

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name S. C. Tucker Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address P.O. Box 939
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Danville State AR Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 72833-0930

County Yell

Telephone (479) 495-4820 Fax (479) 495-4803

Web site/URL https://www.dps-littlejohns.net E-mail phomsithij@dps-littlejohns.net

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* Mrs. Kim Foster E-mail fosterk@dps-littlejohns.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Danville School District Tel. (479) 495-4800

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 Mrs. Kim Sullivan
(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 2023 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 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
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 (2022-2023) 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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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, 2022 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 Students
PreK	0
K	59
1	69
2	58
3	62
4	52
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	300

*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):
- 0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1.4 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 43.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 51.9 % White
 - 1.7 % 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 2021 - 2022 school year: 15%

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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	22
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	21
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	43
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	295
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.15
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 23 %
68 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 76 %

Total number students who qualify: 227

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 28 %
Total number of students served 83

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 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>4</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>5</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>21</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>40</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>11</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 15 %
Total number of students served: 45

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 1

11. 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.	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

12. 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 12:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	79%	79%	96%	86%	87%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

15. 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.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Our mission is to provide effective and innovative educational practices to prepare our student body to take on tomorrow's world. Our vision is to provide a student-focused education.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.dps-littlejohns.net/>

The policy is at the bottom of the page.

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

S.C. Tucker Elementary is a public school. Danville Public Schools has accepted school choice applications in accordance with the Arkansas Public School Choice Act of 2015 and Act 490 of 2021.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The town of Danville, located in the heart of Yell County, Arkansas, is nestled between the Ozark Highlands and Ouachita Mountain Range. The town itself was named after the steamboat Danville that plied the Petit Jean River in the 1840s. As you drive into this small, picturesque town, it almost feels as if you have taken a step back in time. Vintage streetlamps line Main Street instead of modern-day light posts, and old stone buildings with carved names and dates above them remind visitors of days past. You won't find a stoplight, and everything is within walking distance, including the post office, hospital, grocery store, gas station, and a few eateries. Despite being a small rural community, the town is bustling with life, and S.C. Tucker Elementary is located right in the middle of it all.

The Danville School District is one of five main employers in the area, and it serves as a community hub, instilling a sense of pride among its inhabitants and life-long residents. Many local businesses and community members dedicate their time and resources to support the staff and students at S.C. Tucker Elementary. Churches and local businesses collaborate with the school on various programs, including Literacy Night, Spring Fling, and shared physical activity resources, including indoor and outdoor fitness centers, baseball fields, and basketball courts. This partnership strengthens the sense of community and reinforces the school's position as a vital part of the town.

S.C. Tucker Elementary is unique in that it shares a campus with the middle and high school buildings, providing an excellent opportunity for teachers to collaborate and share their expertise. This allows teachers to provide more comprehensive and cohesive learning experiences, including best practices, strategies, and curriculum choices, to advance students academically. Middle and high school students also participate in peer mentoring programs where they come into the elementary classrooms to support students with reading, writing and math.

Effective strategies are used to encourage and challenge all students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. G.U.I.D.E. for Life, an Arkansas Department of Education Initiative based on a five-step process to help students achieve personal success, has been implemented throughout our elementary building. A particularly successful step has been sharing student data with students themselves. Student performance data is presented in a clear and accessible format, helping students understand how they are progressing and where they need to focus their efforts. This strategy encourages students to take an active role in their education and helps them to see the value of their efforts and growth over time.

In addition, S.C. Tucker Elementary employs mixed activity groups, which enable students from differing classes and academic abilities to attend extra-curricular activities together, including p.e., art, music, and library. This approach promotes a supportive and inclusive learning environment in which students feel empowered to share their unique perspectives and learn from those of their peers. As a result, students gain a more well-rounded understanding of the topics they are studying or participating in, are better equipped to think critically and creatively, and effectively communicate and collaborate with others.

Departmentalization in grades 3 and 4 is another key strategy that S.C. Tucker Elementary utilizes. Students are organized into subject-based classes with expert teachers in reading, writing, math and science. By allowing students to develop expertise in specific areas and to learn from highly effective teachers with different teaching styles, this strategy excels student success and prepares them for the transition to middle school.

For years, S.C. Tucker Elementary School has been known for its innovative and creative techniques and programs that contribute to the unique character of the school. One such program is the reading clubs, which has become a hallmark of the school's commitment to promoting literacy and a love of reading among elementary students. The reading clubs program is designed to encourage students to read by offering incentives for reading and by making books easily accessible. Students can join point clubs, book series clubs, and other book challenge clubs of their choosing by completing reading challenges. The program includes a book vending machine that dispenses books to students who earn tokens for joining clubs, good behavior, and academic achievement. The vending machine, which is the first of its kind in the district, has

been a hit with students and has helped to increase their enthusiasm for reading.

In comparison to other elementary schools, S.C. Tucker Elementary may be considered small, but our school and student achievements are anything but, and we are closing gaps every day. From community support to the learning initiatives being implemented throughout kindergarten through fourth grade, S.C. Tucker Elementary is committed to promoting holistic development and high levels of success in all of our students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Arkansas English Language Arts standards are integrated throughout quarterly units and across subject areas. Teachers meet yearly in vertical alignment teams to select essential standards and create curriculum maps that scope and sequence learning for academic success. Direct instruction coupled with higher level questioning techniques, using Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels, has proven to be successful across K-4 grade levels.

Teachers in grades K-4 use a combination of direct, small group, and one-on-one instructional practices. Formative assessments such as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Pro-PA, CORE Phonics Survey, Developmental Spelling Analysis (DSA), Renaissance STAR Reading, and NWEA MAP assessments are given regularly to determine both the effectiveness of instruction and to identify areas in which students are both struggling and excelling. Small group instruction is planned based on the results of the formative and summative assessments. Teachers in grades K-4 meet with the principal, English Language Learner (ELL) director, dyslexia coordinator, special education teachers, counselor, and reading interventionist quarterly to discuss both formative and summative assessments. This allows the data team to identify grade level and individual strengths and weaknesses throughout the year.

The English language arts department uses research-based curriculums that support the Science of Reading pedagogy. While K-1 teachers use a combination of Phonics First, Heggerty's Phonemic Awareness, and Flyleaf decodable texts, Wit and Wisdom is the primary language arts curriculum implemented in grades 2-4. K-4 also utilizes writing strategies outlined within the Empowering Writers program. Using a combination of these programs, our school has seen academic gains and success in our students.

In grades K-2, teachers employ Phonics First and the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness curriculum in order to build a strong foundation in the awareness of sounds and the ability to manipulate them. Materials from the 95% Group are used in kindergarten to support students that show serious deficiencies in phonics. Additionally, teachers in grades K-2 use resources from the Flyleaf Publishing Emergent Reader Series in order to differentiate reading instruction and target skill development. Empowering Writers is also used to introduce common graphic organizers and develop writing skills that will be incrementally developed throughout grades K-4.

In grades 3-4, both Wit and Wisdom and Empowering Writers, along with Science of Reading practices, are utilized by teachers to strengthen reading and writing skills. This is achieved through the use of mentor texts which help build students' comprehension as well as academic and inferential language. Third and fourth grade students are taught close reading strategies in order to comprehend rigorous texts. Key skills that are developed are understanding of literary themes, story elements, characterization, literary devices, context clues to build vocabulary and language comprehension, as well as non-fiction text features and structure.

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

Kindergarten through 4th grade uses the Eureka Math curriculum. Eureka Math is a math curriculum that sequences the mathematical learning progressions in a logical order through modules and aligns to the Arkansas Mathematic Standards as well as the Eight Mathematical Practices. This curriculum is designed to close achievement gaps in student learning, instill persistence in problem solving, and prepare students to grasp advanced mathematics. The distribution of instructional minutes for Eureka Math include fluency, concept development, application problems, and student debrief. In addition to Eureka Math curriculum, the school also uses software programs, including IXL, eSpark, Math Fact Lab, and Prodigy.

Teachers use a variety of instructional methods, such as whole and small group instruction, cooperative learning, modeling, and independent practice. Differentiation is utilized to meet the needs of each student,

and teachers incorporate strategic questioning, visual representations, hands-on activities, and real-world application to engage all types of learners. Students take advantage of manipulatives, participate in self-guided math centers, and engage in math games to further develop their number sense. Teachers also employ science of reading strategies to explicitly teach the mathematics vocabulary of a concept and its cross-curricular integration.

Assessment is an integral part of daily math instruction. Exit tickets, problem sets, class discussion, whiteboard work, polls, and games are used to formatively assess student mastery. Teachers summatively assess using the mid-module and end-of-module assessment tasks included in Eureka Math. Additionally, student growth and achievement are assessed regularly using the NWEA Map Growth test. Students develop autonomy and a vested interest in their own growth and achievement by analyzing their individual results to identify strengths and focus areas, tracking their own data, and setting goals that further their success in the mathematics classroom. Teachers also utilize these results to pinpoint learning gaps and extensions and to plan and execute strategic interventions and instruction that lead to higher levels of academic success in students.

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

In the 21-22 school year, S.C. Tucker Elementary adopted the Know Atom science curriculum in grades K-4. Know Atom is a science curriculum that crosscuts concepts and sequences science and engineering progressions in a logical order starting in kindergarten. It is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and is designed to shape the next generation of problem solvers by challenging students to be scientists and engineers through lessons that involve real-world context and phenomena. The Why-How-What model is used to facilitate student buy-in and to develop higher order thinking skills.

Our teachers use the Know Atom nonfiction, NGSS-aligned texts. Each text is unit specific and includes NGSS phenomena unique to each grade level. The texts allow teachers to continue to fully immerse students in Science of Reading instruction through science content. This includes entomology, morphology, main idea, key details, text structure, annotating and writing. Summative assessments from the 21-22 school year showed a significant increase in student success and mastery of key nonfiction reading and science reasoning skills. The labs also require students to collect, graph and interpret data. Our math and science teachers have collaborated to support student success in this area through science and math "boot camps." To make learning accessible to all students, teachers employ the scaffolded resources provided by Know Atom to differentiate for various levels of learners. In addition, hands-on labs, higher order questioning, and real phenomena engage learners to see themselves as scientists capable of forming and testing hypotheses, or engineers equipped to identify a problem and use their knowledge to prototype possible solutions. Each student also keeps a science lab notebook, where they write through the steps of the scientific process or the engineering design for each lab. Teachers also engage students through the Skype with a Scientist program that connects their classrooms to real scientists doing the work out in the field. Provided assessments are also used to formally and summatively assess student mastery of science and engineering concepts.

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

Social studies at S.C. Tucker Elementary is a teacher prepared curriculum, with lower grades supplementing heavily with a curriculum by Tara West of Little Minds at Work. In grades kindergarten through third, a daily science and social studies block exists, with time split throughout the week devoted to both subjects. In grade four a daily forty-minute block at day's end is devoted to social studies. Fourth grade core content teachers each teach a section of social studies, and the Gifted and Talented (GT) teacher teaches social studies to fourth grade GT students during this time.

Social studies lends itself heavily to reading and writing, and teachers take advantage of the opportunities afforded to include vocabulary, phonics, non-fiction reading and writing, and other English language arts (ELA) skills. Students, through high school and post-secondary opportunities, often struggle with bridging reading and writing to curriculums outside of ELA classes. Normalizing these practices in elementary aids students going forward. In addition to non-fiction reading, social studies presents opportunities to read historical fiction pieces, whether covered during social studies or through alignment with books and essays

studied in reading blocks and book clubs.

Social studies assessments are designed to assess mastery of Arkansas Social Studies Standards. Fourth grade students end their year with an annual Market Day. Market Day is the culminating project to close out the economics unit in social studies classes. Fourth grade students spend time researching and developing a product, producing the product, marketing materials, and budgets for both expenses and expected sales, and set up shop and sell products to the community. Generally, several hundred dollars is raised by the fourth grade class, who then decides where to donate funds. Monies have been given, in past years, to organizations who help the homeless, to animal shelters, and to staff suffering from unexpected medical diagnoses that required extensive travel and time away from work.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Kindergarten through 4th grade students go to art class and music class once a week for 40 minutes each.

In art, students complete projects that help them express their creativity and self-expression. Students also work on concentration skills and hand eye coordination during art class. The art teacher regularly collaborates with the classroom teachers to incorporate art projects that tie into the curriculum. Each spring an art walk is held after hours, and the community is invited in to look at and purchase art pieces created by students.

In music, students sing, dance, and learn basic music skills. They learn about instruments and ways they can participate in music education as they get older. They also have performances they participate in throughout the year, the highlight of which is a community Christmas concert.

The art and music teachers collaborate with other activity teachers as well as the classroom teachers to support the curriculum and tie in activities with other themes during the year.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Kindergarten through 4th grade students go to physical education once a week for 40 minutes. In physical education, students learn how to take care of their health. Students learn about different sports, how to eat healthy, and how take care of their bodies in fun engaging ways. They are educated on how to move their bodies while in school and outside of the school day. Many of the activities students learn throughout the year can be played with friends and family at a local park, at home, or in any number of places while enjoying nature. Occasionally guest speakers come in to teach about other topics. Recently, for example, Arkansas Game and Fish taught students how to be safe while hiking and enjoying the outdoors. The physical education coach also collaborates with other activity teachers as well as the classroom teachers to support the curriculum and tie in activities with other themes during the year. Game play in class regularly incorporates reading, math, and/or science skills.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

2d. Technology/library/media

Kindergarten through 4th grade students attend library class once a week for 40 minutes. Library classes for elementary focus on building a love of reading and teaching Arkansas library standards. Students listen to read-alouds, learn about the benefits of reading, and learn to choose books that are appropriate for them as they are growing readers. Library standards also support the essential skills students are learning in their classrooms, including comprehension, author's purpose, nonfiction text features, research skills, and much more. Students also practice science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) skills in library, and students often complete STEAM challenges that tie in with read-alouds. In the library, students are encouraged to complete reading challenges that get them excited to read. Our school uses the Accelerated Reader program to encourage students to earn points and rewards while reading. Other activities that instill a love of reading include a Book Buddies program, where middle school students come read to elementary students regularly; guest readers from the community; and a Reader of the Month program, where one student per class is selected each month to celebrate their reading achievement.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

Students are challenged to be creative and focus on STEAM skills through gifted and talented (GT) enrichment class weekly. Kindergarten through 3rd grade attend GT enrichment once weekly for 40 minutes. This class supports classroom curriculum by reinforcing higher order thinking skills which relate to the GT standards. In 4th grade, students who qualify for GT services are pulled daily for 30 minutes a day. In this program, they focus on the gifted and talented standards through teaching social studies topics.

Instead of gifted and talented enrichment classes, 4th graders have keyboarding as their fifth activity. In this class, they learn basic typing and computer skills. This stand-alone time devoted to keyboarding was implemented when classroom teachers identified it as an area of concern for this grade level.

Our school counselor teaches kindergarten lessons every week for 20 minutes and 1st through 4th grade lessons alternating weeks for 30 minutes. These lessons focus on social and emotional learning (SEL) to help students learn about their mental health and emotions and learn healthy coping skills. We use G.U.I.D.E. for Life curriculum, as promoted by the Arkansas Department of Education, for our SEL instruction. Career planning and career awareness are tied in with our character education lessons.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Students who are performing below grade level in math or reading are supported through Tier 2 response to intervention (RTI) time. Teachers create individualized goals for each student using data looking at where they can grow or are experiencing deficits from our triannual NWEA assessment and other sources of data. We utilize small groups created of students who need to work on similar skills. Kindergarten through 2nd grade utilize center rotations to tailor instruction to students' levels. In whole group instruction, teachers seat students with a variety of performance levels together. This allows students to learn from one another. We supplement instruction with software to help meet each individual student's learning needs; eSpark and IXL are examples of instructional technologies we find effective. Many of our students who are performing below grade level have also been identified as showing signs of dyslexia, so they are supported through small groups that meet multiple times a week. These small groups are comprised of six or fewer students per grade level. Small groups are led by our dyslexia coordinator as well as our Phonics First Trained paraprofessionals. Thanks to grant and federal funds, we have been able to train paraprofessionals to assist in Phonics First instruction.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Students who are performing above grade level are supported by teachers through small groups and center rotations. These groups focus on skills they could further develop, as identified in class and through the NWEA and other assessments. Teachers, the reading interventionist, and the librarian encourage students to

choose books that broaden their reading ability and comprehension. We utilize eSpark and IXL online to extend learning at each student's individual ability level. Teachers keep engaging extension assignments at the ready, so that when students are finished with their work they can continue learning above the mastery goal set for the class.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Students with disabilities are supported through Tier 3 RTI supports. Most of these students participate in whole group Tier 1 instruction, small group Tier 2 instruction, as well as one-on-one Tier 3 instruction. Some students who have disabilities are also supported through the dyslexia program. Our dyslexia program supports students multiple times weekly through small group instruction, which allows us to hone in on the skills each student needs to strengthen in order to grow academically.

Our special education team serves students throughout the week, with a heavy focus on literacy and math skills. These students are engaged in Phonics First curriculum and Cognitively Guided Instruction in math. Students also participate in the lessons presented in their regular education classroom. The special education team then follows up the lesson taught in their regular education classroom in small group instruction. This ensures that students understand what is required to master each standard.

Students with severe disabilities are supported through one-on-one and small group instruction to improve their independent academic and social skills. These students also utilize an Applied Behavior Analysis program, TeachTown, that allows them access to standards-based core curriculum. TeachTown allows students access to the general education curriculum in a way that allows them to be successful in their learning. As this program is technology based, it also allows students to practice using technology skills, such as logging in and clicking on specific items, in the classroom.

3d. English Language Learners:

Students who are English Language Learners are supported in their classrooms and pull-out small groups. ELL students receive additional instruction in all ELA content. Our dedicated ELL coordinator and ELL paraprofessional work with teachers to design and implement instruction for students who are English Language Learners. In ELL small groups, students have time to focus on areas identified through English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) as low areas, as well as deficits identified in the classroom. Students are taught first through speaking responses, then they learn to write out their responses. Students will read, respond verbally, then work to write out their response. We have bilingual and Spanish book collections for students to access in our school library and in the ELL coordinator's classroom. As is the case throughout all departments and content areas in our school, we encourage reading and work to build lifelong readers and learners. Our ELL program is working, too, as we over the last several years we have been able to exit roughly one third of the ELL student population. We continue to monitor students who have exited and provide supports as needed.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

S.C. Tucker Elementary faculty and support staff strive to be engagement engineers. This philosophy begins with lesson planning and continues as teachers and support staff carry out lessons and work through units. We understand that engagement is critical in advancing students academically. Additionally, it significantly reduces behavior incidents and allows for social and emotional growth. In order to ramp up engagement, faculty and staff make use of technology, manipulatives, movement, alternative seating, grouping, and much more.

Academically, we work hard to create an environment that provides extrinsic motivation and supports development of intrinsic rewards. Extrinsically, we host a number of reading challenges that allow students to join point clubs, compete against themselves and peers, and earn tokens to the book vending machine. Students who are proficient or show growth on assessment scores can earn prizes from the Woot Woot Wagon, which has included items like bracelets, sensory items, kites, bookmarks, and more. Intrinsically, students are provided routinely with data from assessments and work. Teachers spend a lot of time working with students to understand scores – from where their scores are, to jointly developing goal scores, to being able to disaggregate data to understand their own areas of strength and areas for improvement. This attention to data and ownership of scores sets the stage for intrinsic motivation to develop.

The counselor teaches social and emotional lessons using G.U.I.D.E. for Life and supplemental materials. Lessons are designed to nurture collaboration and create an atmosphere of safety and respect. Additionally, instructors draw on these skills in their classrooms, as well, cementing the social and emotional skills students will need to draw upon throughout their lives.

College and career readiness development begins in kindergarten, where students and families make a paper quilt of hopes and dreams the first week of school. The quilt lines the hallway of the building, where it is accessible to be read and re-read throughout the year. Additionally, a unit on community helpers integrates with fact and opinion writing, and students research and write about jobs wherein duties include helping keep the community safe and cared for. Part of the shared vocabulary in upper elementary includes phrases such as “think like a scientist,” “think like a mathematician,” and “think like an engineer.” Teachers bring in guest speakers, and in that manner students are exposed to career opportunities. Some teachers have posters in their classrooms highlighting famous scientists, historians, and the like. Bulletin boards in the hallway, too, reflect career paths, such as the Women’s History Month bulletin board, which highlighted women who were difference makers in their careers.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

In addition to engaging students, we place importance on engaging all stakeholders – including families and community members. Our demographics include 52% White students, 44% Hispanic/Latino students, and a small number of Black, Asian, American Indian, and students who are Two or More Races. Seventy-six percent of our student are low income. Demographic information helps us to track data and make decisions about what resources we can work with our community to provide students and families.

First and foremost, we invite families and the community in often, and we work hard to make them feel welcome. In addition to open house and parent-teacher conferences, we host a number of events that welcome families into our schools both during and after hours. During school, we have a flourishing guest reader program where guardians and community members commit to reading to classes of students regularly. We, too, open our doors for family members to come eat lunch with students. Outside of the school day, we have events including Literacy Night, Spring Fling, and open times for families to shop twice yearly book fairs. Families can visit the school library during open hours over the summer months. During the pandemic, when group events were not an option, we held virtual and drive-through events. Data is gathered during these events that help us track engaged and participating demographics, and it lets us know what populations we need to do a better job of reaching out to.

Our community partnerships provide opportunities for families and students to engage with local businesses, as is the case for our community sponsored trunk or treat event. Additionally, community partnerships help us to meet the needs of our families. Thanks to community support, we are able to offer a backpack food program and outfit students with needed school supplies. During the winter months, local businesses provide jackets and coats for students in need.

We, too, have a number of shared community resources, thanks to partnerships with local entities and grant funding. We have an indoor fitness center that we open to the public outside of school hours, and we do the same with our playground, which also hosts fitness equipment. We also share our track with the community, have a joint-use soccer field, and we share baseball facilities with the city. Our gymnasiums are open for local peewee teams to use for practices.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

S.C. Tucker Elementary is a rural school. Teacher recruitment and retention is important, as it is in any district. As a rural district, we are often not able to compete with salary scales adopted by larger districts in our area. Creating and maintaining a professional culture of engagement, respect, and high expectations is key to our success. We have a number of incredible teachers who travel 30 minutes or more daily, passing higher paying districts, because they feel comfortable, cared for, and nurtured professionally and personally by S.C. Tucker Elementary and the Danville School District.

Teachers are regarded, and referred to, as experts, and their input on decision-making is coveted. We do regularly celebrate teachers with fun activities including scavenger hunts and themed seasonal celebrations, but more importantly we build culture through an atmosphere of respect, help, and sharing of information and resources. High expectations for both students and staff are the norm, and resources are provided as needed or requested to ensure that expectations can be met. Administration covers dedicated work time so that teachers can plan engaging lessons, participate in new learning, and review and make decisions regarding data.

Recently we made the decision to departmentalize first and second grades in the 2023-2024 school year. It was not a decision taken lightly, and both qualitative and quantitative data was taken into account, as were the opinions, concerns, and suggestions of the first and second grade instructors. Initially the concept was popular among first grade teachers and questioned by second grade teachers. A number of meetings were held concerning the possibility of change, and teachers were invited to participate heavily in conversations around this idea. In the end, we settled on a departmentalized schedule that was proposed by the teachers, as opposed to the draft administration initially suggested. This decision, and others like it, highlight the culture of professional respect afforded to teachers. Allowing teachers to run errands, leave early for appointments, and take time off without having to offer a justification shows that the culture of respect transcends professional decisions and takes into account that our staff is human and treated with the dignity they deserve.

Professional development (PD) is delivered primarily on campus, with staff facilitating trainings. This set up allows us to focus in on exactly what we need to, with data to support decisions. It also easily allows attendance for all or part of the sessions by administrators and specialists, who can provide knowledge, permissions, ideas, and are open to changing practices when classroom teachers make an argument that changes will benefit our students academically or otherwise. PD is both stand-alone and embedded, and teachers routinely ask for professional development and time when they identify an area that needs improvement in their practice. Teachers and administrators routinely attend professional development sessions at Arch Ford Educational Cooperative, too, which provides a chance for networking with area educators.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at S.C. Tucker Elementary is a three-pronged approach: engagement, culture, and data.

Keeping both students and staff engaged in the work creates room for celebrations and minimizes discipline. It also builds soft skills, including active listening, communication, and teamwork. Students and staff alike learn to think critically and solve problems through engagement.

Engagement feeds into building a culture of respect, too. Additional culture building was addressed in Part V, 3, and includes leaders saying, “How can I help?” rather than jumping immediately to disciplinary measures in many circumstances. In terms of staff culture, decisions are made in collaboration with staff, as leadership feels it is very important to have conversations with classroom experts. To promote culture amongst students, students are referred to as scientists, community helpers, mathematicians, and the like. We spend a lot of time celebrating students, from rewarding them with book vending machine tokens to posting their photos on social media and more. Daily announcements are filled with the names of students who have completed reading challenges, and cheers as students’ names are read can be heard up and down the halls.

Data guides all of our decisions at S.C. Tucker Elementary, and leadership ensures that ample training is given to understanding data and how to react to it, as well as ample time for disaggregation of data, so that we can drill down to what the best plan of action is for each individual student. We hold regular data meetings, inviting in SPED teachers, therapists, the counselor, the dyslexia specialist, head of the ELL program, and the reading interventionist. Having data alone does not do any good. It is important that we take time for all of the involved adults to understand what the data means and how to use it to aid in individual student growth.

The principal also serves as the curriculum leader for the building, which is a recent change. During the 2021-2022 school year, the district employed curriculum administrators, and the current principal served as head of 7-12 curriculum and federal programs for the district. Administration roles changed this year, as the curriculum positions were dissolved, and principals absorbed those duties. Additionally, the principal is in charge of student discipline, staffing, and scheduling.

Each grade level team has a lead teacher representative, as does the encore staff, and SPED department. The principal is in regular communication with these teachers. Lead teachers are responsible for facilitating weekly department meetings, and they, too, ensure that all teachers on the team are meeting deadlines. They also advocate for changes where they feel changes may impact student achievement.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Our demographics include 52% White students, 44% Hispanic/Latino students, and a small number of Black, Asian, American Indian, and students who are Two or More Races. English Language Learners comprise 26% of our student population; this is in stark contrast to the 2017-2018 school year, where 39% of students were English learners. Seventy-six percent of our student are low income.

In our community, Hispanic residents outnumber White residents, though barely. As such, our community has a number of Hispanic businesses, all of which contribute to the diverse make-up of the community. The school has struggled in the past to attract Hispanic employees, though the trend is changing, and we now employ a growing number of Hispanic faculty and staff. It is important that our students have representation among staff.

While a quarter of our students receive ELL services, we understand that the number of families that need support with the English language is much higher. Concerning family outreach, we have a number of English-Spanish bilingual employees, who are able to translate. We also send home all communication in both English and Spanish, too, as those are the primary languages spoken in our community.

We employ one ELL coordinator and an ELL paraprofessional, and our staff receives ELL training annually. Our ELL students outperformed our White population in both weighted achievement and school value-added growth on the 2021-2022 ESSA School Index, as published by the Arkansas Department of Education. And as noted above, the number of students needed services has decreased by one third in the NBRS 2023

space of a few years, thanks to the hard work and dedication of our ELL staff and other stakeholders.

Equity is the norm in our district, and it is an absolute expectation. To advance cultural awareness, teachers regularly infuse reading and information that pertains to a number of cultures across the globe. Teachers take care to use names and situations in problems and examples that celebrate the diversity of our community and beyond. Guest speakers and readers showcase the diversity in our community, and the book vending machine in the main hallway carries titles from authors from a number of backgrounds, as do classroom libraries and the main library.

As with other pursuits, we rely on data to make changes. When the COVID pandemic forced us to hold virtual and drive-through family events, we were able to obtain data that confirmed that our Hispanic population was more likely to attend a drive-through event than an in-person event, and, through that realization, we have been able to have conversations and make decisions that are more inclusive knowing the comfort level of that segment of the population. That data helped us transition back to in-person events that Hispanic families now feel comfortable attending in numbers that align well with our student population numbers.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

S.C. Tucker Elementary faculty and staff implement a number of practices to ensure excellence in education. The one practice that is most instrumental in our success, however, is following the data. Decisions are data driven.

Data begins in the hands of instructors and is available through a number of assessments, including STAR Reading, Accelerated Reader, Edulastic assignments, IXL, ACT Aspire, NWEA assessments, and more. Teachers collect and analyze data independently and in grade level groups. They understand how to drill down to missing skills for each child, and they make plans to strengthen those skills, whether independently, in small groups, or whole class. They, too, are able to examine the types of questions that stump students and provide strategies for conquering those sets of problems.

We regularly hold data meetings, wherein content teachers are pulled in one at a time with a team that includes the principal, the counselor, the reading interventionist, and dyslexia, SPED, and ELL staff as needed. Teachers come to data meetings prepared to enter and exit students into RTI and to make suggestions regarding testing. We keep notes on individual students so that we can easily access history concerning student placements, testing, and growth information. We have paperwork prepared to write new RTI goals or fill out requests for services and/or testing for inclusion in programs. This streamlined meeting works because it is teacher facilitated and teachers come prepared with data and suggestions.

Students are responsible for their data and learn to understand it beginning in kindergarten. This responsibility gives students a sense of control and accountability – once they realize what they can do to grow academically, students become intrinsically motivated to continue to improve.

We also use data to determine curriculum, relying heavily on EdReports and pairing curriculums that meet expectations with other considerations, including time available in daily schedules to teach content. We use data to make staffing decisions, not only regarding whom to hire but also what assignment best fits their skill set. We recently relied heavily on data to come to a decision to departmentalize 1st and 2nd grades next year, based on the positive effects it has created academically and otherwise in 3rd and 4th grades.

To quote Arthur Conan Doyle's character Sherlock Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet*, "It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data."