

**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 [X] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Jeffrey D Abrams

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

Official School Name Franklin at Brimhall Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4949 East Southern Avenue

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

City Mesa State AZ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 85206-2759

County Maricopa County

Telephone (480) 472-2600 Fax (480) 472-2698

Web site/URL http://www.mpsaz.org/franklinbrim E-mail jdabrams@mpsaz.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\*Dr. Michael Cowan E-mail mbcowan@mpsaz.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Mesa Unified School District Tel. (480) 472-0000

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 Mrs. Jenny Richardson  
(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):
- 57 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 10 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 7 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 74 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>	81	56	137
<b>1</b>	71	49	120
<b>2</b>	78	63	141
<b>3</b>	66	48	114
<b>4</b>	63	53	116
<b>5</b>	46	68	114
<b>6</b>	51	53	104
<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>	456	390	846

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2 % Asian
  - 3 % Black or African American
  - 15 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 77 % 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 2015 – 2016 school year: 7%

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	22
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	39
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	61
(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)	0.068
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
1 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: 24 %  
Total number students who qualify: 198

8. Students receiving special education services: 4 %  
31 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	35
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 24:1
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%	97%	96%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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 is to develop a highly educated and productive community, one student at a time by emphasizing the teaching of foundational skills.

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

Franklin at Brimhall is a school of choice, requiring parents to complete an orientation process prior to registering. Prospective parents view a video introduction of the program, complete two hours of classroom observations, and meet with administration to discuss the school philosophy, expectations, mission, and vision.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Franklin at Brimhall Elementary School is a school of choice for parents who are looking for an alternative approach to education for their children. Franklin at Brimhall is located in Mesa, Arizona and is part of Mesa Public Schools, Arizona's largest school district, educating more than 63,000 students. Franklin at Brimhall is a back-to-basics traditional school which opened in August 2012 following the MPS Governing Boards' Defining the Future initiatives. Franklin Northeast and Franklin South Elementary Schools were consolidated and relocated to a re-purposed school building to form Franklin at Brimhall. Students, teachers, staff, parents, and communities were merged together using the existing philosophy of the Franklin program and charged with creating a new educational community, priding itself on academic rigor, civic engagement, individual accountability, and citizenship.

Building on the foundation of Franklin South and Franklin Northeast, teachers worked cohesively as a true professional learning community to focus their plans on the Franklin model and keeping the idea of "what is best for the students" at the heart of their planning. The creation of a new Franklin Parent Organization was implemented to include existing traditions from both campuses and create new visions for Franklin at Brimhall Elementary. Parents, teachers, and administration worked tirelessly to protect the intimate school community as the new campus emerged. Bringing together two school communities was a great challenge, but reflecting on the process, sacrifice, and dedication of all involved, this is one of Franklin at Brimhall's proudest achievements.

Franklin at Brimhall Elementary is an open enrollment school that serves students and families of Mesa and neighboring communities. Parents interested in registering their child must view a video introduction of the program, complete two hours of classroom observations, and meet with the principal as part of the orientation process. This ensures that parents are committed to the philosophy, policies, vision and mission of the school.

Franklin at Brimhall educates approximately 850 kindergarten through sixth grade students each year using the academic model created in 1978. The school focuses on a precisely defined curriculum, using instructional strategies that complement the expectations of parents. The development of the original program evolved through numerous parental committees which still assist the school in maintaining continuity and consistency in the instructional efforts of the highly trained faculty.

The Franklin academic program uses a phonics-based approach to English Language Arts instruction entitled The Writing Road to Reading by Romalda Spalding. The Spalding Method provides explicit, integrated instruction in spelling, writing, listening, and reading. In combination with the The Writing Road to Reading, the reading curriculum also consists of extensive use of high quality literature to further develop a love for reading in students. Our highly detailed accelerated math program uses week-by-week, concept-by-concept overviews, or teacher guides, to ensure appropriate review of each concept, guide the pace of instruction, provide necessary foundational development and take into account the maturational and intellectual abilities of students. In addition, these overviews provide concept consistency and continuity vertically throughout kindergarten through sixth grade, allowing the teachers to select the best possible instructional materials and strategies for each concept. The language program is based on principles of grammar and language analysis with the opportunity to develop precise, clearly understood writing. Franklin at Brimhall students embrace the traditional concepts of history, geography, and patriotism. In science, foundational concepts of earth, biological, chemical, and physical sciences enrich the students' understanding of the world. Research skills, using technology, are initially introduced and developed in kindergarten. Student learning is further enhanced through art, general music, physical education, health, safety, band, orchestra, art masterpiece, and music masterpiece. The curriculum cultivates a well-rounded child through embedded lessons in character development, conflict resolution, civic learning, leadership, and student government. The Franklin academic program enhances learning using a very specific, nightly homework program that includes minimum and maximum amounts of time spent on independent practice delineated by grade level. The purposes of the homework program are to assess student learning, instill personal responsibility, develop time management skills, and serve as a communication tool with parents.

Additional characteristics of Franklin at Brimhall include: extensive teacher in-service training; whole group, direct instruction; small group and individual tutorial support provided by the classroom teachers; an extensive monitoring program details each child's progress in foundational skill areas; citizenship, which is based on firm and fair behavioral expectations that include parental involvement; and Professional Learning Communities at each grade level to plan and implement the curriculum.

Students are prepared to be successful in future academic endeavors and pursue their future goals. Their strength of character reflects the ideals of education, confidence, and competence. Franklin at Brimhall's positive, caring climate enhances individual academic achievement, resulting in students' development of respect for others, pride in self, and loyalty to country.

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

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

The Franklin at Brimhall core curriculum areas include: mathematics, reading/ELA, science, and social studies. Each subject's essential learning objectives are outlined for teachers in curriculum overviews which align to Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards. The scope and sequence of learning objectives are designed to ensure all concepts are taught during the school year. The overviews spiral to include exposure, mastery, and review of concepts throughout multiple grade levels. Instructional minutes are allocated weekly for each subject area.

The Writing Road to Reading is a multisensory language arts approach consisting of spelling, writing, and reading curriculum. Students are taught the 70 foundational phonograms, the application of the rules that govern the use of the phonograms as they spell words, penmanship, and high frequency vocabulary. Reading is taught primarily using rich children's literature with varying vocabulary and content. The program exposes children to different genres of writing and assists in leading students to become proficient, creative writers. Opportunities to develop fluency in oral and silent reading come from the daily reading of parent-approved literature sets and classical selections found in the Open Court texts. Using rich literature increases student vocabulary, comprehension, and desire to read. Students in fourth through sixth grade build comprehension skills while completing summaries of significant events as they occur in a reading selection together with character identification profiles. Over the course of their elementary education at Franklin, students are exposed to over 375 different children's literature selections and many diverse authors.

Language and grammar usage are embedded within the spelling, reading and writing lessons of the Spalding Method. Students are explicitly taught these skills using supplemental resources including the Six Trait Writing process. Beginning with kindergarten all students develop a writing portfolio that shows their individual growth for each grade.

Math textbooks are used for primary instruction and are complemented with supplemental and online resources aligned to each grade level curriculum overview allowing teachers to draw from the best materials available by concept to assure student success. The curriculum overviews outline week-by-week instructional concept expectations at each grade level to support systematic, explicit, and spiraled instruction. They ensure that teachers will include instructional time each day for the four components of the Franklin mathematics program: foundational practice, systematic review, numeration skills, and standards-based skill development. The overviews also provide continuity and consistency from grade level to grade level creating a learning system that benefits all students. In sixth grade, students are placed into leveled math classes including a virtual pre-algebra class to accommodate the range of student abilities, and ensures that higher performing students are well prepared for an advanced learning track in secondary school. The rigorous content and pacing keeps the above average student challenged while the spiraled review and tutorial component supports students in need of intervention.

Earth, chemical, biological and physical science concepts are taught to students using a textbook, science journals, and online resources. Teachers also use MPS science kits to enhance their learning. For example, fourth grade students use light bulbs, wires, and batteries to explore circuits and electricity. Students in sixth grade develop a strong understanding of the scientific method by conducting research-based experiments and presenting their projects at the science fair each year. Field trips to the Arizona Science Center, the Flight Center, and Lake Pleasant allows students to apply classroom knowledge to real-life experiences and professions. In an effort to provide a needed service to our community, our students facilitate a recycling initiative called "Bench the Bag" where our entire school community collects and recycles plastic bags.

Throughout the social studies overviews, our elementary students learn about our country's history, famous historical figures, events, documents, the structure of our government, and the geography of the United States and the world. Teachers use primary and secondary sources building upon the prior year's knowledge. The use of writing prompts, close-reading, document-based questions, and other best practices by teachers further the students' content knowledge. Applying their understanding of civic responsibilities, students

participate in student council elections, student-led assemblies, and community services to instill the pillars of a strong, local community. Students apply their foundational knowledge of history in different opportunities throughout the year including: Week Against Violence, Martin Luther King, Jr. Contests, and a Geography Bee.

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

Sequential skill building and instruction in art and music integrated with the rest of the curriculum can greatly improve children's performance in reading and math. It is because of this we have thoughtfully designed instruction for all grade levels in the areas of fine arts, performing arts, physical education, technology, and media center skills.

Students receive sixty minutes of art instruction per week by the classroom teacher. Projects use various mediums and techniques such as paint, sculpture, sketch, and crafts. Teachers plan art instruction to complement areas of study including weather projects, patriotic themes, geography, and literature. The Franklin Parent Organization (FPO) also supports the fine arts curriculum by teaching Art Masterpiece lessons twice per month during the spring semester focusing on famous and influential artists. An Arts and Academic Night is held each year celebrating students' artistic and creative talents in areas of: color art, black and white drawing, textile and hardware, diorama, and yearbook cover. These combined methods instruct and inspire students in the area of fine arts, and build a well-knowledged student with a historical and creative appreciation of the arts.

Research supports the positive relationship performing arts has on student learning. All students receive sixty minutes of general music per week taught by highly-qualified music teachers. The general music curriculum develops essential musical experiences and activities in six conceptual areas. The following elements are sequenced within each grade level, as well as spiraled from grade to grade: Rhythm, Pitch, Texture/Harmony, Form, Expressive Elements, and Style. The FPO also teaches Music Masterpiece lessons twice per month during the fall semester focusing on influential composers and their music. Orchestra and Choir are offered to students beginning in fourth grade, and band beginning in fifth grade. To complement core instruction these classes are held before or after school. These musical opportunities culminate with concerts, assemblies, and community performances throughout the year that enrich the lives of students aesthetically, socially, academically and personally.

High quality physical education programs are as essential as academic programs. The physical education curriculum for Franklin at Brimhall students is child-centered and students receive sixty minutes of PE class per week. Over 25 different units of instruction on specific skills are offered throughout the school year. Students become confident and competent participants of physical activities and find fun ways to stay active. Each thirty minute lesson is composed of four parts: introductory activity, fitness activity, lesson focus, and game activity. The four part lesson provides a well-rounded experience and allows for higher rates of student activity regardless of their personal strengths or limitations.

Library classes are taught in every grade level each week for thirty minutes by specialists. The goal of the library is to help students become active and efficient users of information and develop research skills. The lessons promote literacy skills by reading books and promoting literacy across different genres. Each week the students have the opportunity to check out books of their choice to instill a love of learning. Students may also participate in Battle of the Books which is a voluntary reading program for fifth and sixth grade students designed to promote reading through team competition.

Health lessons are presented by the school nurse based on a curriculum that is age appropriate. Beginning in kindergarten students are instructed on basic hygiene and wellness practices. Vision and hearing screenings are conducted throughout the year. The school nurse also hosts growth and development nights for fifth and sixth grade students and parents to better understand the maturational process.

The computer lab curriculum overviews emphasize student learning through the utilization of technology and its many applications to enhance knowledge and conduct meaningful research. Instruction is provided to all students once per week for thirty minutes by a computer lab specialist. In addition, our school has several

device carts which classroom teachers use multiple times every week to enhance student learning and support core curriculum. Students learn basic computer skills involving computer mechanics and care, program selection, mouse and keyboard use, Microsoft Office and digital citizenship. For example, sixth grade students learn and practice PowerPoint skills when researching and creating their country reports resulting in an integrated curriculum of library/internet research, computer skills, and core content objectives.

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

Franklin has an accelerated, fast-paced, rigorous curriculum. The grading scale is modified to reflect high expectations of student achievement and academic effort. The curriculum overviews ensure that the instruction of each identified concept is given adequate time and that the number of instructional repetitions is appropriate for students.

Students are ranked each year based on their overall academic performance. These rankings, as well as other student data, are used to create academically balanced classrooms at each grade level. This balanced approach allows the classroom teacher to implement the curriculum overviews ensuring all students are prepared with necessary standard knowledge, while allowing them to both enrich the learning of higher students and intervene with lower performers. The ability to differentiate in this way supports all students to achieving their highest potential across all content areas.

The overall instructional plan at Franklin at Brimhall utilizes a pre-teach/teach/re-teach strategy. Direct whole-group instruction is delivered through The Seven Steps of Instruction model which is an enhanced version based on the Essential Elements of Instruction. These seven steps include: Teacher Introduction, Teacher Explanation, Teacher Demonstration, Student Explanation with Teacher Demonstration, Student Explanation with other Student Demonstration, Student Independent Practice with Teacher Check, and Homework. Teachers are able to effectively determine if students understand the objective before they begin independent practice. Students requiring additional instruction receive tutorial and small group assistance during recesses and lunch. Teachers tutor students in need of additional support at least twice a week for thirty minutes before or after school.

Spalding reading instruction is divided into three strands: literary appreciation, text structure, and comprehension. In literary appreciation lessons, teachers instill a love of reading using fine literature and teaching its attributes. Students develop fluent and expressive reading as they read aloud. Teachers explicitly teach elements of narrative, informative, and informative-narrative text so students can focus on the most important elements when reading a variety of prose. Skilled comprehension depends on accurate and automatic decoding, a broad vocabulary, background knowledge, and knowing elements of text structures. To increase students' listening and reading comprehension, students learn to consciously use five mental actions (monitoring comprehension, making connections, predicting, reformatting, and mentally summarizing) which significantly improves their performance in language arts and content-area subjects.

Assessment data is vital to the success of Franklin at Brimhall. In addition to AzMERIT, the Arizona state assessment, a variety of formative and summative assessments are embedded within our program. Teachers assess student learning each and every lesson to measure performance and guide instruction. They continuously monitor and adjust instruction to match student understanding. Weekly common formative assessments are designed and administered allowing teachers to reflect on instructional strategies during PLC meetings and plan intervention or enrichment activities.

Students in first through sixth grade are assessed every six weeks to evaluate mastery of phonograms, spelling, reading comprehension and math facts. A 70 phoneme assessment and the Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale are used to evaluate student application of the rules that govern the use of the phonograms as they spell words, precise penmanship, and correct letter formation. McCall-Crabbs Test Lessons in Reading are utilized to develop comprehension through analysis of selections that focus on main idea, detail, cause-effect, author's purpose, sequencing, and inference skills. Depending on the grade, students are evaluated on their fluency and accuracy of addition, subtraction, and multiplication facts.

Students in grades one through six are given online diagnostic benchmark tests in reading, writing and math three times per year. This data is analyzed by teachers and administrators to determine each student's strengths and areas of struggle. The online resource, STARS SchoolCity, then allows teachers to differentiate assignments and lessons so lower performing students receive appropriate interventions while above level students are assigned higher level questions requiring a deeper understanding and critical thinking.

To maintain high levels of achievement, Franklin at Brimhall is committed to the individual student growth by implementing our accelerated instructional model with fidelity. Highly qualified teachers receive continued professional development on proven effective instructional strategies to engage students daily. They consistently evaluate formal and informal data to pinpoint each student's strengths and weaknesses to help them achieve their highest potential. The Franklin model is designed to support all students thus continuing to improve as a school year after year.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

The Franklin at Brimhall climate and culture begins with our campus being a school of choice. Many families enroll at our school based on positive recommendations from relatives, neighbors, and community members. Some of our students are second or even third-generation Firebirds. Prospective parents complete an orientation process where they are required to view an introductory video about our program and observe for two hours in classrooms. Parents also meet with administration for a principal talk, during which the Franklin philosophy and curricular expectations are shared. Parents also have the ability to ask and clarify any questions about the school. The school expectation is to greet every student, parent, staff member and community member with a smile and follow the 10/5 rule of making eye contact when you are within ten yards of a person and acknowledge them with a greeting at five yards. This process immediately establishes our climate as welcoming and creates a personal relationship with each family. Another feature that shapes our school climate is a modest, conservative dress code policy that minimizes distractions and keeps the focus on learning.

The strong partnership between school and home ensures a shared responsibility that supports students in academics, social needs, and emotional growth. Every member of our campus is equally important and contributes to our culture of learning. Our school philosophy includes the importance of intrinsic motivation for our students. Our staff strives to celebrate not only student achievement, but more importantly their effort towards achievement. The classroom and school bulletin boards showcase students' academic, written, and artistic assignments. The focus is always on doing your best and being respectful. When students are motivated by their own effort and personal growth, their self-worth is impacted positively.

The commitment by teachers to implement our school philosophy and curriculum with fidelity is the backbone of Franklin schools. Support systems in place to help teachers include: new teacher orientations, curriculum specific professional development, assigned mentor teachers, curriculum committees, staff advisory committees, and PLC's. Teachers' schedules are designed to maximize and protect their planning time by not assigning them any arrival, lunch, recess or dismissal duties. This allows teachers to use this time for student interventions and for planning effective lessons with teammates. The administration's highest priority is to support teachers with any needs including struggling students, behavior concerns, social strategies, and communicating with families.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Franklin at Brimhall prides itself on the connection the school has with families and community members. The partnership between school and home is who we are. Our school has very dedicated parents with an average of 490 parent helpers, lunchtime visitors, and school volunteers per month. The Franklin Parent Organization (FPO) is a group of parents who meet once a month to help support all areas of our school. These parents, along with the administration and staff, organize many events throughout the year that celebrate our school community. They are an integral part of the educational experience, including planning and organizing volunteers for various committees and sponsoring of our annual Firebird Festival. The FPO organizes the music and art masterpiece program which invites parents or community members to teach lessons about music and art history to all grade levels.

Our open door policy to observe in classrooms, have lunch with their children, attend classroom parties, chaperone field trips, and assist with school events encourages parents and the community to always feel welcome and valued on our campus. The kindergarten classes average almost one parent volunteer everyday to help instruct students during the group rotations. Parents commit to attend two parent/teacher conferences per year and support our Franklin expectations. Former employees and secondary students return on a regular basis to offer service to our classroom teachers, library, and administrative needs. The return of these former students and staff and the service they eagerly provide, speaks volumes to the positive impact Franklin at Brimhall has had on their lives.

Assemblies are scheduled multiple times throughout the school year to celebrate student achievement, performing arts, and patriotic holidays. Parents, community members, and local organizations are invited to attend our assemblies and be recognized for their contributions. For example, at our Veterans' Day Assembly, the Mesa High School JROTC presented traditional military routines like color guard, rifle guard, and flag folding. Each of our elementary performing arts groups performed musical selections to highlight the patriotic theme as we honored visiting veterans. The Franklin Junior High band, orchestra, and choir have also performed at assemblies showcasing opportunities available to elementary students. Our school also contributes to the community as a whole through recycling initiatives, food drives, water drives, and clothing donations. These student driven activities help them understand the needs of our community and contribute in a positive way.

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

School and district professional development courses provide training in areas of reading, math, writing, science, and social studies, as well as instructional approaches and methods. There are a variety of courses offered through the district professional development department, many of which Franklin teachers choose to take to refine their pedagogical strategies, as well as to explore areas of professional interest. These opportunities strengthen teachers' knowledge and skills which positively impacts daily instruction and student achievement.

Teachers and administrators at Franklin at Brimhall are required to take three years of professional development courses in The Spalding Method. This method is an explicit, interactive, diagnostic, sequential approach to teaching reading and writing. The Multisensory Integrated Language Arts courses are composed of two 45-hour parts: MILA 1 and MILA 2. First and third year teachers take MILA 1, a class that includes training in phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, vocabulary, sentence construction, and text structure. Teachers also learn how to instruct their students in the application of spelling and language rules and methodology. Second year teachers take the MILA 2 course which focuses on reading comprehension strategies and writing. The course content includes syllable division patterns, compositions, text structure, text comprehension, literary appreciation, and fluency. This course also includes effective lesson planning, incorporating spelling, writing and reading lessons. This three year commitment to the Spalding Method ensures that all teachers are proficient in delivering Spalding instruction precisely and with fidelity which drives student achievement in all content areas.

Over the past five years, Franklin teachers have received in-service instruction on topics such as: Seven Steps of Instruction, Franklin Curriculum Overviews, Components of Franklin Mathematics, Effective Writing Strategies, Consistency and Continuity of Instruction, and Task Analysis. In-services are presented by the principal, the curriculum and instruction specialist, and highly effective teachers. The Faculty Curriculum Committee collaborates to identify topics for professional development to improve instruction and student achievement. Over the past two years, teachers have participated in Focused-Note trainings, an AVID based strategy. Student achievement has been positively impacted because greater emphasis has been placed on application and critical thinking during the note-taking process. Teachers have also participated in professional development with STARS SchoolCity, an online resource tool that aligns to the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. The SchoolCity resource allows teachers to measure and analyze student data from benchmark assessments then differentiate interventions or enrichments to meet every student's needs.

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

The administration of Franklin at Brimhall includes the principal and team leader (assistant principal) who are responsible for the school's vision, mission, culture of learning, school climate, and campus management. The vision of "Unprecedented Excellence in Education" and the mission "to develop a highly educated and productive community, one student at a time" is the center of all decision making to promote academic and behavioral excellence.

The administration demonstrates values, beliefs, and attitudes that inspire others to greater levels of achievement, and treats everyone with fairness, dignity, and respect. The climate of the school can be felt

when a person enters the campus. The administration sets the positive, welcoming tone for all school employees to follow. Every parent, student, community member, and staff member are greeted with a smile and an offer of assistance. This is the first step to building positive relationships among all stakeholders which takes a large school population and makes it feel like a close family.

In addition to the administration, there are other leadership roles that contribute to the overall success of the school. The curriculum and instruction specialist guides the orientation process for new teachers, designs and leads professional development, and supports classroom teachers with instructional strategies and resources. Teacher leadership is evident with grade level chair, Faculty Curriculum Committee, and Teacher Council representatives. These teacher leaders plan, coordinate, problem solve, and communicate curriculum across the grade levels. Shared leadership is essential to a successful school and contributes to developing future educational leaders.

A strong culture for learning ensures students are able to achieve their highest potential. The administration focuses on the support systems in place for an equally high level of teacher instruction. They also instill a mindset that each student's success is everyone's responsibility. Schedules are created to protect valuable instruction time at every grade level, and are designed to align with the maturational abilities of each group of students. The administrators have an open door policy to meet with teachers formally and informally to discuss instructional strategies, behavior issues, curriculum questions, or just to share a funny story. The combination of regular classroom walk-throughs and open communication with teachers plays a vital role in the success of all teachers and students. Allocation of district funds is primarily focused on instructional assistants. This protects teacher planning time and ensures the safety and well-being of students during recess, lunch, arrival and dismissal.

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

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The single practice that has been most influential to our school’s success is implementing the Franklin philosophy and instructional programs with fidelity. Much of the success Franklin at Brimhall has achieved can be attributed to specific practices and policies that allow for the highest quality of education as possible.

Our academic program helps students build cognitive and problem solving skills. The curriculum overviews provided in all core subject areas were designed to provide horizontal and vertical articulation across all grade level bands. Our practice of using an accelerated, rigorous curriculum not only exceeds grade level state standards, but also challenges students to believe in their own capacity to learn. Teachers adhere to the scope and sequence delineated in the curriculum overviews when planning and teaching their lessons. Implementing the curriculum overviews with fidelity is critical for setting high expectations and for preparing and shaping the minds of our students.

Some instructional strategies that are unique to Franklin include whole-group direct instruction, the Spalding Method, and Seven Steps of Instruction. The precise implementation of these strategies on a daily basis ensures every student gains understanding of concepts and shows academic growth. These strategies have led to the high achievement of our students who have continuously outperformed other district and state schools in the areas of reading, writing, math and science as measured by the AzMERIT and AIMS assessments.

Effective teachers play a vital role in ensuring students reach challenging standards. Franklin at Brimhall selects highly qualified teachers who have expectations that all students can learn. Our teachers make a commitment to attend required prerequisite and ongoing trainings to implement the overviews and instructional strategies aligned with our philosophy. These professional development trainings allow teachers to gain knowledge and refine best teaching practices. Teachers who are committed to their profession and to the academic development of their students inspire and motivate students to give their best effort in all areas.

The pillars of our school include the dress code policy, modified grading scale, protected instructional time, class placement protocol, and instructional model. It is the combination of these traditional practices that when implemented and followed through with fidelity leads to high achievement and exceptional student growth. If one aspect is removed, the entire school culture would be impacted. The commitment of all parents, teachers, students, and administration to support the “Franklin Way” is what makes Franklin at Brimhall one of the most respected and successful schools in the district, state, and nation.