

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Teri Lynn Aplin

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

Official School Name Parker Core Knowledge Charter School K-8

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 11661 North Pine Drive

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

City Parker State CO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 80138-9785

County Douglas County

Telephone (303) 840-7070 Fax (303) 840-9785

Web site/URL http://www.ckcs.net E-mail taplin@ckcs.net

Twitter Handle

https://twitter.com/PCKcharter Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Elizabeth Celania-Fagen E-mail elizabeth.fagen@dcsdk12-org

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

District Name Douglas County School District Tel. (303) 387-0100

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Meghann Silverthorn

(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, write N/A in the space.*

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. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any 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.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
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

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 59 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 10 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 11 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 81 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	33	40	73
1	40	32	72
2	38	34	72
3	33	39	72
4	39	34	73
5	28	44	72
6	47	25	72
7	36	37	73
8	43	29	72
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	337	314	651

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 11 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 78 % White
 - 4 % 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 2014 – 2015 school year: 0%

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, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	628
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.000
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	0

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %
15 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Vietnamese, Telugu, Tamil, Russian, Hindi, Chinese, Oriya, Arabic, Punjabi, Urdu & Indonesian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %
Total number students who qualify: 3

8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %
40 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 14
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	28
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	20
Paraprofessionals	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	10

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 24:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

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

Yes No

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

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

PCK strives to provide a solid foundation of knowledge, skills and character while challenging students to become critical thinkers, responsible citizens and future leaders.

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

Since its inception in 1994, PCK students have been selected on a first come, first served basis via a Letter of Intent (LOI) process. As a public charter school, parents indicate their desire to send their child to PCK by completing a LOI. Each year, as spaces become available, students are admitted for enrollment based on the order (date/time) in which their completed LOI was received by PCK. Over the years, PCK's Wait List has grown extensively, and the enrollment process through our Wait List has always been maintained with the utmost integrity. In 2012, the PCK Board voted to release 18 Kindergarten spots each year, out of our annual 72 openings, to be part of a lottery for students enrolled in our Jr. Kindergarten program. All other openings each year are filled based on the first come, first served Wait List order.

PART III – SUMMARY

Welcome to Parker Core Knowledge (PCK)! Located in beautiful Parker, Colorado, PCK is a vibrant, thriving K-8 charter school that is anchored by the highly respected, content-rich Core Knowledge curriculum. PCK opened its doors to students on September 6, 1994, just one year after the State of Colorado passed the 1993 Charter School Act. Since that time, the parents and staff have made it a top priority to provide a truly exceptional educational experience for all PCK students.

Excellence in all we do is a core theme at PCK. From quality teachers and a strong curriculum to a school community that consistently supports our efforts to help every child succeed, PCK leverages the interaction between the following characteristics to set the bar high and drive student success:

1. A strong, clear mission and vision
2. Consistent leadership, high expectations around a culture of continuous improvement, and low staff turnover
3. The well-designed Core Knowledge curriculum delivered by highly-trained and capable teachers that include core subjects, science, social studies, art, music, foreign language and health/physical education
4. The systematic collection and use of student data to guide and inform instructional practices and critical mid-course corrections
5. A school community that reflects a culture of care, respect, safety and support for all students; a school that values and promotes strong character among its members
6. The strategic and systematic integration of technology as a tool that is used to enhance and expand learning opportunities
7. Strong parent involvement through volunteerism and academic support at home
8. Timely and relevant communication at all levels, across all key stakeholder groups

The PCK mission has and continues to guide our passionate efforts each year. Our teachers, staff, and parents are all highly focused on the overarching goal of building a solid foundation of knowledge and skills for each and every student. We are all bricklayers, with each grade level's knowledge and skills representing the bricks that must be carefully and strategically laid in order to support the academic demands of the next grade level. This effort is very much a shared responsibility between teachers, staff, students and parents throughout the K-8 journey, and internal processes between grades help to ensure smooth transitions to the next level. At PCK, we live our mission on a daily basis, as the expectation and hope for each student's success are very high.

PCK's school mission strategically dovetails with the school's vision to be 'the premier K-8 charter school in Douglas County'. Our quest to be the best does not stem from a place of arrogance, but rather from our humble belief that all students deserve the absolute best we have to offer. They deserve our best efforts—our unrelenting focus on their success, our diligence, and perseverance to continually hone our methods, and our creativity and willingness to 'think outside the box' when traditional practices fall short of the desired results. At PCK, we continually strive to be a school of innovators, pioneers and education professionals that never lose sight of the true mission...our students!

Student success begins with an investment in our students. From Kindergarten on, PCK students are taught basic skills that eventually become lifelong habits for academic success. By developing a love of learning, along with strong study skills and habits, PCK students begin to understand that their education is their responsibility, not their parents or teachers, and this mantle of responsibility is incrementally passed on to the students over the course of the K-8 process. Several key strategies used to facilitate the development of academic responsibility include the use of daily planners, nightly homework requirements, MAP* goal-setting with students, student-led parent conferences, Honor Roll awards, and the ability to qualify for PCK's National Jr. Honor Society. Various academic clubs such as Robotics, Mad Science, Battle of the Books, and MathCounts further promote student involvement in academics outside the classroom. At PCK, we consistently recognize and celebrate our students academic efforts and successes. (*MAP stands for NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress)

Our students need and deserve GREAT teachers! At PCK, this begins with a thorough and rigorous selection process. From their initial hiring to the first day in a PCK classroom, all PCK staff completes a comprehensive orientation and training process that is designed to prepare them for the demands of their job. Advanced preparation is key to a successful launch, and ongoing professional development is essential for continued growth and success. The ongoing message to staff is that continuous improvement drives excellence. At PCK, maintaining a culture of continuous improvement equates to student success.

Finally, an often overlooked, yet arguably significant component of any schools' success involves consistency in leadership. For the past fourteen years, PCK has had two administrators working as a team to ensure all critical bases – academic, operational, organizational and financial – are given the appropriate priority and attention. This consistency in leadership, over an extended period of time, has allowed PCK administration to systematically drive continuous improvement efforts year after year. At PCK, this consistency has resulted in quality systems and process that are strategically built, steadfastly maintained, and continually evaluated for improvement opportunities. When consistent leadership is paired with a strong teaching staff, and then further paired with highly involved parent partners and great kids, the sky really is the limit for the students who attend that school. The interaction between these elements is the key to PCK's success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

As an official Core Knowledge (CK) school, all of PCK’s programs and curriculum follows the learning standards included in the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence. As a Colorado public school, all of PCK’s programs and curriculum are also aligned to the Colorado State Standards in all core subjects.

Reading and English Language Arts (ELA) skills are essential building blocks for our students. At PCK, we use the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program to teach Reading. CKLA provides our students with learning opportunities in two strands: “Listening and Learning”, and “Skills”. The Skills strand provides instruction in phonics, fluency, vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. The Listening and Learning Strand provides the students with high-level content and a wealth of background information to support their vocabulary acquisition and comprehension. As outlined in the CK Scope and Sequence for Reading, PCK students read classic novels and stories at each grade level. The reason PCK uses the CKLA curriculum and the CK curriculum suggested novels is because together they create readers that have an ample and high vocabulary, and a wide base of background information that supports comprehension and allows our students to become critical thinkers. One of the key components of our reading program is “flooding time”. During flooding time, we divide students into small groups based on their reading skills. This time allows us to differentiate instruction for students who are below and above grade level. For students below grade level, we use additional research-based programs, such as Burst Reading, Guided Reading, Quick Reads and the Souday System to support skills acquisition in deficit areas. For students who are above grade level, flooding time provides the opportunity to present them with advanced materials like Junior Great Books and other high-interest literature and novels.

In the area of writing, we use Step Up to Writing, which builds writing skills with a guaranteed learning progression from grade to grade. Our teachers undergo regular training in Step Up to Writing and we have invested in training one of our teachers as a Trainer of Teachers. Our most important professional practice in the area of writing is to meet regularly to discuss mastery areas in each grade. Teachers continuously seek to improve their student’s writing skills, including mechanics, short answers, topic and complete sentences, paragraphs, and extended writing. Narratives, informative writing and other varied types or writing as detailed in the standards are also covered and practiced in every grade. Additionally, in the elementary grades, we have implemented daily 3-hour literacy and writing blocks of instruction.

Although we use several different curricula in the area of mathematics at PCK, our most important strategies for building foundational and higher math skills is through teacher preparation, ability grouping, and the amount of daily time in the schedule allocated to teaching math. PCK students spend from 70 to 90 minutes per day learning mathematics. Starting in Kindergarten, we use curriculum that is one grade level ahead of the student. In order to address Colorado State Standards and Mathematical Practices, we utilize Big Ideas for our 5th to 8th-grade students. We also utilize varied curricula such as Pearson Algebra 1 and Holt McDougal -Larson Geometry to cover secondary standards. In our primary grades, we are in the process of transitioning the math curriculum from Saxon Math to GoMath! and Every Day Counts, again with the goal of better alignment with mathematical practices. Although we have three classes of 24 students in each grade, during math time we divide the seventy-two students/grade into four leveled groups instead of three. By placing students in small groups of peers with similar skill levels, we are able to adapt teaching methods, pacing, and practice to better meet the needs of students in each group, whether it be below or above grade level.

In the areas of Science and Social Studies, we have combined and aligned the Core Knowledge grade level expectations with the Colorado State Standards to produce a document that guides each grade level teacher during the year.

Most science content units are covered during literacy instruction as part of the CKLA curriculum, and teachers create their own high-interest units to cover the rest of the grade level standards. We are the proud owners of two well-appointed science labs, one for K-6 and one for 7-8. Teachers are required to provide

interactive science experiences for their students that focus on the scientific method. Having dedicated teachers who are passionate and knowledgeable about science has a direct positive impact on the quality of the content taught, and the importance of science in the eyes of our students.

Our social studies content units in the elementary grades are also covered during literacy instruction in the CKLA curriculum. We have numerous relevant learning experiences that the students look forward to, and remember, thereby cementing their knowledge. Some examples are Famous Figures in American History Wax Museum in 2nd grade, Rome Day including plays, feast, mosaic art and catapult competition in 3rd grade, Day at the Castle with kings, queens and lords, plays, and jousting in 4th grade, and Renaissance Festival with student-produced art, food and science artifacts in 5th grade.

a. Curriculum support for College and Career Readiness

PCK has implemented ICAP (Individual Career and Academic Plan) in our middle school grades. Students graduate having explored self-awareness tools including interest and skills surveys. They have also developed career awareness in their core and elective classes, which offer a wide variety of experiences in the arts and sciences (stem, theater, mock trial, graphic arts, fitness, etc.) and by preparing for and attending the Douglas County School District Career Fair. In alignment with the Colorado State Standards, Financial Literacy is fully covered at every grade level.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Other Curriculum Areas: In addition to core academic subjects, PCK offers a well-rounded education by providing the students with access to high-quality Specials classes every day. Our Specials classes support core learning and provide the students with varied experiences that appeal to all learning styles. All Specials content aligns with the Colorado State Standards and the Core Knowledge Standards.

Arts: PCK offers a rich and exciting Music and Visual Arts program K-8. Students attend Music and Art once or twice per week each (depending on the grade level) all year.

In Music, students learn to read and compose music, play an instrument, identify famous pieces and composers, study music history, and learn to identify and appreciate the different musical genre. PCK middle school students are given a choice to extend their experience in elementary band or choir, or they can opt to participate in Music Theater or Tech-Theater (sound, stage, lights), as an elective.

PCK's Music department produces two musical theater pieces every year, one for 3rd and 4th graders and one for 5th -8th graders. Approximately 90 students school-wide participate in each production. Productions in recent years include Beauty and the Beast, Les Miserable, Fiddler on the Roof, Through the Looking Glass, and Seussical. PCK students also present band and choir concerts, as well as holiday concerts throughout the year.

In Visual Art, students learn art recognition and appreciation, and architectural elements, along with hands-on techniques. In middle school, students can elect to take Graphic Arts to develop their computer art skills, or Mixed Media Art, which includes photography, drawing, and painting, ceramics, etc. PCK's Art department participates annually in the district-wide art show. In May of each year, we also hold a school art show. One art piece from each student is exhibited in the school's hallways. Teachers select their favorite pieces and post notes on them explaining why they like that particular piece. Students look forward to seeing their art in the exhibit, particularly if they created one of the many pieces selected for recognition.

Physical Education and Health: PCK provides Physical Education (PE) and Health instruction all year long in grades K-8. Students attend these standards-aligned programs a minimum of 90 minutes per week up to 2 or 3 hours per week depending on their grade level. PCK's Physical Education program develops a wide range of skills and knowledge related to physical health and fitness. The PE program supports core classroom instruction by providing students with a much-needed physical and brain break. The program also supports PCK's character effort by helping build the qualities of good sportsmanship, perseverance, determination and self-control for all students.

Foreign Language: PCK has an extensive and well-regarded Spanish program that enables our advanced middle school students to earn high school credit. Students attend Spanish class in all grades, with classes ranging from 60 minutes per week in Kindergarten to three hours per week in middle school. PCK's Spanish teachers help students gain essential communication skills in the target language while also providing cultural connections and experiences that enhance our students' sense of world citizenship.

Technology: PCK has undergone a true and dramatic technological transformation in the past three years. This transformation has resulted in direct technology instruction for all students, ranging from thirty minutes per week in Kindergarten to three hours per week in middle school. PCK uses technology standards from the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) and the Common Core Technology Skills Scope and Sequence. Students receive skill-based instruction in word processing, spreadsheets, research and web navigation, presentation skills, digital citizenship, etc.

Through generous parent support, PCK has been able to provide enough mobile classroom technology (Chromebooks) at a 1:3 ratio in grades K-6 and a 1:2 ratio in 7th and 8th grades. Additionally, PCK still provides a fully equipped technology lab. In conjunction with direct instruction by specialized tech teachers, classroom teachers have received extensive training and are heavily invested in incorporating more technology into their teaching strategies and lessons. The acquisition of essential technology skills has tremendously enhanced both teacher and student growth in the area of technology.

Other:

a - Middle School Electives: Seventh and eighth-grade students have the opportunity to enroll in an elective each semester. The objective of elective classes is to provide students with experiences outside core instruction that are geared towards specific student interests. Elective options change from year to year based on student feedback and currently include options such as STEM, Mock Trial, Meals in Minutes, Practical Arts, Sports Conditioning, Band, Tech Theater, Special Effects Makeup, and Graphic Arts.

b - Library: Students in K -5 visit the school library weekly. During Library time, students hear enhancing literature related to their current grade level Social Studies curriculum and have the opportunity to check out books that further their interests. The PCK library program directly supports literacy in the building.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

At PCK, one of the most important purposeful actions all staff engage in is to get to know the students. It is in knowing the students, the level of skills and knowledge they bring to the table, their social/emotional disposition, their family situation, etc. that we can plan how to best serve them.

In the area of Literacy, we intervene as early as the first week of Kindergarten by forming small reading groups. Later, when we have pinpointed specific needs, we form two-on-one or one-on-one teacher groups. One instructional method that consistently produces positive results for grade level students is to form larger groups that engage in advanced programs like Junior Great Books. All students within the group rise to the higher expectations, as evidenced by the percentage of PCK students who 'Meet' or 'Exceed' grade level expectations when assessed each year.

In Mathematics, we are able to focus instruction by dividing students into small groups. Although all grades at PCK have 72 students divided in three classes of 24, we assign four teachers to teach math per grade level. The extra teacher allows us to divide students into four, smaller leveled groups. Some of our students that need more support in mathematics are able to receive explicit instruction in groups as small as 15 students, where the teacher is able to focus on each student's unique needs and use more manipulatives. Students that are able to progress more rapidly participate in real life problem-based learning challenges designed to engage their interests and encourage cooperative learning.

Our Science and Social Studies instruction engages our entire population by using experiential instruction. Students participate in regular hands-on science and technology experiences, wax museums, field trips, plays, and theme days. Some examples of theme days are Rome Day, Western Expansion day, Pirate Day (culminating activity after reading Treasure Island), Renaissance Fair (where students make era appropriate

artifacts and dress to represent an important person of the time) and the Secret Garden tea. Students never forget the content associated with these experiences, which also create traditions our younger students look forward to enjoying when they reach those grades.

In cultivating and maintaining a caring community at PCK, we carefully serve both the academic and general wellness needs of our students. Knowing, really knowing our students, allows us to not only individualize the academic program to maximum effectiveness, but also to surround students with programs that serve other individual needs they might have. We encourage students to participate in friendship groups, community service projects, math clubs, student clubs like “Kind to the Core” and the “Save our Environment” club, Chess club and various after-school sports activities. Our staff, including teachers, school counselor, and other support specialists, form relationships with students that, in many cases, last for more than one year. This continuity of care provides for the most comprehensive and individualized care a school can provide.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

The PCK Administrative team adheres to the philosophical position that Standards-based assessment of students provides two important benefits. First, it provides teachers with data to focus their instruction and it also provides the administration with data to improve programming, curriculum, and instruction. Additionally, it provides students with an important opportunity to demonstrate what they know. At PCK, students have learned to navigate online assessments and confidently apply their skills to think critically, summarize, find main ideas and supporting information, read maps and graphs, and respond to questions in a way that will demonstrate their solid knowledge and skills to future college professors or workforce employers. At a minimum, our students leave PCK prepared to demonstrate through assessment, their college, and career readiness: this is our goal.

PCK students in first to third grades set group growth goals and in fourth to eighth set individual growth goals that are measured by NWEA MAP three times per year. Younger students participate in a group meeting with their teacher to establish group goals and determine strategies that will help them achieve their goals. Some examples of strategies to achieve group goals would be for each member of the group to read a certain number of books independently, or learn multiplication tables by a certain date, etc. Older students conference with their teachers and develop an individual plan for growth and achievement during the school year.

Data gathered through periodic classroom assessments is shared weekly with parents in Thursday Folders, and through the Infinite Campus parent portal view of teacher grade books. Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice per year and individual student results on standardized assessments like Dibels and MAP are shared and explained in depth. Student learning goals are also discussed during parent-teacher conferences in order to enlist support from parents, who are called upon to play a pivotal role in their student’s education. Fourth through sixth-grade students participate in student-led parent-teacher conferences in order to develop responsibility and accountability in the students.

Building-wide State assessment results are proudly shared with parents at the beginning of each school year at Back to School Night. Building-wide learning goals are then explored in greater depth during Parent Literacy events in grades K-2. Primary Literacy events are very important to our process as they allow us to enlist specific parent support that we know leads to dramatic improvements in reading.

Sharing assessment results with parents, along with specific learning goals for their students, creates a sense of ownership, teamwork and a commitment to education that is invaluable to our students’ growth and development.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At PCK, we are fond of the saying, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." A positive school climate begins at the top and trickles down throughout the building. PCK leaders diligently cultivate a school environment that supports and values its employees, students, and parents. When employees feel valued, respected and cared for, they are better able to provide that same level of respect and care to students and parents. When students feel respected, valued and cared for, they are more likely to engage in the academic process and have a more positive school experience.

Efforts to engage and motivate students take many forms at PCK. Within the classroom, students are easily engaged by the content-rich Core Knowledge curriculum. Teachers employ a wide variety of instructional strategies, including the use of educational Apps and technology, to capture students' attention. Reading competitions, Literacy nights, guest speakers, virtual tours, student presentations, special projects, grade level events, class field trips, school-wide contests, and personal goal-setting sessions, are just a few examples of the creative methods teachers have used to engage students in the learning process. Outside the classroom, students engage in many after school opportunities that round out their academic experience. Our music department produces two large student musicals each year, with upwards of 75+ students in each production, and our sports teams and after-school clubs provide additional opportunities for students to engage with other students around areas of interest.

Building students of character is a vital component of a positive school environment. At PCK, monthly character assemblies and in-class character lessons focused on important character qualities are used to teach and create awareness about the importance of strong character for all students. Students who demonstrate outstanding character are regularly recognized during character assemblies and through "Your character was showing when..." postcards that are sent home to the student by staff members. PCK has a Character Coach on staff to help promote our character efforts, both in and out of the classroom. Our Character Coach also oversees a student-initiated and led after school club called 'Kind at the Core'. The club's mission is to help make PCK the kindest school in Parker. Middle school students at PCK regularly participate in community service opportunities. Their message, PCK Cares, is evidenced by their willingness to step out of their comfort zone to help others. At PCK, we believe building strong character is essential to a student's social and emotional growth.

Ensuring a positive staff environment begins with the hiring process. PCK strives to hire staff members who, in addition to having all the essential education, experience, and qualifications, also love children and are genuinely committed to helping them succeed. The ability to consistently contribute to PCK's positive, nurturing environment is an essential quality for everyone, from the office staff to the teaching staff. Professionalism, friendliness, and courtesy are also consistently on display. Visitors often comment about how warm and welcoming the school 'feels' and how friendly and helpful the staff is. Another contributing factor to PCK's positive environment for staff centers around employment policies/practices that are designed to help staff members balance home and work responsibilities. From wellness initiatives that include onsite exercise and healthy snacks to a strong salary/benefits package, sufficient plan time, and regular employee recognition that also includes bonuses, PCK leaders make it a priority to let the staff know they are valued. Amazing things happen when students and staff feel valued, respected and cared for within the school environment.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Simply stated, PCK would not be the school it is today without the involvement and endless sacrifices of our parents and families. Parents at PCK are AMAZING, and their willingness to partner with us in support of school-wide efforts year in and year out is nothing short of humbling. As a public charter school, PCK has always asked parents to volunteer somewhere in the school for a minimum of 20 hours per year. Whether working in the classroom, stuffing Thursday folders or accompanying a class on a field trip, to much larger commitments like serving on the PCK Board, PTA, Foundation at PCK, or the School

Accountability Committee (SAC), PCK parents willingly give their time and talents to help make PCK a great place for all students. We also have parents who enjoy helping in the library, lunchroom, art classrooms, and many parents support our large theater productions twice per year. Parent volunteers are a cornerstone of our school's success over the year.

PCK's PTA is the community connection arm of the school. Parents serving on this committee plan and deliver all-school events that are designed to bring entire families together within our school community. They organize the Back-to-School Kickoff Pool Party at the local community pool, and by Fall Break, we all enjoy the annual Sock Hop, complete with dancing, games, food and balloon drop. Just after the start of each new year, the PTA organizes a Mother-Son event and a Father-Daughter Dance. In addition to these larger family events, the PTA also provides important services for PCK families. The PTA sponsors the Tool Box School Supplies drive, sells Butter Braids and used uniforms as a preferred service to all PCK families. Through the PTA's community-building events, PCK's parents and families enjoy a strong sense of connection and community.

The Foundation at PCK is the official Fundraising arm of the school, providing critical funds for school needs that fall outside of the regular operating budget, such as technology improvements. Foundation members plan and execute three fundraising events each year: the Annual Giving Campaign, a FunDRun, and a Gala/Auction event. Funds raised through these efforts are targeted for specific, strategic school needs. The Foundation works with parent volunteers and the broader Parker community to ensure all fundraising events are a big success.

The SAC at PCK has defined their role as the character and data-gathering arm of the school. SAC members meet monthly to support PCK's character effort, and to create, administer and analyze important Parent Survey data. The SAC sends smaller 'mini-surveys' to parents in order to solicit stakeholder feedback regarding specific questions or issues relevant to the broader school community, and they write/administer the Annual Parent Survey and the Teacher Survey. All data collected, along with the SAC's recommendations, is put into a report and given to the School Director for consideration. The SAC considers it a priority to keep a pulse on key stakeholders - parents, teachers, and students. The data gathered by our SAC is carefully reviewed by the Administration and PCK Board for continuous improvement opportunities and feedback.

Finally, PCK's middle school students engage in a unique way with the broader Parker and Denver community. Through community service outreach activities, our middle school students volunteer their time serving the needs of people and organizations outside of PCK. Proudly wearing their 'PCK Cares' t-shirts, our students have opportunities to see and experience life outside of PCK...and in some cases, outside of Parker. They have served food at the Denver Rescue Mission, packed food for the Feed My Starving Children organization, organized donations for Coats for Colorado and gathered canned food for the Parker Task Force, visited Seniors at the Victorian House, and helped care for and clean up after rescue animals for the Edwards Foundation. Additionally, various 'Buy a Dress Down Day' fundraisers are used to raise funds for national organizations such as Homes for Our Troops, the American Heart Association, and the American Red Cross. Helping others and serving their community is equally important to our students' growth and development as global citizens as gaining a strong academic foundation. We are so proud of the many ways our students work within the community to show that PCK Cares!

3. Professional Development:

Excellence can only be achieved if the entire staff is supportive of PCK's mission and contributes to our culture of high expectations and achievement.

PCK's teacher hiring process includes interviews by both administration and a panel of teachers. Candidates are then invited to conduct a mini-teach, which allows us to observe their teacher-student interaction and evaluate their planning, creativity, and content knowledge. This process immediately sends the message that PCK teachers are professionals who must meet high expectations and demonstrate a strong work ethic. Once the best candidates have been hired, PCK provides a weeklong new-employee orientation during the summer. During New Employee Orientation teachers learn administrative and

technical aspects of the job and are trained in academic programs, behavior management, and the Character First program. New teachers also have the opportunity to set up their classrooms and meet with instructional leaders in the building, including the Math and Language Arts Leads. By conducting New Employee Orientation in the summer, new teachers have sufficient time to ready their classrooms, study curriculum content, begin to align their lessons to state standards, and discuss building policies, procedures and practices with their new grade level partners.

Employing staff members who possess a strong continuous improvement mindset is a hallmark of any excellent school or program, and all PCK teachers are expected to participate in professional development opportunities throughout the school year. Teachers can participate in weekly sessions that support building initiatives and programs, such as Tech Tuesdays and Love and Logic training, and all new staff complete an approved Teacher Induction Program. Additionally, for our Specials teachers, annual conferences such as ISTE, SEL trainings and other specialized coursework provide the added stimulation and impetus for professional growth.

Our yearly calendar provides protected time for staff professional development. Once per month, teachers have the opportunity to meet in Grade Level Teams (GLTs) K-2, 3-4, and 5-6, for 90 minutes. During this GLT time, teachers set grade level improvement goals in key academic areas, and they receive customized technology training based on the group's needs. Every GLT has a leader and a technology coach (ITL) to support the professional development needs of the GLT members. For instance, a multi-team GLT goal this year was to improve writing in K-2 in such a way that 3rd grade students would be able to write multi-paragraphs instead of one single paragraph. By working together to achieve these goals, our GLTs are driving critical improvements for students in the classroom.

Throughout the school year, the PCK staff participates in four non-contact in-service days. During in-service days, PCK Administration provides time for vertical program alignment, which is led by the Math and Language Arts team Leads. During these vertical alignment sessions, multi-grade teachers are able to plan and understand the scope of their teaching responsibility in the different areas, and most importantly, how their curriculum content lays the foundation for the next grade level above them. One example of such vertical alignment is planning the teaching of specific math processes like fractions and division, addressing questions like: When do we introduce the conversion of remainders into decimals? In which grade should we stop using remainders and master the decimal conversion? Coherence Maps provided by Achieve the Core support this effort.

Finally, every PCK teaching team has designated common planning time during which they can incorporate new ideas into actual lesson plans for their students. For us, professional development is how teachers and adults model and demonstrate the value of life-long learning.

4. School Leadership:

At PCK, we philosophically believe strong leaders lead by example and with a clear vision. In order to achieve strong and consistent results, all leaders at PCK must be on the same page about where we are going and how we plan to get there. PCK leaders strive to communicate a cohesive vision, with clear benchmarks in their specific areas, and then passionately pursue that vision with all available people and resources.

The PCK Board of Directors is comprised of elected PCK parents who each make a three-year commitment to the policy governance, financial oversight and strategic direction of the school. This dedicated group of parents meets monthly (or more) to lend their personal time and expertise in support of PCK's academic, operational and facility goals. Board members work closely with the school's directors to ensure consistently strong school results and operational efficiencies.

PCK has two primary Administrators who each oversee specific areas of the school. The School Director is the acting head of school and reports to the PCK Board of Directors (a group of seven elected parents). The PCK Board of Directors meets monthly, and as needed with the School Director, to provide policy governance and financial oversight. The School Director is responsible for the overall operation of the

school, including staff hiring, budget and facility management, marketing and communication, behavior management, and school safety. The Vice Director - Academics, along with the Business Manager, Operations Manager, Systems Administrator and Building Supervisor, report to the School Director. All other PCK staff report to and are directly supervised by these key leaders. The Vice Director-Academics oversees all academic areas, including curriculum, teacher training & development, Special Education, testing/assessment, ELA, and 504 compliance. Both Directors handle student discipline, parent communication, and employee evaluations.

Each leader within PCK is expected to lead with competence, integrity, professionalism, and heart. All PCK leaders actively participate in continuous quality improvements that ensure a cohesive and strategic effort to achieve school-wide goals and objectives. The entire PCK organization is relatively flat, which facilitates a more personal, collaborative style of leadership across the school. Decision-making at all levels is always linked to what is best for the students. Student success is our top priority at PCK, and every goal, every decision, every new program or initiative must further our vision and benefit the students. PCK leaders continually strive to maintain a student-focused perspective.

Finally, PCK staff members are encouraged to take on leadership roles and develop as leaders within the school community. Teachers serve as Department Heads, Advisors to NJHS and Student Council, Grade-Level Team (GLT) leaders, Information-Technology Leaders (iTLs), sports team coaches and academic team leaders, theater coaches, and staff representatives that serve on PCK's School Accountability Committee (SAC) or the PCK Governing Board. Their involvement in these important organizations helps further student achievement, develops future leaders, fosters strong relationships between students, parents, and staff, and it supports a vibrant, well-integrated, school environment.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

If we had to point to one indicator of our students' academic success, it would be our consistent practice of data-driven instruction.

Beginning with Kindergarten, all incoming Kindergarten students complete an assessment to identify pre-reading skills. When we identify students with deficient pre-reading skills, we provide customized strategies the parents can use at home to bolster lagging skills prior to the start of their child's first year of school. This important step also begins the home-school partnership that is so vital for students' academic success K-8.

Just before school starts each year, all students in grades K-3 complete a baseline DIBELS assessment that provides teachers with the data needed to form skills-based groups and implement them immediately once school starts. Every minute counts when it comes to acquiring reading skills. Our Classroom Teachers and Resource Teachers use research-based programming to target each individual cohort group's needs. We then progress monitor certain student cohort groups every 10 days. This early intervention allows us to catch problematic reading issues early, and then dive deep into the root causes of the problem and correct them in order to get students back on track with their grade level peers. Students are closely monitored using DIBELS data.

Next we move into standards-based data. All students building-wide participate in NWEA MAP testing three times per year as a formative assessment. This initial baseline data provides teachers the necessary information to know which Colorado standards need more focused instruction within the classroom, and which cohort groups need additional support. Teachers then develop standards-based strategies for all students in the classroom. In December of each school year, students complete the second round of MAP testing. The new data is true progress-monitoring in that it informs the teacher whether each student is progressing sufficiently to meet their growth goal for the year. Finally, in early May, we gather a third and final measure with MAP. This data tells us whether our programs and instructional practices have been sufficiently effective and resulted in the achievement of annual growth goals in English-Language Arts, Math, and Science for our students.

Our summative assessment each year is the State PARCC assessment. PARCC data confirms several important drivers of student success. Whether our:

1. Students have acquired grade level knowledge and skills
2. Curriculum and programs are sufficient to meet State and National standards
3. Teachers are adequately trained and sufficiently effective to facilitate student achievement

At PCK, data is a true key to our academic success. We use it to drive all curriculum decisions and instructional strategies in order to best serve the unique and individual needs of our students while also satisfying the broader, national expectation that we produce future-ready students.