

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Barbara - Anderson

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

Official School Name Don Roberts Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 16601 LaMarche Drive

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

City Little Rock State AR Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 72223-4564

County Pulaski County

Telephone (501) 447-8300 Fax (501) 447-8301

Web site/URL http://www.robertseagles.org/ E-mail barbara.anderson@lrsd.org

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. Michael Poore E-mail mike.poore@lrsd.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Little Rock School District Tel. (501) 447-1000

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. Johnny Key  
(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. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. 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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
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 has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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 (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 30 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 7 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 5 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 42 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, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	60	77	137
<b>1</b>	67	75	142
<b>2</b>	73	82	155
<b>3</b>	82	77	159
<b>4</b>	75	77	152
<b>5</b>	77	63	140
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	434	451	885

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 13 % Asian
  - 23 % Black or African American
  - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 57 % White
  - 3 % 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 2015 – 2016 school year: 13%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	71
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	49
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	120
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	893
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.134
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %  
88 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Arabic, Bengali/Bengla, Bulgarian, Burmese, Catalan, Chinese (Mandarin and Zhongwen), Farsil/Persian, Greek, Gujarati/Gujarathi, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Korean, Krio, Malayalam, Marathi, Mongolian, Romanian, Russian, Sinhalese, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Urdu, Uzbek, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 31 %  
Total number students who qualify: 278
8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %  
102 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.

- 22 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 4 Mental Retardation
- 7 Multiple Disabilities
- 1 Orthopedic Impairment
- 16 Other Health Impaired
- 20 Specific Learning Disability
- 31 Speech or Language Impairment
- 1 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: 7
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	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	38
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	17
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	18
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	16

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.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**  
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2016.

<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 X

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.

Our Mission: Through on-going collaboration, innovative technology and an enriching curriculum, in partnership with our families and community, Roberts Elementary is committed to establishing a

distinguished tradition of excellence in a diverse environment by nurturing, inspiring, and challenging each student to value learning, respect and "always do the right thing."

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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The motto for Roberts Elementary is ‘always do the right thing’, suggested by our namesake, Dr. Don Roberts. Dr. Roberts was an exemplary educator and leader in our state and the Little Rock School District. Our staff, parents, and school community strive to embody this motto as we pursue and create an exciting and engaging learning environment for our nine hundred students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Roberts is a young school in our seventh year of operation. We serve a diverse population of students and parents with nineteen nationalities and twenty-eight languages represented at all grade levels. This diversity has created within our school a representation of a global society, and we embrace all the educational opportunities that come with that diversity. Not only are our students culturally diverse, but they come from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and abilities. Thirty one percent of our students are economically disadvantaged and ten and a half percent are serviced by our Special Education Department. Cultural, economic, and educational differences require much differentiation in instruction. By creating an environment of family and belonging for our staff, students, parents, and community stake holders, we are building a place where all children can explore their gifts and talents, discover the world, and open their minds to the possibilities of their future.

Our staff was carefully chosen to form a family of dedicated educators. Of the sixty-five certified staff members, thirty - two percent have achieved master’s degrees and nine are National Board Certified. The staff has accumulated numerous awards. Excellence is demonstrated in the classroom every day. Eight of our classroom teachers were recognized as Teachers of the Year from schools other than Roberts Elementary. One teacher received third place in the State Economics in Education Awards and two were the recipients of the National Milken Educator Award. Our administrators have been recognized for their excellence: Little Rock School District Administrator of the Year, Arkansas Music Association Administrator of the Year, PTA Council Administrator of the Year, History Teacher of the Year for the State of Arkansas, Little Rock School District Teacher of the Year, and Regional finalist for Arkansas Teacher of the Year.

This talented staff uses data to direct our academic plans and decisions, but students are never looked upon as a number. Through formative assessments, tailored and differentiated intervention strategies, and lots of encouragement, we have seen our students in every educational subgroup achieve educational proficiency. State-of-the-art technology is available at every level, with one-to-one computers at the third, fourth and fifth grade levels. Through our award winning Environmental and Spatial Technology (EAST) program, students work daily on creative and innovative ways to use technology to impact the world. Technology is used as a tool to enhance and extend the learning of our students.

Roberts is very fortunate to have an engaged group of parents who work tirelessly to support learning. Roberts' Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has been recognized as the outstanding PTA in the state of Arkansas for three years. Roberts has 100% parent and staff membership. Every year they sponsor the Book Bonanza, giving two books to each student. Each teacher and club is awarded \$100 to help with expenses. The PTA sponsors the Daddy/Daughter Dance, a Mother/Son Olympics, Back-to-School Picnic, an annual musical, World Fest, the Math/Literacy Carnival and Accelerated Reader Recognition parties. Last year the PTA spent over \$15,000 for Chrome books, a 3D Printer, and robots for the Science/Robotics Club!

The curriculum is built around integrated topics of study that are relevant and meaningful. These topics challenge learners to explore topics rigorously. Through historical characters and rich literature, our students are getting a sense of what it means to make a difference in the world. All fourth graders participate in an Ellis Island Experience, a first-hand immigration lesson. This year Roberts opened its own greenhouse enabling teachers to enrich their science teaching. Students participate in Science Fairs, Book Character Days, and an annual school-wide read-a-thon. We are shaping open-minded leaders, learning that through cooperation and commitment, problems can be solved and new ideas can come to life.

Creativity through the arts and physical education plays an integral part in our school experience. The Art and Physical Education departments sponsor poetry slams, talent shows, musicals, art shows, field days,

sports teams and Jump Rope for Heart. A partnership with Wildwood Park for the Arts allows artists to come into our classrooms to interact with students and enrich our curriculum.

This thumbnail sketch highlights the excellence that is a part of Roberts Elementary. Roberts has ranked among the top five schools in the state for the last three years. Through the eyes of our staff and students, the future is very bright. We would be honored to represent excellence in education as a National Blue Ribbon School.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

With an expectation of high achievement, we collaborate to create an integrated curriculum based on questioning and discovery. Our teachers function as facilitators and students are encouraged to explore and navigate their way through content to more effectively construct meaning for themselves.

Teachers at the primary level provide daily instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension through a comprehensive literacy approach. Literature discussion groups, small group guided reading and writing, independent and shared reading and writing all give kids a variety of ways to deepen their reading skills. The writer's workshop is implemented throughout the day as students write across the curriculum while developing their foundational skills. In the upper grades, we focus on six areas of language and communication: reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and presenting. Our children are engaged daily in writing across the curriculum. They are discovering a joy in reading through student led literature circles that focus on character analysis, making inferences, predicting, sequencing of events, and conversations that deepen their comprehension.

Ensuring the highest quality mathematics education for every student, we recognize that curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be data-driven, intellectually challenging, and attentive to the diverse needs of all students. Through the use of a backwards design planning process, reflection of both state and national standards becomes the focus of weekly grade-level collaboration. A safe and caring environment fosters a highly collaborative culture that allows students to justify their answers while critiquing the reasoning of others. Number talks, cooperative group work, hands on materials, rigorous instruction, and use of technology help students become confident mathematicians through stimulating growth and understanding. Our third grade economics unit provides experiences for students to act as entrepreneurs and have the opportunity to create and sell their goods for a profit. Roberts also has two district-wide award winning Mathlete teams, elevating mathematics to the importance of any athletic competition.

Social Studies content is covered through our integrated instructional approach. Our primary grades focus on building collaborative communities while studying about the communities around them. Our intermediate students engage history through the lens of a historian. Lessons are rich with primary and secondary sources which provide opportunities for students to engage in historical thinking; to raise questions and find evidence in support of their answers; to read historical narratives; and to consult historical documents. Students are exposed to multiple perspectives and are involved in the act of historical analysis and interpretation. We strive to bring social studies concepts to life for our kids through authentic learning experiences that place our children in the middle of historical events. Our staff teaches students to question the past, compare perspectives, and share conclusions through discussions, debate, artwork, writing, technology, and a wide range of projects. A prime example of this is in our fifth grade classrooms where students study the Revolutionary War through differing viewpoints. Students chose whether they are loyal to the crown or patriots fighting for freedom. They have to defend their stance on the Revolution during the course of the unit through their writing, poetry, and presentations that reflect their research of this engaging piece of our American story. Civic learning and engagement happens at Roberts. Students travel to historic Central High to culminate a unit full of novel studies, personal reflection, and intentional dialogue about civil rights issues. Veterans come to speak to students about civic duty and responsibility as American citizens. Students participate in mock elections that walk students through the voting process and the responsibilities of that right. Students study James Madison and the founding documents by analyzing the Bill of Rights and the value of each right to American citizens. Simulations occur throughout classrooms to enhance student knowledge of the branches of government and how they work to ensure the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Science is an exciting hands-on part of the learning experience at Roberts Elementary. Students in grades 3-5 visit the science lab each week and participate in innovative STEM activities that build excitement and wonder. Even in early grades, students are taking part in scientific investigations and learning experiences that build curiosity in our students and help them better understand how the world works. Through the Next

Generation Science Standards students study crosscutting concepts that help students make connections between the four domains of science: Physical Science, Life Science, Earth and Space Science, and Engineering Design. Concepts like "cause and effect" are focused on to help students develop scientifically-based views of the world. An inquiry based approach to learning takes place through students investigating the real world by studying concepts like coding, engineering and other practices that build, deepen, and apply their knowledge of core scientific ideas. Our robotics club, science club, and Lego club all help students develop effective scientific critical thinking skills that take students through the scientific processes in rich and meaningful ways. Our students showcase their scientific knowledge through district and regional science fairs.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Roberts is fortunate to have an amazing gymnasium that houses a rock climbing wall and a full basketball court. Promoting a healthy lifestyle for our children is an important part of our physical education program. Field Day is a high point of each school year as well as our martial arts week and golf week where local community experts come and help enrich the physical education curriculum. This year, all Roberts' students participated in "Jump Rope for Heart," raising more than \$21,000 for this cause. Even rainy days are full of physical activity during recess at Roberts. Our support staff help implement "Go Noodle" exercising during indoor recess to keep kids active during the day. Each year our students hit the pavement of downtown Little Rock as they participate in the Little Rockers Kids Marathon. The goal of our physical education department is to provide students with robust experiences in health, nutrition, and exercise that will foster lifelong healthy habits.

Our students also participate in at least two hours of dedicated music and art instruction each week. Through a variety of methods, including a piano lab, musical performances, and various visual arts media, our students are well-rounded and balanced. The music department has produced and performed *The Wizard of Oz*, *Aladdin*, *Annie*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and this year, *Beauty and the Beast*. One of our favorite school wide celebrations in the spring is "EPIC", which stands for "Every Person is Creative." Our EPIC night brings together families and community members from across our city to enjoy dinner together and view an amazing display of art throughout our building. Each child in our school is represented by at least one piece of visual art in the EPIC showcase. In addition, each classroom also takes part in a stage presentation that incorporates all areas of music and movement. By exploring their creativity and natural gifts, and knowing that those gifts are valued, our children are becoming confident leaders who are self-aware and fully able to contribute positively to our world.

Many students participate in our Gifted and Talented Program. This program focuses on creativity rather than IQ scores and services all K - 1 students and many 2 - 5 students that are identified as highly creative. These students are given opportunities to focus on writing, research, logic, and choice based learning that educates the whole child.

Our campus houses two fully equipped computer labs that are used for collaboration and research. All classrooms have smart boards and three desktop computers for student interaction. Primary classrooms are equipped with multiple iPads to use in center rotations while our Gifted and Talented program and science lab have access to chrome books and iPads as well. Intermediate grades have a one-to-one laptop program, which provides each student with his/her own Chrome Book in the classroom. Learning experiences are created that are not driven by technology, but enhanced by the world of possibilities technology opens up for our children. Our instructional technology specialist works hand-in-hand with the Roberts family to keep students current with new tools, apps, and strategies to extend understanding and help students and teachers present their ideas with others in innovative ways.

In addition to regular classroom technology, Roberts is home to an award winning Environmental and Spatial Technology (E.A.S.T.) Lab. Our EAST lab serves over 100 students in grades 3-5 as they work cooperatively to make an impact in our community and world. In this lab, students have access to state-of-the-art software and equipment: drones, 3D printers, Inkscape, Google SketchUp, Raspberry Pi, and Final Cut ProX. The students are in charge of a variety of audio visual equipment that they use to capture events all across our school. The most dynamic project that they are engaged in right now is the 3D Yearbook for

the Arkansas School for the Blind. Through the magic of "Sense Scanning," students are 3D scanning the faces of each graduating senior at that school. This project won top project for the 2017 International EAST Conference. Our EAST chapter has achieved Superior status for five years and the Video Competition Award, a first for an elementary school.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

At Roberts Elementary, it is our goal to ensure that each child feels uniquely taught. In all classrooms, teachers are supported in differentiating instruction to meet students where they are on the learning spectrum. Our team of Special Education teachers partners with the regular classroom teachers to ensure a seamless approach to the curriculum for each child.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

“ROBERTS ROCKS!” is our hashtag on social media. Walking into our building, you feel a positive energy that is inspiring and encouraging. Everyone is greeted with a photo gallery of engaged students involved in fun learning experiences. Our “Writing on the Wall” program has student work visible throughout the building, promoting a culture of student success and accountability. As you walk the halls, you see a progression of writing and learning from Kindergarten to fifth grade that provides evidence of thoughtful, intentional, and carefully planned instruction.

Students are recognized throughout the year for their behavior, academic success, and extra-curricular reading. Our counselors promote character education and students are recognized monthly. Honor roll celebrations encourage students to strive for academic success. Many students choose to participate in the Accelerated Reader Program in order to strengthen their reading skills.

Roberts has extended the learning experience and added excitement for learning through after-school clubs. Teachers from across the building donate their time after school to sponsor a variety of clubs. These clubs give our students the opportunity to explore their creativity and talents, try out new hobbies, and grow as individuals. Chorus, Flag Line, Basketball, Lego, and Chess Clubs offer students a wide range of opportunities to take part in each week. We offer clubs in robotics, computer coding, history, journalism, photography, and art to tap into the natural gifts of our children and help them nurture and awaken their potential in these areas. Through these clubs, students are getting invaluable hands-on experiences that are providing them skills they will be able to use throughout their lifetime. Our children enjoy all of their club experiences and they add an element of excitement and fun to the school day. The clubs also foster a community across our school that transcends grade levels and helps build a family of cooperative learners.

We strive to create professional learning experiences that connect our entire faculty. Our staff has met monthly to complete a book study on Steven Covey’s, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* this school year. These meetings foster collaboration and communication between our family of teachers that goes beyond the classroom and bind us together in community. Grade levels meet outside of school hours to enjoy dinner and fellowship. School wide Twitter chats engage teachers, inspire growth, and celebrate success. Community is highly valued at Roberts and permeates all that we do to promote a culture of excellence.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

The parent support and involvement at Roberts Elementary is a most important key to our success. Our highly engaged and visible Parent Teacher Organization partners with teachers and works to provide resources and support to our instruction and learning. Thanks to our Watch D.O.G.S (Dads of Great Students) Program, which is coordinated by our counselors, we have fathers on campus each day to lend a helping hand on the playground, in the dining room, and inside our learning environment.

To keep our parents and the community informed of the events surrounding the learning at Roberts, we utilize a variety of tools. Our automated call program has been very effective in reminding the parents of upcoming events and special announcements. One of our assistant principals places these calls in the evening throughout the year to keep our families connected and up-to-date. Two websites (<http://robertseagles.org> and <http://robertsrocks.org>) keep parents, partners, and the community informed about our many activities and celebrations. In addition, we have a school-wide newsletter, *Roberts Rhetoric*, that is sent home each month. This newsletter highlights special events, shares pertinent parent information, and celebrates the successes of our students and teachers.

Grades and student progress are monitored and tracked online through the Edline platform. Parents have individual log-in information to enable them to keep up with their child’s grades each nine weeks. The system is able to notify parents when new grades are posted and when students begin to fall behind. We find this tool to be very helpful and engaging.

Formal parent conferences are held twice a year to inform parents of academic growth and struggles. Parents are allowed to interact with the teachers and view student work. Throughout the school year, our teachers and parents keep an open line of communication through classroom newsletters, emails, and frequent calls home to celebrate student success. In creating and fostering an inclusive atmosphere among our teachers, parents, and the community, we are building partnerships that support the academic excellence of our school.

Roberts is blessed to have Partners-in-Education. These businesses lend support and resources to support our programs and assist us in meeting our goals. Our business partners are BancorpSouth, Izzy's Restaurant, Chick-fil-A, ShowRoom Ready, Parkway Automotive and Party City.

### **3. Professional Development:**

The approach to professional development at Roberts is personal and uniquely delivered in a variety of ways. The district provides a myriad of professional learning opportunities throughout the year to meet the needs of staff from multiple schools. At Roberts, teachers are given the freedom to drive their own professional development decisions and participate in the creation and delivery of staff development within our building. Our monthly staff meetings are embedded with a variety of staff development options to touch on different areas of the curriculum. We have employed the Ed Camp approach to after-school development opportunities and allow teachers to engage in the activities they need and request in order to grow in technology and all areas of the curriculum. Teachers can ask questions and tailor the training to meet their specific needs and the needs of their students. It is a very powerful and personal way to create meaning and relevance in our professional growth at Roberts.

Perhaps the most meaningful professional development that happens in our school occurs in the grade level Professional Learning Communities. These groups of teachers have dedicated time within the school day each week to collaborate and create exciting and engaging learning experiences for our students. This time allows teachers time to compare data across grade levels and make important decisions about the direction of the curriculum and instruction. When teachers have the opportunity to sit together and connect, positive things happen for our students.

One of our assistant principals leads a bi-weekly chat on Twitter. This time of professional growth happens in the evening. The topic is different each week and covers everything from math instruction, technology integration, the role of the arts in education and the joy of reading. Teachers are invited to jump into the conversation and are able to earn professional development hours for their participation. We are finding this to be a uniquely powerful way to grow and connect with other educators. Teachers are sharing ideas and learning from each other like never before.

While we strive to ensure our professional development opportunities meet the personal needs and desires of our teachers, we also use data to inform our decisions in planning for these important learning experiences for our staff. If the data indicates a particular need, we do our best to target that particular area and provide the support our teachers need to help our students be the best they can be in our classrooms.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The administrative team consists of a principal and two assistant principals. The administrators realize that every decision and program should be student-first. Every decision is driven by student needs. In describing the administrative philosophy, an inverted pyramid comes to mind with students and their teachers taking on a very important leadership role. The administrators recognize leadership starts in the classroom and that their role is to promote classroom leadership and facilitate the efforts of the teachers. This empowerment is done in very specific ways: modeling best practices and guiding new teachers; providing opportunities for horizontal and vertical collaboration and colleague visits; showcasing teachers' strengths in staff development sessions; and being present during weekly common planning meetings to ensure that the curriculum is not only being delivered effectively but rigorously. While support and encouragement is always present, Roberts's administrators also realize their responsibility to hold staff members accountable to meet student needs. It is often said that "their success is determined by student

success."

A direct extension of the administrative team is the Roberts Elementary Leadership Team. This Student Based Intervention Team (SBIT) consists of the principal, two assistant principals, counselors, a reading specialist and a representative from the Special Education department. Their philosophy comes from the core of our mission statement that integrates all stakeholders in every aspect of helping students "soar to the pinnacle of excellence." This team meets monthly to target specific needs of at-risk students and track students who are no longer at-risk. Their conversations are structured and data-driven. Assessments are carefully monitored and evaluated in order to effectively adjust programs and curriculum to meet the specific needs of all learners as they learn and achieve new heights of knowledge. They take all relevant data and create targeted and specific interventions to bridge the gaps in student growth. Through ongoing collaboration, innovation, technology, and an enriching curriculum this team is committed to establishing a distinguished tradition of excellence in a diverse environment by nurturing, inspiring, and challenging each student to value learning, respect others, and always do the right thing.

Roberts's leadership ensures that all students have every opportunity for growth and exceptional student achievement. The principal, assistant principals and all other stakeholders walk daily in the words of Harry S. Truman, "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit." Through this lens of leadership, there is constant emphasis on maintaining a collaborative culture that elevates the strengths of all.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Roberts is a nurturing community of accountability and support. The students entrusted into our care belong to all of us. It is in this commitment and spirit of working together that we ensure the academic success of all students. Everyone in the school family plays a role in the individual learning of each child. Through pre and post assessments, we generate the data that drive our decisions in meeting the differentiated needs of our learners. It is our goal for each child to feel uniquely taught as we strive to tap into their natural gifts and tailor instruction that allows them to grow across the curriculum. This goal is explicitly met through the following: an SBIT team that meets monthly to create specific interventions for struggling learners, a Gifted and Talented Program that focuses on enriching students' minds, an EAST program that creates critical thinkers and learners who impact their community, a fine arts department that brings out the Broadway star and Picasso in students, and a counseling program that provides leadership opportunities for all students. Through this kind of explicit teaching, we know all learners can be filled with promise.

Roberta Ford said, "I want students to be able to say these things when they leave me. I am a worthwhile person; I deserve a place on this earth; I am successful; I am ready for whatever the world throws at me today or tomorrow." Like Ms. Ford, this is the goal we set for ourselves. We want the school experience for our children to prepare them for the world they will claim. We want to educate the whole child and awaken their true potential. We promote a growth mindset among our staff and students that instills the idea that learning is not about the destination; it's about the journey.

We know that the role we play in the lives of our children is invaluable. By embracing the idea that all of us are growing together and constantly striving to soar higher, we believe that our children leave us with a set of wings that is strong enough to carry them through life and set them on their path to making this world a better place. May our intentional efforts to promote a learning environment of academic excellence in our school, be the wind beneath their wings.