

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Ronia K Davison

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

Official School Name Sadler Arts Academy

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 800 Altamont Street

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

City Muskogee State OK Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 74401-4309

County Muskogee

Telephone (918) 684-3820 Fax (918) 680-2513

Web site/URL http://mpsi20.org E-mail ronia.davison@mpsi20.org

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. Mike Garde E-mail mike.garde@mpsi20.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Muskogee Public Schools Tel. (918) 684-3820

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. Mike Ebert
(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):
- 9 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 11 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	17	25	42
1	22	19	41
2	21	25	46
3	22	22	44
4	14	30	44
5	24	25	49
6	21	29	50
7	9	17	26
8	11	12	23
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	161	204	365

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 24 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 16 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 20 % White
 - 34 % 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: 1%

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	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	5
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	369
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.014
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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, Mandarin

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 53 %
Total number students who qualify: 194

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
36 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.

- 3 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 1 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 2 Orthopedic Impairment
- 3 Other Health Impaired
- 10 Specific Learning Disability
- 17 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: 6
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	16
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals	0
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 23:1

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%	98%	97%	98%	98%
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.

Rigorous art integrated instruction at Sadler Arts Academy provides the inextricable link between caring and cognition. Our motto: Creating a better citizenry through arts education.

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

Sadler Arts Academy is open to any student in grades Kindergarten through eighth on a space available basis. Entry is determined on a desire to come, and not on special abilities in the arts. Sadler is not on a quest to see what our students can do for the arts, but rather what the arts can do for them. Sadler uses an arts-rich education to foster a love of learning. In accordance with school board policy, a simple screening process for attendance, discipline, and leadership is part of the criteria for determining entry to Sadler Arts Academy. A formal, but simple application involving both student and parent is provided to everyone wishing to attend.

PART III – SUMMARY

Sadler Arts Academy serves a very diverse population of students racially, socio-economically and academically. Well over half of our students live in poverty, and by many would be considered “at risk,” despite these perceived obstacles for success we defy statistical probability and year after year Sadler Arts Academy is Muskogee’s highest performing school.

The faculty of Sadler Arts Academy is committed to core beliefs which have become the foundation for the success of the school. In 1996 former Sadler Elementary School was closed, for it had earned the dubious distinction of logging the worst test scores in the history of standardized testing in Muskogee Schools.

Though the old school just closed, plans were already afoot for the new school which would be housed in the previous building and would serve both a magnet population and many of the former students. After a year of study, traveling to arts schools all over the nation, a community committee made the decision that the old Sadler Elementary would be reborn as the new Sadler Arts Academy. It was decided that Sadler would use integrated arts instruction as the center stage in the regular classroom.

A cadre of arts-minded educators was selected from a pool of applicants. They were charged with the labor intensive job of creating an environment to support the arts integration focus of the new school. This involved both changing the physical environment of the school as well as educating the staff on how to teach through the arts. Ongoing conversations between the teachers about arts infused instruction became a cultural norm at Sadler Arts Academy and remains as a foundational component in the school’s constant state of development, refinement, and evolution.

The staff spent the summer cleaning, purging, and creating an inviting physical environment that would serve as the backdrop for the arts. Focusing on grade level instructional objectives, the school purchased a vast collection of authentic children’s literature. These great books filled the once barren library shelves and became the springboard for arts integrated instruction. When the doors of the new Sadler Arts Academy finally opened, students entered a place like no other: an inviting environment and caring teachers armed with the arts.

By the end of the first year, the staff had refined the vision to include five core beliefs: The arts are intellectual disciplines of substance and deserve center stage in the regular classroom. Literature is the thread that binds all aspects of the curriculum together. All students are gifted and talented. An inclusive environment is best for most students. We should all practice being kind to each other, tenderhearted, and forgiving. Sadler’s faculty continues to hold steadfast to these principles.

As an arts integration school the faculty realizes that creative thinking is not a station one arrives at, but a means of traveling. We know there is usually some degree of risk taking when children are being creative. Children need the freedom to artistically explore their world without judgmental criticism or imposing adult standards of perfection. What children can do is important, but more importantly what they feel about what they do is crucial to their success. Our team holds the pedagogical belief that we strive to join artistic learning with what our students think and with what our students feel.

Early on in the journey at Sadler, we discovered that a quality piece of literature would be the thread that binds the regular academic subjects to the arts. Literature is often the instrument of instruction in the classroom, whether learning science, history, math, or language arts. Often, students respond in writing to something we have read in class. Art projects are inspired by the books read. Whether it is a gallery of presidential caricatures or Matisse illustrated similes, literature figures into all work.

When visitors tour the building they immediately sense the difference in the school climate. They see children working cooperatively, having academic conversations, defending their thinking, and creating art that shows what they know. All of these scenarios are made possible by Sadler’s culture of mutual respect.

As an example of the commitment to giving students only quality arts experiences, Sadler's signature performance piece is "Nutcracker." It is more than a school program; it is a community event and a tradition. Nutcracker has not only been a remarkable learning experience for Sadler's students, it has been the impetus for parent involvement.

As a result of arts infused instruction, Sadler Arts Academy registered the biggest test score gain in the state its very first year. As test scores continue to soar, we have consistently earned High Performing or Reward School status.

Sadler Arts Academy has been a success story in every way. The power of the arts has changed the lives of children and their parents and the teachers who teach them.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

As a commitment to quality teaching Sadler provides consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn. Stakeholders know the expected rigor. Using Oklahoma Academic standards our core curriculum is designed to be robust and relevant to the real world.

Pupils learn all content area through arts integration and the use of great literature. Students read fiction, non-fiction, short stories, and other appropriate literature around which instruction is inclusive of all academic domains. Textbooks are used as a resource. Students read books and use art to express their newfound information. For example students read Sarah Plain and Tall, The Egypt Game, or Maniac Magee to learn about land forms, Egypt or Valley Forge respectively. We also satisfy our science and social studies objectives with authentic learning experiences, including S.T.E.A.M exploration, science fair projects, History Day presentations, guest historians, and partnerships with local, state and national museums. This inclusive format creates more time and space in the curriculum for close and careful reading across all content areas as well as allowing the opportunity for creative expression through a variety of art forms.

Sadler students have rigorous academic conversations which are dependent on rich literature. Teachers insist that classroom experiences stay deeply connected to the literature, and that students develop habits for making evidentiary arguments both in conversation as well as in writing to assess comprehension of a text.

We have determined that writing needs to emphasize use of evidence to inform or make an argument rather than the personal narrative and other forms of de-contextualized prompts. While the narrative still has an important role, students develop skills through written arguments that respond to their ideas, events, facts, and opinions.

Sadler students constantly build the academic vocabulary they need to access grade level, complex literature. By focusing strategically on comprehension of pivotal and commonly found vocabulary, teachers constantly build students' ability to access more complex texts across the content areas.

We have deepened our focus on math by implementing the Everyday Math Curriculum and College Preparatory Math. Teachers focus intensely on only the concepts that are prioritized in the standards so that students reach strong foundational knowledge and understanding and are able to transfer mathematical skills and understanding across concepts and grades. Our educational team carefully connects the learning across grades so that, for example, fractions or multiplication spiral across grade levels and students can build new understanding onto foundations built in previous years. Teachers can begin to count on deep conceptual understanding of core content and build on it.

At Sadler, we teach more than “how to get the answer” and instead support students' ability to access concepts from a number of perspectives so that students are able to see math as more than a set of mnemonics or discrete procedures. Students demonstrate intangible understanding of core math and science concepts by applying them to new situations. Sadler students are writing and speaking about their understanding. We know math is the language of the sciences. Teachers provide opportunities at all grade levels for students to apply math concepts in “real world” situations including science applications.

Sadler students are practicing and understanding. There is more than a balance between these two things in the classroom – both are occurring with intensity. Sadler teachers create opportunities for students to make use of skills through extended application of literary, written expression, historical, mathematical and scientific concepts. Each book in our library has been selected by a committee of teachers because it references the curriculum to be taught at some time during a child's academic career.

We use formative and summative tests, reflective writing, benchmarks, weekly content assessments, anecdotal records, and teacher observation to develop a list of students to be targeted for before or after school intervention. Teachers meet weekly with the site administrator to analyze where students are, based

on the monitoring strategies. We address instruction and assessment at each grade level through conversations that are both planned and incidental. We do look at the previous year's test scores, and in that way we address weaknesses of individual students from one year to the next in an effort to get the student where he/ she needs to be academically.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Sadler, quality arts integration is paramount! We use the arts as the vehicle for teaching; they become the core of a school-wide culture of high standards, preparing students for a workplace where excellence is the norm. As part of our commitment to quality education and character development in our students we engage our students in project based learning that includes theatrical productions. Our students paint the set, run lights and sound, help backstage, and perform on stage. They develop personal character, good work habits, promote ethical behavior and create a caring community by using this platform to inspire, set a positive example and mentor others. Even though the students are giving to the community, it is the students, in the end, who receive so much more: the art of movement, poise, self-confidence, coordination and a sense of purpose.

At Sadler we understand the link between nutrition, physical activity, and learning. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for students to achieve full academic potential, complete physical and mental growth, and well-being. To this end, Sadler has developed well-planned and effectively implemented school nutrition and fitness programs. Students use fitness trails, play organized sports, gymnastics, coordinated movement, agility training, and physical conditioning. Our staff models the significance of healthy behaviors by sponsoring running clubs, physical fitness challenges and other forms of daily exercise.

Sadler uses technology as a progressive approach to learning. Our students have equitable access to quality digital learning tools that support individual, group and team collaboration and facilitate meaningful educational projects. Each day all learners at Sadler interact with technology in some format whether it's a learning program, doing research or creating digital reports. Access to interactive texts, videos, animations and other features in digital instructional programs provides dynamic and personalized lessons. The Rosetta Stone program carefully sequences the material for our English Language Learners and other students that are interested in immersing themselves in foreign language.

Language is integrated daily into all areas of study at Sadler. Foreign languages are especially prevalent in our music, art and dance classes. French is the language of ballet with words like *changementment* (a jump changing foot position), and *pas de deux* (step of two). Italian is the language of music, where students learn terms like *diminuendo* (a decrease) and *allegro* (lively and fast). Art classes provide children with exposure to languages and cultures from around the globe. This year a few of the terms students learned included *Gyotaku* (literally fish rubbing from Japanese), *collography* (*Collo* from the French for glue and *graph* from the Greek for writing), and *der blaue reiter* (the blue rider from German artists).

Throughout the year we study artists from different countries. As we study art we talk about the language and culture of the artists. Our younger students love to speak like the focal artist would have spoken by learning phrases, numbers or colors in foreign languages during group time. Our older students are interested in translations of the titles of artwork. When they see a Franz Marc titled "Die Grossen Blauen Pferde" or "Gelbe Kuh" they ask "How do you say that?", and "What does it mean?" This gives a natural opportunity to increase their awareness of foreign languages.

With a grant from the Chinese Consulate and American Government two citizens from China spend time on our campus bringing language and cultural awareness to our students. One student's parents working in China annually present integrated lessons on Chinese culture with a heavy emphasis on language acquisition.

The arts integration format that is foundational to all learning at Sadler is the perfect platform for teaching foreign language. Our environment ignites a passion of discovery which inspires students to continually seek knowledge about other cultures whether it is in language, music, art or drama. From instructional practices of teaching Latin and Greek word origins, to speaking Spanish or French to enhance a lesson, to dance the

Pas deux in the Nutcracker, to singing a German lullaby in a first grade musical, or to dramatize the Russian Fiddler on the Roof, Sadler Arts Academy has always used language and cultural immersion to inspire students to look beyond their environmental confines and seek understanding of our world.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Each week during Data Team Meetings and Professional Learning Communities educators review data and make informed instructional decisions. We use collected data from computerized learning modules, formative and summative assessments, quarterly benchmarks, anecdotal classroom observations and other varied forms of student responses, as well as, parental input. Student performance is analyzed and intervention strategies are put in place. The Response To Intervention (RTI) approach is utilized to help us differentiate instruction by creating multiple paths so that students of different abilities, interest or learning needs experience equally appropriate ways to absorb, use, develop and synthesize concepts as a part of the daily learning process at Sadler.

This intervention framework allows for our students to take greater responsibility and ownership of their own learning, and provides opportunities for peer teaching and cooperative learning. We use interventions that are preventative as well as proactive. We provide visual learners with pictures, graphics or key words written in bold. Oral discussion, presentations and group collaboration are offered for auditory learners. Our kinesthetic learners receive rhythmic or movement experiences, hands on tasks, and an alternation of active and passive tasks to give them the tactile exploration they need. We provide student choice in the ways that students are allowed to demonstrate knowledge. They often have a varied selection of projects and can choose the one that accommodates their individual response preference.

Changes are made to core instruction delivery to address skill deficits revealed by disaggregated data strands. Additional learning time is provided to students to enhance their opportunities to learn. Parent collaboration is utilized. Parents of students at Sadler Arts Academy on Academic Progress Plans meet monthly with the classroom teacher to develop specific interventions. Our students work in small, flexible skill groups. Progress monitoring, and formative assessments are administered per schedule to determine progress. Logs of intervention efforts and student progress are compiled. Documentation of student RTI is recorded in daily lesson plans.

Sadler has high expectations for all students. We have reinforcement and monitoring strategies in place. The intervention process allows teachers to stay ahead of the game and maintain our reduced student failure rate. Each student comes to our school with different strengths, interests and needs. We know our students learn best when the curriculum and instructional strategies are united with their skills and abilities. We make sure our students receive the support they need that will ultimately lead to their success.

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

We use on-going assessment data to analyze and improve student and school performance. At the beginning of each year we administer assessments to gather baseline or initial placement data. The initial placement data is recorded and used as the foundational score that directs the specific instructional path for each student. In all testing grades we disaggregate the data from the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test and compile weakest to strongest models. Data Teams meet weekly to review student performance, on-going assessment data, and to make strategic plans for continued achievement. This sustained review of data and the resulting collegial conversations helps Sadler Arts Academy to maintain high levels of academic performance.

Annually the site administrator sends a formal letter to all Sadler parents informing them of our schools progress. A detailed report of each grade level's performance is included in the letter. The state of Oklahoma uses the A-F Report Card to rank school performance.

A careful examination of all testing subgroups is compiled. If a discrepancy of ten points or more exists, strategic plans are devised to help prevent this from being an annual occurrence. We determine what contributing factors led to the discrepancy and take corrective measures, such as, improved testing

environment, RTI's, instructional modifications, before or after school tutoring, or interest inventories. These instructional adjustments help ensure increased student success in the next testing cycle. Special education students spend most of their academic day in the inclusive environment of the regular education classroom. Students obtain strong foundational knowledge and conceptual understanding and are able to transfer mathematical skills and understanding across concepts and grades through these meaningful interactions with their typical peers.

At Sadler all students are taught as though they are gifted and talented. Emphasis is not placed on how smart kids are, but rather on how kids are smart, recognizing that success for all is a given. The development of critical intelligence is one of the primary purposes of schooling. Content is no longer considered the only thing worth knowing; higher order thinking skills and interpersonal life skills are also valued, as they are in the workplace. It is this strong belief that helps Sadler Arts Academy maintain high levels of academic achievement.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Our character education initiative has profound impact on our school culture, student behavior and academic achievement. Our school culture is built on the premise “be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving” which have been foundational watch words guiding teacher interactions with students since Sadler opened. Our school motto is Creating a Better Citizenry Through Arts Education which are byproducts of our overarching premise, “Through the Arts we learn to Care!” Hence, Sadler’s touchstone is “The Art of Caring.” From the consistent caring attitude of teachers in the classroom to the weekly Rise and Shine Character Assemblies, Sadler continually promotes our core beliefs which foster an environment of mutual respect between staff and students. We use literature to teach children to read, but also to explore the dynamics of actions and consequences. Our consistently high test scores bespeak the fact that all students perform at academically high levels. Students explore through project based learning, collaborative projects, hands on research, and writing activities. With this diversity of instruction we quickly discovered that all students possess unique gifts and talents. Sadler’s students are given the opportunity to construct their own knowledge through participation in real life, meaningful experiences.

Beyond the survival needs, and safety and security needs, teachers and students must feel like they belong and that they are accepted. The “feeling of belonging” and contributing plays a big part in our success. Along the way, it became something we as adults internalized. Sadler teachers are more willing to take on challenging projects and be involved in innovation and creativity because our “whole” at Sadler is much, much bigger than the sum of our parts. All teachers know they are valued by the unending support they continually receive. The things that have been accomplished at Sadler that make us a family are more about meeting needs than anything. Education is not really about who the students are, or who their parents are. It is all about how we interact with each other. Sadler is safe place for not only for student to take risks and learn but also for its teachers. Character is the key ingredient “In 1996, we came to “save” a forgotten segment our city’s children. We opened our school to them and they opened the doors of their hearts to us; we respected them, and they honored us; we disciplined them and they unconditionally loved us. In the end, we were saved.”

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We host student led conferencing, instead of traditional parent-teacher conferences twice annually. We have 96% parental attendance rate. Our students take the lead role in these conferences by which they build their self-efficacy through being able to articulate their strengths and weaknesses. Character and goal attainment are included in the student led conferences. Sadler Arts Academy builds strong bonds between home and school. This close communication helps yield our very high homework compliance rate. Our student’s character shines not only within the walls of our school, but also when we leave for competitions and field trips. We receive numerous compliments and affirmations from community members about how mannerly and polite our students behave. Good character runs deep at Sadler Arts Academy.

Sadler has an army of mothers, fathers, and grandparents who work in the school daily, assisting and promoting the mission of the school, through everything from fundraising to making costumes, to building stage sets, to reading to students. This group is loyal and dependable. Volunteers give willingly to the socio-economic “haves” and the “have nots.” Traditions have developed at Sadler which directly involve parents. In addition to Nutcracker, Sadler hosts an annual Constitution Parade that weaves its way through the poorest neighborhood in Muskogee. Neighbors cheer us on as we parade by. Assemblies have evolved into meaningful school-wide instructional events, often approached with a sense of reverence. (i.e., the annual Veterans Day Assembly). Weekly we gather for “Rise and Shine.” Various grades and classes perform for their peers in a family atmosphere, where standing ovations are common.

Sadler has built many tangible relationships with community agencies and our students donate countless service hours to local organizations. Recently we worked in tandem with the Muskogee Parks and Recreation to create a new running trail around our school. Sadler envisioned the creation of this “Wellness

Walk” to promote healthy living and to honor two teacher’s spouses who had succumbed to cancer. We understand that giving students purposeful tasks has powerful and deliberate outcomes. Working with our community achieves two principles: fostering student’s self-motivation and engaging families and community members as partners. What better way for the youth of Sadler to learn about taking care of their community and promoting healthy living than by working with the present stewards of their community.

3. Professional Development:

The professional development approach at Sadler Arts Academy is to engage our teachers with ongoing learning that is scientifically research-based, data driven, and demonstrative of best practices. Our professional development offerings are based on longitudinal data analysis of OCCT’s, Benchmarks, the Muskogee Literacy Framework, and Student Performance Indicators. Teachers are provided with professional learning to enhance their instructional delivery to meet the needs of an ever changing student population. Training is offered for district adopted and state board approved comprehensive mathematics and literacy curriculums. We train on specific Oklahoma Released Test Items and Testing Blue Prints.

During PLC meetings, teachers work collaboratively to seek and share learning with their goal being to enhance their effectiveness as professionals for students’ benefit. The following premises are embraced during PLC time: supportive and shared leadership, collective creativity, shared values and vision, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice. Collegiality is formed. Collective knowledge of staff is increased as well as, lateral and longitudinal learning.

To keep learning active and renewed, our site leadership team selects a period in art history for our yearlong study. We have studied Impressionism, Art Nouveau, Fauvism, and Expressionism just to name a few. Our site specific professional development needs change along with our art theme. Teacher leaders plan and provide professional development for our staff that provides foundational knowledge on the designated art study. The theme studies are opportunities for not only integrating art styles and techniques into our classroom, but also the explicit vocabulary connected to the art genre study.

Casual conversations of substance take place each day at Sadler. Our school culture only supports discourse that is positive and of a growth mindset. A substantial amount of professional learning transpires during impromptu faculty discussions on what is working instructionally to improve student learning. Over the years Sadler has pulled in many professionals but we have learned the greatest expertise is in this building. The best experts are often the ones in the trenches. The most promising forms of professional development engage teachers in the pursuit of genuine questions, problems, and curiosities in ways that leave a mark on our practices.

Our consistently high test scores bespeak the fact that all students perform at academically high levels. This doesn’t happen by chance, quality decision making takes place in data teams. Informed decisions about student progress and how to respond to their learning needs spur our success.

4. School Leadership:

Twenty years ago, a professional educator told Sadler that a lasting program has to be bigger than just one person. The Sadler staff worked hard to create an arts integrated school. Our first leader and principal retired six years ago. Our current principal became the second leader. What makes her excellent as an administrator is the fact that she has not only maintained our vision, but built upon it, and expanded it significantly. She has held true to the shared beliefs and dreams of Sadler Arts Academy concerning the best practices of education and how children learn. It was her unflinching dedication and loyalty to doing the right thing for all students that empowered all children who entered her classroom and has now empowered all teachers who become part of the faculty of Sadler Arts Academy.

The leadership philosophy and structure at Sadler Arts Academy is high expectations for all, created through a culture of mutual respect and shared leadership. Our principal believes so strongly in the significance of this supportive attitude and the effect that it has on our school, our students, our faculty, and our parents, that she felt it was the foundation for Sadler to become first an Oklahoma School of Character

and then a National School of Character. Through our principal's leadership, drive, and persistence, Sadler Arts Academy became a 2014 National School of Character and continues to promote quality character initiatives.

The school leader has been determined to enhance the already rich learning environment for the students, faculty, and parents of Sadler as well as improve upon some of the aging equipment. She has written and encouraged other staff members to write for grants which have brought new walking trails to Sadler, garden areas, benches, metal sculptures, an outdoor classroom, a new sound system, video system and a large retractable screen for the auditorium. Working with community members on a bond project our site administrator and a team comprised of lead teachers, the librarian, and thematic specialists planned, designed and equipped a new state of art Library Media Center, dance studio, STEM room and new computer lab. This site leadership team meets weekly to plan activities, functions, learning experiences as well as stewardship of site funds. It is this effort above and beyond the basic learning, reaching to touch the students' lives that make the shared leadership at Sadler a true success story.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our success is made possible by a deep-rooted, set of core beliefs at Sadler Arts Academy which are part and parcel to who we are and how we deliver instruction. Teaching through the arts using a quality piece of children’s literature as a bridge between the traditional academic subjects and the arts is known as art infusion.

Literature can be viewed from mathematics, scientific, social studies, language, and an arts perspective. Studies are unlimited as literature becomes the basis for learning. Sadler doesn’t limit the learner to the information contained in a textbook or program; we use many sources of information, in developing open-ended learning situations.

Children come to school as creative beings that are intensely curious about their world. They are natural scientists, musicians, storytellers, artists, mathematicians, historians, actors, and dancers. Through arts integration much of this innate curiosity and creativity can be furthered. In this competitive world, we cannot afford to do otherwise. Through arts integration knowledge gained from literature sets is expressed artistically, whether it is through a tessellations project, through the creation of a mural depicting the major battles of the American Revolution, or through a collaged map showing the various organ systems of the human body. Through encounters with paintings, poems, and piano sonatas, students can enter a world of ongoing dialogue that can move them from narrow interest and absorption in self to an unfolding curiosity and a growing concern for the world in which they live.

Teachers involved in delivering art infused instruction must understand the over-arching purpose of arts integration and in particular, their role in the process. Teacher buy-in to the case for the arts requires examination of deep-rooted assumptions about learning, and about implementation and delivery of any educational program. The faculty of Sadler Arts Academy is committed to these basic core beliefs or tenets, which have become the foundation for the success of the school.

Each year, amazing things happen at Sadler Arts Academy. We expect, and they perform, we challenge and they rise to the occasion, we offer and they accept, we suggest and they ask more questions. From a rousing swing dance to a student’s impressionistic painting, from an “exploding” science lesson to the unexpected “ah ha,” wonderful moments called learning take place. We appreciate our students for making Sadler Arts Academy, a place like no other, where teachers learn from students every day.