

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 [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Patricia DeLorenzo

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

Official School Name Devanny Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1725 South Wright Street

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

City Lakewood State CO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 80228-3961

County Jefferson County

Telephone (303) 982-9200 Fax _____

Web site/URL

https://sites.google.com/a/jeffcoschools.us/devanny-es/ E-mail pdeloren@jeffco.k12.co.us

Twitter Handle _____ 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*Mr. Dan McMinimee E-mail dmcminim@jeffco.k12.co.us

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

District Name Jefferson County Schools Tel. (303) 982-6616

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Ron Mitchell

(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):
- 106 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 19 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 25 High schools
 - 11 K-12 schools
- 161 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	24	39	63
1	39	38	77
2	43	34	77
3	47	28	75
4	49	34	83
5	53	38	91
6	34	43	77
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	289	254	543

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 95 % White
 - 0 % 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: 21%

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	64
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	51
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	115
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	545
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.211
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	21

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7%
41 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Chinese, polish, Vietnamese, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Western Farsi, French, Korean, Telugu, Arabic, Hindi, Tswana, Nepali

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13%
Total number students who qualify: 71

8. Students receiving special education services: 8%
42 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
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	1
Classroom teachers	23
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals	10
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
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.

To empower all students to achieve their highest potential through community-wide collaboration and commitment to engage in diverse and continuous learning opportunities.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Devinny Elementary School (Devinny) is located in the Green Mountain area of Lakewood, Colorado. Our school includes grades K-6, and we have 545 students. In addition, we host a Gifted and Talented Center Program (GT) for grades 1-6. Our student population is approximately 52 percent boys and 48 percent girls, 23 percent minority, and 13 percent of our students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Devinny is a "High Performing School" that has enjoyed 50 years of touching lives in our community. Devinny Elementary offers students a rigorous academic program in a safe learning environment, supported by a rich curriculum and a dedicated staff. Our faculty and staff are committed to empowering all students to achieve their highest potential through community-wide collaboration and engagement in diverse and continuous learning opportunities.

Our students and staff work hard to achieve their highest potential on district and state standardized assessments. Consequently, we have consistently received high performance ratings on our school accountability and accreditation reports. We are proud to have received the Governor's Distinguished Improvement Award in both 2013 and 2014 and the John Irwin School of Excellence Award every year from 2011 through 2014.

Devinny's staff has high expectations, not only for students but also for themselves; staff members continuously push themselves and their peers to become better educators. Devinny staff participates in weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) where new educational practices are explored and finessed, student needs are discussed, and intentional planning and reflection is promoted. Staff plans within and across grade levels to ensure systemic practices in all content areas. Our staff utilizes the district-provided curriculum (Curriculum Alignment Project) to ensure students receive a guaranteed and viable curriculum. There is close collaboration between teachers and administrators in the evaluation process, and this collaboration allows staff to use growth-producing feedback to enhance their instructional practices.

At Devinny, we believe it is essential to consider the whole child, not just their academic progress. For children to be successful in school, they must have their emotional and social needs met. To help do this, we follow the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports framework (PBIS) which has had a profound impact on the climate and culture of our building. In fact, our PBIS program, called the "Noble Knights," has become a model for other schools throughout the district. In this program, our students and classes receive Noble Knight slips for demonstrating any one of the key behaviors- respect, kindness, learning, or responsibility. Several times a year, students can use their Noble Knights to buy gifts for others and to enter drawings for prizes. Annually, we have a Noble Knight festival where all students are celebrated. In addition, each classroom teacher recognizes three students per year that exemplify the core beliefs of PBIS.

Devinny's staff believes "all of our kids are all of our kids." Children understand that their behavior can be recognized by any staff member or volunteer in our building. Visitors and guest teachers regularly comment on how respectful our students are, stating that it makes our school a "joy to visit." This dedication to positive behavior has a long history in our culture at Devinny.

We call the unique, long-standing climate and culture at our school: "The Devinny Way." It is rare to have turnover of staff, and when teachers retire, they continue to reconnect with "home" through retiree groups, volunteering at the school, and substitute teaching. The parent community is strong at our school with parents hosting a variety of community activities. Our success with children could not happen without this strong parental and family support.

We are excited that Devinny was selected to pursue the National Blue Ribbon Award as it validates our hard work, commitment to children and families, and years of providing academic excellence. We have found that when we set our bar high, students meet our expectations and go beyond. This makes Devinny a sought-after school.

We believe excellence is not a destination; we believe excellence is truly achieved by daily efforts of life-long learners.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Devinny's success can be attributed to the continuous use of research-based educational practices. The school uses the District's standards-based curriculum as the framework upon which we add our experience and expectations for rigor. We are a Gifted and Talented (GT) Center school, and the addition of the GT resources increases the rigor for students in all classrooms.

Our instructional practices are founded on Wiggins and McTighe's Backwards by Design model so that teachers and students "start with the end in mind" as they embark on their learning. Teachers define success criteria allowing students to determine when they reach their learning targets. Based on the works of Marzano and Hattie, we have focused on goal setting and providing meaningful feedback to students to increase achievement. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) use data to intentionally plan and drive our instruction.

In reading, teachers use the structures of Daily 5 (Boshey and Moser) and readers' workshop to fluidly manage their reading instruction. These structures allow teachers to meet with differentiated guided reading groups while promoting independence for the other students. Specific resources we use include Foundations in grades K-3, DIBELS assessment data, and a centralized book room of leveled reading materials. Our instruction includes the five components of reading: phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. We provide support for struggling readers with interventionists at all grade levels using BURST, REWARDS, and Read Naturally Live.

Over the past several years, writing has been our major academic focus. Writing is important to every member of our staff, including art, music and PE teachers, who encourage students to write frequently. The writers' workshop structure is used to provide differentiation throughout the writing process. Students learn that writing takes time. Starting with our youngest writers, all students learn to brainstorm their ideas in a variety of ways, from pictures to Thinking Maps. After creating an initial draft, students learn to revise and edit their pieces, and then take their drafts to the "final publication" stage and share them. Students are exposed to multiple mentor texts when writing in different genres. They also confer with peers, teachers, and other adults to enhance their ideas, organization, word choice, sentence structure and conventions. To measure student progress, we use a school-wide writing assessment. This helps us plan future instruction and set goals with our students.

Over the last few years, Devinny has achieved high math assessment scores and has done so while implementing a new math curriculum. Conceptual-based learning of math has been the foundation of our instruction; Math Expressions and Big Ideas Math are our primary resources, but we regularly supplement these resources with additional materials to support learning. Math workshop is the instructional framework to help teachers differentiate instruction for student needs. Math workshop time includes small group instruction for students who are struggling with particular math concepts, practice activities for those on grade level, and extension activities for those who need to be challenged. In addition, the instruction of math concepts spirals, not only from grade level to grade level, but within a year. In addition to math concepts, students are expected to learn multiple processes for thinking mathematically. We give teachers dedicated planning days to build units collaboratively, and time for math labs when they can visit other teachers to observe teaching techniques in action. Our high expectations through the years have truly led to our mathematical achievements.

We are proud that science and social studies are critical parts of our curriculum at all grade levels. Our science units are hands on, inquiry-based, experiential lessons where students learn the scientific method and use of science notebooks to record findings. Students encounter units in life, earth, physical sciences beginning in kindergarten and build on these concepts through sixth grade. Social studies learning comes alive for students as they get to experience geography, history, civics and economics outside of the classroom walls. Younger grades go to places such as Dinosaur Ridge, Morrison Natural History Museum, Littleton Historic Museum, and the Lakewood Cultural Center. Older students enjoy learning economics at

Young Ameritowne, reenacting Revolutionary War battles, and a week at Outdoor Laboratory School in the mountains.

We push ourselves to continually grow in the use of best practices so our students can attain the higher order thinking skills needed to become 21st Century learners. Through professional development, teachers learned to ask higher order questions so students learn to think more critically and at a deeper level. For us, there is no ceiling!

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Devinny provides its students the opportunity to participate each day in either art music, or physical education, known at Devinny as “specials” or “AMP.” These classes are designed not only to meet Colorado standards, but also to enrich and enhance core content instruction. All three AMP teachers plan with grade level teachers to integrate current core content learning with their specialty. In addition, AMP teachers participate in our professional development training and PLC work on a weekly basis.

All students learn both technique and human response to art as well as art-specific vocabulary. Project-based learning allows students to experience the complexity of creating quality art. Elements of art standards include but are not limited to, color and perception, line and depth, metaphor and symbol, design and composition. The art teacher regularly integrates Colorado art standards with grade level content. For example, the art teacher teaches fifth grade students about movement and the human form while they learn about human body systems from their classroom teacher.

In music, students learn to demonstrate basic dynamics, tempo, and meter in all grade levels. They use a variety of instruments, ranging from recorders, to guitars, to hand bells. Students learn rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic patterns by performing music and writing their own songs. Students have several opportunities to engage in performances, from choir concerts and singing the National Anthem at a Rockies game to writing and producing their own musical in 6th grade.

Fifth and sixth grade students have the opportunity to participate twice a week in beginning and advanced band and orchestra during the school day. Band and orchestra students perform twice annually for their parents and our community.

Health and wellness is important at Devinny. In physical education classes, students learn about nutrition, health-related fitness, sport educational concepts, and cooperation and team building. To encourage an active lifestyle, students learn basic sports skills and actively participate in obstacle courses, physical games, organized sports activities, and fitness tests. Our P.E. teacher integrates the use of technology and math skills to help our students track their progress toward physical fitness goals throughout the year by using iPads, graphing, and Quick Response (QR) codes.

Digital citizenship is a binding strand throughout Devinny’s curriculum. To meet International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards, our Digital Teacher Librarian (DTL) works with every student to practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology. The DTL works in collaboration with classroom teachers to help students learn how to use technology effectively to create and communicate information and conduct research. The DTL provides professional development to teachers in software programs such as Google Classroom, Schoology, Google Sites, and Think Central (Math Expressions). These programs enhance our daily instruction as students are given a variety of modes through which to express their learning. Extension technology opportunities such as the Hour of Code and the GT Tech Challenge are offered annually.

Each classroom is equipped with a SmartBoard, several iPads, and Chromebooks for student use. In addition, the school houses seven mobile computer labs with laptops and Chromebooks that can be checked out by teachers as needed and are available for student use before or after school.

Though foreign language is not offered as part of our regular curriculum, students may select to take classes in Spanish, French, or German through Word Play, a before- school program. Additional enrichment

programs are offered before and after school, including chess club, Science Matters, LEGO-inspired engineering classes, and Destination Imagination. Opportunities such as these support the life-long learning of our students.

Through these other curriculum areas, students enhance their skills in writing, reading, math and communication, helping to build the whole student. Students display both their work and talents at local and regional art shows, local concerts, and performances.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

The staff at Deviny believes in the power of systemic practices to address the diverse learning needs of all of our students, including those in our GT center program. Our systemic practices have proven to be successful for all students because there is consistency regarding expectations, resiliency, and academic rigor. Our kindergarten through sixth grade systemic practices are:

- * Math Workshop
- * Writers' Workshop
- * Daily 5/ Readers' Workshop

We have found that the implementation of systemic practices allows our students, even those struggling academically, to build on their learning from one grade level to the next. These practices also provide a seamless transition of support. For example, our K-3 classrooms utilize systematic phonics instruction and this instruction provides the foundation for students' reading and vocabulary skills in intermediate grade levels.

Additional systemic instructional strategies that are utilized in order to ensure consistency for all learners:

- * Mentor texts
- * Anchor charts
- * Success criteria
- * Conferring with students
- * Learning targets
- * Goal setting
- * Close reading strategies
- * Mechanics and Grammar Learning Continuum

During our weekly PLCs, grade-level teams use their students' assessment results as they plan instruction. Every six weeks, we hold MTSS (Multi-tiered Systems of Support) PLCs in which we look more intensely at students' performance. At these meetings, all stakeholders, including our principal, instructional coach, English Language Learner (ELL) teacher, grade level teachers, interventionists, learning specialists (special education), and school psychologist use data to determine areas of celebration and needs for our students. Within these meetings, teachers examine data on students who may be struggling or in need of academic advancement. The team determines possible strategies and next steps. Students are then assigned to an appropriate intervention or enrichment.

Currently we have students working on various reading skills in the following researched-based intervention programs: BURST Intervention, REWARDS, and Read Naturally Live. Student progress and skills are reviewed every six weeks to ensure we are targeting individual needs.

Deviny uses technology to enhance students' learning and teachers' instruction. Our students are exposed to a variety of software and web-based tools. Teachers utilize Google Classroom and Schoology, allowing students to complete assignments online. This technology helps teachers provide support as students complete their work. To engage students and provide differentiation in mathematics, teachers utilize Think Central for homework, additional practice, and extension.

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

Devinny takes great pride in our ability to use data to drive instruction. Our teachers use a broad body of evidence to make instructional decisions including classroom performance, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), DIBELS, CMAS ELA and Mathematics, Amplify Reading 3-D/DRA2, and our school-wide writing assessment. Our comprehensive approach to using assessment results and sharing data with our students and parents helps us to maintain a high level of student achievement.

During our weekly PLCs, we work with all stakeholders to ensure we are meeting the needs of all of our students while ensuring that our instruction meets the high expectations of our school. During these meetings we explore new professional learning, dive deeper into planning and instruction, discuss and create formative and summative assessments, and plan for differentiation in instruction.

The planning that takes place in PLCs is always informed by data. For example, Devinny has identified writing as an area of need for our students. We have focused on K-6 systemic writing practices and we administer a school-wide writing assessment given in August, December, and April to monitor student progress. Following each administration of this assessment, teams hold a scoring conference during PLCs to ensure reliability as they score student work together using a Common Core aligned rubric. Teachers then identify trends in their students' writing. The writing data drives intentional planning, instructional practices, student goal setting, and the differentiated instruction teachers provide for all students. This process is not limited to students who are struggling but also includes students on grade-level and those who are demonstrating advanced needs. Students needing additional support receive targeted instruction during writers' workshop. Those requiring additional challenge are flexibly grouped into higher grade-level classrooms to address their unique educational needs. Our teachers follow similar practices using the math and reading data we collect.

As partners in education, we believe in the importance of communicating assessment results with students, parents, and the community. In school, students are taught over time to understand their own assessment results and identify and monitor goals based on their current level of achievement. Parents receive feedback on student work in Friday folders as well as through emails. Assessment results and explanations of the data are discussed at fall and spring parent-teacher conferences and also sent home when they become available. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers for additional explanations when necessary. School-wide and grade-level assessment results are shared with the parent community at monthly accountability meetings. At these meetings, the principal requests feedback and solicits questions on assessment results as well as input on the school's Unified Improvement Plan (UIP).

Our comprehensive approach to using assessment results and sharing data with our students and parents helps us to maintain a high level of student achievement at Devinny.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Devinny, our school climate and culture is based on our strongly supported Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework. Our belief is well summarized with the phrase “Building a Respectful Community Every Knight, Every Day.” Our PBIS program supports our students academically, socially, and emotionally. Visitors often comment on our students’ respect for each other, for their teachers, and other adults in the community. We build a culture of excellence by using PBIS language that is embedded in our daily “talk” with children. Devinny operates under a Knight’s Code of Honor that includes:

- * Respect - for myself, others, and our school environment
- * Responsibility - for my actions and my words
- * Kindness - treating others as I want to be treated
- * Learning - is valued in all settings

As a part of the PBIS program, students earn a Noble Knight slip when they get “caught” demonstrating Noble Knight behavior. Noble Knight slips then become a type of currency that students can spend at our Holiday Shop to buy gifts for others or can be used to enter monthly drawings for prizes.

In addition, each trimester teachers nominate one outstanding student that consistently exemplifies Noble Knight behavior. These students are recognized as our Knights of the Round Table and are given a special student-designed T-shirt and honored with their picture on a certificate that is posted in the main hallway of the school.

Students look forward to our end-of-year PBIS celebration. To earn this annual celebration, the student body works together to earn enough Noble Knights to unlock a special, school-wide event. In 2015, we celebrated with a whole-school (all students and staff) field-trip to the Denver Zoo.

Students aren’t the only ones honored by our PBIS framework. Staff members are recognized by their peers with “Knight-O-Mites” for demonstrating the following attributes;

- * Many hands make light work
- * Team player
- * Kindness and respect
- * Learning and growing

Recognition comes through the weekly staff bulletin, monthly drawings, and “Knight-O-Mites” posted on a bulletin board in the main office. A recent example reads, “Jill, thanks for helping with our intervention group. Your willingness to make all of our students your own is much appreciated.”

It is an honor when visitors come to our building and express their amazement regarding the noticeably respectful culture of our Devinny community. In reflection, we believe our culture and climate did not just “happen” but is the result of the hard work of our PBIS committee and the dedication to our framework by all stakeholders.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Devinny, we understand the importance of building collaboration between educators, families, and our community. In order to facilitate this collaboration, Devinny strategically engages parents and the community in school and classroom activities, educational support, and outreach. These activities include community events, such as Moms & Muffins and Dads & Donuts, Tissues and Tea for parents of kindergarteners and new families, a family movie night, and a fall activity night at a local corn maze. All

school activities - such as a spring carnival, the science fair, and the PTA Reflections program - rely on parent volunteers and the PTA to be successful.

Parents also spend countless hours assisting teachers in the classrooms. Our open door policy encourages parents to be a part of our school community. Classroom parent volunteers allow teachers to offer more specialized instruction to small groups of students.

To maintain strong lines of communication, Devinny staff employ multiple communication techniques. According to the 2015 TELL Colorado survey, 100 percent of participating teachers reported that the school does a good job encouraging parent involvement, that parents both know what is going on in the school, and are influential decision makers in the school. We communicate with parents through weekly principal voicemails and emails. Individual teachers contribute regular content to their own class web page which is accessible via the school's website. There is a 98 percent parent attendance rate at parent-teacher conferences. In 2015-16, more than 65 dads volunteered in the school through the Watch D.O.G.S. program.

Each year, our PTA works closely with the staff to enhance the educational setting and provide new tools for classrooms and the school. The annual PTA Fun Run is Devinny's one annual fundraiser. In 2015, we raised \$39,000 while also promoting physical activity. Over the past few years, Fun Run proceeds have been used to provide four Chromebooks for each classroom, offer specialized teacher training, fix the deteriorating baseball field, add a basketball court and hoop requested by the students, and purchase literacy and STEM materials. Additionally, the PTA helps individual classrooms by considering teacher requests. Through PTA, Devinny students have had the opportunity to participate in American Revolutionary War Reenactments and artist-in-residence programs.

Devinny also relies on professionals from the community to enrich the curriculum. We bring in naturalists, chemists, storytellers, historians, artists, and musicians to interact with students and broaden their learning experiences.

We believe it is critically important to contribute back to our community. Our student council runs clothing and food drives and organizes a workday at the Jeffco Action Center on an annual basis. Students pack Thanksgiving boxes for a local church, make ornaments and cards for hospitalized veterans, and collect donations for patients with leukemia.

3. Professional Development:

At Devinny, our teachers are dedicated, life-long learners. We value a collaborative approach to professional development (PD); members from each instructional team form Devinny's PD committee. Each year, the PD committee uses the previous years testing data to identify areas of student need and devise a training plan for the teachers that address those areas.

We have three, full-staff professional development meetings on a monthly basis, and we have frequent professional development during our weekly PLCs. Our principal and instructional coach attend Leading Student Achievement (LSA) days provided by our district. LSA days allow us to learn about a variety of teaching methods and then we bring back the best of the best of these days to our PD committee. Decisions are then made on how this learning should be delivered to our staff. Our principal, instructional coach, and teacher leaders provide the training to the rest of the staff, highlighting and demonstrating effective strategies. During our PD, we work in vertical teams to learn from each other and capitalize on the strengths of our colleagues.

For the past few years, Devinny has focused on improving our writing instruction. Our work in this area illustrates how we align with academic standards, support student achievement, and adapt our methods as we learn more systemic practices.

We began our work on writing instruction with the development of the writers' workshop. However, after launching writers' workshop our teacher leaders realized that our students were still struggling with their

grammar and conventions. Based on this information, our teachers developed a writing conventions continuum. Our PD committee supported this work by facilitating book studies for our K-6 teachers using Grammar Study (Angelillo) and Mechanically Inclined (Anderson). As students became more aware of grammar expectations, our professional development focused on how teachers can provide timely descriptive feedback to students and support their goal setting. After all of this, the PD committee recognized that students still did not have a clear understanding of grade-level writing expectations. This led to PD focusing on helping teachers establish and explain clear learning targets and success criteria in writing.

As the students' technical writing skills improved, we learned that our students were not thinking critically about their writing. The PD committee then shifted focus to helping teachers formulate and ask higher level questions. In an effort to have students think more deeply we introduced close reading strategies and Socratic Seminar to help students transfer their critical thinking into their writing. While our focus over the past several years has been improving student writing, teachers have also transferred these successful instructional practices into the other content area.

4. School Leadership:

Effective principals know they can not lead in isolation. The more open a principal is to spreading leadership, the better it is for student learning and teacher development. Devinny has a principal who exemplifies this philosophy. She shapes a vision for the school, creates a collaborative culture, cultivates leadership in others, and improves instruction.

Devinny's motto, "Every Knight, Every Day," exemplifies this vision, and it is the foundation for ensuring high standards and success for all students. The standard of excellence at Devinny is not set by the principal but inspired by her. In addition, our principal chooses a yearly theme for the school that helps focus teacher and student growth. This year's theme is "Reflection." Through this theme, the principal has asked her staff to reflect daily or weekly on their educational practices. One teacher recently said that the practice of reflection has, "helped me gain a better understanding of my students and their needs which has helped me refine my instructional practices."

The collaborative culture at Devinny promotes staff retention which ensures continuity for the students and their families. Teachers express gratitude for the opportunities to work together planning, learning, and sharing in the everyday challenges of teaching. Teachers feel valued at Devinny.

Our principal cultivates a shared leadership through the structures she has implemented. All teachers are asked to be members of various leadership teams. These teams include Professional Development, Leadership Advisory Team (LAT), PBIS, Technology, and Student Council. LAT acts in an advisory capacity, providing teacher input on school decisions such as budget, calendar, master schedule, and staffing. All staff members' voices are heard, and each is given the opportunity to contribute to our school community.

Our principal is truly an instructional leader and leads by example. Teachers' practices are strengthened through on-going instructional feedback provided by our principal through formal classroom observations and in other settings. Using the teacher evaluation process, she uses reflective conversations to help teachers identify areas of strength and encourages them to continue taking risks to become more effective practitioners. Teachers value the feedback they receive and feel it helps them grow in their instruction. Each year our principal asks staff members to provide feedback so that she can reflect on her leadership and determine areas for professional growth.

In the high-stakes environment that education has become, it is refreshing to work with a team of leaders that feels more like a family than an institution. It takes shared leadership, under the guidance of a strong principal, to achieve this.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At Devinny, we have a long-standing belief that teachers' and students' abilities are developed through hard work and dedication~ a growth mindset. Our staff strives to ensure the success of each and every one of our students by modeling the characteristics of Carol Dweck's growth mindset to embrace challenge, persist in the face of setbacks, see effort as a path to mastery, and learn from feedback.

Students learn to embrace challenge at Devinny. Teachers provide opportunities for students to construct their learning and struggle through problem solving. Teachers support students to overcome roadblocks that arise while learning new concepts. At times, discovery can be frustrating. However, our teachers model resilience, showing students that through perseverance, mastery of learning will occur.

Our teachers create a love of learning for our students which transfers to resilience and grit. When our students are faced with challenging problems, they do not give up or quit but continue to do their best. The passion to learn instilled in our students motivates them to embrace challenges with confidence and pride. They believe in their efforts and strive for excellence. This resilience is taught to go beyond the school walls. A recent student who became homeless was supported by the staff with breakfasts, bus passes, homework assistance, and clothing, and in return, he made every effort to be at school every day, even having to transfer via public buses and light rail to get to Devinny. We have seen this student's perseverance and commitment to learning continue into middle school.

A growth mindset leads to an enhanced sense of community at our school. This mindset is not limited to our classrooms but extends to our entire staff, including our secretaries, paraprofessionals, custodial staff, interventionists, and learning specialists. Students recognize that every member of our staff believes in them, and students are eager to share their accomplishments. It is not uncommon to see our secretaries working with students who have asked to celebrate their accomplishments in reading and writing, or problem solving with a student who is having an off day.

Devinny's growth mindset creates motivation and creativity and enhances relationships in our building. Our rich history shows our success comes from the passion and belief that all students will reach our high expectations. Every staff member in our school believes that the success of each one of our 545 children is their responsibility. While the students and parents play a crucial role, our staff members know that ultimately it is our responsibility to guarantee each child reaches the high expectations at Devinny.