

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**  
**A Public School - 13SD1**

School Type (Public Schools): Charter  Title 1  Magnet  Choice

Name of Principal: Dr. Joel Price Ed.D.

Official School Name: Faulkton Elementary School

School Mailing Address: PO Box 308  
1114 Court Street  
Faulkton, SD 57438-0308

County: Faulk State School Code Number\*: 24-4

Telephone: (605) 598-6266 E-mail: joel.price@k12.sd.us

Fax: (605) 598-6666 Web site/URL: http://www.faulkton elementary.k12.sd.us/

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*: Dr. Joel Price Superintendent e-mail: joel.price@k12.sd.us

District Name: Faulkton Area Schools District Phone: (605) 598-6266

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mrs. Heather Bode

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

*\*Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
1 Middle/Junior high schools  
1 High schools  
0 K-12 schools  
6 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 8268

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	6	9	15
K	12	10	22
1	12	13	25
2	3	6	9
3	7	13	20
4	9	11	20
5	8	8	16
6	7	9	16
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
<b>Total in Applying School:</b>			143

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
0 % Asian  
0 % Black or African American  
2 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
96 % White  
1 % Two or more races  
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting 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.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 3%

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

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	4
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	0
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	4
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	123
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.03
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	3

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 0

Number of non-English languages represented: 0

Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 25%

Total number of students who qualify: 31

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 14%

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 categories.

<u>1</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>10</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<u><b>Full-Time</b></u>	<u><b>Part-Time</b></u>
Administrator(s)	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>16</u>	<u>4</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

11:1

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

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	98%	98%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size:	<u>0</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>0%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>0%</u>
Military service	<u>0%</u>
Other	<u>0%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>0%</u></b>

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

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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The Faulkton Area School District believes in lifelong learning. The district has historically focused on core academics, fine arts, and co-curricular activities to ensure a well-rounded individual. The students of the district come to us from supportive families where education is a high priority. Our students arrive in our pre-K program ready to learn. Once they enter our lower elementary program our teachers do their very best to provide the learning environment where each child can reach their full potential in reading, math, science, social studies, and fine arts.

Individual learning styles are accommodated through the modeling of our mission statement by our teaching staff. The administration of the school works very closely with the parents, teachers, and students to support them and provide the necessary materials and supplies so that all students are immersed in a learning environment where different learning styles are recognized and encouraged.

Traditionally the district maintains a greater than 96% daily attendance rate. This is matched by the nearly 100% attendance rate at our parent teacher conferences which are held bi-annually.

Milestones that have been celebrated by our school include reaching eighty consecutive years of membership in NCA/CASI. Students in the building also have scored 100% proficient or advanced in reading three out of the last five testing years on the South Dakota State level Dakota STEP Test. Two of our students have been honored by the Governor and the Secretary of Education for scoring perfect scores on state mandated Dakota STEP assessments in reading and mathematics.

The district is located in a predominately agricultural based series of small communities. The children of the district because of the rural nature of the communities, farms, and ranches where they live bring a strong work ethic to the classroom each day. Our location on the northern plains has a long and storied history of devastating droughts, dangerous blizzards, and destructive tornados which foster a spirit of independence and a can-do attitude regardless of the circumstances. The students that we serve are hard-working individuals who come to school willing and ready to learn the curriculum presented each day.

One of our greatest strengths is the technology that we have equipped each of our classrooms with allowing us the capability of presenting interactive lessons to all students each day. We have a Promethean Board in all of our elementary classrooms including our SPED room. We have a roaming lab of laptops that is available for teachers to check out for student use as needed. Our teachers have become experts at planning, building, and presenting interactive Promethean Board lessons. The teachers in our district have presented at summer in-service trainings across the state, at state technology conventions, and at professional development opportunities across our state.

The teachers and administrators in our district are working within a learning community. This learning community has the motto that “We are a learning community striving to foster positive growth and accountability.” Within our learning community concept we are engaged and focused on student achievement. We also have monthly staff meetings where we begin the discussion by asking the question “What have you done in your classroom in the past month to assist in improving your individual student’s reading and math abilities?” We have done book studies including the component of having a web-based ongoing discussion where colleagues have the opportunity to enter into an asynchronous discussion where they can pose ideas related to student achievement or pose questions for assistance with student learning concerns. At the present time, we have two teachers who have their master’s degree and five teachers who are working toward obtaining their master’s degree.

The Faulkton Elementary School is deserving of this award because we are a district where “No Child is Left Behind”! We foster an environment in which the needs of each individual student are at the center of

all decisions made. We teach to the needs of individual students each day in our classrooms and within this model students learn, thrive, grow, and are given the tools they need to succeed. We are able to offer individual student attention and to meet the needs of every child because we have tremendous support from our community and our local governing school board.

## **PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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### **1. Assessment Results:**

A. The performance levels as defined by the South Dakota Department of Education and used by the district for the Dakota STEP Test are Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced.

\*Below Basic ~ A student performing below the basic level is unable to perform the content standards for the grade, therefore, no description is provided for this performance level. This student is performing at an unsatisfactory level and is not able to perform basic grade level skills.

\*Basic ~ A student performing at the basic level performs below expectations for that grade level. The student is able to perform some of the content standards for the grade below the level of difficulty, complexity or fluency specified by the grade level standards.

\*Proficient ~ A student performing at the proficient level meets expectations for that grade level. The student is able to perform the content standards for the grade at the level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency specified by the standards.

\*Advanced ~ A student performing at the advanced level exceeds expectations for the grade level. The student is able to perform the content standards for the grade at a level of difficulty, complexity or fluency.

At Faulkton Elementary we are continuously striving to have all of our students achieve at the Proficient or Advanced levels on the Dakota STEP Test. We work with parents, teachers, and students to ensure that all grade level content standards are presented in all subject areas so that students will have the opportunity and skills necessary to perform at the Proficient and Advanced levels on the state wide Dakota STEP Assessment. Students rarely score in the Basic or Below Basic levels, but when they do, they are placed in our Title I Programs and given skill specific instruction in the critical area of need.

B. The data shows that results in reading and math for the Dakota STEP assessment for students in grades 3-6 for the time period of the spring of 2008 through the spring of 2012 exhibit mild variability in grades but also show growth over time for cohort groups of students when examined year to year. In mathematics the lowest number of students scoring proficient or advanced occurred in 4th grade in the 2010-11 testing year. The following year, in 5th grade, that same group of students scored 94 percent proficient or advanced.

One can only deduce so much from one set of scores and it would be presumptuous to suggest otherwise. What that variance may show, however, is the positive use that the 5th grade teacher found in the data generated during that year's data retreat. The students obviously gained some additional mathematical technique and knowledge over the school term and their comprehension also improved. Previous to their low score year, as 3rd graders, the same basic cohort of students had scored 92 percent as proficient and advanced. The number that had scored advanced remained almost the same with 21 percent scoring advanced as 3rd graders and 19 percent scoring advanced the following year in 4th grade.

The 6th grade assessment results show the tightest grouping of scores with three years of students earning 100 percent proficient or advanced. The other two years show scores of 97 and 94 percent respectively. The one other variable during all of the testing years in the cohort was the change in mathematics series during the 2010-11 school terms. This may explain why certain class scores dipped during this time period. It may also show that, using the Saxon Math series spiral review process, students became more proficient on their basic math facts thus exhibiting higher percentages in proficient and advanced in succeeding years of testing.

In reading the overall scores they are not uniformly as high as in mathematics with two grades scoring 100 percent proficient advanced compared to four grades in mathematics. One trend that is evident is that cohorts of students do show growth over time based upon a 3 year evaluation of their results. This indicates that while their scores initially may not have been as high in the proficient or advanced column their overall scores did increase over time. This indicates that the teachers took the previous year's results, plugged that data into their curriculum, and provided the necessary improvements to enhance the student's reading skills.

The time period from 2009-10 in 3rd grade shows that 85 percent of the students scored proficient or advanced with only 14 percent scoring advanced. That same group scored slightly lower proficient and advanced the following year with a 75 percent score but the number of advanced students increased by 5 percent. In the last recorded testing cycle that same group scored 94 percent proficient or advanced and 67 percent scored advanced.

This time period also corresponds to the district's inclusion of the RtI program in grades K-3. The Response to Intervention program is especially successful for those students who may have areas of concern in their overall reading function. The DIBELS Next program is used to determine the level of success for each student and those who score below grade level are enrolled into the RtI program. The progress monitoring function of DIBELS Next allows classroom teachers and our RtI specialist to insure that the treatment that each student is being given is providing the necessary improvement in performance. The students in RtI are progress monitored every week and the data, tracked over time, provides a clear picture as to the growth or improvement in basic reading skills, phonemic awareness and sight words.

One other treatment that the district provided for all students was a move from a M-W-F Kindergarten program to a full-day M-F program beginning in the fall of 2011. While it is too early to show increases in Dakota STEP scores there is evidence in the DIBELS Next scores and reading abilities of the KG, 1st and 2nd grade students who were the first to be included in the new Kindergarten schedule.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

The district operates from the philosophical position that the connection between the teacher and the student is the most critical component of the assessment process. Decisions are made based upon a careful study of previous year's summative assessment results using the statewide mandated assessment given each spring. Yearly data retreats are held where each student's results are analyzed and a 3-year trend of testing data is projected for both the student and the class as a whole. This summative data forms the basis for individual student needs and is followed-up throughout the school year by the compilation of formative assessments in the core content areas. All of these assessments are based upon current content standards and in the future will be based upon the new Core Content Standards that are now being implemented in reading and mathematics.

District staff use the disaggregated data generated through the Dakota STEP assessment to examine where the strengths and areas of concern are both by standard and by the individual learning objectives linked to each standard. Once the teacher is in possession of the relevant data then a backwards design model is implemented to positively affect instruction. The backwards design model first identifies the desired outcomes and the results that are anticipated by the students. The next step is for the teacher to design the appropriate assessments to measure what the student knows and to what level of performance each student has reached in mastering the material. The final step is to plan the lessons and design the learning opportunities so that each student can reach the designated competencies.

The other component of data-driven decision making is the use of these data points to develop and promote the district's school improvement model using NCA/CASI as the means of accreditation. District staff plays a critical role in this process as the design of the learning objectives, the presentation of those objectives, and their ultimate success is something that the staff is directly responsible for and works

toward on a daily basis. In reality, the district's success can be directly attributed to the inclusion of these goals and their overarching instructional importance in each classroom.

The district's learning community process takes a central focus in these decisions and the discussions that center on student learning and success in the classroom form the focus of staff meetings, board of education discussions, and publications for parents and other district stakeholders. District assessment results are presented each fall to the board of education. These discussions center on current performance but also reflect on trends over the previous 1-3-5 years. The ability to track student performance over time allows for a more robust discussion and provides evidence of strengths and also areas of improvement.

These results are posted online through the district's website. The report of results is printed in our weekly newspaper. They are also posted at the attendance center, in our county library, and a copy is kept in the main office.

Informal meetings are also held regularly with parents who have students who receive Title 1 services. The results of their child's performance on standardized assessments are used as well as formative assessment results and current performance in the classroom. Again, the focus is on student achievement and the means by which the teacher and the parents can assist the child in improving their skills in reading, mathematics, or both subjects.

The most important utilization of student results is to narrow the focus of instruction so that each student's classroom instruction may be tailored to accentuate their areas of need, strengthen areas where they are already proficient, and accelerate learning for those content areas where their performance is advanced. Comprehensive use of assessment results provides the district's teaching staff and administrator the answers necessary to systematically improve instruction, strengthen curriculum, and enhance student learning throughout the learning experience.

### **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

Our elementary school teachers have displayed their knowledge, expertise, and experience in varied settings. In past years the Faulkton Elementary staff have conducted workshops in phonics, reading, math, science, and social studies using technology for teachers in our district, region, and across the state. They have presented at the annual statewide technology conference; the TIE Conference, at in-services for other districts, at our own in-services, and at summer professional development workshops. Our district staff has become very adept at using the tools of the Promethean Board and because of their expertise; districts throughout the state have brought their teachers into our building so that they too may become more proficient using technology as a teaching tool.

Our teachers also willingly serve as mentors for the new teachers in the district. Each year we are asked to work with education students from Northern State University and South Dakota State University and we willingly provide a classroom opportunity for their student teachers. We know that the best way to improve the practice of the next generation of public educators is to work closely with these university education departments to provide an environment where these new teachers can grow and practice their craft among a collegial and highly professional staff.

Our focus in staff development is predicated on the belief that the best way to improve practice and enhance the learning environment within our district is for our teachers to share their best practices with other staff. We have focused our efforts on improving instruction in English, reading, language arts, and mathematics through the inclusion of all staff during district-wide in-service programs. Sharing best practices in the classroom with other teachers enables the staff to gain knowledge and expertise from their peers. This facilitates a much clearer understanding of what works and also allows for further discussion as these best practices are tried in the classroom.

#### **4. Engaging Families and Communities:**

In the spring of each year we begin the process of hosting our annual pre-school screening to determine how many children in our district will be entering our Kindergarten classroom in the fall. We use this process to help us identify students who are in need of special services provided by our district, whether it is in the form of special education services through the South Dakota birth-to-three program, occupational, physical, and speech language services and others provided by the district. We advertise this pre-school screening/child find in our local newspaper and on our district web-site in an effort to determine the number of children we will be serving in our upcoming Kindergarten

In the fall of each school year district administrators and Title I teachers conduct a meeting to discuss Title I services provided by the district, with the parents who have a child in the Title I program. We also take this opportunity to invite all parents into the building to discuss concerns they have about the new school year and to discuss their child's educational program. This gives parents and teachers an opportunity to become acquainted with each other and better informed about the services the district provides. Following this initial meeting, the district holds two additional parent/teacher conferences where each teacher meets with the parents of their students to discuss the overall educational progress of their child. These conferences are held in the fall and in the spring and traditionally our elementary school achieves near 100% participation in both the fall and the spring.

Additionally, students in grades K-3 and their parents use the TIGER (Today I've Got Everything Ready) Notebook to communicate with their classroom teacher. At the beginning and the end of every day the student presents their TIGER Notebook to their teacher who then checks to make sure that any correspondence sent home the previous day has been received. At the end of every day, students are responsible for noting any assignments that are still due including any communication from the teacher or the main office that requires parental attention.

Finally, our teachers and administration communicate to our district parents through e-mail, the district web-site, and a program called SchoolReach which is an automated phone call that goes out to all parents alerting them of important events. Each week, the administration also writes a weekly article for the local paper addressing educational topics of interest, district events, and trends in education at the local, state, and national level.

# **PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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## **1. Curriculum:**

We currently follow the South Dakota State Content Standards in reading, English, language arts, math, science, social studies, technology, fine arts, and physical education. This allows our classroom teachers to work with the students in these critical content areas.

Currently, our district is transitioning into the Core Content Standards in English, language arts, and mathematics. The other Core Standards will be incorporated into our curriculum as they are introduced by the South Dakota Department of Education. One of the most critical components of the transition is the training that our teachers have undergone. This training provides the knowledge base necessary to determine what changes, if any, there are between our current standards and the new core standards. Our teachers have identified significant differences between the standards that they are currently using and the new Core. Noting these differences has helped them prepare for the transition and is also helping the students who are in some cases being required to learn content in a grade or curriculum area that previously may have been one or two grade levels above their current grade.

One of the tools that have been provided to our teachers in the areas of reading and mathematics are checklists for South Dakota Content Standards for every grade K-6. Each checklist has the following categories that teachers are encouraged to use to ensure that they are meeting each of the standards in those critical areas. The first column lists the indicator for each standard in sequential order. The second column lists the standard in narrative form for each indicator. The third column is used by the teacher to document the form of assessment used to measure the standard, and the final column is used by the teacher to note the date that the assessment was given to the students. The assessment given can be summative, formative, or both. This is due to the fact that some of the standards are of such a critical nature that it may require more than one assessment to ensure that the students have mastered that particular content area.

The district builds the framework for curriculum using the constructivist's model. The constructivist theory is predicted on the notion that real learning occurs when the student creates a scaffold of the new knowledge linking the new concept to previously understood material.

In reading, we address the South Dakota State Content Standards by teaching our youngest students the "Five Big Ideas of Reading". These ideas include alphabetic principal, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Any student who has difficulty mastering these reading skills is provided with intervention services.

In math, we address the South Dakota State Content Standards at each grade level by focusing on basic mathematical procedures in our instruction. Our curriculum also uses the concept of repetition of skills in order for students to master a skill at their own pace instead of on a given date and time.

In science, we address the South Dakota State Content Standards using a curriculum that focuses on a sequential, grade specific course of instruction. This program links previously taught scientific principals together to form an understandable body of knowledge about scientific concepts.

In social studies, we address the South Dakota State Content Standards with a curriculum that addresses social, economic, political, and geographic topics including the United States and the World. The physical education curriculum focuses on physical activity, health and wellness, healthy choices and nutrition, and builds a life-long interest in physical activity.

Our technology curriculum is a vital component of our instructional philosophy. The teachers use technology not only as a teaching tool, but also as a means of providing opportunities for learning using the wide array of software and hardware available to them on a daily basis.

## **2. Reading/English:**

The reading curriculum at Faulkton Elementary is an all-inclusive program which encompasses reading, spelling, phonics, and grammar in one series. The curriculum is based on the whole language idea of making cross curricular links within the entire language arts curriculum. The theme based stories in each unit have a specific reading skill that is presented weekly, along with a set of vocabulary words that go along with the spelling words and the phonics lesson presented. This type of reading curriculum has helped our elementary school as we begin the journey of meeting the Common Core Standards over the next couple of school years. The instructional methods used in our lower elementary classrooms, K-2, include whole group instruction using the Promethean Board to present the daily lesson in reading, phonics, grammar, and spelling. All students are also instructed in a small group setting based on their reading ability level. During small group instruction, skills that are difficult for students are presented and students read leveled reading books that are matched to each student's reading ability.

The school chose this whole language based all-inclusive language arts curriculum after much discussion, a long selection process, and after viewing many other curriculums that were being considered for purchase. It was chosen largely because of the many components located within the program. The series contains leveled assignments for "approaching" learners, "on-level" learners, and "beyond" level learners. It has weekly and unit assessments that cover a range of skills including comprehension, the weekly reading skill, vocabulary, grammar, and an essay component. The series has ELL activities and readers for students who are English Language Learners. At each grade level, the series also offers leveled readers for use in small group instruction. The leveled readers contain stories which are from the same genre as the main weekly selection. There are three levels of leveled readers to help meet the needs of various students with many reading levels.

All students are given a DIBELS Assessment three times yearly to determine their progress in reading using the five big ideas of reading; alphabetic principal, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Students who score below benchmark are placed into our RTI Reading program in grades K-3. These students are given small group instruction in their identified area of weakness. They are progress monitored by-weekly to determine progress on each of the five big ideas of reading that we use in instruction. In this way, all students are monitored to ensure they are making adequate gains in reading.

## **3. Mathematics:**

The mathematics curriculum at Faulkton Elementary is based primarily on presenting basic math skills at each grade level. The skills are presented and mastered by students through the presentation of basic computation, problem solving, and real life project based learning activities, assignments, and assessments.

The mathematics curriculum we use in our elementary school is based on the idea that skills are continuously presented using previously learned material and these skills continue to show up in their daily lesson and in assessments in a revolving fashion to allow students to gain an understanding by continuing to see all the problems that have been presented. We chose this curriculum because students are able to master skills over time as they gain an understanding of the concept presented. The curriculum is based on the idea that all students do not master skills immediately when they are presented and all students do not master skills within the same time frame, so problems containing previously learned skills continue to show up in the daily assignments for weeks following the original lesson. All new skills learned are then built on the previously learned and presented skills.

In grades K-4, students learn the basic mathematical skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. We believe in teaching students by using memorization of the basic facts, combined with problem solving and project based learning.

In order for our students to be ready for the Common Core Standards, we have also trained our elementary teachers in a program offered in South Dakota entitled, Math Counts. Math Counts allows students to solve real-world problems using strategies that make sense to them. Students solve problems presented using these math strategies, share them with their classmates, and learn to solve real world problems in a way that is meaningful to them.

#### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

In addition to our mathematics, reading, and language arts curriculums, we offer an excellent physical education, health and wellness, and nutrition curriculum to all elementary students.

In physical education, students are exposed to a variety of physical activities that will help them to be lifelong advocates of physical exercise. They are expected to run in class each day and during the course of the school year they work to increase the amount of time and distance that they are able to run each physical education class period. At the completion of the school year, students are given the opportunity to participate in the Presidential Physical Fitness Challenge. Within this challenge, students compete in physical activities that measure their strength, endurance, speed, and quickness. If the students meet the challenges, they are given a pin and a certificate of accomplishment signed by the President. In physical education class, students are weighed and measured at the beginning and end of each school year! In this way, parents can track their child's growth and development and we can work with parents to help ensure that our students weight stay within a safe, healthy range for their height and age.

Many of our health and wellness and nutrition activities are provided through a partnership with our high school FCCLA chapter and our local healthcare facility. Our high school FCCLA chapter is extremely active in sponsoring events for our elementary students that help them to be conscious about making healthy lifestyle choices. They have sponsored "Pop Challenges" where students are challenged to go without drinking pop for several weeks at a time. They are currently sponsoring a policy that does not allow pop with sugar or energy drinks to be sold or brought into the school building. Our local healthcare facility sponsors a program for children after school entitled "Fit Kids" where students are encouraged to attend and participate in physical exercise and have a healthy snack after school.

#### **5. Instructional Methods:**

At Faulkton Elementary, we believe in educating all children. We reach this goal of helping all children achieve success by using differentiated instructional methods. At the lower elementary levels, we use learning centers, small group instruction, and whole group instruction using the Promethean Board as a technological presentation tool. In our upper elementary classrooms we provide students with access to laptop computer labs, as well as the small group instruction, and whole group Promethean Board presentations.

The students served at Faulkton Elementary are typically not from many diverse subgroups. Students in our classrooms speak English as their first language, they attend school with a nearly 100% attendance rate, and they come from supportive families that value education and assist their children in their education journey. These factors make our job of educating children easier as well as extremely successful.

In our classrooms we differentiate instruction by presenting whole group lessons followed by individual performance checks with classroom teachers, math specialists, and reading specialists in the classrooms. Students are closely monitored to see that they are able to successfully complete the given

assignment and that they understand the presented skill. Students, who are having difficulty in any given curricular area, are given individual one-to-one instruction in their area of need. They are also progress monitored to determine if the interventions being provided are working to treat the learning deficit.

At Faulkton Elementary, all classrooms have been equipped with Promethean Boards to use as instructional tools in the classroom. Teachers use the Promethean Boards for whole group instruction in all curriculum areas. They also use the Promethean Boards in order for students to demonstrate that they understand the concept being presented with a hands-on check for understanding set. Students are also able to use a roaming laptop lab for use in creating power point presentations, reports in word document form, and also to complete research for reports for all subject areas.

## **6. Professional Development:**

The district's professional development program is best described as focused on student learning with an understanding of the needs of certified staff to provide the programs and skills necessary to maximize the impact on the district's mission statement. Yearly objectives are developed with the assistance of a staff development steering committee that meets to discuss trends in the classroom, and in the state of education. Once the objectives are defined then it is up to the committee to reach out to presenters who may be in the district, or who are from outside the district.

During the past five years the district staff have received training on such diverse topics as technology inclusion, reading strategies, project-based learning, formative and summative assessment using the Emetric software program, Math Counts, the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Effective Teaching, and special education pertaining to understanding and working with students who are diagnosed with autism. In each case staff received the training provided to improve pedagogy, enhance assessment strategies, develop strategies to work effectively with special education students in both special education and regular education classrooms, and keep abreast of current trends in educational theory.

Using the school improvement model based upon the district's membership in NCA/CSI the primary responsibility of the staff development training is to improve practice, enhance learning, and stress the importance of developing higher order thinking skills. This focus maximizes learning opportunities for all students in grades K-12.

District staff also meets monthly and discuss specific practices that have improved students' performance in math and reading. This topic starts off every district-level staff meeting and provides a focus for the important work that is done every day in district classrooms. Due to the importance that this topic has at the top of every agenda it becomes second nature for district staff to be cognizant of the focus that the district places on this important aspect of our work.

Administrators work with the teaching staff on a daily basis to insure that student needs are being addressed and that the focus of scholarship, leadership, service to others, and a positive learning environment are championed. It is district policy to celebrate success and one of the best ways to insure that success is celebrated is through the recognition that is afforded staff members who go above and beyond the call to implement new practices, measure success through innovative means, and mentor peers who may wish to learn more about a particular aspect of educational practice. The entire professional development program fits seamlessly within the district's mission statement and vision for the future.

## **7. School Leadership:**

The district's school leadership philosophy is based upon the concept of servant-based leadership and accountability to the entire district, the students, parents, staff and patrons. The duty and responsibility of district administration is to insure that the needs of the students and staff come before anything else. Due primarily to the fact that the district is located in a small, rural county in South Dakota the superintendent

also serves as the elementary principal. This combination of positions is not uncommon in smaller school districts and lends itself to a closer attachment of the superintendent to the day to day operations of the elementary than might otherwise be the case in a larger, more urban district.

Since the role of elementary principal and superintendent are of a shared nature decisions are collaborative in nature with the staff taking a large share of the decision-making process into their own sphere of responsibility. This is necessitated primarily due to the fact that with shared positions comes no reduction in the amount of day to day decisions as a principal or superintendent and the longer term decision making process necessary in the superintendent's position and responsibilities.

One other strength of the conjoined duty position is a much larger role into the aspects of classroom instructional practice, curriculum development, evaluations and student, parent and teacher interactions. Due to this fact the contact with staff is on a daily basis. Sometimes multiple times in a given day due to the close relationships formed among the staff and the principal/superintendent.

The district's average daily membership has remained relatively stable over the past five years. There have been no significant declines in student numbers. In fact, the two largest classes in the entire district are the current Kindergarten and first grade classes with student numbers of 23 and 25 respectively. Interestingly, the district's smallest current class is in Second grade with an average daily membership of 10 students.

The elementary teaching staff is highly motivated to succeed. Since classroom numbers are for the most part highly manageable teachers and students develop a strong bond from the very first day of school to the very last. With increased contact comes a greater understanding of the strengths and areas of improvement for each student. This information is developed from the yearly data retreats as well as the content rich day to day classroom environment where all are encouraged to reach their full potential as developing lifelong learners. This philosophy is tied into the district's mission statement and is a commitment to develop each learner to their utmost so that they can realize their full potential as learners.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2008/09/10/11/12 Publisher: Harcourt

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	100	100	92	79	95
Advanced	65	47	21	43	26
Number of students tested	20	20	24	24	19
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6. White</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	100	100	92	79	95
Advanced	65	47	21	43	26
Number of students tested	20	20	24	24	19
<b>NOTES:</b>					
The score of 0 in many categories is indicative of the small n size or no data evident in the reporting of the disaggregated groups.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2008/09/10/11/12 Publisher: Harcourt

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	100	100	85	93	93
Advanced	65	73	14	33	31
Number of students tested	20	20	24	24	19
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6. White</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	100	100	85	93	96
Advanced	68	71	14	33	31
Number of students tested	20	20	24	24	19
<b>NOTES:</b>					
The score of 0 in many categories is indicative of the small n size or no data evident in the reporting of the disaggregated groups.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2008/09/10/11/12 Publisher: Harcourt

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	100	69	82	79	87
Advanced	64	19	47	25	20
Number of students tested	25	26	26	24	24
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6. White</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	100	69	82	79	87
Advanced	64	19	47	25	20
Number of students tested	25	26	26	28	24
<b>NOTES:</b>					
The score of 0 in many categories is indicative of the small n size or no data evident in the reporting of the disaggregated groups.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2008/09/10/11/10 Publisher: Harcourt

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	100	75	76	85	100
Advanced	71	19	41	39	20
Number of students tested	25	26	26	28	24
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6. White</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	100	69	82	79	87
Advanced	71	19	41	39	20
Number of students tested	25	26	26	28	24
<b>NOTES:</b>					
The score of 0 in many categories is indicative of the small n size or no data evident in the reporting of the disaggregated groups.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2008/09/10/11/12 Publisher: Harcourt

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	94	87	88	83	100
Advanced	67	67	41	21	43
Number of students tested	26	26	28	24	17
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0				
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6. White</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	94	87	88	83	100
Advanced	67	67	41	21	43
Number of students tested	26	26	28	24	17
<b>NOTES:</b>					
The score of 0 in many categories is indicative of the small n size or no data evident in the reporting of the disaggregated groups.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2008/09/10/11/12 Publisher: Harcourt

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	94	90	88	87	90
Advanced	67	47	41	40	43
Number of students tested	26	26	28	24	17
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6. White</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	94	90	88	87	90
Advanced	67	47	41	40	43
Number of students tested	26	26	28	24	17
<b>NOTES:</b>					
The score of 0 in many categories is indicative of the small n size or no data evident in the reporting of the disaggregated groups.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2008/09/10/11/12 Publisher: Harcourt

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	100	94	100	97	100
Advanced	67	53	33	30	50
Number of students tested	26	28	21	18	17
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0				
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0				
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6. White</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	100	94		97	100
Advanced	67	53		30	50
Number of students tested	26	28	21	18	17
<b>NOTES:</b>					
The score of 0 in many categories is indicative of the small n size or no data evident in the reporting of the disaggregated groups.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2008/09/10/11/12 Publisher: Harcourt

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	93	94	86	93	94
Advanced	53	53	33	29	38
Number of students tested	26	28	21	18	17
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6. White</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	93	94	86	93	94
Advanced	53	53	33	29	38
Number of students tested	26	28	21	18	17
<b>NOTES:</b>					
The score of 0 in many categories is indicative of the small n size or no data evident in the reporting of the disaggregated groups.					