

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 Mr. Scott Schiller

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

Official School Name Southside Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 278 East Monroe Street

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Powell State WY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 82435-9998

County Park County

Telephone (307) 764-6183

Fax (307) 764-6153

Web site/URL <https://southside.pcsd1.org/>

E-mail srschiller@pcsd1.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Jay Curtis

E-

mail jrcurtis@pcsd1.org

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Park County School District # 1

Tel. (307) 764-6186

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Kim Dillivan

(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
2 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	47
1	54
2	52
3	46
4	48
5	40
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	287

*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
 - 1 % Asian
 - 0.5 % Black or African American
 - 14 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.5 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 79 % White
 - 5 % 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: 9%

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	18
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	27
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	287
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
12 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 48 %

Total number students who qualify: 138

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 26 %
Total number of students served 75

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>3</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>11</u> Developmental Delay	<u>24</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>22</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</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: 11

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.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	19
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 16:1

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	91%	95%	96%	95%	95%
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. 2014

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

Our MISSION is to prepare all students to be: Problem Solvers, Effective Communicators, Cooperative Participants, Responsible Citizens, Lifelong Learners, Future Seekers, and to Celebrate Success!

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

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3cVIGj3cwRqaTg4ZEZXM3BtbEE/view?resourcekey=0-jHWDFIyF0nuAbkJVJF314w>

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Southside Elementary School serves the community of Powell, Wyoming. Powell is about 75 miles from the east gate of Yellowstone National Park. Our district comprises three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The community of Powell is a multi-resource community consisting of farmers and ranchers, healthcare workers, oil and gas workers, service industry employees, and educators. The total population of Powell is around 6500 residents, and they are well-educated. In 2022, Powell High School boasted a graduation rate of 93.3%, one of the highest graduation rates in the state.

Education is essential to our Powell citizens, and their support for all of our schools proves that fact. This well-rounded population has high expectations of its schools. Our school board seeks the best facilities and expects our schools to recruit and retain the best educators. Park County School District #1 holds professional development for its educators as a high priority by creating a school calendar that allows for building-level and district-level professional development on a bimonthly basis. The administration and board have invested in the ideas of professional learning communities (PLCs) and have also created strategic goals around training our staff in these highly effective practices. This focus on PLC practices within the culture of our school has led our team to continually focus on four critical questions that guide their teaching practice.

“What do we want students to learn?”

This first critical question is the most important. Before our teachers can begin the vital work of helping students learn, they work through all grade-level standards to determine the essential standards that need to be mastered. They further dive into the learning targets and the level of rigor. They incorporate this work into developing their pacing and use of curricular resources. Lastly, they use common planning time to determine their key lessons, assessments, interventions, and enrichments.

“How do we know if they learned it?”

After grade level essentials are determined, teachers collaborate around common formative assessments. Much time is spent determining assessment items that match the rigor of the essential standard or learning. Teachers work through 10-15 day cycles of teaching and learning and strategically plan where they will administer common formative assessments to determine if the students are learning at high levels. Teacher collaboration around the analysis of the student results on common formative assessments determines what the grade-level team will do for the next two questions.

“What do we do if they do not learn it?”

The first and most important question to address after the common formative assessment is what we do if they have yet to learn it. Southside’s schedule has been built to integrate two critical intervention times. Each day, all grade levels begin with a 30-minute reading intervention. This intervention time is for all students and utilizes nearly every available adult in the building resulting in about 40 instructional groups for our population of about 300 students. If the need is more intensive, the number of students within the group will be smaller to allow for more one-on-one instruction. Each intensive group is matched with research-based curricular resources or interventions to fit the instructional needs of the students. This reading intervention time is held sacred and is rarely interrupted.

Each grade level has an additional 30 minutes for math intervention. It is not held simultaneously for all grade levels but is scheduled during six consecutive 30-minute periods. This schedule allows us to use our paraeducators and Title I team to push into each of these intervention times. It also allows six to eleven staff working with about 50 students.

“What do we do when they already know it?”

Finally, we address this question within our systems for intervention and enrichment, including our common

assessments. With the common assessments, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate that their knowledge is at a “4” by attempting a problem, or set of problems that the teacher team has carefully determined meets the rigor and complexity of an advanced understanding of the concept or skill. Our intervention/enrichment blocks for reading and math include enrichment groups where students read advanced materials or work in higher-level programs. During math, advanced students are also grouped during I/E to expose them to more challenging math items or problem-solving. In some grade levels, students that have shown proficiency consistently are able to work on a project-based learning opportunity that includes integration of their previously mastered skills.

In 2014, our school was a blue-ribbon recipient. That award affirmed that what we are doing for our students is working, and since then, we have focused on what we can do to make learning for our students better. We maintain our efforts to ensure all staff members are trained in Professional Learning Communities. We are also intentional about collaborating meetings that keep the focus on student learning, and we always keep the above-mentioned four essential questions as our guiding principles for professional collaboration around student learning.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The foundation of our Reading and Language Arts curriculum is encouraging a love of reading among our students. We encourage students to be lifelong learners and effective communicators, and our implementation of reading and writing builds upon that mission. At Southside, we incorporate a balanced literacy curriculum. Suppose you observe a classroom during reading instruction. In that case, you can expect to see a variety of activities centered around literature, including but not limited to guided reading, independent reading, guided writing, independent writing, classroom discussions, strategy practice, student-led observations, and interactive reading. We incorporate both Fountas and Pinnell and Foundations curricular supports. Both research-based curriculums offer supplementary interventions to further instruction and target specific skills for all learners.

School-wide reading groups is a thirty-minute block designed to allow all students to be in an intervention or enrichment group to fit their literacy needs. School-wide reading groups are the first of many small group settings where students will find themselves throughout the day. This thirty-minute block allows all grade-level teachers, paraprofessionals, Title 1 educators, Special Education teachers, and elective/specials teachers to instruct a small group of students five times a week. This time is sacred to our school, and students quickly familiarize themselves with the routine. This allows for 120-150 minutes per week of targeted instruction to further literacy skills for each student. Educators meet every week to discuss the progress of their group.

As stated, school-wide reading groups are not the only small groups students will find themselves in during their grade level's literacy block. By incorporating a balanced literacy approach, teachers also can provide a guided reading time within their classroom that allows students to be placed into small groups (to practice reading at their current level) within their classroom. At this time, grade-level teams are formed and work together to provide another opportunity for tailored instruction. While these interventions offer more flexibility than our school-wide reading groups, they are still highly effective in supporting student growth. If students are not meeting with a small group, they are working toward strengthening their literacy skills independently. This can be practiced with the use of 1-1 technology. We utilize Lexia, IXL, ReadWorks, Epic!, and NewsELA to allow students to work independently, targeting comprehension, phonemic awareness, and reading accuracy skills.

Students' progress is monitored frequently (bi-weekly to monthly) through formative assessments, including running records, Lexia performances/data, and unit checkups within the curricular resources. We also provide a school-wide summative assessment three times per year from Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems. This data is interpreted to allow educators to place students in specific groups based on a student's needs.

Finally, we encourage students to seek literature beyond their classroom walls. Southside participates in celebrations centered around reading, including Summer Reading Challenge, Southside Read-A-Thon, Indian Paintbrush Reading Challenge, and celebratory reading days. Our community also embraces our mission to encourage a love of reading among our students. We are fortunate to have many local organizations donate their time, efforts, and resources to put books into the hands of students.

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

Our mission statement states that we strive to prepare students to be lifelong learners, cooperative participants, and problem solvers. Our approach to mathematics instruction reflects this mission. At Southside Elementary school, you can expect hands-on practice, strategic problem-solving, and various instructional practices to meet our students' needs. Collaboration is the pillar of our mathematics instruction. Over the past three years, we have collaborated district-wide to determine our essential standards and

common assessment items. Our essential standards stem from the Wyoming State Standards. Our school-wide grade levels collaborate on a monthly to bi-monthly basis. In contrast, our grade-level teams collaborate weekly to interpret, determine, and discuss mathematics instruction and data collection. As a school, we incorporate Bridges Mathematics and iReady Mathematics curricular resources to guide our mathematics instruction. We are fortunate at Southside to have 1-1 technology. Educators will also integrate various mathematics applications such as Reflex and IXL Math. These tools can be differentiated to meet a student's needs and allow students to practice daily calculation drills and number fluency. Our educators value the guidance from both curricular resources; however, our educator's input is also valued at Southside Elementary school. We recognize that there are various strategies, resources, and techniques to fit a student's individual instructional needs.

At Southside, data is an actionable tool to deliver tailored instruction to each student. Grade-level teams meet weekly to interpret data and place students in intervention and enrichment cycles based on their instructional needs. Currently, formative assessments are given at the beginning of each cycle to determine a student's placement. Through collaboration, students are placed into groups with educators who will intervene or enrich concepts dependent on the needs of the group. Our teachers are thoughtful and decisive when placing students in an intervention or enrichment group. Once a cycle has begun, you can expect to see students working in small groups to conceptualize understanding through the use of manipulatives, various strategies, and real-world applications of the concept. We believe in an 'all hands on deck' approach during our intervention and enrichment cycles. We utilize all available personnel to create a more significant number of groups to tailor instruction. Currently, Title 1 paraprofessionals, grade-level paraprofessionals, special education teachers and paraprofessionals, and grade-level teachers will instruct small groups. All team members are updated weekly on each group's progress through our PLC. Cycles will last 10-14 days, dependent on the skill. At Southside, we recognize that more time may be allotted if needed, and enrichment and intervention teams will work to ensure all students are learning. A summative assessment is given at the end of each cycle. The data collected from the summative assessment is then interpreted. As previously stated, we believe in the '4 essential questions' approach and will begin to determine how to move forward if a student has not learned yet. Often, teachers ensure that these students receive more targeted instruction in small groups within the classroom and will continue to develop the skill they are struggling with. At Southside, we believe 'all means all' and strive to ensure maximum proficiency in all essential standards.

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

Our science curriculum concentrates on concepts and processes with an inquiry-based approach. The scientific process is stressed as a basis for all science instruction. The history and nature of science are also emphasized. Next Generation Science Standards are broken into the major categories of earth and space, physical, life science, and engineering. Our grade-level teams have worked with other teams across the district to develop a scope and sequence of units of study and common assessments supported by two online curricular resources: Mystery Science and Generation Genius.

Our teacher teams take an integrated approach to teaching science, integrating science with reading, writing, and math. Some grade-level teams support science instruction with scheduled time for stand-alone projects or activities. In contrast, other grade-level teams work these projects or activities into their core subject times during the week. It is not uncommon to walk down the hallway and see students constructing science activities, models, graphs, etc. Students are encouraged to hypothesize, test their hypotheses, and explain or write about their conclusions based on these tests.

We invite guest speakers to come into our classrooms to work with our students on science and engineering projects. Our 3rd grade and a statewide civil engineering group meet yearly and design bridges and ramps along with the vehicles to study aerodynamics, friction, motion, and momentum. Another engaging activity is the annual dissection of an eyeball in 4th grade. Our 4th-grade teachers work with local hunters, meat processors, and livestock owners to collect eyeballs, and this dissection culminates their study of the human eye, sight, and anatomy. Fourth-grade students also design, construct and test parachutes and design vehicles made of recycled materials.

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

At Southside, we promote good citizenship, accountability, and patriotism at all levels. The focus of Social Studies expands as the grades progress – beginning with self, classroom, and school. From there, we move to community, state, national, and global awareness. Classroom teachers creatively integrate this learning with other curriculum areas, often applying an integrated literary approach using fiction and non-fiction texts to meet the ELA and Social Studies standards. We believe using creative and authentic assessment is engaging and fun for our students and encourages a lifelong passion and interest in all areas of social studies.

Across our upper-grade levels, we provide unique opportunities for students to highlight their learning. At the end of the year, one grade participates in a Living History Day, where students select a historical figure to research, including dressing up as that historical figure and presenting an oral autobiography to a live audience. Another unit of study about the Plains Indians includes a Native American scavenger hunt and a Winter Count Map made by the students. Other students participate in a mountain man rendezvous, pioneer day, and Wyoming Day as culminating activities for the different units throughout the year.

In the primary grade levels, social studies lessons are given through rotations. Each teacher is responsible for teaching social studies for one trimester. This allows the teacher the opportunity to teach all students in one grade level, encompassing the attitude that it is our kids, not my kids. One unit the primary grades incorporate is making global connections and learning about cultural diversity among ourselves, communities, and globally. Our younger students also take field trips throughout the community, including City Hall, the Police Department, and the Fire Department. Southside has also partnered with Northwest College International Student programs and invited students from various countries to the classroom for a brief presentation, teaching students about their home country's culture. This allows students to learn about the world around them and celebrate diversity globally.

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)

Fine arts instruction includes music and art. We are incredibly fortunate to have our own music teacher specific to our school. Our music teacher collaborates weekly with the other district elementary music teachers to ensure a dynamic and comprehensive music program for our K-5 students. At Southside, each grade-level class meets 60 minutes per week for instruction in music concepts that students perform both vocally and instrumentally. Southside collaborates and contributes to school and district music events such as the annual Christmas Concert, Grandparents' Day program, and Kindergarten Circus. For many years our students have hosted and participated in a regional festival for music at the elementary level. This valuable festival allows students to perform and grow as musicians with students from other schools and districts. Furthermore, we offer 5th Grade Kids Chorus, an after-school elective music opportunity. This group performs for sporting events, senior citizen centers, special school events, and our annual Christmas concert.

Art instruction is delivered by each classroom teacher based on the Fine/Performing Art Standards. Our classroom teachers and paraeducators are very talented in this area and work with our students to make creative art pieces. The artwork is so innovative that you would assume that we have an actual art teacher. There are always examples in our hallways of our students' creativity and talent, and many pieces are integrated with other subject areas such as Social Studies, Math, or ELA.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The physical education curriculum consists of the following strands: movement, fitness, and personal behavior. Sportsmanship and safety are promoted and fostered through the P.E. curriculum. All students attend P.E. classes twice weekly for 60 minutes of physical education instruction. Our PE teacher collaborates weekly with the other elementary PE teachers to ensure the scope and sequence of learning objectives, common formative assessments, and equity amongst students in our district.

Through our PE program, students can access exciting multi-standard, integrated school-wide fitness activities such as our school marathon and color run, the annual turkey trot, and schoolwide incentivized jump rope competitions. Students thoroughly enjoy PE because of the positive energy, safe environment, and wide variety of activities offered to meet our high expectations and their diverse interests, needs, and abilities. Our program emphasizes learning skills through traditional sports games and extraordinary units in dance, team building, badminton, and rugby. One of the most popular units is the Rockwall Unit, purchased by our parent support group several years ago. Students are challenged to navigate and complete the many obstacle course variations climbing laterally, and by the end of the unit, many, if not all, of our students reach their goal!

Our PE program promotes self-management of health, disease prevention, and self-awareness through our curriculum. A significant emphasis is placed on developing goal-setting and decision-making skills. These concepts are integrated into the PE environment as results of a healthy, active lifestyle. Our snowshoeing in the mountains is an excellent example of this. Students are encouraged to set goals, plan proper hydration and nutrition and understand the importance of layering clothing in unpredictable weather.

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

Foreign Language Standards are set for grades K-5 by the Wyoming Department of Education. Opportunities for integration of Foreign Language in all units of study have been embedded across the subject areas supported by standalone resources such as online programs and videos. Students also learn about foreign cultures and language within our reading program in a class read aloud or shared reading.

2d. Technology/library/media

At Southside, we are Future Seekers! This attribute aims to use technology/library/media to its fullest potential. Technology is used across all areas of study to introduce new concepts, reinforce skills, synthesize prior learning, and prepare students for the acquisition of 21st Century Skills.

Technology/library/media instruction is divided into two courses - Library and Computers. Primary-grade students receive 30 minutes of instruction twice weekly. Intermediate students receive 60 minutes of instruction twice per week. Each classroom and lab is equipped with a variety of technological devices.

With the newly introduced 2022-23 Computer Science Standards for elementary school students, work began in 2020-21 to review and align these standards from Kindergarten through 5th grade. Our librarian and computer tech paraeducator led the technology committee and collaborated with grade-level teams to determine the scope and sequence of instruction and assessment.

It is a priority to provide our teachers with equipment and materials that are highly engaging, such as Lego Mindstorm, Botleys, Spikes, etc. Students utilize this innovative equipment in classrooms, the computer lab, and in our already-established after-school robotics club. This curriculum of coding and problem-solving is engaging for our students and a critical building block for their future in a technology-rich and ever-evolving world.

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

At Southside Elementary, staff has been trained in the Quantum Learning System. This research-based educational methodology increases teacher effectiveness and improves students' performance through four

core components. The four components are Foundation - creating an aligned community of learners; Atmosphere - creating a positive and respectful emotional climate where students feel safe to take cognitive risks; Environment - creating a physical space that supports the classroom culture and enhances learning; and Design & Delivery - creating and facilitating meaningful learning.

Within this program are the 8 Keys of Excellence: Integrity, Failure Leads to Success, Speak with Good Purpose, This Is It!, Commitment, Ownership, Flexibility, and Balance. These keys act as guiding principles to build positive character qualities for staff and students and a positive school culture. Each month a theme is chosen for our staff and students to focus on. Direct instruction and experiential learning opportunities are used in what we affectionately call our “Buddy Program” to teach the skills and mindset of our monthly character trait. The “Buddy Program” consists of monthly meetings with combined classes, which allow our older students to mentor and model the values and culture of our school to the younger students. This program enables teachers to collaborate and enhance our collective efficacy. To strengthen the effects of this program, we include the character traits in our daily announcements, weekly awards are given to students who demonstrate the character traits, and during our monthly assembly we recognize a student from each class that exhibits these qualities.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Part of our Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model is addressing the question of ‘what do we do if they have not learned it yet?’. At Southside, we believe in a team approach to interpreting data and taking action to support a student’s learning needs. First, if students are not meeting a particular standard or academic skill, they will be placed into intervention during our school-wide reading groups and/or grade-level math intervention groups. Students’ progress will be monitored closely, and an assessment will be given on a bi-weekly basis. Students’ growth is then discussed amongst team members during our weekly PLC meeting. With this approach, we believe that students are OUR kids, not ‘my’ or ‘your’ kids. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators brainstorm to collectively strategize the best next steps and strategies for that student. Progress of interventions is tracked on a six-week basis. If, after six weeks, a student has not learned, they may be placed on a B.I.T. (Building Intervention Team), where the grade level team and parents can monitor current and past interventions, collect data, and discuss the student’s learning needs/progress more frequently.

Each grade level has two 30-minute intervention times daily for mathematics and reading at least three days per week, if not more. Students performing below grade level are placed in a small group intervention utilizing a research-based curriculum resource to guide their intervention. Some intervention resources we utilize for English Language Arts (ELA) include Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) and Explode the Code. For mathematics, we offer iReady Math interventions and Bridges interventions. We are also in the third year of providing a Reading Recovery program for students. Within this program, students meet for 1 hour per day in both a small group and 1-1 setting to intervene in decoding skills, phonemic awareness, and comprehension skills.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

The fourth and final PLC question aimed to drive conversation, collaboration, and instruction is: “How can we extend and enrich the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?” The first three PLC questions alone can draw much of any team’s focus, but Southside strives to make it a goal for students to attain and learn above their current grade level.

One such catalyst for higher-level learning is Southside’s use of Project Based Learning (PBL) throughout all subject areas. This looks different from grade to grade, but one example of effective PBL is our fourth and fifth grade’s approach to addressing and assessing geometry standards. Both grades have researched and developed innovative pedagogical approaches to transcend traditional area and volume and have now provided their students meaningful opportunities by having them work in groups to organize, plan, and create their own cities. Not only does this extend the grade level standards, but it also allows students to

actively participate and engage with their peers authentically and purposefully. Similarly, second-grade students create a business plan complete with inventory and budget to further learning in operations and algebraic thinking.

Another example is our schoolwide reading enrichment. During our morning reading groups, students are placed in enrichment groups where they complete novel studies, tackle research questions exploring nonfiction text, perform plays based on books, and participate in literature circles/book clubs.

Creating experiences for those who score advanced on assessments is a goal for all students, but for them to be advanced, opportunities and the criteria for determining if they are advanced must be in place. Our PLC teams work collaboratively in writing questions that vary in Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels by inviting students to organize, synthesize and analyze their thinking at levels beyond their grade level standards and requirements.

At Southside, regardless of a student's level of learning, one thing remains the same; we foster an environment that encourages student growth either at grade-level expectations or beyond.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Our goal at Southside is to meet the educational needs of ALL students. During grade-level collaboration meetings, we carefully monitor all students' progress, especially those struggling with grade-level essentials. We monitor student progress during core instruction, assessment, and within intervention groups. One meeting per month is used as a Building Intervention Team Meeting to consider the progress of at-risk students. Over time, we meet with parents and identify students we suspect may have learning disabilities. This identification may result in a 504 plan or Individual Education Plan (IEP). For a 504 plan, we meet with the parents and carefully consider and formalize strategies and accommodations that "level the playing field" for the students and allow them to access the general education curriculum more easily. Students on an IEP may require more specially designed instruction determined by their annual goals and objectives. IEP student's service time may include a mixture of inclusion or push-in support within the regular education classroom or 1-1 or small group instruction within the resource room.

To close the gap between IEP and regular education students, our staff utilizes collaboration meetings where core instruction, essential standards, and common formative assessments are designed and analyzed. Additionally, these collaboration meetings are when intervention/enrichment groups are determined with the support of our Special Education Staff. Active participation at grade-level collaboration meetings allows our Special Education staff to design the proper scaffolding of instruction, modification of assignments, assessments, and proper delivery of accommodations to help close this achievement gap.

Unique to Southside Elementary School is our weekly collaboration meeting of all building Special Education teachers, Speech-Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, administration, and district personnel. This group meets with the goal of increasing student achievement for students with disabilities. Agenda items include student achievement and effective strategies or accommodations for student learning. Another significant benefit of this collaboration is the opportunity to troubleshoot specific student needs with many team members, often resulting in effective solutions that can be efficiently implemented.

3d. English Language Learners:

Our English Language (EL) instructor/director and para-professional collaborate with classroom teachers to address the needs of our EL students. The EL director/instructor, para-educator, and classroom teachers collaborate around the students' Individual English Learning Plan (IELP), which is designed to help students advance in the four domains (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) as measured by the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) test and other assessments throughout the year. EL support consists of 30 minutes of English Language Acquisition Intervention Class (pull-out) 4 times per week and 30 minutes of in-class support during English language arts (ELA) 4 times per week. This model is developed based on the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment model NBRS 2023

(WIDA) for English Language development standards.

At Southside, our EL support begins with Schoolwide Reading Groups for the first 30 minutes each day, five days per week. The EL instructor or Para-professional use the intervention time to work closely with the EL student to address their reading and WIDA standards and fulfill a portion of their required pull-out time prescribed in their IELP. While the (ACCESS) for English Language Learners drives the EL Students' IELPs, all students at Southside are also assessed three times per year in reading using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), DIBELS (grades K-3) and formative classroom assessments(CFA). The BAS, DIBELS, and CFA determine their reading level and instructional needs, which then determine their intervention/enrichment (I/E) reading group for School-Wide Reading Groups.

The most essential strategy our EL personnel bring to the table is relationship-building with the EL students and their families. In all school matters, our EL staff stand ready to help our teachers and administration communicate with students and their families, including parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, newsletters, and other document translations. This relationship building has also been reciprocated by the EL families reaching out to our EL personnel to communicate with teachers or administration.

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

The district Life Skills program is a full-time, active part of our school. Life Skills students are those on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with multiple disabilities, including medically fragile students. Many of our Life Skills students use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems to communicate. Students in this program are each unique in their own way and thrive on schedules, structure, and hands-on strategies for learning. The goal for our students in this program is as much independence and inclusion as possible, but much of their day requires para educator support. A typical day for students in Life Skills includes morning meetings, social skills, movement breaks, academics, inclusion, adaptive PE, music, computers, library, recess, structured play, and group time. Students also engage in age-appropriate pre-vocational skills such as self-help and jobs within the school.

Life Skills students also enjoy some time with reverse inclusion, where regular education students join them in Life Skills and participate in activities. This strategy is growing in frequency, duration, and popularity! Our students are starting to increase their awareness of the community by taking field trips where they can practice sitting for a meal, purchasing items at a store, enjoying a museum visit, etc. These field trips often include parents as chaperones. Parents are able to observe and then practice strategies they can use at home. Besides meeting multiple educational standards, these field trips serve to increase students' stamina for typical family recreational and functional outings. In addition, many of our Life Skills students are invited by the adaptive PE teacher to take part in downhill skiing beginning in the intermediate grades and by the end of the unit, they can successfully ski downhill with minimal assistance!

Our Life Skills class is an exceptional program, and one of the most rewarding for our students and staff. The learning, achievement of goals, inclusion, and pure joy that come with this program are extraordinarily special for our Life Skills students, staff, and the Southside community.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Our mission is to prepare all students to be: problem solvers, effective communicators, cooperative participants, responsible citizens, and lifelong learners. A safe and positive school culture is essential to this mission and learning at Southside Elementary. Building positive relationships with students is foundational to create a positive learning culture. Southside uses a variety of strategies to engage students in academic, social, and emotional growth.

Every morning at Southside begins with a student-led announcement, which serves as a welcoming greeting and provides reminders of what we can do at our school to demonstrate our values and mission. Each announcement reminds students of our focus for the month from our “8 Keys of Excellence” and ideas on how to demonstrate that key throughout the school day. Our morning announcement gives us the opportunity to start our day on a positive note by celebrating student and staff birthdays and celebrating the successes of our students.

We use a PBIS (Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions) Model throughout our school to focus on and encourage positive behavior. This model focuses on being safe, respectful, and responsible across all school settings. Students are acknowledged for positive behaviors by receiving a ticket, which they can enter into a weekly drawing for student of the week. Winners of the drawing have their pictures on display in the hallway for all to see. Southside also engages students with celebrations with the principal for those students who demonstrate our key of excellence and get to have “Popcorn with the Principal” and “Donuts for Ownership with the Principal.” Southside engages students with monthly assemblies to celebrate academic growth, character strengths, and student successes.

Our school counselor implements a comprehensive school counseling program with tiered systems of support that focuses on social-emotional learning and college and career readiness, according to the national school counseling standards from the American School Counselor Association. The school counselor implemented a check-in/check-out system for at-risk students by connecting students with adults in the building daily. During weekly counseling lessons, students are engaged in lessons about social skills, self-regulation, and preparing for their futures through college and career exploration.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Southside embraces many strategies to engage families and the Powell community. Our strategies' core is strong communication, volunteer opportunities, collaboration with our community, and celebrating student success.

With the advent of modern technology, our communication efforts have grown to include a school Facebook page and voice, text, and email communication. We continue to communicate with parents through bi-yearly parent/teacher conferences, monthly school-wide online newsletters, weekly classroom newsletters, and the beginning of the year open house for all students and parents to attend.

Many volunteers spend time in our classrooms, on field trips, with fundraisers, movie nights, health screenings, picture day, and holiday parties, to name a few. The Southside Community Organization (SCO) is Southside’s parent/teacher group that organizes many of these volunteer efforts. For the last five years, we have also accessed the grandparent volunteer program provided through state and federal grants allowing a grandparent(s) to volunteer and be paid a small stipend.

Because Southside is a Title I School, Title I Family Nights are held twice yearly, promoting reading and math. These family nights offer activities, strategies, and incentives that encourage families to spend time together and connect reading and math to real-world experiences and a successful school experience. We have an after-school club that parents and teachers can refer students to for extra (I would change homework to skill practice) homework and academic (maybe remove skill) skill development.

Southside achieves the parenting connection by offering Love and Logic classes, a six-week course twice yearly for adults interested in parenting strategies, promoting positive relations between parent and child. Our staff is active in book studies and professional development, such as Ruby Payne, which aid in understanding situational experiences at home in order to provide instruction suited to meet students' individual needs.

Decision-making includes our Student Leadership Team (SLT), composed of students representing grades 3-5 who weigh in on various decisions that affect the school's involvement in community activities, such as Christmas cards for troops, a food bank drive, and a local animal shelter fund/food raiser. Our parent group, the Southside Community Organization (SCO), collaborates about school fundraising and proper utilization of the funds both internally (funding classroom needs) and externally (funding student involvement within the community). The administration/faculty/staff fulfill the decisions made by the SLT and SCO.

Southside collaborates with community organizations to coordinate resources for students and families. These include the Backpack Blessings program, sponsored by the local ministerial association, and crisis intervention needs like food banks, medical/vision/dental, etc. We utilize community resources (guest speakers, local museums, etc.). We host Northwest College practicum students, Powell High School work/study students, and student teachers from various colleges, including the University of Wyoming.

Celebrating student success is extremely important to our Southside Community and a big part of our mission. Each month we invite families to join our celebration of student achievement. This red-carpet event recognizes approximately 10-15% of our students monthly with music, dancing, pictures, medals, certificates, and lots of applause. Each Friday morning, students are drawn to receive special incentives for positive behavior through our PBIS program.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Our school improvement plan and professional development (PD) model partners with the board of trustees' strategic plan, goals, and objectives. Our improvement plan addresses the core Math and English Language Arts (ELA) areas. One more area of emphasis is sustaining the development of our Professional Learning Communities (PLC) culture.

Learning for all guides our approach to professional development. Our schedule includes a daily common planning time for each grade level team. Each team meets at least once per week to collaborate on the four questions of a PLC. These questions guide our collaboration meetings and lead us to develop a systemic instruction approach, including intervention and enrichment. Another benefit of our collaboration meetings is embedded opportunities for professional development. Teams will share successful strategies, professional book studies, and examples of student work, and they are constantly looking for new ways to improve student learning.

Our teachers have collectively stated one of the best things about our school is how we utilize the talents of our paraeducators to enhance our students' educational experiences at school. Each team meeting includes all staff that work with students at that grade level. Including all staff in our collaborative teams helps our teachers and paraeducators feel valued and supported.

Our teachers also participate in district PD focusing on the four questions. This collaboration often includes discussion and analysis on question one: "What do we want students to learn?" and question two: "How do we know if they learned it?" Teachers at the district level also share in district-wide PD several times per year. Our teachers comment that some of the best PD is what is working collaboratively with other teachers across the district.

Our school sends teachers to regional and national events focusing on PLC Culture and effective practices. Our teachers are encouraged to attend state, regional, and national professional development opportunities. In recent years, we have also provided intensive training at national events for Reading Recovery and early NBRS 2023

literacy practices with the goal of our attendees providing PD at the district and building level for all of our reading teachers.

Our teachers receive many benefits from professional development, but our students receive the most significant benefit because we are increasing our teacher efficacy in student learning and systems of intervention and enrichment. Our emphasis on growing teacher capacity through quality training opportunities bolsters our ability to maintain a laser focus on student learning. If posed with the question, “Can we afford to offer our teachers the best PD available?” Our answer would be, “For the sake of student learning, could we afford not to?”

4. School Leadership:

Southside’s stakeholders understand and promote that leadership with no goal or purpose creates spectatorship. This is evident from our students' active role in daily activities to the firmly-established philosophies of each staff member.

There is one principal at Southside Elementary School, but many leaders of learning. Through the Professional Learning process, the goal of our principal is to provide structures that allow for high levels of collaboration and professional learning. The Principal’s role is supported by an Instructional Facilitator who provides instructional coaching and feedback. Each grade level team leads their grade level collaboration meetings. These grade level teams include paraprofessionals, special education teachers, Title I Staff including our Reading Recovery Teacher, Instructional Facilitator, School Counselor, and Principal. Leadership is encouraged with students through the Student Leadership Team, which helps organize school wide initiatives and celebrations.

Creating opportunities for students to demonstrate their leadership qualities is paramount to improving our school culture and cultivating traits that will serve them well throughout their lives. Southside students, ranging from third to fifth grade, apply each year to be a part of the Student Leadership Team for an opportunity to serve their peers in many ways. This team organizes community and school events such as food drives, award ceremonies, and family nights centered around educational topics.

Growing our students and encouraging them to become leaders is a charge the Powell community takes collective ownership of. Our school and its stakeholders recognize authentic leadership as servitude. During school breakfast, it is common to see our district superintendent or local police serving our students breakfast. Other classrooms open their doors to students for after-school clubs promoting and fostering their interests. Staff uses their own strengths and passions for education to serve our students’ interests and needs.

Traditionally, principals and instructional facilitators aid in implementing schoolwide professional development. However, Southside believes our greatest knowledge base is collective rather than individual. Each of us draws from one another’s strengths to better educate ourselves and, in turn, our students. Staff members attend training and professional development offered around the state and country so that we bring the learning to our school and educate each other. Many of our common practices and commitments have come from passionate colleagues.

Students and staff at Southside adopted ideas and principles from Bobbi DePorter’s book “The 8 Keys of Excellence.” Each month, we spotlight a trait, and students earn tickets by exemplifying the habit highlighted. Commitment and ownership were two particularly valuable keys of excellence that proved beneficial for students to demonstrate their leadership skills—both of these months yielded high levels of buy-in among our students by providing ample opportunities to encourage each other to take pride in themselves, each other, and in their school. Students continue to lead by example and champion each other to take positive action and own their choices with a common goal of making our school a better place.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Respect and community are core values for all students and staff at Southside. Southside Elementary uses a systemic approach to support our students' diverse needs, experiences, and backgrounds. We instill

culturally responsive teaching and learning values into our school community through relationship building, social-emotional learning, character education, professional development, and resources for students and families.

Our social-emotional curriculum comes from Second Step and focuses on skills for learning, empathy, bullying prevention, self-regulation, emotion management, and problem-solving. These lessons are led by the school counselor on a biweekly schedule in all classrooms. The school counselor utilizes this skills-based curriculum to help foster students' social and emotional growth and supports academic development for all students. Our character education focuses on the "8 Keys of Excellence," which include: Integrity, Failure Leads to Success, Speak with Good Purpose, This Is It!, Commitment, Ownership, Flexibility, and Balance. These character trait lessons are built into our Buddy Program through monthly meetings with combined classes. This program creates a sense of community and belonging for all students. It also allows our older students to act as mentors to our younger students and our staff to collaborate and work together to promote our school values.

Southside has invested in professional development in the area of trauma-informed practices and behavior support in schools. We explicitly teach our behavior and social expectations across all school settings. When students struggle to meet these expectations, we use a tiered system of support to help students become successful and confident in these areas. Southside Elementary staff has participated in several professional development opportunities to address the needs of our students and families, including trauma-informed schools. The team has been trained to focus on building trusting relationships with students, recognize trauma responses, and contextualize behavior as a form of communication and an opportunity for teaching skills rather than a punishment. Some of these trainings have allowed us opportunities for community forums and a chance to share resources within our Powell community. Our school district has a school-based mental health program to help meet the needs of our students and families.

Diversity comes in all forms in our school community, but our most prevalent variety is centered around socioeconomic needs. Currently, our school is at a 48% free and reduced lunch count. Our school district collaborates with many different local resources to meet the needs of our students and families. To help ensure that student and family needs are being met, we provide all students with a fresh fruit and vegetable snack each day. Southside Elementary also facilitates a weekend food bag with easy-to-make meals at home. This program currently serves about 60 students. We also ensure that students have access to formal clothing for music concerts and performances by providing dresses, dress shirts, and dress pants to those that need them.

At Southside Elementary, we provide experiential learning opportunities that many students may not experience otherwise. This includes overnight camping trips to Yellowstone National Park, snowshoeing excursions, and visits to the Buffalo Bill Museum.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

A Professional Learning Community (PLC) is “An ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators.” – AllThingsPLC.com

At Southside Elementary School, working collaboratively as a PLC is the most instrumental practice to our school’s success. The PLC model guides everything we do at Southside Elementary, from establishing our values, mission, and vision to how we operate on a daily basis. The culture of collaboration is so strong at Southside that we can say every adult in our building is part of a collaborative team.

Since the early 2000s, Southside Elementary has continuously developed and refined our PLC culture. Through the PLC lens, we focus on student learning and experiences. We have protected time to collaborate and build teacher efficacy through working groups, strategy sharing, and staff-led professional development. We reflect on our teaching practices through collective inquiry and student results. The four essential questions set a structure for us to be action-oriented, strive for continuous improvement, and be results driven. We use this data to guide our instruction, intervention, and enrichment. The PLC model and components guide us to best meet the needs of all students.

The PLC framework and mindset are what make Southside Elementary successful. Our PLC culture of collaboration is the steady foundation that has supported us through the adversity and hardship of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. It has guided us to adapt and support our Southside community while still having high learning expectations. There will always be challenges to face in the world of education. Still, the PLC framework always brings the focus to what is best for students and how to support academic and social-emotional growth for all students.