

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Adam Eggeling

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

Official School Name Charter Oak-Ute Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 321 Main Street

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

City Charter Oak State IA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 51439-0077

County Crawford

Telephone (712) 678-3325 Fax (712) 678-3626

Web site/URL http://www.co-u.net E-mail aeggeling@co-u.net

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. ROLLIE WIEBERS E-mail wiebersr@co-u.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Charter Oak-Ute Community School District Tel. (712) 678-3325

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. Jim Ewoldt
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. 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

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):
- Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - Middle/Junior high schools
 - High schools
 - K-12 schools
- 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
PreK	12	8	20
K	12	11	23
1	14	12	26
2	8	11	19
3	8	8	16
4	12	14	26
5	10	9	19
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	76	73	149

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 95 % White
 - 0 % 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: 8%

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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 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, 2015	136
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.081
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
4 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 60 %
Total number students who qualify: 84

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
15 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 2 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 1 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 0 Other Health Impaired
- 8 Specific Learning Disability
- 0 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: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	6
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	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 20:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	94%	96%	95%
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.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes No
If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.
15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.
The Charter Oak-Ute CSD is committed to providing a quality education which will enhance the abilities of all students toward reaching their utmost potential.
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

The Charter Oak-Ute CSD is a rural district located in Western Iowa fifty miles east of the Missouri River and halfway between the cities of Sioux City, Iowa and Omaha, Nebraska. The district consists of the towns of Charter Oak, Soldier and Ute. The land of the district is located in the counties of Crawford and Monona and the population is evenly split between the two counties. Agriculture is the main industry for the residents of the district and many of the residents of the district commute to work outside of the district boundaries for employment. The three towns that make-up the district have a total population of less than a thousand residents. The school district has evolved over the years from one that had families that were mainly farmers to families that work at meat packing plants in the neighboring town of Denison or other jobs in Denison or other surrounding towns. All three towns have an elderly population and residents that move into our district are typically from low socio-economic backgrounds and the mobility rate continues to grow. Free and Reduced lunch rates have steadily increased over the years and though the district is mainly white, minority populations have increased a little in the last few years as well.

The Charter Oak-Ute CSD was formed in 1962 with the merger of the Charter Oak and Ute districts. The district operated with two buildings, one being an elementary school in Ute and the Junior-Senior High School in Charter Oak. Due to declining enrollment, the Ute center was closed at the end of the 2011-2012 school year and the district started serving students PK-12 in the Charter Oak center. The district has watched enrollment decrease from a high in the 1970's of 864 to the current enrollment of 265. The school system has been and continues to be the hub of the communities. The district and the communities are involved in many joint projects that help the citizens and students from an educational, social and community service perspectives. The school and the towns work together to provide traditional events such as Achievement Days, Fun Day, Homecoming Events, Open Houses and other activities designed to generate community involvement in the school. The Charter Oak-Ute CSD will be undergoing a major change with the beginning of the next school year as the district will enter a Whole Grade Sharing Agreement with the Maple Valley Anthon-Oto CSD. Through this agreement, the Charter Oak-Ute CSD will send students in grades 9-12 to Maple Valley Anthon-Oto for high school classes and extra-curricular activities. Declining enrollment and financial pressure has led to this occurrence, but the district is looking at this as an opportunity to expand and improve the PK-8 system.

The district has employed a variety of strategies with the goal of helping each student develop and reach their full potential. Due to the small size of our district and the philosophy of the Board of Directors, class sizes have been kept relatively small in nature. Though most of this has occurred naturally, the Board has added additional staff and class sections over the year when the need arose. This philosophy has created a system where individual students can receive the attention they need in the a whole class setting without disrupting the educational flow of the classroom. The districts also employs additional teachers and staff that work with students who are struggling in certain areas to help them get on track and achieve at their ability levels or beyond. Charter Oak-Ute runs a summer school program that is open to all students grades K-5 that is designed for enrichment activities as well as remedial work for those students that have that need. The district has initiated several programs that are designed to help students socially and emotionally, which in turn should also help academic success. Olweus concepts are in place and the district is in the process of implementing PBIS. Charter Oak-Ute has received a grant to start operating the Positive Behavior Intervention System and the team and staff have readily put the operations in place. Character Counts Initiatives have been in place and a Mentoring Program using secondary students is established and running effectively.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The Charter Oak-Ute CSD Elementary School has a Core Curriculum that consists of daily instruction in the core areas of Reading/Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies which includes the area of Civic Learning. Along with these Core Areas the district also includes instruction and experiences in the Fine Arts Fields and Physical Education and Health.

Teachers schedule a 90-120 minute literacy block and utilize that block for meaningful reading and writing instruction and learning. As mentioned earlier, professional learning communities provide an opportunity for teachers to prioritize the standards and perfect instructional strategies that will ensure all students master essential concepts. Teachers all have access to Pearson’s core-aligned reading and writing materials, Reading Street Common Core. In addition to those materials, there is a guided reading library where teachers can access texts at instructional levels for students.

Kindergarten through fifth grade teachers at Charter Oak-Ute Elementary utilize Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Go Math materials as a resource for engaging students in problem solving and in developing conceptual understanding of mathematics. In addition, teachers engage students in the mathematical practices through Cognitively Guided Instruction, or CGI. The district utilizes the Title I Department to provide remedial opportunities to students to who need extra assistance in the Math areas. A Summer School Program is also provided that gives students extra opportunities to work on Math skills and concepts.

Students are involved in civic learning throughout the curriculum as they are guided in instructional activities designed to make students more aware of the importance of being productive citizens. At the elementary level students are involved in activities that are grouped based and focused are implementing ideas of group work and the idea of a democracy. Students are encouraged to participate and be members of groups that promote active involvement in civic and community service groups. The district partners with outside agencies to promote these activities and schedule the use of district facilities for these activities. Lessons are completed in classrooms that promote the concepts of operating in a democratic society and the importance of being participating citizens in the process.

Science instruction includes hands-on learning with FOSS and STEM Kits. Classes also participate in field trips that provide enhanced learning opportunities. The district is in the early stages of implementing STEM programs and STEM model teachers that will enhance opportunities for students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Charter Oak-Ute Elementary School offers a variety of other curricular areas for students. A rich tradition in the K-12 Fine Arts has been enjoyed for many years with students earning honors in statewide events and competitions. Elementary students experience a visual arts class weekly in an innovative art room that includes 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional project opportunities. Our vocal music program offers students the chance to appreciate and learn about the essentials in producing sounds and music on a weekly basis as well as performing twice per year. Instrumental music is open for students in grades four and up at Charter Oak-Ute Elementary. Developing a love of the Fine Arts has been the main charge of our programs and students engage at high rates in these opportunities.

Our school has been a 1:1 technology school for eight years and was the first “Google School” in Northwest Area Education Agency. Students in grade 5 each have access to a MacBook laptop and several iPads are available throughout the elementary classrooms. Teachers help students use these tools as tools for learning on a daily basis as they develop 21st Century Skills in the area of Technology Literacy and Employability Skills.

Students also engage in many physical education and health learning opportunities at Charter Oak-Ute

Elementary. Physical education classes are held twice per week and include lessons related to health and wellness across the grade levels. Students also have unstructured play time at recesses daily at which times they can use essential skills from physical education classes.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Charter Oak-Ute Elementary is committed to building a multi-tiered system of support for all students. The multi-tiered system of support addresses the academic as well as the behavioral needs of our students, which we strongly believe are both essential and must be done in tandem in order for students to be successful. Although we are heavily engaged in this work, we continue to make adjustments and work to continuously improve our system in order to best meet the needs of our learners.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Our school became an Olweus Bullying Prevention Program school in 2013 and continues to implement the program in the classroom. The School Improvement Coordinator is also our site-based Olweus Bullying Prevention Program certified trainer. Elementary students have the Guidance Counselor visit their classrooms twice per month. The Guidance Counselor conducts lessons to help meet social-emotional needs in whole groups as well as small groups and with individual students.

Charter Oak-Ute received a School Climate Transformation Grant to implement Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (PBIS) in 2014. Our PBIS team is comprised of teachers, administrators, and support staff that meets regularly to learn, plan and deliver professional development to the entire staff for Tier One. Next steps are to learn more about Tiers Two and Three and to involve student voices in the development of the acknowledgement system. The School Climate Transformation Grant includes targeted training for building Adult-Student Relationships and all teachers engaged the Youth Mental Health First Aid training in 2016.

Through our work with Olweus we developed an expectations matrix to help us define what it looked like to be “An Ultimate Bobcat”. From that initial work, we’ve refined the matrices for each grade span and conducted a “Boot Camp” to teach the expectations as part of PBIS. All staff members have a PBIS guide complete with the lesson plans for each common area and the matrices.

These two programs, Olweus and PBIS, have been instrumental in helping our school become a positive environment where all students and staff are supported. Soon we will launch a Bobcat of the Month program for students and Staff Member of the Month for adults.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Small, rural schools have an advantage over urban areas in the area of engaging families and that is certainly true at Charter Oak-Ute Elementary. Many of our parents are in our hallways every day, bringing their children to school. With the closing of one elementary building in Ute three years prior, our school housed in one location has brought about additional opportunities for community members to participate in the support system of the school. Conferences are held twice each school year to report progress to parents. Teachers are encouraged to contact parents often for positive reasons as well as for problem-solving reasons.

The Charter Oak-Ute CSD has a private “Education Foundation” that was established by citizens and alumni to help support the district financially by raising money that can be applied for to purchase curriculum materials, technology materials or any other educational items or programs that will enhance the district’s ability to help students achieve success and have access to needed resources. This foundation actively involves district patrons and alumni in the selection and evaluation process. The district also has a private scholarship foundation that supports students attending post-secondary schools. This foundation has many activities that encourage the involvement of students and community members in service projects.

Last year, Charter Oak celebrated its 125th anniversary as an Iowa town. The Charter Oak-Ute school building was a major hub for the June 2016 celebration with the All-School Reunion being held at the same time. This celebration brought together all members of the community; business owners, church leaders, past and current citizens, school staff, students and alumni. The days were filled with events for the community to celebrate Charter Oak.

The Charter Oak-Ute School website is another way parents and community members can engage with the school staff. Student achievement information for the annual progress report is shared via the website as are newsletters and school board agendas. The School Improvement Advisory Council meets annually and

helps develop the goals for subsequent years. This year has been especially active with community participation as our school plans to move forward with a whole-grade sharing agreement.

3. Professional Development:

The professional development plan at Charter Oak-Ute is grounded in Marzano's High Reliability Schools framework. As a member of the High Reliability Schools Network, our school is committed to achieving each level; creating a safe and collaborative culture, ensuring effective teaching in every classroom, providing a guaranteed and viable curriculum, competency-based education, and standards-based education. When designing professional development, the administrators, school improvement coordinator, curriculum director, and teacher leaders consider research-based practices in conjunction with the specific needs indicated by classroom, school, and district data.

Professional development has included teacher training and implementation of effective data teams and professional learning communities. The data team process gave CO-U elementary teachers the structure for collaboratively analyzing assessment data and for instructional decision-making based on student performance and progress in mastering essential skills and concepts. In addition to building-level data teams, CO-U teachers also participate in professional learning communities, PLCs, with teachers from two other buildings. The PLCs provide an opportunity for teachers to collaborate with grade alike teachers to unpack and prioritize standards in order to develop learning targets and success criteria for grade level standards. The PLC work and data team structure has led to an increased understanding of the Iowa Core Standards and has put student learning at the center of professional conversations. The work of the PLC is consistently student-centered as teachers address four main questions: What is it we expect students to learn? How will we know they have learned it? What will we do if they don't? What will we do if they already know it?

Through this type of collaboration and reflection during professional development, teachers are able to develop an understanding of curriculum, target areas of need for all students, and engage in a cycle of continuous improvement that leads to success for all groups of students.

4. School Leadership:

The Charter Oak-Ute Elementary leadership structure includes a Superintendent and Principal based in Charter Oak as well as a shared Curriculum Coordinator and a shared School Improvement/HR Coordinator. While not many small schools can justify four leadership positions, the shared positions have proven to add value to our programs. The Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) Plan has allowed us to share Teacher Leaders' expertise to enhance programming.

The leadership philosophy at Charter Oak-Ute aligns with our district mission; "The Charter Oak-Ute Community School District is committed to providing a quality small school education which will enhance the abilities of students toward reaching their utmost potential." As leaders, the philosophy is to provide a quality environment for students and staff. The leaders strive to engage in shared leadership, to gain input on crucial school decisions, and to have a growth mindset.

Providing high-quality professional development is one way leaders ensure resources focus on student achievement. The Early Literacy Implementation (ELI) legislation has been a guide to jump start our focus on literacy and a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) at Charter Oak-Ute Elementary school. Data teams were formed and leaders take part in the meetings. The ELI and MTSS efforts have been headed by the Curriculum Coordinator and Superintendent. Providing professional development in the areas of authentic teaching, working with English Learners, and building a positive school climate has been provided by all four leaders in the district.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Strategies for academic success at Charter Oak-Ute Elementary school include some measures already addressed in other sections. Briefly, those include universal screening for reading difficulties and use of data in Data Teams. We believe the use of academic data in isolation is not the only way a school can be successful. Academic data, in conjunction with socio-emotional indicators have served us more fully in being successful. Understanding that our students come to us with a multitude of factors that affect their academic success which are often out of our control; we choose not to let that get in the way of educating the whole child. Students will not care what we know until they know that we care!

Professional Learning Communities have also been referenced in other sections. We consider the PLC process as a contributing factor in our successful school. Charter Oak-Ute Elementary teachers could be isolated since there are no opportunities to meet with grade-alike partners with one section per grade level. The success in our PLCs lies in being part of a consortium, allowing grade-alike PLCs to gather. Leading the PLCs are the shared Curriculum Coordinator and School Improvement/HR Coordinator, which offers opportunities for curriculum information and instructional strategies to be shared across the consortium districts.