultures, and are altruistic and community-minded. Our parents have organized drives for hurricane relief and collected coats for children. Parent organizations include the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), Grandparents Club, and Men's Club. Community organizations such as "Friends of Airline Park" and the Kiwanis Club provide support.

APAAS employs several key strategies that encourage and challenge all students to develop to their full potential. Academically, all students use tier 1 curriculum mandated by our district and are taught advanced curricula in English/Language Arts (ELA). A large number of our students have been identified as gifted learners, so they receive weekly supplemental instruction from qualified teachers. Pre-COVID, all students participated in our annual Junior Achievement program. Fourth and fifth grade students were allowed to join the Academic Games team. After-school programs included Chess, Robotics, Mad Science, and Challenge Island. During the summer, we hosted Camp Invention.

Emotionally and socially, our school uses the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) program. Through the PBIS program, students can earn Eagle PRIDE awards, Golden Eagle awards, and PBIS tickets for outstanding work, behavior, and character. These tickets are entered into a drawing and pulled weekly for special prizes from our school store. These awards are announced at our schoolwide Morning Meetings. We encourage students to demonstrate their Eagle "PRIDE" which is an acronym. Students are expected to be "P"- prepared, "R"- respectful, showing "I"- integrity, "D"- determination, and "E"- excellence. Each grade level wears a specifically-colored "spirit shirt" on Fridays. Physically, we offer physical education classes, an annual Field Day program, and after-school Yoga, Soccer Shots, and golf.

Families play a large part in our social and cultural events. Pre-COVID, we held an annual family picnic and events such as "Muffins with Mom," "Donuts with Dad," and Grandparents' Day. Our school community looked forward to our annual Gala for parents and staff. Post-COVID, we held our gala virtually.

Pre-COVID, we held multicultural programs such as "International Food Fest" where our students and their parents prepared dishes from their cultures. Family members came to school to share information about their unique backgrounds, and we also held an annual Mardi Gras parade. Additionally, Morning Meetings allowed the school community to celebrate birthdays, accomplishments, and school news. Post-COVID, we continue our Morning Meetings virtually.

We look forward to revitalizing our creative and innovative programs. During our weekly "Enrichment Clusters," teachers shared subjects they have a passion for with students, such as origami, mythology, or games. We held an annual holiday program where students performed songs and music for their parents. Two innovative projects were "Art for the Sky" and our Google Experience. In "Art for the Sky," the whole school posed outside in the yard to create a picture of a tree. Also, Google came to our school to give our students an experience with augmented-reality.

All of these events allow our students to discover who they are. We encourage parents to share in students' discoveries and celebrations. APAAS honors and celebrates each of our student's diversity, gifts, and talents.

Like schools across the nation, our school adapted and changed due to COVID-19. When schools closed in March 2020, our faculty and staff immediately jumped into action ensuring our students would continue to receive the high-quality education to which they were accustomed. Students checked out Chromebooks if

needed. Teachers began virtual instruction through their Google Classrooms (GC). Lessons were added weekly to GC, and teachers held "Zoom" or Google Meet classes.

When our school-year resumed in August, teachers returned to school in person, but continued hosting GC because approximately 1/4 of our student population chose to be virtual learners. Teachers attended professional development sessions provided by the district and colleagues to ensure full technology implementation would exist for teachers and students. We learned to sanitize classrooms, check temperatures, and wear masks. We teach in-person and virtual students simultaneously, while social distancing. We keep students in small, static pods and limit visitors to the school. Instead of allowing students to travel around the school, our teachers and Librarian travel to classes. All students and staff wear masks. Students are allowed to eat outdoors, weather permitting, and they have individual desk shields. Students have continued learning and growing, but undoubtedly, our teachers and staff have continued learning as well.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Our teachers follow state standards developed by the Louisiana Department of Education. Our district provides materials and lessons (our tier 1 curriculum) to teach state standards. The scope and sequence for each core subject is set by our district. Core curriculum includes English Language Arts, math, social studies, and science.

All students are accelerated one grade in ELA, beginning in pre-kindergarten. Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) is implemented in pre-kindergarten through first grades. Sequenced lessons develop foundational reading skills in knowledge and phonics. Literacy-based Guidebooks are used in second – fifth grades. Students demonstrate understanding of texts by retelling, summarizing, and inferring. Students analyze and cite evidence from fiction and non-fiction texts. Graphic organizers and rubrics aid the writing process. All students use the “Claim, Evidence, Reasoning” (CER) writing strategy beginning in kindergarten with “Claim,” adding “Evidence” and “Reasoning” in subsequent grades. Teacher-created formative assessments are standards-aligned. Summative assessments (e.g., benchmark tests) are supplied by our district.

Students use Eureka Math in grades pre-kindergarten - fifth. Eureka’s program helps students gain a deeper understanding of the “why” behind the numbers. Students think, strategize and solve problems. They build math knowledge expanding on the same problem-solving methods each year. Students explain math processes and create visual models to understand problems/solutions. Online resources are available for students, teachers, and parents. Pre-kindergarten – second grade students improve fluency using Zearn and Lexia programs. Second – fifth grade students use “i-Ready” for individualized remediation/acceleration.

Students explore communities, citizenship, and economics; develop chronological and historical thinking; locate and interpret geographical features; and discover government/political systems. Students build understanding as they advance through these grade-leveled standards. Materials used are district-provided curriculum, Social Studies Weekly, Discovery Education, and Flocabulary. Fourth and fifth grades also use Document-Based Questions (DBQ). Extended writing tasks, cold reads and DBQ essays are assessed.

The STEMscopes program is used in all grade levels. Standards include problem solving, analysis, interpretation of data, and critical thinking skills. Pre-COVID, two STEM labs operated on campus allowing teachers to have all materials needed for experiments in one location. Post-COVID, teachers use videos of experiments from websites (e.g., Discovery Education, YouTube) or model experiments for whole group instruction. Teachers use “5E” science lesson plans, keeping students Engaged, Exploring, Explaining, Elaborating, and Evaluating with real-world concepts that challenge students to solve problems. Students are assessed with mid-module and end of module tests.

Curriculum, instruction, and assessments were adapted to meet the challenges of this school year. Our district modified the curriculum scope and sequence to meet adjusted timelines. Due to virtual learning, teachers spend more time online. Each teacher has a Google Classroom and uses whole-group instruction for face-to-face (in-person) and virtual students. We have implemented more virtual platforms to support teaching and learning (i.e., Google Meet, Nearpod, Edulastic). Programs such as Jamboard and Flipgrid engage learners. Students learn and practice keyboarding. Google Classroom’s breakout rooms allow student collaboration on concepts in every core subject.

Teachers use project-based learning to supplement the district-mandated curriculum (i.e., dioramas, maps, Black history biographies). Teachers differentiate instruction for learning styles and needs. Small groups target student needs. Special projects or investigations (conducted electronically) motivate students (i.e., virtual field trips). Special education teachers use Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to differentiate instruction for their individual students.

A district assessment framework drives planning and instruction for educators. Assessments are grade-appropriate, standards-aligned, and scripted into the curriculum for all core subjects. Teachers use

benchmark tests three times a year. Formative assessments are teacher-created and can be teacher observations, quizzes, writing tasks, or exit tickets. Weekly assessments might be tests, essays, online quizzes, or assessments on digital platforms (ex. Learnzillion).

Assessment data are regularly used to drive instruction. We identified curriculum hot spots by analyzing data from the past school year and the diagnostic test data from this year. We continue to address these hot spots by analyzing data from benchmark tests and weekly assessments. Each student maintains a data tracker to self-monitor progress. Teachers maintain data folders to monitor students' growth. Data are analyzed by grade level to identify students needing further assistance. In all subject areas, students are monitored for progress and assigned either remediation or accelerated activities as needed.

Post-COVID: When schools closed in March 2020, instruction moved to virtual learning. Pacing has been adjusted for students who need more time to complete virtual assignments or who work ahead to complete Google Classroom assignments. Assessments are submitted electronically through Google Classroom by virtual students. Face-to-face students submit work in person or electronically in all grades. Teachers create assessments on Google slides or documents.

Grace is extended to students who experience technology difficulties. Students, teachers, and parents learned lessons--teachers and students became more familiar with Google Classroom, Google Meet, and virtual learning, while parents learned to help their children complete/submit assignments electronically. Everyone learned more patience as we all grappled with technology problems.

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

1b. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

Pre-kindergarten's core subjects are English Language Arts (ELA) and math. Social studies and science concepts are embedded within ELA and math. In ELA, Pre-kindergarten (pre-K) uses knowledge and skills from the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program at the kindergarten level. Math is taught using the Eureka Math program at modified and accelerated levels. The Time for Kids magazine is used for current events. Pre-kindergarten follows the kindergarten curriculum which is district-provided and based on Louisiana state standards. Teachers modify the kindergarten curriculum's scope and sequence for their advanced pre-K students.

Even though our youngest students are academically advanced, we remember they are only four years old! Consequently, teachers consider developmentally appropriate practice when planning activities. Teachers allow students to have opportunities for movement throughout the day. Centers correlated to academics and developmental skills are included and modified as needed. Opportunities are provided for skills development in all developmental domains. Social and emotional learning, literacy, cognitive skills, and fine/gross motor development skills are emphasized.

At least 90% of pre-K students are kindergarten-ready at the end of the year, based on the assessment program T.S. Gold. This means that our pre-K program promotes a foundation for future success. Using T.S. Gold and curriculum assessments, teachers regularly assess students through observation and checklists, providing enrichment or remediation whenever necessary.

COVID-19 required our pre-K teachers to make adaptations and modifications. Pre-K moved to virtual instruction in March 2020, using Google Classroom. Upon resuming in August 2020, the school purchased desk shields for every student and teacher. Center materials were modified and disinfected. Students remain in static pods and partner groups throughout the day and engage in frequent hand-washing. All students and staff wear masks. Students attend school face-to-face or virtually depending on their parents' choices. Teachers educate the face-to-face and virtual students daily through Google Classrooms.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Other curriculum areas include library, physical education (P.E.), and gifted and talented programs.

Students in pre-kindergarten through third grades have one 45-minute class per week. Students in 4th and 5th grades have one 50-minute class per week. Our librarian teaches digital citizenship and media literacy, reinforces and supplements the ELA curriculum, and presents anti-bullying lessons. She supports reading for pleasure, research projects, and classroom instruction. Adaptations this school year ensure the librarian visits all classes instead of having students travel to library. She delivers both virtual and face-to-face instruction, providing virtual lessons through Google Classroom.

Our two coaches use the 3-Dimensional Coaching Framework to develop our students in all aspects of their being: body, mind, and spirit. In the first dimension (body), they teach fundamentals of “strength, power, speed, quickness, technique, repetitions, and tactics.” In the second dimension (mind), they focus on psychology with “motivation, confidence, emotions, team cohesion, and goal-setting.” In the third dimension (spirit), our coaches stress “identity, character, significance, self-worth, values, and purpose.” All students receive 45-minutes of P.E. daily. Other skills stressed are sportsmanship, coping skills for disappointment, and awareness of others.

Our coaches also teach students healthy lifestyle choices. Healthy habits for eating are taught through the Coordinated Approach to Childhood Health (CATCH) program. This school year, adaptations require that students stay in their homeroom pods, are socially distanced, and use limited equipment. Coaches provide links in their Google Classrooms to websites (i.e., “Go Noodle”). Virtual students are also encouraged to engage in 45-minutes of physical activity daily at home with exercise routines and recommended websites.

Students (in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth) who have been evaluated and identified as gifted learners according to Louisiana state criteria meet twice a week with a certified teacher. The curriculum follows national gifted associations' standards and develops critical, creative, and logical thinking; research and technology skills; and communication skills, including creative writing. As a resource class, students are pulled out of the regular classroom twice a week to work on rigorous, in-depth enrichment projects. Assessment occurs through rubrics, teacher observation, and completion of products. Instruction supplements or reinforces classroom instruction. Currently, APAAS has one full-time and one part-time (itinerant) teacher servicing students who attend class virtually or face-to-face. Students in grades Pre-K through fourth are being taught virtually this year, through Google Classroom and Google Meets, because the teacher is working from home (due to COVID-19 accommodations). The second itinerant teacher instructs both face-to-face and virtual fifth-grade gifted students through Google Classroom lessons.

First- through fifth-grade students who have been evaluated and identified as talented meet once a week for 45 minutes during P.E. The talented program supports students' acquisition of skills and knowledge. Art reinforces social studies (timelines) and math (grids, graphs). Students write about artwork and read about artists. Drama students read plays and write their own scripts. Students participate face-to-face or virtually. APAAS has one art teacher, one drama teacher, and two music teachers. Post-COVID, recitals and plays are not allowed.

3. Academic Supports:

When a student is performing below grade level, our teachers use a variety of interventions to meet the student's needs. A teacher will work with the student individually to reteach the area of need. Teacher will use one-to-one interventions, giving specific academic feedback, so the student will know how to progress. The student may be offered extra time to complete an assignment, small-group instruction, or technological support with self-paced, digital platforms that are standards-aligned (i.e., Lexia, Prodigy, Zearn, iReady). If a student has difficulty catching up to grade level expectations, the teacher will document interventions that were used and refer the student to our Academic and Behavioral Intervention Team (ABIT). ABIT will meet to determine the next steps to take to help the student. A student may receive further interventions or an evaluation to identify specific needs.

APAAS provides an advanced curriculum in ELA and our students tested into our school because they are performing above grade level. To keep our students advancing academically, enrichment activities and projects are completed. Examples in grades kindergarten - second include projects such as “Dinosaur Week”, volcano eruptions, cookie moon phases, character pumpkins, biography bottles, and Mardi Gras floats. In grades three - five, projects include hands-on learning experiments, extension tasks, current events, research projects, fake social media reports, and book clubs. Students are provided with a rigorous advanced curriculum, with complex texts and manipulatives. A student performing significantly above grade level may use a digital platform above level or meet with the librarian for independent reading suggestions. When a student is progressing well beyond grade-level expectations, the student is referred for screening for the gifted program. If, after a student is evaluated and meets the criteria for the gifted program, he or she will meet with a certified teacher of gifted who designs an independent educational program (IEP) for the student. In gifted enrichment classes, the student receives enrichment and specialized activities to challenge and accelerate his or her learning.

We have three special education teachers who create/follow individualized education plans (IEPs) to provide differentiated instruction for our special education students with disabilities.

If students are in need of specialized services, we have staff who will provide services in speech, adapted physical education (APE), occupational therapy (OT), and applied behavior analysis (ABA). We have a social worker who provides “check-in/check-out” services for students who may be struggling with managing daily routines.

APAAS is unique because it is the only school in the district that services 3-year-olds who are identified as gifted learners. In Louisiana, gifted learners are identified beginning at age three. When a child in our district is identified as gifted before preschool age, he or she attends our preschool gifted program (twice a week for 45 minutes a session) with a teacher who is certified in gifted and early childhood education.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

We strive to create a positive learning environment. Our curriculum is rigorous and challenging with high expectations for students. During shutdown, teachers provided asynchronous instruction through Google Classrooms. Teachers engaged students by holding weekly Zoom meetings using programs such as Nearpod and Flipgrid. Currently, teachers instruct face-to-face (in-person) and virtual students simultaneously. They teach using Google Classroom, Google Meet, Jamboards and breakout rooms. Teachers provide differentiation, encourage peer collaboration, and play learning games.

Our school is decorated to promote our schoolwide theme “Our Perfect Vision.” Student work decorates halls; bulletin boards contain writing by students. Many classrooms have pets. To make our environment beautiful and safe, our Dad’s Club spends time working around the school. Three days a week, we begin with a virtual Morning Meeting acknowledging birthdays and student accomplishments. Themes include: Motivational Monday, Wacky Joke Wednesday, and Fun Fact Friday. On our school social media page, teachers feature students and activities weekly.

Students get recess for 10-15 minutes a day and classes take turns having lunch outdoors at picnic tables. The website “Go Noodle” is used to increase movement and morale. Students participate in contests (i.e., yearbook cover contest) and celebrations. King cake parties are held during Mardi Gras and birthdays are recognized with treats.

Pre-COVID, fourth and fifth grade students served as Student Patrol and helped younger students in car-line before and after school. Older students frequently read to younger students. Extracurricular activities supported varied student interests (i.e., Soccer Shots, Chess Club, Mad Science, Robotics).

Our school social worker presents programs to students and checks in on at-risk students. Our school is a bully-free zone and we have a “Buddy Bench” where students can sit when they have trouble finding a friend. Our PBIS program rewards students who show kindness and respect to others through Eagle tickets. On Fridays, tickets are drawn for prizes from the Eagle Store. We have dress-down and costume days for special occasions and every Friday, students wear their grade’s specific-color spirit shirts. To motivate students, quarterly awards are given out (i.e., Honor Roll, Bringing Up a Grade, Student of the Year, reading awards). Monthly, each classroom honors a Golden Eagle recipient.

Our faculty is united with a common goal and vision. Teachers greet students with positive attitudes. We feel fortunate to be teaching at APAAS; happy teachers transmit happiness to their students. We feel we are preparing our students for the real world, academically, socially, and emotionally.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

APAAS has a good reputation in the community. By having their children tested, parents choose to send their children to our school. An academy for ten years, APAAS is proud that two of our students became finalists for regional/state students of the year. We are very proud of the work our students and staff do to foster a positive environment for our APAAS families, and we refine and add to our program regularly. We have school work days where parents come in to garden, paint, or make repairs to make our school safe and beautiful.

On our social media page, new families to our school express excitement at becoming a part of APAAS; they are very proud of their children for being accepted. Many students enter our school family already comfortable to be on campus since they have participated in school activities with older siblings. Teachers communicate regularly with parents through email, phone calls, Remind app, Google Classroom and our social media school page to share concerns and positive news. Monthly newsletters and calendars are shared with all families through Gmail. Parents are encouraged to partner in their child’s education. Pre-COVID, parents shared their cultures and areas of expertise. With the COVID shutdown, we provided Chromebooks

to students who needed them, and we held material pick up days for parents. We continue to hold material pick up days each nine weeks since many of our students chose to remain virtual this school year.

The PTO, Mens' Club, Grandparents' Club, Friends of Airline Park, and Gala Committee support the needs of our students and teachers. Playground equipment, computers, iPads, picnic tables, and desk shields have been funded. COVID restrictions altered some organizational activities, but others continue. Our annual gala was conducted virtually. Since our Open House was also presented virtually, parents met teachers through videos posted on the school website.

Pre-COVID, we invited professors from the local university to talk about hurricanes and geology. During Junior Achievement Day, parents and business leaders in the community volunteered to teach our students about entrepreneurship and careers. Kiwanis Dawn Busters sponsored a reading program, providing coupons for students with a yearly drawing for prizes. A nearby church provides our families who are in-need with food baskets and/or gift cards to purchase necessities. Despite COVID restrictions, we are still able to receive these incentives/needs from our business and community partners.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

At APAAS, teachers/staff feel valued throughout the school year. As in past years, the parent teacher organization (PTO) provides lunches and treats for teachers (e.g., "floats for keeping us afloat"). They passed around "cheer carts" with popcorn and drinks. Each month, parents from a different grade level provide a teacher/staff appreciation luncheon.

Teachers are also supported with materials for instruction. The PTO donates items to support teachers such as laptops and iPads. Our PTO donates gift cards to every teacher but this year, extra money was added to help us deal with COVID. "Friends of APAAS" also paid for personal protective equipment and supplies to make the environment safer for teachers, staff, and students.

Communication is a vital part of a positive, supportive environment. Our school provides digital communication for teachers, staff, and parents. The school newsletter provides pictures of activities and shout-outs. Our principal emails weekly administrator updates to keep everyone "in the know." Interactive digital platforms create ways for students to collaborate with each other and allow virtual students to stay connected to our school community. When schools closed, every teacher kept a log of parent teacher communications to ensure that parents and students stayed connected to continue students' learning.

Teachers and staff have been supported through professional development programs, peer support, and staff support. This year, the school hired a full-time substitute to provide support whenever a teacher was absent due to quarantining. Our technology coordinator provides technical support, and colleagues support each other during grade level collaboration meetings and peer observations, providing suggestions and helpful feedback.

This school year, we were given several days of professional development to learn and plan before students began instruction. Our district created videos that demonstrated how to use new digital platforms and how to engage students virtually.

Staff supports include our principal who has an "open door policy" for teachers and staff, our master teacher, who provides information during our weekly collaborative planning meetings and our librarian. Weekly collaborative meetings are supportive because they are goal-oriented, aligned to curriculum and embedded within the school day. During these weekly meetings, new digital technologies are modeled by our master teacher.

When schools closed, our district paid for teachers to have online training from Edmentum Technology. Then, every teacher learned a new digital tool to show to their teacher collaborative groups. In this way, we learned programs such as Screencastify and Flipgrid.

4. School Leadership:

Many paradigms guide APAAS' philosophy which set the stage for success. The principal has a strong knowledge of teaching and learning along with the ability to successfully manage our school's organization. Delegating leadership among the faculty through specific leadership roles allows for teacher buy-in, needed for organizational success. Leaders ensure that relevant decisions are communicated to parents through Gmail and monthly newsletters.

Our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) is composed of our principal and one representative from each grade level, including our master teacher, two teacher leader fellows, and one math content leader. The ILT increases collaboration among teachers and fosters the growth of our student body through data analyses for improved student achievement (e.g., ILT analyzed recent benchmark data and created a plan to address problem areas). ILT leaders support teachers by helping to assess teacher/student progress, suggesting adjustments as needed. The principal supports the ILT and helps ensure the team speaks with one voice on the school's approach to teacher leadership and collaboration.

Our master teacher (MT) conducts demonstration lessons to help teachers improve their classroom skills. MT collaborates with and guides teachers in creating lesson plans for their classes (e.g., MT modeled how to use a Jamboard to engage students). MT shares responsibility with the principal for adoption of curriculum resources, teacher performance evaluations, and other instructional-related functions, (e.g., School Improvement Plan). She participates in professional development activities by planning and delivering weekly teacher collaboration meetings; assists in school-planning and decision-making; and attends training to be an effective coach, model, and evaluator.

Our two teacher leader fellows (TLF) support the school by mentoring and coaching teachers, guiding their curriculum planning to increase student/teacher performance. Informal walk-throughs are conducted to help monitor the implementation of goals the teacher and TLF developed together. This year, TLFs mentored teachers on classroom management during virtual instruction. TLFs participate in leadership meetings, analyze grade level data, and help plan and implement collaborative teacher meetings.

Our content leader (CL) builds instructional capacity around math curricula, supports improved practice and implementation, and leads content-specific professional developments to enhance district goals, improving outcomes for ALL students.

Covid-19 has impacted our leadership roles in several ways. Leaders created a "Safe Start" plan sharing the safety protocols we implemented at our school. This plan is updated and adapted following new guidelines from national and local governments. Ensuring safe practices (e.g., social distancing, mask wearing and hand sanitizing/washing) are imperative this school year.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Our school decorates with a new school theme to welcome all students. Every student's birthday is celebrated with a shout-out at Morning Meetings. All students are eligible to win the monthly Golden Eagle award or enter a ticket in the Eagle ticket weekly drawing. Student and teacher shout-outs are shared in the newsletter or in Morning Meetings.

Our school community has many cultures and all are recognized and celebrated with discussions and information from students and parents. Pre-COVID, language and culture enrichment classes were held. Parents shared food at our annual International Food Festival and were invited to share their heritage. Our curriculum provides opportunities to read stories from and gain background knowledge about other cultures. Our state history and culture is included in our social studies curriculum.

Children share their accomplishments at Morning Meetings, held virtually, so both face-to-face (in-person) and virtual students can participate. During shutdown or virtual learning, students could check out Chromebooks for home use. Technology support is available to all families

through a helpdesk hotline.

Inclusion is practiced. All students who receive special education services are included in virtual or regular classroom settings as much as possible. Face-to-face students are encouraged to collaborate with virtual students in class discussions.

To address social current events, we use supplemental materials such as “Time for Kids.” Some news topics (e.g., Inauguration, Black History Month) were discussed at Morning Meeting and in social studies classes. Post-COVID regulations decreased our community connectedness, so we worked together to build our digital community. COVID supports include regulations for masking, social distancing stickers, signage, and mental health supports. Shields and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) were provided by parent organizations.

Academic supports include Google Classroom daily schedules, color-coded emoji assignments, and virtual parent/teacher conferences, so all parents could attend. Socio-emotional supports are provided by staff. Our social worker holds group meetings to provide emotional help where needed. She also conducted presentations and checks on students who are having difficulty coping. Our librarian conducted lessons on bullying and digital citizenship. Teachers conducted mental health screenings twice this year.

Tangible supports provided to us this year were: teacher gift cards from the PTO, lunches and individual treats from PTO, grab-and-go meals for virtual students (during shutdown), and COVID vaccinations. Accommodations were provided to students (e.g., digital lessons) and to one teacher (work from home). Our Grandparents’ Club created outdoor dining (picnic tables with umbrellas) and provided treats for students.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that was most instrumental to our school's ability to successfully educate and support students since March 2020 was our willingness to embrace new technology. In March 2020, we had no choice but to "sink or swim." Since we wanted our students to succeed, we swam.

We found YouTube videos instructing how to set up classrooms, create digital assignments, and conduct Zoom meetings. We learned digital programs such as Screencastify, Flipgrid, and Nearpod. Our world changed drastically, so we had to change with it. Teachers had to learn how to teach in new ways.

In addition to dealing with a frightening pandemic, daily educational challenges emerged. Our district paid for our immediate training from FriedED Technology. Holding Zoom conferences maintained classroom connectedness. Teachers posted daily/weekly schedules and assignments for students using color-coded emojis to help students manage daily tasks. Weekly collaborative planning allowed for discussions and problem-solving for teachers. We created practice classrooms to rehearse with other teachers.

We involved parents as much as possible. Families checked out Chromebooks so every student could connect to our virtual classrooms. We called or emailed our parents each day and instructed families how to access, complete, and submit assignments through Google Classroom.

At the beginning of the school year, our district provided extra days for staff to participate in professional development. Through district-created videos, we learned to engage students (with programs such as NearPod), while teaching two groups of students simultaneously (face-to-face/virtual). We managed technical issues such as how to reduce echo, manage chat, and view all students while presenting.

Over this past year, we learned new programs to use for student collaboration and engagement. Teachers, parents, and students worked to stay up-to-date with changing learning platforms. Teachers prepared lessons in advance to ensure the assignments could be delivered and submitted electronically.

We made lots of mistakes. For example, we all tried to talk while muted. We used our failures as fuel to move forward, learning right along with our students. When teachers made "mistakes" or experienced problems with technology, students observed how we handled our technology challenges. This modeling inspired students to embrace technology as well.

Teachers helped colleagues through feedback given during practice Google Meets or after virtual peer observations. Teachers felt strongly about including and engaging all students. We stepped up to the challenges of the past year, staying afloat, while keeping students engaged and excited about learning.