

U.S. Department of Education
2023 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 Ms. Aimee Crispin
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 401 Independence Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lakewood State CO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 80226-1082

County Jefferson

Telephone (303) 982-6382 Fax (303) 982-6383

Web site/URL <https://www.dennisonblueribbon.com> E-mail Aimee.Crispin@jeffco.k12.co.us

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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mrs. Tracy Dorland E-mail tracy.dorland@jeffco.k12.co.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Jefferson County R-1 Tel. (303) 982-6500

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Ms. Stephanie Schooley
(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.

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

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):
- 103 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 23 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 27 High schools
 - 4 K-12 schools
- 157 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	88
1	90
2	92
3	92
4	92
5	91
6	75
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	620

*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 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 11 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 13 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 69 % 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 2021 - 2022 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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	3
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	614
(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):

Spanish, Russian, Lithuanian, Vietnamese, Czech, Chinese-Mandarin, Korean, Chinese-Yue, Greek, French, Malayalam, Nepali, Hindi, Polish, Slovak, Bengali, Filipino, Chinese Min-Nan, Lao, Farsi,

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %

31 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %

Total number students who qualify: 56

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 3 %
Total number of students served 18

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>1</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>3</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>4</u> Developmental Delay	<u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 0 %
Total number of students served: 0

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 2

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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	27
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 22:1

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	95%	97%	97%	0%	0%
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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2017

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

Mission Statement To provide a rigorous academic education that prepares all Dennison students for a successful future. Vision Statement To be a school where students, staff, and parents work together to establish and exemplify the highest standards of educational excellence.

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

<https://go.boarddocs.com/co/jeffco/Board.nsf/Public#>

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

Students are enrolled through the district's lottery process based on established district priorities.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Dennison Elementary in Lakewood, Colorado is an option/choice school within the Jefferson County School District. The 620 students attending Dennison are selected through a choice enrollment process utilizing a digital random selection process. No testing, prerequisites, or qualifications are considered in the process. Once students are enrolled, they most frequently remain at Dennison through 6th grade, which supports our low student mobility rate. As you might expect, families that go to the trouble of engaging in a choice enrollment process, are typically highly invested in their children's education and demonstrate support for their students. This is typically the case at Dennison, and parents, for the most part, support their children with studying and homework. They also support the mission of the school through involvement in leadership opportunities, volunteering, and fund raising.

The Dennison mission is to provide a rigorous academic education that prepares all Dennison students for a successful future. Originally named the Dennison Fundamental Alternative School when established in 1974, the school's model emphasized a "back-to-basics" approach. Through the years, Dennison has maintained the basic tenets of this philosophy, while continually enhancing this content rich, academically rigorous educational model for its students. Dennison Elementary's curriculum is aligned with Colorado Academic Standards. Students' progress is formally assessed by DIBELS, Colorado Measure of Academic Standards (CMAS) and MAP. The staff continually analyze formal and informal student data to drive instruction and ensure that students achieve, at a minimum, grade-level proficiency in all content areas.

Highlights of the instructional model include: systematic and systemic content alignment and instruction; single grade, self-contained classrooms with an emphasis on whole group direct instruction; Open Court Reading Program emphasizing phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency, and comprehension; an emphasis on basic skills as well as critical thinking skills; problem-solving skill development across content areas; art, music, technology/library science, and physical education on a rotating schedule; extensive and varied opportunities for before and after school enrichment activities; high-level academic and behavioral expectations and support for all students; and highly aligned, scaffolded, and spiraling writing instruction. All staff members participate in meaningful staff development that is aligned with the school's achievement goals. We collectively formulate school goals, grade level team goals, and differentiated teacher goals to facilitate professional growth and refine best practices to increase instructional effectiveness. The staff is tenaciously dedicated to the responsibility of supporting children to reach their academic and behavioral potential. Additional strategies that contribute to encourage and support students are the MTSS process. With such a rigorous instructional program, it is prudent and necessary to provide support for students, who may not be identified with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 status. All students have areas of strength and areas of challenge. Dennison is proactive in identifying and providing specific, targeted intervention in a tiered protocol early on to ensure students do not "fall through the cracks". The teaching staff utilize effective instructional strategies to support differences in learning styles during core instruction. The intervention team, consisting of a special education interventionist, a reading interventionist, highly trained educational assistants, mental health providers, and ESL support, provide research-based, targeted interventions in addition to the core curriculum. The successes we are most proud of are: the number of students who achieve at high levels despite the fact that students do not submit cognitive testing data to enroll. The sustained high achievement over time and the student growth data are also accomplishments that correlate with opportunities for successful futures, thus, sources of pride.

Dennison has been honored with Blue Ribbon recognition three times before. The Blue Ribbon certification is a rare accolade and difficult to achieve. Ultimately it means we are doing our job for kids. We want children to have no limits on their choices in life. From a balcony perspective, families look at performance data and see the Blue Ribbon recognition, and are interested in Dennison. For Dennison students, the families want to be a part of a first-rate school. They are motivated to engage, volunteer, and support. For others, they are motivated to visit, ask questions, and network with us, which helps us improve as well. As a Blue Ribbon recipient, our commitment is to expand our efforts to share with others and further develop our expertise. We are dedicated to continually refining, improving, and networking with others to advance opportunities for children. This previous recognition has offered the parents in our district an enrollment

option if they are looking for a school that is holding to the high standards and rigorous expectations of a National Blue Ribbon School.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The Open Court Reading Program has been the anchor of Dennison's reading instruction since the school was established in 1974. The five components of reading ensure a comprehensive, systemic approach to reading instruction. Students regularly practice phonemic awareness activities in the Primary grades to ensure that they have a strong foundation with which to manipulate sounds as they begin to read and spell. Phonics instruction is systematically taught in the primary grades as well, teaching students how to read and spell any word, regardless of the context or whether they have previously encountered the word before. Spelling lists and grammar tasks are interwoven with the reading curriculum, creating a language rich environment and giving students the tools they need to succeed in further reading and writing. Fluency is taught through choral reading of grade level texts, grade appropriate monitoring, and direct instruction in each of the components of prosody.

Each classroom explicitly teaches vocabulary in context as students are exposed to a broad array of useful and novel language. Throughout all grades, students learn to analyze words as they read by applying latin/ greek/ and Anglo-Saxon affixes and roots to bases. Additionally, reading comprehension instruction is rich and varied at all grade levels with a focus on increasing students' depth of knowledge with complex questioning. Students study many types of literature, and work as a class to analyze and make meaning of many different text types and genres. Grammar is taught throughout each grade level using the Daily Language Instruction program along with our Open Court Reading resource. This is then applied in a concrete way as students are constructing their own texts through a scaffolded and clearly modeled writing process. Each of these components of literacy are made possible by the continuing work of alignment throughout the grades in each area as students move through a systemic and systematic curriculum. As each grade builds proficiency in students, the succeeding grade will improve on that knowledge base to increase confidence and ability as students move through the program.

In all grades, students are assessed on their mastery of reading skills weekly. This includes assessments from our Open Court resource, which is aligned with standards, for phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. In addition, 1-6th grade students are given NWEA Measures of Academic Progress three times yearly to assess reading and language skills. Students in grades K-3 are given the Acadience DIBELS assessments to determine progress on indicators of basic early literacy success. If students are showing gaps in mastery in reading, they may be given more diagnostic assessments such as DIBELS DEEP, Words their Way, or other Orton Gillingham screeners to determine areas needing most intensive intervention.

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

Dennison uses Savvas Envision Math as the main resource for mathematics instruction. Students learn the foundational skills necessary for working within the base ten number system. This is done using manipulatives and then models before applying the understanding to mathematical algorithms. Students apply their mathematical thinking in many ways including real world problems solving and creating their own math stories. Higher level content such as algebraic thinking is woven into the curriculum beginning in Kindergarten and slowly builds as students move through the grades. Foundational skills such as the memorization of math facts and the regular practice of algorithms are instrumental in students' mathematical success.

All students take the Savvas unit math assessments that align with our resource and standards, as well as quizzes throughout the unit. Students in grades 1-3 complete at least weekly math fact tests in addition and subtraction to track mastery. When students near the end of third grade, they begin taking multiplication fact tests and move into multiplication and division in 4th grade and continue this through 5th grade. In addition, students in 3rd-6th grade take the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress math assessment three times a year to assess progress and determine instructional steps.

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

Science instruction occurs both within a dedicated science time using the Savvas Elevate Science curriculum and is integrated into the reading block through cross curricular nonfiction texts. Students learn background information on how the world works and also apply this knowledge to real world problem solving. In all grade levels, students use the scientific method to investigate questions about science as well as verify knowledge they have accumulated. In addition to in class specific learning, students also have the annual opportunity to participate in a school wide science fair where they choose an area of interest and investigate it further. These projects are presented to the class to share the knowledge they have gained. Students are given quizzes throughout the Savvas units and end of unit assessments to determine mastery and next steps. In addition, students participate in hands- on labs where experiential learning takes place and is assessed.

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

Much like science, Social Studies content is also taught both within a dedicated learning block across the grade levels and is integrated within the reading curriculum. Students learn about history, civics, and government by studying specific histories, reading nonfiction texts, going on field trips into the community, and listening to a variety of speakers. Events like Colonial Days in 5th grade and Day in Denver in 3rd, allow students to experience the world they are studying. The pledge of allegiance is said at the beginning of the day in every classroom as a way to start the day with gratitude. Government is studied at every grade level with an emphasis on the structure and function of how the American system works. Students learn how to be a productive and caring member of the greater communities within which they live. Due to the fact that we do not currently have a systemic social studies resource, each grade level creates common formative assessments based on standards to determine student mastery of concepts. In all of the grades, students also complete projects such as maps, dioramas, or online books that show their knowledge of the content.

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)

In Art, we encourage the children's imagination and creativity while seeking to develop their ability and capacity for observation, comprehension, envisioning, critique, and reflection. We hope to ignite their sense of discovery and invention, while cultivating cross-curriculum connection and concepts. With these goals in mind, we expose the students to multiple mediums, such as chalk, watercolor, clay, found object sculptures, glass fusing, tie dye, art drawings, and paintings. We also give students the opportunity to participate in group class projects, such as large mosaics, crayon creations, and specialty tile projects. Because we yearn for the students to understand the history and diversity of art, we not only include that in our classroom instruction, but they take a special trip to the Denver Art Museum, where they are immersed in art culture and history. Out of the entire district of elementary schools, Dennison has been awarded Best in Show four times and received two Purchase Awards at the Jeffco Art Show, hosted by Red Rocks Community College each year.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Jefferson County, and Colorado Department of Education has developed a comprehensive Physical Education curriculum that provides students with a planned, sequential based program of curriculum and instruction designed to develop motor skills, knowledge and behaviors for active living, physical fitness,

sportsmanship, safety, self-improvement, and emotional wellbeing. The goal of physical education is to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

Demonstration of Dennison students' growth can be witnessed at Field Day, a special day to show the skills that they have learned in PE, and demonstrate cooperation, sportsmanship, respect, integrity, and enjoyment in the many fun activities with fellow students.

Additionally, special classes are often added to the curriculum such as First Tee Golf, and Ninja Nation Obstacle course. Seasonal after school activities such as speed stacking, jump roping and cross country have been offered for extra practice.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

Dennison students learn to leverage technology to set goals and reach them. Students achieve higher typing words per minute by tracking their growth over time. Students understand and facilitate which internet tools to best support, demonstrate, and showcase their various learnings. Students can use google tools effectively. Students recognize how best to interact and react in an interconnected world using digital citizenship. Students curate digital resources and showcase creative understanding using Sound Trap, We Video and adobe products.

With the addition of library to the class students also learn to engage, inquire, explore, include, collaborate, curate and expand their knowledge by using all resources available to them such as: databases, encyclopedias, atlas, books, online reference materials. By using both the library and technology students are able to grow, share, create, and think objectively about the world around them. The classwork is explicitly designed using the ISTE (International Society for Standards in Education) standards.

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

The music program at Dennison closely follows the Colorado music standards. The expression of music is the process of practice, refinement, and performance or other demonstration of musical knowledge and skills to communicate thoughts and emotions. This is done through various ways such as singing and playing various classroom instruments such as recorders, xylophones, boom whackers, drums and other pitched and auxiliary percussion instruments. The creation of music is the demonstration of musical knowledge/skills in the composition, improvisation, and arranging of music. This happens through many different formats including written notation, iconic symbols, and electronic representations. Students create at their different ability levels, and their compositions grow in difficulty as their knowledge of music increases. Dennison also offers many extracurricular performing arts opportunities such as band, orchestra, choir, drama, as well as a variety of different clubs that change from year to year, such as ukuleles, bucket drumming, drums alive and Orff ensembles.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

The MTSS model at Dennison is especially robust. The teachers are extremely dedicated and work with students individually and in small groups before and after school and during limited flex or study hall times to support students struggling with specific concepts. These supports are optional and the students attending are flexible, but they provide a level of intervention that definitely supports student learning. Students are assessed in many ways to determine best tier two and three supports. In reading, we utilize the DIBELS assessments to determine gaps, and may ask other specialists to do screeners from Orton Gillingham, Haggerty, or a language screener. In addition, we may use data from MAP assessments to determine areas of

need. We also employ a special education teacher/interventionist, a reading specialist, and a group of highly trained paraprofessionals who utilize research based interventions such as Wilson, Orton Gillingham, Heggerty, and textbook based interventions from Open Court and Envision Math. Our groups are fluid and flexible and are monitored often to ensure we are meeting student needs and closing gaps.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

In 2nd grade, all of our students are given the CoGAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) and teachers and parents fill out the SIGS (Scale for Identifying Gifted Students) which may qualify them to be placed on an Advanced Learning Plan. Students who qualify for an ALP are supported through a rich and rigorous learning environment that focuses on higher level questioning and real world application of skills. For example, students are given opportunities to study greek and latin roots, other cultures, and participate in mock legislative sessions when learning about government. Teachers and students set both academic and affective goals which are monitored throughout the year to ensure they are realizing their potential.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Students who qualify for an individual education program (IEP) receive specialized instruction from a team of dedicated professionals through one-on-one, small group, and/or in-class delivery. Students have access to a learning specialist, a speech language pathologist, a school psychologist, an occupational therapist and/or a physical therapist based on their presenting areas of growth. The special education team also partners with all staff members to support and educate in order to provide the best possible learning environment for all students.

3d. English Language Learners:

At Dennison we understand the long term benefits of communicating in more than one language. As a result, we heartily welcome students from diverse cultures and provide linguistic and academic support to all English Language Learners (ELLs), accelerating their growth towards high levels of academic proficiency in English. ELLs receive individualized support using proven English language development (ELD) strategies as they learn to listen, speak, read and write in English. This English language development is provided in collaboration between classroom teachers and ESL staff, and is given in addition to the same rigorous instruction provided by grade level classroom teachers. Throughout the school year ESL staff use both formative and summative assessments to determine the English language proficiency level of each student in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. As students move toward fluent proficiency in English, linguistic and academic supports are adjusted to encourage growth and empower ELLs to succeed across grade levels and content areas.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Since Dennison is not a neighborhood school, it is vital that we create opportunities for students to engage outside of the school day. Various additional extra-curricular experiences are provided to students throughout the school year. Students have opportunities to attend the Colorado Symphony, Arvada Center Denver Art Museum, as well as other venues to extend learning. We also participate in various cultural experiences and activities to foster connections and extend learning. Examples are Reflections, in which students perform to showcase their talents in art, music, drama, and literature. We also have a yearly science fair, craft fair, and field day competitions. Some of the other extending activities in which students can also participate are chess club, band, orchestra, choir, ukulele, track, spelling and geography bees, Lego club, Kid Stage, and Science Matters. In addition to these student activities, we organize events for families such as a night at the Nuggets game, Roller City Night, and APEX night. These extra-curricular opportunities are important in providing a wide variety of opportunities in which students can engage with other students and use skills to think critically. They have opportunities to work both independently and collaboratively to create, solve problems, and have fun.

Over the last several years, we have noticed a need for more supports in students' social emotional learning. Therefore, we have prioritized our budget to ensure we have a full time Social Emotional Learning Specialist as well as a .8 School Psychologist. Both of these staff members are essential members of our MTSS team where we problem solve to meet student needs in all areas, including mental health. In addition, all classrooms receive twice monthly Second Step lessons, which focus on building students' social emotional skills- like nurturing positive relationships, managing emotions, and setting goals. These skills will be beneficial not only during their elementary school years but as they become young adults and beyond.

We believe, through our model, we are providing an excellent foundation for all of our students, academically, behaviorally, and in social emotional skills, and this will lay the groundwork for them to be college and career ready.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Dennison Elementary School is an option school within the Jefferson County School District. Dennison routinely has a waitlist for all grade levels, even as overall enrollment in the district is decreasing. Once students enroll in the school, they rarely leave, so mobility is low. When asked why they want to come to Dennison, families frequently express their value of an academically rigorous education to provide a foundation for life opportunities, and desire for a school environment that supports safe, respectful, and responsible behavior. Not surprisingly, having supportive and involved parents and families is a key factor that contributes to the consistently high achievement at Dennison. Families volunteer their time and talents to help their children be successful by helping children with homework, volunteering in classrooms, raising funds, participating in PTA and the School Accountability Committee (an advisory committee to the Principal), and supporting before and after extra-curricular activities.

Student success at Dennison is described as a three-legged stool, with a foundation of students, staff, and families; all three legs must be present for the stool to stand. Just as our parents and families support our students, Dennison's administration and staff recognize the importance of supporting the parents and families. Communication between the school and parents is key and is accomplished through a variety of resources. Thursday folders with graded student work and progress reports are sent home weekly. Starting in third grade, students use planners to organize homework, which are sent home on a daily basis for parent review. In addition to academic information, teachers are proactive in communicating both positive feedback and concerns to parents via phone calls or emails. Report cards and mid-term reports are sent home each trimester and parent/student/teacher conferences are held at least twice per year. Additionally, IEP, and 504 reviews are conducted as needed, with ongoing communication to support students.

Like many public schools, fundraising is extremely important for Dennison and the parent community works hard to support the school financially. Under parent leadership, our PTA chapter plans and executes ongoing fundraising through a number of events which also serve to engage the Dennison Community. These events include a family fun event at a local recreation center each year, which is another opportunity to bring families together to build relationships and also earn money for the school, as well as an annual student fun run and an annual silent auction, which offers both student-created items and donations from families and community businesses.

We also have a strong partnership with Colorado Christian University. Each semester we host several practicum students and student teachers from their elementary education program. We believe in providing excellent mentors to these future educators.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Dennison fosters a school-wide tradition of high expectations and standards for behavior as well as academics. A structured atmosphere employing Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) guidelines is fostered and reinforced school-wide to provide a predictable, respectful, and kind environment. In this positive atmosphere, children thrive and have opportunities to feel successful and maximize learning. Our staff emphasizes building relationships with students as a foundation for all learning.

Over the last two years we have seen a dramatic effect on students' perseverance, emotional regulation, executive functioning, and problem solving ability. We know that the years of disrupted learning due to the pandemic impacted them in many ways. This year, in four monthly book studies, we read *High Expectations Teaching*, *Grit in the Classroom*, *Permission to Feel*, and *Better Learning Through Structured Teaching*. The conversations and learning that teachers shared with each were very powerful and increased teacher capacity across the school.

In addition to the book studies, we spent time focusing on reinforcing our teamwork and collaboration skills. We spent time reading articles, watching videos, and held discussions on "Better Conversation Beliefs," "Listening with Empathy," and "Finding Common Ground." This work has strengthened our teams, especially those with staff members who have been hired within the last few years.

Another focus for our professional development are our vertical team meetings. We believe in the power of both systemic and systematic practices and continue to prioritize our time together with the grade level above and below to ensure our practices and procedures are aligned and how we can better support students as they move through the grade levels.

All Dennison staff members are tenaciously dedicated and focused on providing students with life opportunities through success in academics. The same culture of kindness and respect is foundational and prevalent in all areas of school life. We recognize acts of kindness, giving back, responsibility, support of others, and achievement at each staff meeting with "Eagle" and "Star Jar" awards. We have a supportive parent community, who are engaged in their students' learning and, for the most part, demonstrate their value and support of school staff.

4. School Leadership:

The principal places high value in a shared leadership model. She works side by side monthly with the Building Leadership Team. The Leadership Team consists of a representative from each grade level, special education/intervention, Specials (digital teacher librarian), educational assistants, the business manager, the instructional coach, assistant principal, and principal. We have agreed to a decision making model to build structure, identify goals, and draft working agreements. Goals for the team and overall school goals are driven by student data--both achievement and behavioral based. Although the principal makes the final decision regarding budget and other fiscal concerns, dialogue is instrumental for sound decision-making in support of student achievement and welfare. Consensual decisions are then brought forward to the rest of staff for voting. Leadership Team representatives serve as leaders with their own grade level or department and also as liaisons for the Leadership Team as a whole and administration. The dedication and overarching

leadership they bring to the team is instrumental in achieving school goals. The Leadership Team has set a goal to get back to our in-building Instructional Rounds at the end of this year and beginning next year. This process halted due to the pandemic, but we believe that observing teachers in the grade level below and above help to strengthen our vertical alignment.

The administration at Dennison continues to strive toward creating a system of interdependence among the staff through building a structure of shared leadership, valuing teamwork, welcoming environment, kindness and respect of self and others, exemplary performance, and commitment to the integrity of the school's model. She monitors and supervises instructional practices, serves as a resource provider with respect to both materials and professional learning, is a visible presence in classrooms and community, supports families, is an instructional leader, and general manager for matters of business and all parts related to human resources and hiring.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Although the majority of students and families identify themselves as white/Caucasian, our entire enrollment population choice enrolls through random selection, so we are fortunate to have a diverse, culturally mixed student body. We take great pride in ensuring there are books in our library collection that represent all of the students in our school, including the many languages they speak. We have conversations about and celebrate all cultures and their traditions within our classrooms. When selecting new textbook resources, we assign a committee that takes great care in not only ensuring the resource aligns with standards and is engaging, but that it also represents the many faces we see in our classrooms. We prioritize Second Step lessons that encourage students to celebrate their differences and embody this as staff and student body. In addition, we have actively promoted and encouraged involvement in our volunteer organizations such as PTA and Accountability to make sure all voices are represented in decisions and discussions about the school.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Dennison's mission statement is, "to provide a rigorous academic education that prepares all students for a successful future," and the staff takes this very seriously. It is truly a concerted effort on the part of the staff to ensure textbooks and all other resources, instructional practices, assessment, intervention, and student support are specific, targeted, effective, and efficient. They are individually and collaboratively dedicated to ensuring students "do not fall through the cracks". They continually reflect and evaluate these components to maintain and grow opportunities for children through academic achievement.

We believe, and put into practice, that our systemic instruction and resources ensure all of our students have access to and master grade level standards. We believe that every single child who walks through our doors deserves the same education as the one he or she sits next to in his or her classroom.

The establishment of shared leadership was initiated as a tool to ensure staying true to the 49 years of the model and the tradition of excellence while aligning to CCSS. The unpinning belief was that goals are more effectively and comprehensively accomplished through a model of shared leadership. All aspects of student achievement, e.g., textbooks/resources, assessment, student engagement, student resiliency/growth mindset, and professional learning are addressed through the Leadership Team and then brought forward to the entire staff for approval and or refinement.

It is this common goal, or common belief that is truly our strategy for excellence. Every staff member in the building is focused on this same goal and puts his or her heart and soul into providing the absolute best education we can to every one of our students.