

U.S. Department of Education
2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Epic Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 650 Conistor Lane
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Liberty State MO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 64068-4202

County Clay

Telephone (816) 736-5730 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://www.lps53.org/epic E-mail michelle.schmitz@lps53.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. M. Jeremy Tucker E-mail jeremy.tucker@lps53.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Liberty 53 School District Tel. (816) 736-5300

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 Nicholaus Bartlow
(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 signatures 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 2016 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 11 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 18 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 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	0	0	0
K	20	30	50
1	28	19	47
2	30	20	50
3	25	24	49
4	33	17	50
5	24	23	47
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	160	133	293

*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 85 % White
 - 7 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: ≤1%

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

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	283
(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):

Haitian Creole, Chinese

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6 %

Total number students who qualify: 17

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 17 %
50 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 with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <u>3</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</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.	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
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 24:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	96%	96%	96%
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 2021.

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.

Inspire students to be CREATIVE and THINK BIG.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.lps53.org/Page/7670>

The Liberty 53 School District Board of Education is committed to maintaining a workplace and educational environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs, services, activities, and facilities. In accordance with law, the district strictly prohibits discrimination and harassment against employees, students or others on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law. The Liberty 53 School District is an equal opportunity employer.

The Board also prohibits:

1. Retaliatory actions including, but not limited to, acts of intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against those who:

a. Make complaints of prohibited discrimination or harassment.

b. Report prohibited discrimination or harassment.

c. Participate in an investigation, formal proceeding, or informal resolution, whether conducted internally or outside the district, concerning

prohibited discrimination or harassment.

2. Aiding, abetting, inciting, compelling, or coercing discrimination, harassment, or retaliatory actions.

3. Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against any person because of such person's association with a person protected from discrimination or harassment in accordance with this policy.

All employees, students, and visitors must immediately report to the district for investigation any incident or behavior that could constitute discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in accordance with this policy. If a student alleges sexual misconduct on the part of any district employee to any person employed by the district, that person will immediately report the allegation to the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services in accordance with state law. In accordance with this policy and as allowed by law, the district will investigate and address discrimination, harassment, and retaliation that negatively impact the school environment, including instances that occur off district property or are unrelated to the district's activities

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

EPiC enrolls up to 300 (50 per grade level-K-5) students from across the LPS district. EPiC is comprised of a variety of learners with services for gifted, regular education, and special education students. The only requirement to enroll is to live within the boundaries of the Liberty Public School District.

The enrollment request process for new applicants will occur annually in the month of February, beginning on the first day of February and concluding on the last day of February. The information will be publicized through multiple district communication avenues. (Quick News, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the LPS website)

An external third party creates a randomized list for lottery placement.

Initial lottery slots are allocated on an equal percentage basis (approximately 5%) to the current 10 elementary sites. After initial enrollment, students will be placed into the school from the created waiting list. In order to maintain equal opportunity throughout the LPS system, students will be placed on a rotation basis from each of the current LPS elementary sites. Any seats not filled for a school site will be distributed to the remaining schools.

EPiC enrollment is based on a family household lottery system. When a child is selected through the lottery system, all immediate siblings in the family household will be eligible for placement based on availability in the designated grade level and if there are seats remaining available for their home school site. If there is not an opening, siblings will be placed on the waiting list in the order created through the lottery process.

Placement notification emails are sent during the 1st full week in April.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The vision to transform education began in 2013 with the shared leadership of the Liberty Public Schools Board of Education, superintendent, central office staff, administration, teachers, parents, patrons, and students. This journey began with the question, "What would you do if you could create the ideal learning environment to prepare students for a world that continues to evolve?"

Ideas developed around a 1:1 learning model with mobile technology, flexible learning spaces, creativity, team-based teaching, engaging and authentic learning, and a continuous learning calendar. As a part of this journey, the team visited several noteworthy school districts across the United States that had successfully launched at least one or more of these ideas. The team developed the vision and mission for EPiC Elementary, anchored by three pillars: Empower Creativity, Equip Students, and Engage Communities. The team also worked closely with an architect to design a flexible learning environment.

EPiC Elementary's demographics are a snapshot of the diversity of the Liberty community. Five percent of the student population comes from each elementary school in Liberty Public Schools, representing regular, gifted, and special education learners. Based on a lottery system, any family who lives in the LPS district may enroll. EPiC encourages family involvement and service through required volunteer hours, which increases partnership in learner education and success. Instead of traditional parent/teacher conferences, EPiC hosts showcases during the year where students share their learning with parents and the community. EPiC has moved from the presentation of products to presentations of learning.

The bedrock of sustainable practices for EPiC Elementary is the collective mindset of all who share a laser-like focus with a vision for transformation within our learning environment. As our journey continues to unfold, our culture is enveloped with continuous learning and experimentation, embracing uncertainty, pausing to reflect and revise, and engaging with the innovation cycle. This growth persists because of EPiC's robust networks with our community and other schools and educators from across the nation and the world. Through our partnerships with Apple Distinguished Schools, we have built a global network of like-minded educators who share our vision, passion, and desire for innovation and sustainability.

EPiC Elementary serves as an incubator school for Liberty Public Schools. Many ideas are born and tested with a scaled, system-wide implementation in this environment. As a relentlessly adaptable learning community, we embrace the rapidly evolving world of new technologies, global challenges, and undiscovered mysteries of the 21st century as our learning environment. Leveraging the power of 1:1 iPad mobile technology, students curate, create, and publish digital content for authentic audiences and personally invest in their learning path. Using real tools and materials, students collaboratively construct real-world applications of their knowledge designed to make an impact on the community.

Our learning environment is built on the foundation of creativity, a timeless skill set that, when fostered, can provide a lifetime of learning and confidence where learners see themselves as contributors, producers, and leaders in the world. Our vision is to continually ignite and nurture the creative spark in every child as they discover the power they have to impact the world. With resources such as Apple's Everyone Can Create, our learners consistently examine what matters to them personally. They know they are artists, photographers, videographers, and musicians who can make their ideas visible. Our students engage with self-expression and produce original work by encouraging the in-depth exploration of multiple facets of creativity with various pathways and learning experiences.

We promote the entrepreneurial spirit for all learners, where innovation is second nature. Through building relationships, taking risks, and learning rapidly to make an impact, our learners know there is always more than one way. Our iPad devices, Apple apps such as Clips, Keynote, and Numbers, and our Apple Pencils, provide endless opportunities for learners to develop and grow their curiosity, persistence, flexibility, elaboration, and original thinking.

Learning opportunities are everywhere, and our learners strive to make the most of those opportunities every day. Looking at the world through a wide-angle lens, our learners identify and engage communities to make

a positive impact, leading with creativity, ideas, and the flexibility to adapt and problem-solve. By seeking different perspectives and being responsible Global Citizens, all learners develop empathy and compassion for others. Technologies such as the Apple ecosystem and Google for Education provide relevant and authentic platforms for our learners to connect with global networks, produce creative works, and manage projects to impact our world.

We believe in the intentional scaffolding of voice and choice, unleashing the creative learning process in every child. EPiC learners discover, develop, and execute their unique creative processes using mobile technology, with teacher guidance, best practices, and relevant instruction. Our goal is to continue cultivating transformational capabilities in students' lives, such as the power of reflection, unlearning and relearning, empowering creativity, the capacity to practice empathy for others, and the resilience to become their own creators of change in the world around them. We do not let the newest technologies lead; instead, we develop the human potential to create technologies that change the world.

We model teamwork and collaboration strategies in real-world working environments. We want our learners to acquire skills, connections, and experiences to equip them for their future. Teamwork should naturally fit and integrate into the learning process. Before designing collaborative learning experiences, we consider strategies and scaffolding to focus on the "why" of the experience. First and foremost, in the design process, we want to empower and support our learners to discover and practice using their strengths as part of a team.

Through fostering collaboration, we grow our learners to see beyond themselves, providing opportunities to explore how their ideas can work with others and to create something purposeful. We continue to grow and deepen our understanding of personalization and its meaning for all learners. By helping learners understand their unique creative processes and teaching different pathways for project management, our learners can decide how best to create and manage their products. Using strategies such as menus, goal sheets, project workflows with digital tools, and blended learning rotations, our learners continue to advocate for themselves.

We value coherence in both instruction and collaboration across grade levels. There are no silos nor islands, and we consistently move forward with personalization and cross-age instruction. Modeling teamwork, we start with our standards, iPad devices, and high-quality resources and create layered learning experiences with students of different ages creating together.

One of our goals is to develop well-rounded learners who see themselves as contributors to a larger cause. Creating learning environments that match the world gives our learners opportunities to see themselves as a part of a bigger story. Our learners become creators of content, creators of solutions, and creators of change and impact. Their ideas and voices have an impact on the greater good.

In our quest for continuous innovation, EPiC's learning spaces continue to be fluid with the world. In every space, both within and outside the walls of our learning environment, we seek to empower our learners' voices, cultivate their unique creativity, and invite new and innovative thinking and ideas to the learning process. Our active and flexible learning ecosystem is designed for fluid transitions and quick reconfigurations through multi-modal options such as project work, discussion, direct instruction, self-paced learning, and feedback circles. Every physical and virtual learning space is designed for learners to analyze, create, present, synthesize, and more, providing endless opportunities for deeper thinking. Our learning spaces support shared learning experiences across grade levels, community partnerships, and global classrooms. Learners take their iPad devices home every night and during summer break. They have access to applications and resources that make learning continuous.

With the explosion of virtual and augmented reality learning experiences, we continually seek new platforms, strategies, and opportunities to transform teaching and learning. Our learners create products and experience learning content using apps such as ARMaker. In addition, we have recently added CoSpaces to our learning environment.

As part of our vision to equip students and engage communities, we facilitate extensive garden-based learning experiences to teach leadership, teamwork, sustainability, and service to the community using the

Missouri Learning Standards as the foundation. We have 18 raised beds on campus and a butterfly garden and container garden. In addition, studio 3 runs an EPiC Market in the spring where the community can buy fresh organic vegetables. These experiences are essential to the fabric of the EPiC vision and align with the belief system of real-world work.

During Covid, EPiC Elementary managed to keep its doors open during the 20-21 and 21-22 school year with strict covid measures such as masks, social distancing, and student cohorts. During this time, we were able to thrive because we have a solid vision of (1) empowering creativity, (2) engaging the community, and (3) equipping learners. EPiC learners continued to learn at a high level by being immersed in the vision of EPiC and real-world work.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:

EPiC Elementary, founded on the dynamic vision of Every Person Inspired to Create, is a project-based learning environment, centered on creativity, innovation, personal learning, and real-world work. EPiC is firmly grounded in three timeless pillars: Empower Creativity, Equip Students, and Engage Communities.

The instructional practices of EPiC Elementary start with the learner. The goal of all learning is to encourage individual growth and to help all learners achieve their personal best. Teachers use Missouri Learning Standards as the foundation for all learning at EPiC. Missouri Learning Standards are relevant to the real world and reflect the knowledge and skills students need for success in college and to achieve their goals. Teachers connect the learning standards in meaningful ways to the real world through authentic learning experiences, providing students opportunities to develop their creativity, voice, and confidence to see themselves as contributors, producers, and leaders in the world. Liberty Public Schools is an Open Education Resource district, so EPiC teachers become experts in the learning standards and have the opportunity to select the best resources for teaching the standards.

EPiC's flexible learning environment includes 1:1 iPad devices, wireless infrastructure, creative learning spaces, community partnerships, personalized learning paths, and real-world work. Our 1:1 device atmosphere has led to students taking real ownership of their learning, reflected both in their ability to engage and share with a public audience and participate in project-based learning experiences.

In our data-driven environment, our teachers partner with students in the learning process. We track growth by using the benchmarks set forth by the Missouri Learning Standards, and we embed 21st-century success skills throughout all learning. Teachers monitor the learning progress of students and adjust instruction based on student responses. On-the-spot assessment is seamless throughout the learning experience. Through this process, student engagement becomes the driving force for achievement. Data is routinely collected to celebrate success and guide instruction in the classroom. Data is collected on every student by teachers from online personalization programs and teacher-created assessments, both formative and summative. During daily and weekly meetings, teachers analyze student data to assess growth and areas of improvement. Students are truly at the center of every conversation because we believe that every student can experience growth and success.

Our 1:1 iPad environment coupled with expert teacher instruction has provided students the opportunity to spend more time in their personal Target Zone of Instruction, accelerating their learning. When students learn within their target zone of instruction, they have unlimited opportunities for success, reducing overall failure. Teachers use the immediate data to form flexible small groups, scaffolding support while leading instruction with the core standards.

To help students more deeply understand 21st-century thinking, EPiC has developed an empowering worldview lens for each studio.

Kindergarten: We are Builders

First Grade: We are Leaders

Second Grade: We are Storytellers

Third Grade: We are Connectors

Fourth Grade: We are Change Makers

Fifth Grade: We are Designers

As students learn content and engage with project-based and personalized learning, they are learning what it means to design, lead, and connect with the world. These lenses offer opportunities for students to empathize and connect their learning with the greater community, providing student ownership, action, and voice.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Literacy plays a prominent role in our project-based learning environment, as researching and communicating are pivotal to fostering lifelong learners and deep thinkers. All EPiC students learn the Missouri reading, writing, and speaking/listening standards throughout their time at EPiC. We use Orton Gillingham to teach a multi-sensory approach to early literacy learning. All students utilize mobile technology for personalized literacy learning with programs such as iReady Reading and Lexia adapted to their needs. Literacy standards provide the foundation for how students make sense of social studies and science content in project-based learning (PBL) experiences. Through the PBL process, students ask good questions and seek answers through research, interviews, observation, and other forms of investigation, resulting in the continued practice of critical reading, careful listening, and analytical thinking.

EPiC learners are not only consumers of content but also creators of original content, often designing products to share beyond the walls of the classroom. Using a variety of digital tools and resources, they actively discover and curate information to make meaning, construct knowledge, and produce creations. Everywhere they go, with iPad in hand, our students document and publish learning stories and creative products on public platforms such as blogs, visual stories, digital books, and digital portfolios. As we continue to grow as a learning community, we've explored a variety of storytelling techniques within our curriculum and instruction. Whether it is sharing news, writing narratives, or presenting information, our learners choose how they want to share their stories. Our students use techniques like stop motion, green screen, drawing apps, iMovie, and visual design to produce amazing stories.

We use iReady benchmarking/growth monitoring to track ELA progress and then use reflective practices to fill in gaps in learning. We design learning pathways for struggling students and challenge all students to move forward toward their potential. Literacy learning, including digital literacy, is dynamic, embedded, and the connective tissue between all content explored in the PBL classroom.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Mathematics at EPiC Elementary begins with aligning instruction and objectives to the Missouri math standards. Because we are an Open Education Resource district, teachers have the opportunity to select the best resources for teaching. Teachers know and understand the math standards to provide rich teaching experiences that incorporate math vocabulary, multiple strategies to solve, and numerous opportunities for student practice. The teaching of math is intentional and personalized as we aim to meet students at their level of learning. Most math instruction is taught in small groups to meet each child's needs and differentiate instruction. Small group teaching allows some students to move quickly through the curriculum and move on to more advanced math. Others can work at a slower pace allowing for repeated practice, ensuring understanding and mastery of skills.

Additionally, personalized learning through technology tools such as iReady Math and Imagine Math allow students to work at their level. These technology tools also give teachers immediate and precise feedback for struggling students and where the breakdown in learning is occurring for each student. Furthermore, teachers regularly analyze and use summative assessment to adjust small groups and instruction as needed. Daily formative assessment tools are used to monitor student progress, adjust instruction, and identify student misconceptions and/or procedural and conceptual understanding. In addition, real-world application for using mathematics is incorporated into our project-based learning units when applicable. We choose to teach math through direct instruction and personalized learning while also embedding it into our project-based learning units so we can provide students with rich opportunities to put these skills to use in real-

world situations. Examples of this include data and statistics revolving around hunger and the global water crisis and numerous entrepreneurship projects, including our student-run farmers market. By giving students opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge in real-world situations, they have greater appreciation and motivation for gaining conceptual understanding within the mathematics curriculum. Our approach to mathematics education since the spring of 2020 has not altered. We have stayed true to our vision and our collective efficacy because we believe this approach to learning is what is best for all students. During periods of virtual learning, teachers continued to provide direct instruction via videos and Zoom lessons and offered numerous opportunities to practice skills. In addition, students at EPiC were expected to keep up with their personalized learning lessons through various technology applications throughout virtual learning. Dedication to personalized learning and meeting students at their level, coupled with real-world application of skills, has strengthened mathematical understanding for our students.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Science standards often serve as catalysts for our project-based learning experiences. Students build their science skills from kindergarten through 5th Grade through hands-on experiments, field experiences, and opportunities to interact with science experts from the community and around the world. Our students' success on science state assessments is based on their ability to think critically about science content standards and apply them in meaningful and authentic ways. Throughout their time at EPiC, students engage in STEAM learning experiences such as conducting high level science experiments, collecting and analyzing data and applying science and engineering standards to design challenges and prototypes.

As part of our vision to equip students and engage communities, we teach our students the skills and knowledge to help build a more sustainable future and to be solution providers for a better world. We also want our students to take learning beyond the walls of the classroom and into the community to see how their ideas and voices matter. We have 19 raised beds on our campus, giving every EPiC learner an opportunity to explore the natural world and Missouri learning standards through garden-based learning. We also have a student-created and maintained butterfly garden that teaches everything from pollination to plant care to geography to research skills. We also have a container garden that is brought to life each year when students research flowers and needs of plants.

We intentionally use science concepts in various ways that are consistent with the needs of the world around them. Teachers and students set challenging goals and develop success criteria to ensure students understand what they need to learn and how to take that learning further.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

As students discover and identify the challenges in this world, they actively create to change the world for the better by finding solutions and raising awareness.

EPiC students routinely engage in social studies learning standards through authentic learning experiences connected to relevant and real issues. Students work on projects that provide ample opportunity for community and civic engagement. We consistently seek learning opportunities to engage our community leaders through field trips, virtual meetings, and guest speakers. Our students are routinely engaged in social projects that impact our local community and around our globe. We often say, think global, act local!

Literacy and research are cornerstones of our project-based learning experiences. From famous historical leaders to symbols of America to perspectives of different cultures, students create from their learning. For example, students create a multimedia documentary to teach others about American and Missouri history, perform a mock trial in a local courtroom while learning about government, and present a Native American interactive exhibit at the local library. When EPiC students engage in civic projects to bring awareness to local hunger issues and the water crisis around the globe, they learn about empathy and the power of their voice and actions from a very early age. Additionally, our instructional approach to social studies allows for student choice and is often student-driven based on their interests and talents. This approach is not only motivating for students but also engages our diverse learners.

Additionally, the data we collect within the social studies curriculum is not typically from quizzes or paper-pencil assessments. Instead, we use more anecdotal and visual data from the conversations we engage in and the projects students present. Our approach to teaching history and civics goes behind learning the stories of the past. When our students learn about history, culture, and civics through work that empowers students to use their talents, voice, and actions, the learning becomes a part of them and puts them on a path to make our community and our world a better place.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

As an incubator school for our district, we have pioneered arts integration at every grade level, modeling risk-taking and tenacity, along with the power of iterations. Through partnerships with the John F. Kennedy for Performing Arts Program and Kansas City Youth Audiences and the power of mobile technologies, our learners experiment with new ways of creating and thinking, improving their critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills, with time to exercise their creativity. EPiC students are artists, musicians, puppeteers, directors, and editors every day! EPiC learners produce documentaries, perform musicals, design murals, and create animated digital stories. With the iPad Camera at their fingertips, EPiC learners are avid photographers, capturing their learning daily and creating visual stories to share with the world.

EPiC students engage in music, art, and physical education instruction on a weekly basis. Every student receives 50 minutes of instruction in each of these classes. These special classes are integrated into core subjects. Every grade level works with the music and art teacher to produce a musical production to include choreography, acting, and visual arts.

To build thought leaders and change-makers for a better tomorrow, learners need time, space, and opportunity to develop confidence, perseverance, and communication in complex thinking and creative problem-solving. We believe that by continuously exploring new technologies, we access new neurological pathways in our brains. By providing learning experiences using coding, computational thinking, robotics, and storytelling, we can cultivate complex thinking skills and creative confidence so our learners will have the vision, drive, and persistence to help transform the world. All EPiC learners experience intentional instruction in coding, which teaches critical thinking and problem-solving. Beginning in Studio K, EPiC learners code using apps such as Scratch, Jr. to learn to sequence, practice logical thinking and explore algorithms, as well as code stories such as The Gingerbread Man. As our learners progress, they learn Swift using Swift Playgrounds and Apple's coding curriculum Learn to Code 1 and Learn to Code 2. Students learn to code Spheros and teachers embed robotics opportunities in project-based learning experiences. Additionally, all students learn and use digital design skills and processes such as video production, graphic design, green screen technology, and 3D printing.

Beyond coding, as a learning community, we value the entrepreneurial mindset in all our learners. Children already think like entrepreneurs, so we design personalized learning opportunities with a solid foundation of accountability that cultivates confidence, fosters creativity, builds resilience, and prioritizes humility. Because we want our learners to think big and accomplish great things in this life, they need to be willing to learn from others, nourish a growth mindset, and think like an entrepreneur.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

At EPiC Elementary, we meet all students at their level through personalized learning, small group instruction, and differentiated instruction. This is incredibly beneficial for all students, but especially for our students who struggle and often perform below grade level. Our struggling learners get daily, differentiated instruction that is hands-on, with opportunities for repeated practice over time. Our small group approach to instruction allows for our struggling students to spend time with math manipulatives, repetitive practice with Orton-Gillingham's best practices for phonics and word decoding, and reading text that is appropriate to their level of learning. This small group instruction not only allows teachers to meet students at their level of learning but also provides teachers with an up-close look at misconceptions and breakdowns in learning. It allows teachers to correct students and provide in-the-moment feedback to students. Additionally, personalized learning through technology applications such as iReady reading and math, Imagine Math, Lexia, and Kids A-Z, allow all EPiC students to get daily practice with immediate feedback at their present level of learning. Our project-based learning approach also allows students more choice and flexibility in their learning. Thus, struggling learners (and all of our learners) can showcase their learning in a variety of ways, in a way that makes sense to them and helps them be successful. Lastly, our approach to learning through real-world work and coupling that work with technology and arts-integration methods helps us reach all visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. Daily practices that engage the whole brain help our learners retain information. All of these tools allow us to closely track and monitor the progress of each student. This allows teachers to adjust instruction and groupings on a regular basis based on what students need to be successful.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

It is important to us that we create an environment where every student is moving forward. Project-based learning organically allows us to instill work ethic and quality control into the daily life of the students. With a project-based approach, students can also improve, go back and rethink, take their learning into more self-directed avenues, and keep pushing to grow and develop. Students who are performing above grade level are understanding that it is not about doing more work, but doing the right work to grow themselves as a learner and leader. Helping students develop leadership skills to serve as mentors for other students is another way that students at all levels are challenged to go deeper with their learning. In our school, we live by the model that everyone is a teacher and everyone is a learner. This focus allows students to see that we are never done learning and never done sharing what we know with others.

3c. Special education:

As we were originally designing the academic pillars of EPiC, special education programming was at the core of many of those discussions. We were wanting to see how to better meet the needs of this group of students through reflective practices and a rethinking of how we provide scaffolded support for instructional challenges for all students. Our goal was always to see how to better help every student be successful within the classroom. Over the years, we have seen phenomenal results as we target student needs by closely tracking academic progress, strengths, and weaknesses. District benchmarking tools are monitored for progress and opportunities to help fill in gaps for our students.

Special Education teachers partner directly with classroom teachers to determine ways to best provide a support structure for students while still allowing them to access and participate in the general education classroom as much as possible. Through this process, we strive to meet every child's needs while ensuring that they are in their least restrictive environment. Successes in this approach are evidenced through testing data, but also through students who were once disengaged from the regular education classroom that are now fully engaged, participating, and able to access the learning while receiving the help they need to achieve their personal best. One of the powerful revelations to come out of utilizing the PBL approach is that students can access learning in ways that work for them. One student can take ownership of learning and move at their own pace, while another student responds to a more structured plan of moving through materials. A student can choose to enter into the learning environment in a way that they believe they can be successful. A student who might have trouble writing their answers on a piece of paper, can do an interview-style recording and showcase their learning at extremely high levels. Once they understand the power of their own thinking, students who would normally struggle with learning self-esteem, take more risks and become more confident learners.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

At EPiC Elementary, certified ELL instructors offer English language development to students from households that speak languages other than English. EPiC Elementary has a designated ELL instructor that provides services 1-3 days a week from 30 - 120 minutes with our ELL students to work on specific academic skills and language development based on need.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:

At EPiC Elementary, if someone is classified as homeless, we have many resources available including a social worker. The social worker works with the family to provide resources to the family including those resources that the student may need inside the school and community resources that are available to the family.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

With our learner-centered approach, EPiC students have a voice and choice, responsibility in their learning process, and ample opportunities to demonstrate learning in different ways. EPiC teachers build relationships to nurture education as a partnership and utilize inquiry-based instructional models designed to precipitate learning. Additionally, our teachers serve as coaches and provide one-on-one support and immediate feedback, consistently encouraging EPiC learners to remain self-confident in their abilities with a growth mindset. By constructing their learning paths and decreasing dependence on teacher-directed instruction, our learners deepen their critical thinking and questioning skills.

Creativity, communication, teamwork, critical thinking, personalization, and real-world engagement are the essential design elements for project-based learning in our learning environment. These elements empower ALL to develop skill sets and mindsets to make a positive impact in our world. Their future success in making this positive necessitates an understanding of how the world works now and what it needs to improve continually. EPiC teachers co-design learning experiences with EPiC learners that build empathy and engage the real world, igniting the imagination, building confidence, and giving learners a vision of what is possible.

By leveraging our learners as innovation partners and framing learning in the real world, we continually unleash the creative potential in every child. With creativity in the DNA of our school, we believe creative ideas are all around us. As educators, one of our primary goals is to empower our learners to uncover these ideas and develop them into something more to make an impact on our community and world. Each of us has a unique creative process. This process of creating cultivates confidence unparalleled to other learning experiences.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The community has played an integral role from inception through continued growth for EPiC. Members of the community provided input on the flexible learning environment, key components for learning, our vision, and our mission. We partnered with Apple, Hollis Miller Architects, and the Buck Institute for Education to develop a strong project-based learning model infused with technology in a flexible learning space. Apple provided the initial training for the 1:1 mobile technology and MacBook training in our wireless environment. Hollis Miller Architects designed a flexible learning environment with input from our stakeholders that provides students choice and ownership in their learning surroundings. The Buck Institute for Education gave us a building-wide expectation and model for learning that was both engaging and authentic.

We work with three community organizations (Tri-County, Great Circle Family Counseling, Children's Mercy) to provide family counseling, individual counseling, and psychological needs. Additionally, we partner with several other community organizations (KC Healthy Kids and Kansas City Community Gardens) on fostering healthy lifestyles for students and families.

Community engagement plays a vital role in EPiC student learning. Both local and global communities provide a wealth of opportunities for learners to engage in real-world work, developing transferable skills such as information literacy, collaboration, communication, and creativity within constraints. For example, several of EPiC's learning studios participate bi-yearly in Battle of the Brains, a K-12 Stem competition sponsored by Burns & McDonnell, a global engineering firm with world headquarters in Kansas City. Learners work together to dream up a new exhibit idea for Science City, our local science center. Beyond our local community, our learners continually embark on global adventures, making connections with the world. Using our mobile devices, learners have virtually traveled to such places as Gettysburg to learn more about this major battleground and its impact on the Civil War. They have conducted virtual FaceTime meetings with experts such as Jane Goodall, NASA, and zoologists leading polar bear research. Taking the

learning outside the walls of the classroom transforms learning for both the student and the adult. The excitement becomes contagious, inspiring all learners every day.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Using a team-based teaching model, our professional learning community becomes a fluent, ongoing practice as part of our daily conversations, rather than only at designated times. We believe in the growth mindset for everyone. Therefore, we embed and customize professional development every day, as well as obtain specific PD to grow our knowledge.

Daily, we have personal, real-time, inquiry learning for teachers. Teachers share expertise and skills with each other as requests and need arises, both with their teaching partner and across grade levels. Both the building principal and building learning coach support the planning and implementation of new instructional models, as well as customizes learning to teams and individuals. As connected educators, we grow in our own pedagogy through Google Hangouts, webinars, Twitter, and other social media, and a constant flow of growth mindset conversations.

Weekly, our teachers set aside a specific time to lead an after-school, Edcamp-style PD called Two-Cent Tuesdays. This idea came entirely from EPiC teachers, with the mindset of master learners wanting to collaborate and communicate and support each other in their profession and passion. Teachers share technology tools, project ideas, and process reflections. Teachers also tap into their own expertise, such as digital photography, video storytelling, and 3D printing, and teach one another various skillsets for success.

4. School Leadership:

We believe leadership is the collective mindset to change the world. Although the future of education is unpredictable, we can be the creators of what can be in education. We question the assumptions, embrace uncertainty, and adapt lifelong learning models. And we know a road less traveled is never easy to traverse. We embrace a shared leadership model where every team member, including students, excels at their expertise, and the learning community benefits from the collective genius of all. We trust each other's strengths, growing our confidence, as we model an immersive and transformative learning environment. The collective mindset of all stakeholders is the foundation for innovative success. Beginning with our school board, superintendent, and district administration, there are structures in place that anchor the vision of transformation within EPiC Elementary and across our district. Our multifaceted District Vision 20/20 team includes school board members, district administration, staff, students, parents, and community members which embrace the vision of matching the world around us for all learners. This continues to propel us on a successful path of re-imagining education.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

At EPiC Elementary, we believe that it is our responsibility to make sure that everyone feels a sense of belonging in our culture. In alignment with our district, we are welcoming, honoring and building upon the unique characteristics and assets of every student and family, while providing all students with the resources, opportunities, and support systems needed to be prepared for success in school and beyond.

The EPiC Elementary equity action plan serves as a guide with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We believe that diversity values the cultural identities, experiences, and differences among our students, families and staff. With that in mind, each of our studios (classrooms) intentionally recognize and celebrate the contributions of various cultural groups within their project-based learning units of study. Our school district's definition of equity is to provide access to educational opportunities that promote successful outcomes for all students. At EPiC Elementary, we utilize personalization tools to provide equitable opportunities for all students to show personal yearly growth with a focus on high achievement/high growth. As a part of our plan, we also focus on inclusion which includes building a culture where the diverse perspectives of all within the community are recognized which also aligns with the district graduate profile. As a building, this is amplified by incorporating the graduate profiles characteristics (academic, cultural, personal, entrepreneurial, professional) into each project-based learning unit of study to develop artifacts

and evidence of the transfer of learning. Project based learning provides unique entry points for every learner which fosters and develops the inclusive community we strive for in our learning community.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

As a project-based learning school entrenched with design-based thinking, learning at EPiC is multi-dimensional: personalized, creative, and global. We are not preparing students for “one” thing. We are preparing students to do anything. When our learners enter EPiC, we want their journey filled with wonder, questions, and discovery. We believe that school is no longer a building but a launching pad for learning in our city, state, and world. We want our learners to develop real-world skills and believe that their ideas, voice, and thinking matter to create a better tomorrow. Since our inception as a collaborative learning community, we have built and fostered a culture of innovation, partnering with students in the learning process and seeing the opportunities and possibilities in everything.

Project-based learning sets the stage for the world to be our classroom. Because learning goes beyond the walls of our building, EPiC learners are active participants in the greater community every day. Project-based learning provides the opportunity for students to solve real-world problems in society, both local and global, which provides access to the world beyond the classroom, fostering relevance and usefulness of content both in and out of school. Community partnerships are a cornerstone for our continuous innovation with project-based learning. Partnerships include Kansas City Community Gardens, Liberty High School, Kansas City Youth Audiences, Kansas City Zoo, Missouri Department of Conservation, Science City, City of Liberty, Plaza Apple Store, Woodneath Library, and many local businesses, entrepreneurs, and experts. These ongoing community and business partnerships allow students and teachers to be a part of authentic learning as they create, collaborate, and develop critical thinking skills.

Project-based learning experiences rooted in Missouri Learning Standards at EPiC include:

Studio 5 learners explore the problem of hunger in our community through research, guest speakers, interviews, and stories. Inspired by their research, students work together to design and host a hunger awareness event for parents and community members. This event includes a student-organized silent auction and a dinner and program to raise money for two local organizations that help the hungry in Clay County.

Studio 3 learners research the global water crisis and work with a local organization to raise money for more clean water in Africa. This project-based learning experience includes working with local artists, growing food in our raised beds for EPiC market days, and an African drum performance for the community.

Studio K learners begin the year by asking, “How might we grow the food we can eat?” This launches a deep dive into fall gardening experiences, and photo walks to discover our local community, and creative products such as stop motion stories to teach others how a seed becomes a pumpkin.

Through a Lowe’s for Education Toolbox grant and a partnership with Kansas City Community Gardens, all EPiC learners participate yearly in garden-based learning experiences.

Through a growing partnership with the Liberty High School science and fine arts department, each grade level experiences at least one full immersion STEAM day facilitated by the high school students.

As the 21st century continues to unfold, there is an incredible sense of urgency to foster a culture of leaders who will continue developing our complex world. It is our responsibility and obligation to teach students the acquisition process of developing new ideas and redesigning existing ideas. We build on the strengths of students and teach transferable skills to better equip them to navigate an unknown future. As we cultivate these skills and confidence within students, they will have the vision and creativity to help transform the world.