

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. Julie S Howell

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

Official School Name Mesa Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4801 Norris Street

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

City Clovis State NM Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 88101-5932

County Curry County

Telephone (575) 769-4470 Fax (575) 769-4472

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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 Jody Balch E-mail jody.balch@clovis-schools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Clovis Municipal Schools Tel. (575) 769-4300

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 Kyle Snider
(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):
- 12 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 17 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	45	43	88
1	47	52	99
2	43	42	85
3	37	50	87
4	38	44	82
5	36	46	82
6	0	0	0
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	246	277	523

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 77 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 21 % White
 - 1 % 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: 15%

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	40
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	37
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	77
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	523
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.147
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

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

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

Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 27 %
Total number students who qualify: 143
8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
50 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
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 3 Other Health Impaired
- 9 Specific Learning Disability
- 25 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 11 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	24
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	3
Paraprofessionals	7
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 22:1

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	98%	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. 2000

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

To provide opportunities for students to build a strong academic understanding and to grow in character by providing a climate for learning, a challenging curriculum, character building experiences, and thoughtful learning strategies.

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

From the opening of Mesa Elementary School in 1990, it was a magical place of learning for all students. Twenty-six years and a Blue Ribbon award in 2000 later, Mesa continues to provide a wonderful learning environment for all students. Since the school opened its doors, Mesa has been a high achieving school with a focus on academic achievement and learning through multiple intelligences. Our campus wide belief is that all students can learn and through guided instruction that is research-based we can help all students reach their greatest potential. The outstanding staff strives to develop positive relationships with students and their parents in order to reach our goal of what is best for our students.

The community of Clovis, New Mexico, has always been known for its farming and ranching, dairy industry, railroad, and Cannon Air Force Base (CAFB). While the other industries remained strong and an integral part of the community, the BRAC commission threatened to close CAFB. Cannon was saved and reorganized as a Special Operations base in 2006. These changes greatly affected Mesa Elementary School, as 43% of its current overall enrollment is military. The change in mission at CAFB meant a change in the personnel trained here. Longer deployments, greater stress carried over to the military child, and younger military personnel changed the overall makeup of nearly half of our school population. Through all of these changes, Clovis remains a strong community with an incredible focus on the schools and the children to which they serve.

Academic achievement remains an integral part of Mesa Elementary's success and growth. Beyond a rigorous curriculum and high expectations, Mesa offers several programs to help students be successful. Our gifted and talented class offers a learning program for students to interact and learn from one another with an enriched curriculum. Mesa won first place at the state-wide Destination Imagination program last year where public speaking, story telling, and integrated technology comprised the final presentation. Additionally, students who have a parent that is deployed may participate in our Military Support Group, which meets twice monthly. Our school counselor, along with the CAFB liaison, work with these students to build connections within the school and help them learn how to handle the emotional side of deployments. Our school fully supports health initiatives like 5-2-1-0 and Jump Rope for Heart. Students love the interactive learning and are actively involved in these programs. Last year alone, Mesa raised \$13,000 for Jump Rope for Heart, the greatest school contributor in the state. Students have the opportunity to participate in the spelling bee, geography bee, and for the first time at Mesa, a Spanish spelling bee. Participation in book clubs, board game challenges, and other events allow students to develop an interest and continue to expand their knowledge base.

Mesa has an involved parent group that not only helps with daily tasks like making copies for teachers and listening to young readers read. These volunteers coordinate events like our school carnival, fall and spring fundraiser events, fall and spring book fairs, and also work to create our yearbook. Parents plan and organize Teacher Appreciation week activities and a luncheon for all staff members. We have bi-monthly PAC meetings where the principal shares information regarding school events, volunteer opportunities, and presents a lesson on topics like reading PARCC reports, helping your child read at home, using math manipulatives to problem solve, and others. Mesa parents are also involved in helping to plan our monthly character assemblies where members of the community come and present how good character choices help them in their career, sport, or other activity. Our character assemblies are a big hit with parents and students alike.

Mesa was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon school in the 2000-2001 school year and was the first school in the community of Clovis to receive such a distinction. Mesa has worn the Blue Ribbon award like a badge of honor with a plaque on the exterior of the school building and the Blue Ribbon seal on the marquee. With a high mobility rate for our community and the change in mission at CAFB, those who are moving to Clovis are impressed with the status of our school as a National Blue Ribbon school, knowing the achievement level required for such a distinction. The student population of Mesa has changed over the last ten years, with more families having both parents work outside of the home and a greater level of families that qualify for free and reduced lunch. Being recognized for its continued efforts and closing the achievement gap prove that no matter what changes occur in a student population, the dedication of the

principal and staff can overcome that. The most impressive change to Mesa has been how it continues to strive to meet the demands of more rigorous testing and the changes involved with those tests. As the expectations have become more scrupulous, our staff and students have worked to meet that measure.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Mesa strives to provide quality education to all students with a rigorous curriculum that aligns to the Common Core Standards. We present our students with the skills they need to problem solve and analyze problems critically, ensuring they are prepared to succeed in college or the workforce. Our core school curriculum includes Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science.

At Mesa, we believe that the language arts curriculum is the fundamental building block for all other content areas. Therefore, we place a heavy emphasis on developing the foundational skills in reading that will help our students thrive in all other aspects of their schooling. We utilize a combination of balanced literacy, reading and writing workshops, guided reading, hands-on phonics, an adopted reading program, and a supplemental grammar program. Through music, movement, and projects, teachers work hard to connect with all learners. We focus on the development of phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency in grades kindergarten through third grade, and place a stronger emphasis on vocabulary and comprehension in grades three through five. Students are exposed to fiction/nonfiction paired texts across all grade levels, and develop their close reading strategies by learning to annotate text, completing multiple reads for different purposes, and analyzing the content and structure of each text.

Writing is taught using the 6 Traits of Writing, Whole Brain Writing, and Writing Workshop to provide our students with meaningful practice in composing narratives, informational pieces, and persuasive compositions. Students work through the writing process, working with partners and small groups to peer edit, and conference with the teacher about their writing.

We have added keyboarding and online research activities to our instruction to better prepare our students to flourish in our technological world. The complete language arts curriculum is guided by on-going formal and informal assessments. Triangulating our data from different assessments helps us provide flexible grouping to differentiate small-group instruction that is provided on a daily basis to all students, including the students that are struggling with the content and the students that are ready to be challenged with more rigorous tasks.

Our instruction in mathematics has gone through a big change in the past few years. We have enhanced our instruction to better equip our students with the skills needed to face the current demands of higher education. Our goal in math is to encourage our students to become independent thinkers by providing them with a toolbox of different strategies that will help them problem-solve in many ways. We employ the district adopted math textbook along with Number Literacy tools and strategies that fit into the curriculum. Through hands-on instruction, real world applications, and higher order questioning, students are learning there is not always just one way to get to answer, nor always just only one correct answer. Our students understand that getting the right answer is not as significant as explaining the thought process behind the strategies used to get to that answer. Our math curriculum encompasses not only concrete and abstract concepts appropriate for each grade level, but also addresses the content and academic vocabulary necessary for students to express their mathematical thought processes thoroughly. We vertically align our teaching to make sure students are provided with scaffolded and challenging math instruction across all levels.

While science and social studies are integrated into our language arts curriculum, we feel strongly that these two subjects should stand-alone for a more concentrated focus. The New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks offer a starting point for our instruction.

Social Studies instruction includes history, government, and geography. Although we have an adopted textbook, teachers rely heavily on reenactments, field trips to historical sites in our state, online resources, and a subscription to Time for Kids to help supplement our instruction in a more engaging manner. Kids participate in a “Living Museum” in fifth grade, and all other grade levels attend this interactive museum. Fourth and fifth grade students also get the opportunity to participate in an annual Geography Bee.

Science is taught using the scientific method as a basis, and teachers draw on experiments and investigations to teach students data analysis and observation/journaling skills. Our curriculum provides a strong foundation for chemistry, biology, physics and human anatomy, and all fourth and fifth grade students participate in an annual Science Fair, where they get to showcase their experiments to the school and community. Guest speakers are invited regularly to present information on weather and careers in science.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to the core curriculum, all students at Mesa are offered supplementary instruction in other areas: Physical Education (P.E.), Music, and Computer Technology. Students in all grade levels attend P.E. and Music twice a week for forty minutes. All students visit the computer lab daily for forty minutes, while also having access to technology in their classrooms for individual and group learning opportunities.

In P.E., students learn about the importance of good nutrition and exercise. Students explore good exercise habits through play, games, and competitions. The basic rules and standard play of different sports like baseball, basketball, volleyball, and soccer are introduced to students, and good sportsmanship is a major part of the physical education curriculum. Non-standard games, are introduced to students to help them develop specific skills addressed in the curriculum. Students also participate in various events throughout the year to connect good health with real world scenarios. Students are actively involved in Jump Rope for Heart and with 5-2-1-0 Let's Go, where good exercise and eating habits are the focus. Hula-Hoop contests, Jump Rope competitions, and an annual Mesa Olympics are events where students get to showcase their good exercise routines and healthy food choices. With the help of the community, students participate in a Health Fair where they experiment with healthy food choices and discover how to add good nutrition to their everyday diets.

In Music, students welcome an experience-based approach to learning about music. Students discover music utilizing the Kodaly Method to learn some basic musical skills, as well as the reading and writing of music. Throughout the year, students are exposed to a variety of music and learn all the orchestra instruments and sounds. All students get hands-on practice with musical instruments including keyboard/piano, recorders, and the guitar. Students also engage in square dancing, folk dancing, and moving to the rhythm and beat of different sounds. Music instruction is also used to introduce students to other cultures and traditions. Students in third through fifth grades put on a musical performance for the school and community each year. Students try out for parts in the musical performance with some students singing solos, others singing in small groups, while others have speaking parts. All students have a role in the choir and practice songs diligently for weeks in preparation.

In computer lab, students receive technology-based instruction. From kindergarten through fifth grade, students learn the basics of computers and how to work independently at their own desktop computer. Four days out of the week, students work at their individual level in a computer program (Success Maker 7) to help them master concepts and skills in both reading and math. SM7 is Common Core aligned and provides students the opportunity to work at their own instructional level to pace themselves for grade level targets. School wide incentives, and recognition for achievement presented at our Character Assemblies each month motivate students to reach both a grade level target and to make an individual one-month gain for both content areas each month within this program. Additionally, students complete a keyboarding class once a week in the lab. All students learn about the home keys, where their fingers should be on the keyboard, and how to type more efficiently. The computer lab is also a place where students learn the basics of troubleshooting computers, how to care for our technological equipment, and how to use technology to enhance our learning in a productive way. Each classroom is also equipped with three student desktop computers and two ipads, and these are utilized to further enhance our technology curriculum. Each classroom is equipped with an Apple TV that allows teachers to display content and have students work with that content in an interactive way, while also making learning fun for them. Students use classroom devices to test on Accelerated Reader leveled books as well as do research for units of study or inquiry projects.

Additionally, Mesa implements the Accelerated Reader program. Students conference with teachers and set a nine week personalized goal. Students are motivated to read throughout the school year by getting to see where they are in their goal and celebrating each book with their classmates and teacher. After a book has

been read, students move to the computer based portion of the program where they take a reading practice quiz.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

We have found two major areas that help us meet the diverse and individual needs of students. Getting to know students as learners and collaborating with each other in developing effective instructional approaches are focus areas our school has adopted. Knowing what kind of learners we have helps us develop lessons that will engage and challenge students. By triangulating many data points throughout the year, we are able to determine how we can more effectively reach all our students.

Creating intervention groups that change as kids change and designing lessons that grow as kids grow has helped us provide both differentiated and explicit instruction. Relating the content and standards to real-world problems, activating prior background knowledge, and connecting the standards across all subjects help our students see the relevance and importance of their learning. To accomplish this, we collaborate daily with our colleagues. We discuss what works and what we need to change both as a grade level and for our classes and students individually. Working to also align our teaching vertically across the grades helps us develop lessons that are appropriate for students' developmental needs.

Mesa teachers believe the most important factor that affects student learning is their environment. We aim to create a positive learning environment by setting clear expectations, treating students with respect, and by modeling good character. We provide many opportunities for our students to interact in partners, small groups, and as a whole class. It is important to us that all students feel valued and accepted, so group work and partner work is closely monitored to ensure positive outcomes. The majority of our lessons require some form of student interaction, whether it be a class discussion, working in partners to share ideas or develop an end product, or working collaboratively in small groups for a larger project.

Small group interventions and differentiated workshop activities are instructional approaches teachers at Mesa use for language arts and mathematics. During this time students work both independently at their personal level, and meet with the teacher in a smaller setting to hone in on the skills they need to be successful.

Conferencing with students is another way teachers ensure academic goals are being met and are being adjusted as students' needs change. Teachers conference with all students about their data, their writing, and their reading and math goals. We work with each student to set personal goals for math and reading, and all Mesa students feel ownership of their learning.

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

Mesa utilizes data as part of the lesson planning process for both whole group and small group instruction. In grades Kindergarten through third grade, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is used to assess phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency. In grades Third through fifth, vocabulary and reading comprehension are measured by STAR reading. All grades utilize the following assessments: Discovery pulls in information for both math and reading that is normed by school, district, and state results, My Math Benchmark assessments challenge students in problem solving and reasoning, and Success Maker 7 provides teachers with a daily view of students' abilities in both math and reading. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment is given to students for math and reading in grades 3-5 and scores are reported to schools and families the following school year. The Standards Based Assessment (SBA) assesses science for fourth grade students. ACCESS testing is used for our ELL population.

Assessment scores are reviewed for both summative and formative assessments. One of the most important parts of a data review is the conversation between the teacher and the student. Overall achievement on an assessment, progress toward a goal, and a strategic plan for what the next step entails are important aspects of the partnership between the teacher and student.

Twice annually, students have the opportunity to formally share their assessment results with their parents during student led conferences. Data is also made available and shared regularly for parents with parent access to Skyward, our online grading system. Assessment reports are sent home with report cards each quarter and provide parents with information regarding their child's progress.

When viewing our PARCC results down to each subgroup, our boys scored significantly lower than our girls in reading. Our overall percentage of proficient and advanced was 47.8%. The girls scored 57.8% while the boys scored 35.6%, with the difference being 22.2%. This achievement gap follows a national trend of girls outperforming boys in reading categories, but was the largest discrepancy in our entire district when comparing proficiency levels for reading in this subgroup. The staff at Mesa is researching ways to engage boys more in reading through our instructional practices. Choosing text that is at a high interest level for boys and focusing more on challenges, competition, and engagement will help to close this gap.

Mesa is a high performing school, earning an A rating for 2014-15 on the PARCC. High levels of achievement begin with looking at student data, trends in grade levels and individual classroom teachers, as well as our school honing in on areas of weakness and developing a plan for addressing the need. Upholding excellence in both math and reading are achieved by maintaining a focus on our school priorities and making sure that everything we do fits within those constructs.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Mesa prides itself in providing an environment for all students and teachers to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. There are many programs in place that are designed to motivate students. All teachers work hard to find positive ways to reinforce good academic, social, and emotional behavior. Teachers are aware that different things work to motivate different students, so teachers are constantly researching and collaborating to motivate and engage all students.

One major emphasis is on character. Every month, the school focuses on one character trait from the Six Pillars of Character. Teachers incorporate lessons on the character trait into their everyday teaching, and students are engaged in activities that provide opportunities to practice that trait. At the end of the month, teachers choose one student from the classroom that has exemplified the trait. The school hosts a Character Counts Assembly to showcase these students and their exemplar character. Parents and community members are invited to attend and support the character winners. The students' pictures are displayed in the main hallway of our school for an entire month.

The principal also gets involved in acknowledging student success. The kids love to be acknowledged for their good character and their academic accomplishments. For character, the principal hosts "Battle of the Best," which is a competition between classes for best behavior outside the classroom. The class with the most points at the end of the month gets acknowledged in the character assembly. The principal also has "Pizza with the Principal" for the classes that show the best character during lunchtime. For academic motivation, the principal takes the "Smartie Cart" around the school at the end of each month and gives this candy to each student that meets their grade level targets.

To help students whose parents are in the military adjust to the deployments, we have implemented a Military Support Group. Eighty-four students in the fall, and ninety students in the spring met with the school counselor and the military liaison to learn coping strategies, ways to communicate better, and how to balance emotions with school.

Teachers feel valued and supported by both the principal and their colleagues. The Mesa family works to support one another with issues in and outside the school environment. Teachers get to share their knowledge with others in staff meetings, attend professional development and become a resource for other teachers, and have many opportunities to contribute to the goals of the school. Teachers feel that their hard work and experience are truly acknowledged and cherished.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Mesa believes that our student's success can be attributed to the teachers, the students, the parents, and the community. We strive to help our children learn how to become good citizenships of our community. To achieve that, we strongly believe that students need good role models to understand what becoming good citizens entails.

Community members attend our school throughout the year. One of the main areas community members participate in is our character assemblies. People of different professions come to our assemblies once a month to talk with the whole student body about good character and how it will relate to their adult lives. These community members make a strong connection with good character choices and how those choices have helped them become successful members of our community. Lawyers, doctors, policemen and women, firemen and women, athletes, coaches, and military airmen have all come to our school to encourage our students to make good character choices and do well in school. Students look forward to these assemblies, and look up to the community members that present. The presentations are often interactive, and send the message that students can follow their dreams while keeping their good character intact.

Community members also volunteer to judge our annual science fair. The judges are trained by the science fair coordinators, and then interview each fourth and fifth grade student one-on-one. This provides a wonderful opportunity for students to practice their formal English speaking skills with a respected member of our community, and the students gain a sense of value and accomplishment. The community also gets a glimpse of what students are working on in school and what they can achieve.

Students that need additional tutoring attend the Whiz Kids Program once a week. With this program, teachers are able to send in work to volunteer community tutors who work one-on-one with students who do not have the support at home. This program has made a tremendous impact on students that need additional individualized support.

Parent volunteers are important members of the Mesa family. These parents volunteer their time to come in and make copies for teachers, sort papers, listen to young readers, and help out with big art projects. Because of these parents, teachers can dedicate their time to planning more differentiated lessons that engage and challenge our students. The impact these parents make to student learning is valued and appreciated.

Every year, the teachers host a Volunteer Luncheon to thank our volunteers. Everyone that has volunteered his or her time throughout the year is invited to attend and enjoy a good meal prepared by the teachers. This is a huge success and builds lasting bonds between educators and the community.

3. Professional Development:

Much like the approach to leadership at Mesa, the approach to professional development is very collaborative and is tied to the principal's syllabus. Mesa has professional development meetings after school every other Wednesday afternoon. These meetings are centered on the three areas laid out in the principal's syllabus: data, engagement, and rigor. In partnership with the leadership team members, the principal plans professional development activities and learning that align with these.

Data has been a major focus area at Mesa for the past three years. When first looking at data, it became important to really understand the types of data we were reviewing as a staff. Student achievement data from multiple sources, understanding subgroups, and translating our understanding of data into effective classroom practices have all become a part of our professional development. After each student assessment, the staff works to analyze the data fully and decide what changes need to be made instructionally whether whole group or through interventions. Growing with the rigor of assessments and teaching our students how to be more prepared for that also became a priority. The district has been an incredible support as we all learn how to read new reports and decipher what each report entails.

Engagement has been another area Mesa really delved into. Using the book, *Teach Like a Champion* as a springboard, our staff looked at adopting those practices and how to bring them to life in our classrooms. Thinking about how to have a more engaged classroom environment begins at the planning stage as teachers are completing lesson plans each week. We adopted a collaborative planning approach as grade level teams and began to look at the how we are teaching, not just the what we are teaching. Pulling in practices such as those found from *Number Literacy* only heighten a students approach to problem solving and true mathematics.

Rigor is the other area we needed to focus on as a school. With the change in assessments, came the need for change in the way we instructing to prepare our students to do well. Grade level teams began to focus on writing Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions for units of study in both math and reading to be used daily. As a school, we began to ask ourselves if we were really teaching to student readiness levels, and truly challenging students on their instructional levels. As part of our research and study, we began to notice that teachers were asking rigorous questions, but we now needed to focus on only accepting rigorous answers from students. Teaching teachers how to teach rigorously moved into how to teach students to learn and perform at a rigorous level.

Building capacity as a school is an important aspect of professional development. The leadership team

members are engaged with their team of teachers to research, help with peer observations, and mentor new staff. Every academic activity at Mesa is led by a different set of teachers. The Science Fair is organized by two teachers not on the leadership team; the spelling bee is coordinated by a grade level; the geography bee is planned by another grade level. All teachers are expected to serve and own an academic activity at Mesa. With each opportunity for professional development outside of our district, teachers are selected to attend and come back to teach what they have learned. Some valuable learning opportunities stem from this interaction during professional development and help to build capacity within our building.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy of the principal at Mesa is collaborative, one that is working hand in hand with the leadership team and staff. Mesa has a leadership team that is comprised of five members: the principal, the numeracy leader, the literacy leader, the technology leader, and the character leader. These five members work together to develop school focus areas on the principal syllabus. Every other member of the staff is assigned a team to be a part of and works together for a common goal within their content area.

The syllabus is written each year by the principal, which then goes to the leadership team for further development and approval. The focus areas on the syllabus are broken down into three main areas: data, engagement, and rigor. Everything our school does in the area of professional development is centered around these focus areas. Our leadership team meets twice each month to analyze our growth in meeting the goals on the syllabus.

Each member of the leadership team has a role in making these school goals a reality and everyday practice. Each team works to support data driven instruction, greater student engagement, and rigorous teaching.

The numeracy team works to understand math data monthly, specifically PARCC math scores, SM7 math scores, and the My Math curriculum benchmarks. Researching engagement strategies and using strategies and tools to enhance mathematical understanding is a big part of what this group seeks to achieve. Making sure that our practices align with the Common Core State Standards and meet the level of rigor required in mathematical practices is another focus area.

The literacy team works to understand literacy data each month. Data from PARCC, SM7 reading, Accelerated Reader, and Imagine It benchmarks is reviewed to assess student growth and alignment. Best practices for differentiated instruction in literacy, workshops for leveled reading and writing, and using rubrics to determine those levels all work together to build rigor in the curriculum.

The technology team works to ensure our practices are supported in a technologically rich environment where staff and students alike have access. Making technology part of the teaching practices in an interactive way leads to the engagement piece for teaching and learning.

The character team works to make character education part of everyday instruction. Using character education activities to teach good character choices and being able to build upon that for independent choices are what this group strives to accomplish. This group has developed Mesa Manners, which is a set of rules and guidelines for behavior choices for students. This power point is reviewed with students every nine week period.

The syllabus is evaluated at the end of each year to look at our areas of success and areas that need further analysis. The success of each syllabus goal is in direct alignment to student achievement and teacher effectiveness ratings from their overall evaluation.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

There are many important factors that contribute to making Mesa successful. A loving environment, dedicated teachers, and good administration all play into the dynamics that help Mesa thrive. The one practice that makes Mesa so successful, though, is our ability to analyze our data and utilize that information to drive our instruction.

This one practice greatly affects every teacher and every student. Teachers consistently use various data points to gather information about both their teaching and their students. All teachers are provided with professional development to learn how to read reports and analyze data, and more importantly, on how to take that data to modify their instruction. With the information gathered, teachers can really reflect and determine if their instruction was effective, if students need more direct/whole group instruction, or if differentiated/small group instruction is needed. This practice is beneficial to new and seasoned teachers alike. For new teachers, this practice provides a way for teachers to learn effective teaching strategies and help them plan for future lessons. Teachers can see what is working, what needs to be revised, and where the instruction needs to go moving forward. Veteran teachers can see if their best practices continue to be effective with modern generations, or if the population/culture has changed and they, in turn, have to also change their instruction.

With data analysis, teachers can work together to find what is working in each classroom, and share and build on that knowledge. Data is broken up into individual classes, so each teacher can reflect on their own teaching, and then data is broken up into grade levels, so that teachers within that grade level can learn from each other and plan based on the evidence. The data is also looked at school wide in staff meetings where teachers can share out the strategies that are making their instruction so successful. This data is what forms the school goals, grade level goals, and each individual teacher's goals.

Students benefit from this practice because they get customized, differentiated, and personalized instruction tailored to their individual needs. Teachers triangulate all data to help them develop their small group interventions, the individual learning goals for each child, and to group students to increase their learning.