

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Wade Sanford

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

Official School Name South Side Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1229 Howell Avenue

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

City Worland                      State WY                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 82401-4029

County Washakie County

Telephone (307) 347-3306                      Fax (307) 347-6150

Web site/URL  
http://www.wsh1.k12.wy.us/Southside.html                      E-mail wsanford@wsh1.k12.wy.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. David Nicholas                      E-mail dnicholas@wsh1.k12.wy.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Washakie County School District #1                      Tel. (307) 347-9286

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. Don Bryant  
(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

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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

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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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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	17	34
1	13	21	34
2	9	19	28
3	21	13	34
4	19	24	43
5	21	16	37
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
<b>Total Students</b>	100	110	210

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 0 % Black or African American
  - 25 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 73 % White
  - 2 % 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: 5%

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	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	202
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.054
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %  
2 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: 40 %  
Total number students who qualify: 80
8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %  
30 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.

- 1 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 1 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 10 Other Health Impaired
- 11 Specific Learning Disability
- 7 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: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	12
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals	9
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 17:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	95%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.

Treat others how we want to be treated, do our best every day, make our community the best place to live by making good choices.

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

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South Side Elementary is a K-5 school. Staff, students, parents, and the community of Worland are very proud of their high-achieving students. South Side Elementary is one of three elementary schools in Worland, WY, and is located in the southern portion of town. The school vision is to provide all students great and equal opportunities to learn in a safe school.

South Side is built upon the beliefs of rigor, relevance, and relationships. We make learning relevant to our students by providing them with powerful learning opportunities. To capitalize on those powerful learning opportunities, we develop appropriate, positive relationships with our students to create a safe climate for student exploration and learning. Also, the appropriate climate helps us achieve the desired culture, providing students the skills they need to be successful in a global community. The stakeholders know the school programs are successful when each and every educational opportunity is geared toward making connections from the classroom to the real world. We are committed to growing the whole child.

This culture of collaboration and shared responsibility has been embraced by teachers here for years, even before the PLC process was adopted by our district. This is evident in how schedules have evolved to allow time for staff to collaborate both vertically and horizontally for numerous purposes. South Side Elementary houses four of the six grade level team leaders in the district, showing how we have been leaders in guaranteed curriculum delivery district wide for a considerable amount of time. When the former principal of many years was replaced, the transition of leadership was made seamlessly.

Success of the South Side students is discussed and evaluated frequently. The building leadership team measures success by collecting and using data. The student performance assessments include: District Standards, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment, the state-wide assessment instrument (PAWS) assessment, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and others. Other methods of assessing success include behavior referrals, discussions with stakeholder groups, climate surveys, etc. The South Side teaching staff meets regularly to consider data, curriculum concerns, staff development and other ideas to determine how best to meet the needs of South Side students. South Side is unique to Worland because of our commitment to a culture of collaboration, communication, and shared responsibility toward meeting the needs of all students.

Support programs and services include help in Title I reading and the RTI process in reading, special education staff members, English Language Learner (ELL) staff, para-educators, after school homework club and speech/language assistance to name a few. Evidence of this collaboration can be witnessed daily in all corners of our school, where small groups work with adults on focused academic goals tailored to meet the needs of each group. A visit to after school homework club will show that students K-5, who need additional time and support, get that help from highly qualified certified teachers.

South Side School has a school/community agreement that is ratified by the parent group each year. The South Side parent group is very good at helping the building leadership team by being the advisory group and providing Family Fun Nigh Activities. The South Side teachers also help with these activities and this has been a great way to get parents and other community stakeholders involved in our school. South Side Elementary has a system wide commitment to excellence in both the teaching staff and South Side students. This is demonstrated by South Side Elementary receiving a mark of Exceeding Expectations in all categories within the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act each of the past two years.

As we have a high number of students demonstrate proficiency either on MAP testing or the PAWS assessment, we must strive to improve the area of student growth, continually challenging each student by engaging them in and affording them powerful learning opportunities. We are continuing to improve and refine our purposeful attention to documenting and using results at all levels of schooling. We engage in purposeful efforts toward empowering effective leadership throughout the school. We strive to effectively research and integrate additional technologies (with appropriate staff development) into South Side Elementary. Fully recognizing that the school is 'not there yet', staff indicate that the teaching staff is 'moving in the right direction'.

Worland, Wyoming is located in the Big Horn Basin in the north-central part of the state, and is surrounded by mountains, shielding the area from extreme storms and wind, featuring more than 300 days of sunshine a year!

Worland has a diverse economy featuring several major manufacturing and distribution companies, a large Bureau of Land Management office, a well-respected medical center, oil production, farming and ranching, and world-class telecommunications capabilities. Worland offers a business-friendly environment in a community-oriented, small town atmosphere. Our school is a gem of this community.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

South Side Elementary School’s curriculum is based on the Wyoming State Standards. Our staff works cohesively with each other to provide a learning foundation that meets the needs of each student. We provide the necessary instruction to meet each student’s abilities, while challenging each student with rigorous, rich, course content. In addition, our staff works closely with parents and the community to build relationships that promote student growth and success. To empower students to become independent, life-long learners, South Side School holds high expectations among its staff and students, while encouraging and supporting all stakeholders in the learning process.

**Reading/English Language Arts:** Our reading and language arts curriculum provides a strong foundation of literacy skills. While teachers use *Journeys* by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt as a core program, they also supplement with a variety of research-based materials and best practices to strengthen, enrich, and reteach the reading and language arts foundational skills. Teachers use whole group instruction to deliver explicit instruction of critical literacy concepts. Then, through small groups they help students develop as readers based on their needs, challenges, and sometimes preferences. They also guide readers by supporting their ability to use a variety of reading strategies. Flexible reading groups are made according to the observation of student growth. Students are also expected to work and read independently to establish good reading habits and practice their skills and strategies. This strong foundation strengthens each student for success in all areas.

Our core writing curriculum is facilitated through *Step Up to Writing*. This program helps teachers provide strategies to support specific standards in the areas of writing, vocabulary, language, reading, and speaking & listening. Teachers provide the scaffolding and instructional sequence to support all students, no matter their writing ability, in becoming independent writers who write with increasing sophistication. Furthermore, students learn to produce organized, clear, and coherent writing pieces. We focus on the three main text types in our state standards: informative/explanatory, opinion, and narrative writing, along with learning how to respond to text in written format and enriching student vocabulary. In addition, our school participates in the *Young Author’s Writing Competition* in which students go through the full writing process.

**Math:** Our math curriculum provides a strong foundation of mathematical skills. Our core program is *Go Math!* By Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. This research based program provides best practices that help empower our students to become mathematically literate students and meet the cognitive expectations demanded by the standards. Through scaffolding, teachers use direct, explicit instruction and then allow students to converse using rich, math vocabulary, while exploring concepts with others. Students then practice applying the concepts, use reasoning methods, analyze, and synthesize to solve complex problems. In addition, teachers differentiate instruction and materials to meet the needs of each student. Math manipulatives are used to help students with a hands on approach and help engage the learner.

**Social Studies:** Our curriculum follows the strands of the Wyoming State Standards. In our kindergarten through second grades, our teachers integrate many of these concepts throughout their reading. Some of these main themes include: citizenship, community, self, cultural, patriotism, time, changes, and places. The third through fifth grades build upon and these themes, while adding government, democracy, Wyoming history, production, distribution, and consumption. Additionally, some of these themes are integrated through our Music department and tie into our community outreach.

**Science:** Our curriculum follows the Wyoming State Standards. Kindergarten through second grades integrate science themes throughout the day and use an inquiry based approach to engage learners. Third through fifth grades also uses an inquiry based approach along with the scientific method to cover the content areas of earth and space, physical, life science, and biology. Some of these themes are extended throughout the day within the reading and math curriculum. The areas of health, nutrition, and self-awareness are addressed in our Guidance lessons presented by our school counselor.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Movement and activity are important for brain stimulation and academic success. South Side students benefit from Physical Education, 4-5 times a week for 30-45 min. Students in grades K-4 participate in PE 4 times a week. Grade 5 attends PE 5 times a week. Students learn about and play various sports, dance, gymnastics, Zumba, and participate in a cup stacking tournament. Students learn about rules, sportsmanship, cooperation and teamwork. They also learn about safety, nutrition, health and personal choices. All students have recess 3 times a day which provides for physical activity. In addition to PE, students take swimming lessons for 10 days at the local pool. Classroom teachers include Brain Breaks as needed. Students in grade 2 learn about snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. They end the unit with a trip to the mountain. Movement and activity are important for brain stimulation and academic success.

Students receive 10 art lessons during the school year. Each lesson is 45 minutes with an art instructor. Students receive instruction on technique, art medium, and tools. Students develop expression and an appreciation for art. Each student has artwork that is displayed in the annual spring art show at the local museum.

All students in grades K-5 attend Music instruction 2 times a week for 30 minutes. Students sing, develop rhythm, and read music. Students learn about different instruments and how they are played. Grades K-3 present a winter performance. Grade 3 participates in an Arbor Day Program and performs at the Care Center for Valentine's Day. District wide 4th graders present a Veterans Day Program in the fall with a second performance at the Senior Center. Grade 5 performs at the annual Festival of Trees for community outreach. District wide 5th graders participate in a spring program. Various grade levels travel to attend The Nutcracker Ballet. Students attend performances to learn how to be an audience.

Students receive classroom guidance from the Guidance Counselor twice a month for 30 minutes. In addition to this, K-1 participates in the SELF Program (Social Emotional Learning Foundation) once a week. Both programs teach social skills and strategies for problem solving. The counselor also meets with individual students as needed.

K-5 students attend Technology Lab once a week for 30 minutes. Students learn basic computer skills and keyboarding. They learn to navigate through the internet and web pages. Students develop grade appropriate skills. They work independently and responsibly while on the computer. Additional computer lab time is available to all grade levels for 30 minute blocks.

Grades 1-5 attend Library Skills in the Media Center. Grade 1 attends weekly, grades 2-5 twice a month. Students learn specific skills, proper use of the library and how to navigate through the resources in the library. Library time is also for the enjoyment of reading.

All students are invited to attend Writing Club once a week during lunch period. Students have the opportunity to explore a variety of writing styles. Students attend to write for their own purpose and enjoyment.

Students in grades K-5 receive instruction from the UW County Extension Office. K learns about poison identification, grades 1-2 practice proper handwashing technique, grades 3-4 receive training on nutrition and healthy food choices. The school nurse offers a Mother/Daughter Luncheon on physical changes for grade 5 girls.

Many students attend afterschool Homework Club. It is offered 3 days a week for 60 minutes. Students complete homework, read and receive assistance and reinforcement of skills as needed while in the school setting.

Grade 5 participates in the DARE Program (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) in the spring. This is sponsored by local police officers. Once a week, students receive information and the skills to make healthy, positive choices during the teen years and into adulthood.

Grade 5 meets with kindergarten students once a week. During this integration, kindergarteners receive one on one assistance when the 5th grader reads to/with them. Kindergarteners look up to their 5th grade role models. Grade 5 students begin to understand the influence they have on younger students.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Meeting the needs of all learners can be a difficult task. Our school takes pride in being able to achieve this. First of all, our teachers take the time at the beginning of the year to teach classroom expectations. These expectations include classroom procedures and good working habits to develop independence, stamina, and accountability so that less time is used for classroom management and more time is spent being on task. As for instruction, teachers use explicit direct instruction to introduce new concepts with students through whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction. Differentiated and flexible reading and math groups (RtI) are used to reteach, check for understanding, and further the learning process. Teachers use a scaffolding approach to help ensure student learning. They also work with each other to seek new ideas, instructional methods, and discuss student data to drive instruction. Through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) our teachers work collaboratively both horizontally and vertically for consistency in curriculum. Cooperative learning groups are often used for students to have active conversations and engage student learning, as well as take on certain roles for responsibility in their learning.

South Side Elementary teachers have a 30 minute time period that is utilized for math and reading interventions or enrichment. Some grade levels combine both classes and put their students into groups, while others just use their own class to group. A variety of research-based instructional methods and materials are used to differentiate during this intervention time. Teachers use informal observations, i-Ready diagnostic assessment results, DIBELS, and other assessments to group their students and know what type of instruction may be necessary and what skills are lacking. Our Title I Reading Specialist, Learning Support teachers, and para-educators help to provide small group instruction during this time as well. The most intensive students are provided with very systematic and targeted instruction utilizing research based programs.

Our classrooms use brain break activities such as Go Noodle, Brain Gym, brain exercises, SPARK, and just movement in the classroom to help engage students and improve learning.

Appropriate technologies are integrated into classrooms to enable learners to compete in their future world. This includes ipads, ipods, laptops, computer labs, and Promethean Boards. Teachers use a variety of technology programs to compliment the curriculum. Some of these include Promethean flipcharts, Think Central (Journeys Reading & Go Math), Moby Max, Lexia, i-ready, TenMarks Math, Renaissance Accelerated Reading, Flocabulary, Xtra Math, and Spelling City.

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

South Side School uses a variety of assessment tools to drive instruction. This includes: DIBELS, i-Ready, DRA, district standards, curriculum assessments, MAP, and PAWS results. These results are shared with appropriate staff members to decide on student RTI groupings. Teachers also share results with each student and parent focusing on student growth and mastery of skills and standards.

Our Building Leadership team uses MAP and PAWS assessment results to help develop school goals. Quarterly meetings between the principal, classroom teacher, special education teacher, and Title I Reading Specialist are held to check on and discuss students who made need further interventions.

Student data from multiple assessments such as PAWS, MAP, and DIBELS, is entered into a program called Milepost. Teachers view and enter interventions and create individual learning plans for student tracking. Progress monitoring is used monthly by the Title I Reading Specialist and reported to teachers. The Special Education teachers use Current Levels of Performance quarterly to check and report on identified students to appropriate stakeholders.

In addition, the Building Leadership Team meets frequently to review assessment data, and propose school improvement goals as a part of the AdvancEd school improvement process. Those proposed goals are reviewed and discussed with the entire staff. Those goals are tied to student achievement, performing at or above grade level, and also student growth. The growth goal is designed to address specific student needs for high achieving students, as well as continue to close the gap for those below grade level. Staff also reviews the annual results for South Side Elementary provided by the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA), which is based on student performance on the state PAWS assessment. This report provides feedback on school performance in the categories of achievement (proficient or above), growth (improvement in comparison to other students who started at the same level during the reported school year), equity (measuring the percent of students with below proficient scores during the prior year with growth that indicates they are on track to become proficient within three years or by the end of grade eight), and participation rate (all students are expected to participate).

Data is not only reviewed with district personnel, but also made available to stakeholders through web sites, state department public portals, district report/goal cards, in addition to being presented to the South Side Elementary PTO group annually at the September meeting and reviewed with parents at spring and fall parent teacher conferences.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

South Side Elementary School has built a culture that is often described by its stakeholders as a family. This description accurately depicts the core principle that guides South Side Elementary, growing the entire child. To achieve that goal, staff work tirelessly to form quality relationships with students and their families through frequent, respectful, thoughtful and genuine interactions.

The mission statement of South Side Elementary, "We will treat everyone the way we would like to be treated, we will strive to do our best in school every single day, and we will help to make our community the best place to live by making good choices." addresses the role we all play in contributing to an effectively functioning school. Respectful interactions, accountability for our own effort and actions, and making positive choices impact students in the academic setting, as well as social and emotional growth and well being.

In an effort to support and sustain the positive culture and climate, South Side Elementary has implemented student, staff and parent surveys annually, with data reviewed by the Building Leadership Team (BLT) and the entire staff, as well as implementing peer social skills groups as appropriate for students.

To foster the desired culture and climate, South Side Elementary focuses on the positive attributes that students possess, and then move to build and grow the entire student from those successes. South Side Elementary recognizes students not only in their academic achievement and growth, but also for positive contributions to our school community. Students and staff may turn in an act of kindness to the administration for consideration for an "I Notice" award. This is a recognition for a student that has gone out of their way to lend a helping hand to another, or put the need of another before their own. By creating the capacity to show care and concern for others, South Side Elementary has created a culture and climate that students, parents and teachers are excited to share and enjoy.

Teachers are supported in the monitoring of students through the scheduling of three dedicated one-hour collaborative periods per week with their grade level partner. These collaborative periods allow staff members to not only review the academic progress and need of students, but also their behavior and social emotional well-being.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Each year, South Side Elementary hosts "School Year's Eve" to begin engaging families and the community immediately. At this event, the school partners with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to feed families (grandparents and extended family members as well), and allow students and parents to meet their teacher and other staff members the evening before school begins. This positive interaction prior to school starting has increased communication between school and families by establishing the foundation of the relationship immediately, rather than weeks later at an open house event or parent teacher conferences. The partnership with the PTO also includes quarterly activities titled, "Family Fun Night." One such activity is Bingo for Books. This awards books as prizes, accomplishing the goal of putting books in students' possession, increasing reading at home, resulting in improved literacy performance.

Families are also engaged through a variety of events hosted by the school. The school offers a Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings for families to attend, as well as Breakfast with Dads, Muffins with Moms, parent meetings centered on academic programs, and parent involvement in class field trips and activities.

South Side Elementary is also active in giving back to the community as well. Each year from Thanksgiving to Christmas time, the school organizes a canned food drive in which all proceeds are donated to a local food bank for those in need. Students bring items in and they are tallied per class. Many times, the number of items doubling the number of students enrolled. South Side Elementary students also

participate in contributing to care packages sent to service men and women overseas. These items may include a variety of items, but most frequently include cards and letters written by students in support of those serving our country, as well as showing thanks for their service and for the freedoms secured and protected by their actions.

Finally, the South Side Elementary staff has pledged, on their own accord, to have nothing less than 100% participation in parent teacher conferences. Each fall and spring, a time slot is secured for parents of each student in order to discuss student progress, achievements and concerns. These conferences often include a student self-assessment to be shared at the conference at the intermediate grade levels. If a parent does not show for their appointment, South Side Elementary staff members reach out to the parents to reschedule to guarantee that the conference occurs through whatever medium necessary.

### 3. Professional Development:

South Side Elementary has thoughtfully developed a plan for success and effectiveness. This plan begins with each new teacher being assigned a mentor within the building, and possibly an additional mentor in a specific area of content if needed. Collaborative meetings are scheduled frequently between mentor and mentee to assist with knowledge and implementation of district and school policies, as well as guaranteed curriculum and effective instructional strategies.

South Side Elementary also has worked diligently to align with the district vision of job embedded professional development. The bulk of professional development within the school is accomplished through implementation of continued growth of Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Many of the South Side Elementary staff have attended professional development training or attended workshops related to PLC. Each grade level has three collaborative times each week for a cumulative total of two hours and forty-five minutes. Teachers also meet three hours each month with the entire district grade level instructors and instructional facilitators. The guiding focus of these collaborative times is the four pillars of PLC. What do we want students to learn? How will we determine if they have learned it? What will we do if they have not learned it? What will we do when they have learned it?

In addition, South Side Elementary staff has received training from certified instructors regarding Ruby Payne's work, "A Framework for Understanding Poverty," as well as a book study covering the book, "Opening Minds, Using Language to Change Lives." These trainings have been utilized to further the mission of South Side Elementary, growing the whole child and developing a growth mindset. This continued professional development models lifelong learning for South Side Elementary students.

Our principal also serves an instructional leader to facilitate professional development. He has attended a PLC summit and participates in administrative team book discussions of which instructional strategies and researched based best practices are identified and then discussed and cultivated into practice within the building through a collaborative effort.

South Side Elementary has also received training from instructional facilitators regarding new programs being utilized in writing and math. Instructional facilitators lead trainings and then visit classrooms to give feedback, co-teach, or model lessons for instructors in an effort to continuously improve instruction, student growth and achievement. Facilitators also collaborate with grade level teachers during their common collaborative time throughout the week in an effort to support and promote effective instructional strategies.

### 4. School Leadership:

Our school staff is unified in the philosophy being "treat everyone the way we would like to be treated, strive to do our best in school every single day, and help make our community the best place to live by making good choices." Concentrating on each student as a whole child enables unique academic, physical, and social-emotional needs to be adequately addressed with a consolidated goal in mind; facilitate growth in all of these areas to develop well-rounded individuals that are life-long learners with determination,

perseverance, and the resilience to contribute to their community despite obstacles that may be placed before them.

The Building Leadership Team is comprised of the principal, special education teacher, Title I specialist, and two primary and one middle classroom teachers who meet to discuss staff concerns, new information from conferences/trainings, information from grade level meetings, Building Intervention Team meetings, and Special Education team meetings. They analyze how to implement programs with efficacy, review student data, and evaluate what is pertinent to other staff members to be shared at weekly staff meetings. This team serves as a liaison to the staff regarding information from the District Leadership team as well as other agencies/groups. The principal and Title I specialist also are on the District Leadership team, ensuring communication occur seamlessly.

The Building Leadership construct brings together professionals with varied strengths and specialties providing the opportunity for the development of individual leadership skills. Functioning in a very cohesive and synchronized fashion, the team maintains a high level of professionalism and vigilance in keeping a student-centered focus and thoughtfully considering different perspectives to make decisions that benefit all students not just oneself. For example, to find each grade level collaborative planning time, PE and music are scheduled in subsequent order creating an hour block of time rather than thirty minutes. Another idea that was proposed for both grade level classes was for them to attend PE simultaneously. Despite increasing the number of students in this time frame, it provides a longer period to keep students actively engaged.

All staff members have ownership as they are all working together to support all students as well as each other as they grow as professionals. Of the 28 staff members, 23 have earned master's degrees and one currently pursuing a master's degree. The staff takes pride in being models of life-long learners as well as having the ability to step back and allow students to teach them and others.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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The one practice that has elevated South Side Elementary School to its level of consistent achievement is the vigilant effort to create and sustain a culture of collaboration, communication, and shared responsibility for the success of each child as a whole.

This culture is fostered by providing consistent collaborative times throughout the week for teachers to not only plan together, but also collaborate in a multitude of ways. This time is used to communicate with families and colleagues regarding student performance. Student data is reviewed weekly utilizing formative assessments, iReady progress monitoring, NWEA MAP assessment data, and data from the Proficiency Assessment of Wyoming Students (PAWS). By utilizing multiple student data points, we are able to identify areas of strengths and concerns for each student in an effort to remediate and enrich as needed. At the beginning of each year, teachers are given data regarding NWEA MAP assessments from previous years, as well as previous PAWS administrations, with students disaggregated into instructional grouping profiles in specific content areas and their subgroups. This information is discussed with the current grade level team, as well as collaboratively with the students' previous grade level team to plan specific instructional strategies.

Data is also reviewed in the areas previously identified through the utilization of the Curriculum and Associates computerized diagnostic and instructional tool, iReady. Students take an initial diagnostic at the beginning of the school year, and an additional diagnostic at the end of each quarter, with progress monitoring activities included throughout the quarter. This tool assists specifically in reading and mathematics, by providing an individualized lesson plan for each student with lessons specific to their needs or strengths.

Finally, all of these data points are reviewed minimally, once a quarter with the classroom teacher, principal, special education instructor, Title I Reading Specialist, and additional service providers as appropriate for each student. At this time, DIBELS assessment information is also reviewed, as well as any behavioral tracking data that is present.

The desired outcome of the collaborative approach to student review is to engage the entire team of resources surrounding students to meet their specific needs. By comprehensively utilizing the resources present and consistently communicating regarding each student's growth and achievement, we are able to identify any external contributing factors to student success or difficulty on an individual basis, sustaining a consistently high level of performance at South Side Elementary.