

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

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[ ] Public or [X] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Miss Sandy Wiele

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

Official School Name Peoria Christian Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3506 N. California Avenue

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

City Peoria State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 61603-1106

County Peoria

Telephone (309) 686-4500 Fax (309) 686-2569

Web site/URL http://www.peoriachristian.org E-mail swiele@peoriachristian.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\*Mrs. Becky Gardner E-mail bgardner@peoriachristian.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Peoria Christian School Tel. (309) 686-4500

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. Todd Moore  
(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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1. 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. 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** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

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	35	35	70
K	11	19	30
1	15	13	28
2	16	20	36
3	24	21	45
4	22	20	42
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	123	128	251

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 7 % Black or African American
  - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 83 % White
  - 6 % 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: 6%

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	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	250
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.064
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 8

8. Students receiving special education services: 0 %  
0 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
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 0 Other Health Impaired
- 0 Specific Learning Disability
- 2 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: 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	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

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 19:1
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%	97%	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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2009

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Peoria Christian School supports the Christian home and church by preparing students to lead Christ-like lives through a biblical approach to education.

## PART III – SUMMARY

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Peoria Christian Elementary School began in 1950 in Peoria, Illinois, with sixteen students and one teacher. It celebrates sixty-six years of education this year, having grown to an enrollment of 250 students and twenty-seven full and part-time staff in preschool through fourth grade. The district includes a middle school and a high school with a total enrollment of 687 students preschool through twelfth grade. Students come from middle-income families in single-family households of professional and business people. It draws students from Peoria proper, as well as several outlying communities. It is the only large non-denominational Christian school in the central Illinois area. The main campus houses preschool-fourth grade and high school students. It also has a satellite preschool campus and a middle school (grades 5-8) on separate properties. Peoria Christian Elementary School faces the challenges of the local economy as a major job source in the community has announced multiple layoffs. In addition, the Peoria Christian Elementary School family has gone through several crises with community members dealing with long-term illness and even death. The school family has come together and offered support through community benefits, scholarships, counseling, and prayer. The Peoria area is home to Bradley University, a top private university in the country. Peoria Christian Elementary School has had the honor of training student teachers from Bradley in its program. A local junior college also sends its pre-service teachers each quarter to observe classrooms.

Peoria Christian Elementary School had a dramatic turnover in leadership in 2012. The elementary principal became the superintendent and a long-time teacher became elementary principal, with the middle school and high school attaining new principals from within the school as well. This could have been a tumultuous time for the school; but instead, it was a blessing in many ways. Having the whole leadership team familiar with each other and with the school has served to be productive and beneficial to faculty, staff and families.

Peoria Christian Elementary School “supports the Christian home by preparing students to lead Christ-like lives.” The mission is accomplished as it produces academically skilled students who impact the world for Christ and who become leaders in their fields of study. School values include the need for students to learn to process information and to think critically, the need for students to be challenged to excellence in everything they do, and the need for students to develop Christ-like character. As students grow, they become community leaders who help to serve in a multitude of areas. Academic excellence is shown in an ACT average of 27.6 for students attending Peoria Christian School from preschool to graduation.

Peoria Christian Elementary School is recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education and meets all of the mandated health and academic requirements. The school is accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). This group is the largest accrediting association of Christian schools in the world. Peoria Christian Elementary School is also accredited by North Central Association through AdvancED.

Peoria Christian Elementary School teaches all subjects through a biblical worldview, believing that all truth is God’s truth. It has integrated the Common Core State Standards into the curriculum, but those serve as minimum requirements for students to accomplish. The staff uses a variety of methods and materials to help each student progress using his learning style. Opportunities to work independently and cooperatively are provided. The academic program includes reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, Bible, physical education, music, Spanish, library, computers and art.

With the announcement of the Blue Ribbon Award in 2009 posted in the local newspaper, Peoria Christian Elementary School received numerous congratulatory letters and notes from area schools, businesses, and governmental individuals. The school included the award in publications, on its website, and letters to verify the academic excellence Peoria Christian Elementary School strives to achieve as it fulfills its mission and vision. The award solidified the path it continues to pursue as part of meeting the needs of every student so that each achieves improvement from the previous year. The faculty continues to participate in numerous hours of professional development to learn and implement best practice teaching strategies and opportunities for the students to actively engage in learning. Math textbooks changed since the 2009 award due to data

analysis and faculty input. The school has seen an improvement in mathematics because of this change. An elementary art program has been added and the school is in the process of updating and expanding its technology plan. Classrooms were updated with new paint and tile floors to provide better learning environments, and special area classes were moved to the same hallway to highlight their importance. A recycling initiative has been implemented in each classroom. There continues to be a strong community influence as Peoria Christian Elementary School exemplifies a biblical worldview and excellent academics year after year.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

#### Reading/Language Arts

Peoria Christian Elementary School believes a strong literacy foundation is crucial to the twenty-first century student. Teachers use multi-faceted strategies and techniques to engage students in learning to think critically and deeply. Kindergarten and first grade classes have a strong phonics-based curriculum that allows for movement in beginning literacy skills. Students are actively engaged in learning songs and motions with Zoo-Phonics. Comprehension strategies such as cause and effect, fact versus opinion, prior knowledge, story elements and inferences are reinforced each week through stories and projects at all grade levels in whole-class instruction, as well as small group. Students participate in activities designed to provide excitement in understanding these strategies. Events such as the “Q” and “U” Wedding, Van Allsburg Awards, and a Poetry Picnic are favorites, as well as the 100 Book Club, and Dr. Seuss Week. Each grade level works to ensure all ability levels are being served, whether through differentiated station work or pull-out time with the resource department. All students write persuasive, narrative and expository pieces, which are often posted on the hallway walls for others to enjoy. Many reading lessons naturally allow for civic learning and engagement. Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Ruby Bridges, and George Washington Carver are some of the leaders discussed. Lessons are built around the challenges faced and compared to those which affect current life. For example, after reading and discussing the life of Rosa Parks, students create a bus art project, putting themselves in the bus. They discuss standing up for what is right. This allows for biblical worldview discussions, as well as teaching students that God created people in His image, so we should love and serve everyone, no matter the differences.

#### Mathematics

For several years teachers noticed through data analysis and anecdotal evidence that students were capable of memorizing math facts and math equations but struggled with number sense. The teachers worked to provide supplemental help in these areas, but it became apparent that a curriculum change was needed. In 2013, a hands-on, conceptual mathematics program was adopted. Teachers incorporate modeling, manipulatives, and strategies in a more meaningful way while teaching various strategies to solve problems. Math stations and math journals are used to reinforce concepts learned throughout the year. Math facts are memorized through the Rocketship Math program of nightly review. Technology plays an important role in the mathematics program as the entire student workbook is available for use on Promethean boards. Each classroom utilizes the ThinkCentral website for follow-up assignments, games, review and activities. One of the third grade classes holds a Math Carnival for parents.

#### Science

Science is taught through a hands-on approach that engages students in learning the scientific process. Students study a variety of areas, including living and non-living things, health and safety, plants, and the human body. One of the ways student interest is captured is by offering events that are student-friendly and fun. The younger grades hold a sensory fair in which students rotate through multiple centers of exploration and experimentation. An optional science fair is also offered. In an effort to push the excitement level for science higher, The Amazing Chemistry Show comes to the school. With the adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards by the state of Illinois, teachers spent professional development time comparing these standards to the current textbook. They also included various biblical truths to ensure standards fit the school's mission and vision statements. Future plans include incorporating more STEM projects.

#### Social Studies

The social studies program at Peoria Christian Elementary School focuses on American heritage. Students are actively involved in learning through a Thanksgiving feast and Colonial Day. The Patriotic Program, an annual event for twenty-eight years, has students researching and dressing up as a famous American to present a short monologue for the community. Fourth grade students are selected to daily raise both the American flag and Christian flag. Students decorate bags of goodies for local veterans. The white table ceremony is conducted in one classroom to help students appreciate the sacrifices of many military families.

Students make booklets of America's famous landmarks, research other countries of the world to discover similarities and differences, and hold mock elections. Units on how the democratic government operates are all part of the school's commitment to engaging, and active civic learning.

#### Preschool

Scripture Bites, a theme-based curriculum, is used in the preschool. This Bible-based curriculum includes centers such as housekeeping, blocks, table games, art, books, science, and music. It introduces the alphabet, the letter sounds, and phrases. Science, Social Studies, and Fine Arts are included throughout the year. In Mathematics, the numerals 1-20 are taught. The students count using one-to-one correspondence, recognize numerals 1-20, and count by rote to 20. The numerals 0-100 are introduced. Students identify shapes, classify objects, and identify patterns. Games, blocks, beads, Lego's, Play-Doh, and a sand and water table are used, along with technology, to enhance learning. All activities and themes follow the Illinois Early Learning and Developmental Standards and allow for an easy and smooth transition into kindergarten. Students spend time on a community helper unit, which stresses the valuable work various members of the community do for its citizens. This unit closes with a community helper parade. A Children around the World unit helps students begin to appreciate the similarities and differences of cultures.

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

#### Visual/Performing Arts

Believing that music is a gift from God, and can be used in many ways to glorify Him, music is a top priority at Peoria Christian Elementary School. Students attend twice weekly, thirty-minute classes in kindergarten through fourth grade. Skills related to singing and instrument playing are learned. Multiple instruments are on hand for students to play. The teacher incorporates a composer of the month which highlights the history behind the songs, and performances of many composers, including those of varying cultures. Students in fourth grade learn to play the recorder and students in all grades have at least one major performance each year. The drama club is an after school opportunity for grades two through four with a spring show presented each year. In the past two years great strides have been made in incorporating an art program in the school. Currently classes meet at least every other week for forty minutes with students beginning to learn how the color wheel works, how to use paint correctly, the elements of art, and art vocabulary.

#### Physical Education/Health

Recognizing that humans are fearfully and wonderfully made by God, physical education class at Peoria Christian Elementary School aims to not only have fun, but also to learn how best to use bodies to glorify God. Each Physical Education class begins with some form of exercise or training before skills based on state standards are taught to students. Both large and small motor development aspects are addressed at all grades, kindergarten through fourth grade, twice weekly for thirty-five minutes each. Sportsmanship is stressed. Students regularly qualify for the presidential fitness awards each year. Highlights of the physical education program are the bi-annual obstacle course and the annual Field Day at the end of the year. Health is taught in both physical education classes and the science curriculum.

#### Foreign Language

An introduction to Spanish begins in preschool with bi-monthly classes which increase to weekly for kindergarten to fourth grade students. The goal of the Spanish program is introduction, not immersion. Students will acquire vocabulary and basic grammar skills, along with learning about the culture and customs of the Spanish people. Students learn the language through active lessons, and often with the help of music and song. Having had a strong introduction to Spanish in the younger grades serves the students well as they move to middle school and are offered more opportunity for Spanish electives.

#### Technology

The librarian serves as the technology teacher each week in all grades. Classes meet for thirty minutes and include digital safety, keyboarding skills, and Microsoft Office. Through Grandparents' Day donations, twenty-four iPads were purchased. These are used in the library, as well as being available for classroom checkout. Students are able to play review games and create visual and narrative reports. Also through

donations from grandparents, new apps are consistently purchased to use on the iPads that keep Peoria Christian Elementary School on the cutting edge of creative learning and assessment. The technology lab was expanded to allow for more practical use of computers and iPads and as a look toward the future of technology becoming a greater part of the learning process. Teachers bring their classes to the lab for whole group lessons and research. Students particularly enjoyed working through a problem solving adventure about surviving in Jamestown after getting off the Mayflower.

### Bible

The Bible program is of extreme importance to Peoria Christian Elementary School. The curriculum is based on a worldview approach. The school's desire is that all students, no matter their age, are able to know what they believe and why they believe it. Bible is taught daily as a subject, but it is also integrated into every subject that is taught. Beginning in kindergarten students attend a weekly chapel to sing and listen to various speakers. Each grade level is involved in a service project throughout the year. Food drives, letters of encouragement to pastors, participation in Samaritan's Purse, and the purchase of uniforms for disadvantaged public school students have all been done by students of Peoria Christian Elementary School.

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

Having students actively involved in the learning process is very important to all those associated with Peoria Christian Elementary School. Knowing that not all students learn in the same way, teachers strive to meet all needs through the various modalities. Promethean boards provide a dramatic visual aspect to lessons but also provide the opportunity for the students to be engaged in the lesson through interactive software. For example, spelling words may be hidden under a definition and students come to the board to find the correct word and make a match through use of the board pen. Short video clips are shown as introductions to some lessons, and often a musical rhyme or chant is included as a memory cue. The preschool program begins foundational learning through play-based learning focused on developmental stages. As students continue through kindergarten and beyond, they are frequently involved in group work and differentiated learning of some type. Particularly in the primary grades, classwork begins with a whole group lesson and then is divided into stations where review work is done. The teacher meets with groups at different levels in order to best meet their need. Students often play games and use manipulatives. Teachers can easily adapt these for varying levels of students. For example, a tiered math game uses basic facts for one group and more advanced addition/subtraction skills for another. Students also learn how to work together and complement each other rather than being in competition with each other. They learn how to work as a team through the science lessons with each group having a steward, a coordinator and a messenger. Turn-and-talks, the use of rubrics, and structured research are other ways that students experience learning.

While it can sometimes be easier to address the needs of the struggler, Peoria Christian Elementary School considers it extremely important to ensure that students who are in need of an extra challenge are also helped. In the lower elementary classes, most of these needs are met in the specific classroom with the teacher creating her own varied plans. In third and fourth grade, students are recommended to the resource teacher to become part of the LEAP program (Learning Enrichment and Achievement Partners). This group meets weekly with the resource teacher in order to develop critical thinking skills beyond what they are doing in the classroom.

Peoria Christian Elementary School administers the Terra Nova achievement test each April, with results delivered in May. The principal does the initial analysis to gain an overview of student performance, then teachers are given access to their specific class scores. Parents are given a report at the end of the year. Peoria Christian Elementary School invited a Terra Nova consultant to come in 2014. She further trained teachers how to read, interpret and adjust classroom teaching based on the given data. She held a separate meeting with parents to discuss the meaning of the test results. This past year a more detailed approach to analyzing data was done by teachers. Each teacher looked at individual scores of their students and identified those on the verge of being at the next level of mastery. Plans were then made to accomplish that gain. The principal maintains records of scores and grades, and regularly meets with teachers to discuss progress, plans and initiatives. Dibels testing is done on all pre-school, kindergarten and first grade students throughout the school year. This allows for easy tracking of progress and helps teachers identify areas to

stress in the classroom.

Terra Nova data is also analyzed to determine curricular strengths and weaknesses. It was through this analysis that the need to address the mathematics curriculum was made known and ultimately, a change was made.

Peoria Christian Elementary School has regular association meetings where achievement data is shared with stakeholders and school-wide scores are also announced. Results are shown on promotional materials as well. Parents are able to access grades at any time through the PowerSchool program and parent teacher conferences are held each fall with nearly 100% parent participation.

Peoria Christian Elementary School is a college prep school; therefore, it will always strive to continue to be a top performer in academics. Teachers meet in vertical teams across the grade levels and across the district to ensure that proper planning and sequencing is done, and that the entire district have created curriculum maps for each subject area.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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

The principal at Peoria Christian Elementary School believes that students need to have fun while learning. She seeks to provide an exciting, nurturing atmosphere each day. At the beginning of the year, she invites each class into her office to pray with them, to challenge them to do their best throughout the year, and to read some favorite books. This has been a highlight of the year as students try to trick their parents by telling them they “were in the principal’s office.” The principal also supervises lunch each day, keeping in close contact with all the students in order to provide consistency and a comfortable, safe environment. After a week of Terra Nova testing the school celebrates by having Charger Theater. Students choose between several movies to watch with popcorn and candy being served. Students are challenged to take the summer Bible reading program which encourages daily Bible reading. Random fun activities, such as M&M Monday, a hot chocolate day, surprise ice cream social, and Christmas parties with the principal all serve to foster a fun, creative learning environment that students anticipate. The hallways are filled with student projects which encourages, excites, and motivates students to present their best work. Students are routinely prayed for by all faculty and staff.

Teachers at Peoria Christian Elementary School are hired not only for their ability to teach but also for their ability to relate to students and families alike. Teachers often find themselves in the role of a counselor. They take this role willingly and diligently seek ways to help and encourage the students. Teachers meet each week to pray together and to have Bible study. Each year parents volunteer to be an encourager and prayer partner for a teacher. Parents also support teachers through classroom volunteerism and donations. The School Board of Peoria Christian Elementary School holds the teachers in high esteem and works diligently to provide a competitive salary. Teachers are able to receive life insurance, health insurance and a retirement savings program. They are encouraged to continue their education through a reimbursement program. Each year the faculty and staff are invited to be a part of a focus group with school leadership which allows them to share their thoughts and opinions on various school employment issues.

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

Peoria Christian Elementary School has a warm, inviting, family atmosphere. The school mission states that it “supports the Christian home and church,” and it is considered an honor and privilege to partner with families and churches.

Each week the principal distributes an informative email blast sharing news of the week along with many pictures of students involved in activities. Classroom teachers send out a weekly or monthly grade level calendar for their specific class. As the principal seeks parental input, she organizes focus groups for each grade level to ask pertinent questions related to various school topics. These have been highly valuable for all involved. It was through these focus groups that it was determined parents desired to have more time to meet other parents in their students’ classes. Because of this, several meet and greet events have been planned allowing for easy conversation and introductions.

Facebook is used at least weekly to share events happening within Peoria Christian Elementary School. The local media has publicized events with some regularity. The school has hosted the Chamber of Commerce Business Before Hours event and also had a luncheon for area realtors.

The entire school district comes together for the annual Homecoming event and Auction to support the school. Families are asked to raise donations to help meet the expenses not covered by the operating budget.

Donations, both small and large, are frequent at Peoria Christian Elementary School. Donors from within the Peoria Christian Elementary School family have helped with school improvements by purchasing such things as a larger, faster computer server and a new parking lot. Staff luncheons and general classroom needs are provided throughout the school year. Volunteerism is critical to meeting the needs in the school;

parents and grandparents are regularly involved in helping many programs run smoothly for students. Volunteers are available for the library and computer room, Fine Arts Picture Person program, room moms, lunchroom, and one-on-one tutoring work. Many families at Peoria Christian Elementary School have both parents working which makes volunteering difficult, but parents are willing to help in any way that is possible so they have a part in the school and the lives of their children. The newly formed Parent Teacher Organization is allowing volunteers to serve the school in a multitude of ways that best meet their schedules and abilities.

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

Key to the culture of Peoria Christian Elementary School is professional development of its teachers. The school budget allows for \$20,000 for this and the allotted Title II monies are also used. The leadership of the school has a passion for lifelong learning and makes this a key component in all trainings held throughout the year. The principal will often go with teachers to conferences. She will attend multiple events individually in order to learn about curriculum concerns and leadership qualities. Teachers attend workshops related particularly to literacy and mathematics skills. The principal purchased a selection of professional books for teachers to choose one, read, and write about during the summer break. This reading has caused teachers to gain new insight and excitement for their teaching as they learn new ways to incorporate strategies and standards. The principal led the teachers through a book study on assessment during the school year. Teachers have access to webinars through a partnership with ACSI, ASCD, and edWeb. When teachers read or go to a conference, time is made to share what they have learned with other staff members so that all may benefit from the training. The literacy retreat that is regularly attended now started with just a couple of teachers going the first year. Having this type of discussion and feedback has made it so that eight to ten teachers now attend. Understanding that it is not always convenient to go away for professional development, the leadership at Peoria Christian Elementary School seeks to provide in-house training when possible. Nationally known speakers have been invited to the school for days of in-service related to literacy, mathematics, or classroom management training. Heidi, founder of Heidi's Songs, came for preschool and kindergarten teachers to discuss early childhood skill development. An associate from Debbie Diller Educational Consulting came for all grade levels and served as an encouragement to rethink the classroom environment, even the way desks are arranged. A highlight of this past year was having Donna Whyte come to share insight on classroom management and station work with teachers.

Professional development is part of Peoria Christian Elementary School's certification and evaluation process. In order to be re-certified, teachers must be able to show they have met professional development criteria for their grade level. As teachers are evaluated, the school leadership takes special note of their participation in furthering their knowledge of their given classroom content and management.

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

All families attending Peoria Christian Elementary School create the Association of Peoria Christian Elementary School. They elect a nine-member Board who oversees the goals and finances of the school. The superintendent is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school. The principal reports to the superintendent. All these members meet together at least monthly to seek ways to continue to provide excellent education. Prayer always begins these meetings with special emphasis on student and family concerns. Topics of discussion include safety and security procedures of the entire district, teacher evaluations, budget issues, and the implementation of an upcoming technology plan. The principal of the elementary school meets with her teachers in various ways. She has a monthly teachers meeting which includes general information and topical studies. Meetings are also divided into grade level meetings or vertical meetings to discuss curriculum strengths and weaknesses. Additional leadership includes the business manager, who oversees the budget, as well as the resource leader, who is engaged in assessing students to enter the school and those students already attending here. The admissions and development leaders diligently work together to promote the school and to raise needed funds. The Association has two meetings each year where news of the school and upcoming goals are discussed. The spring association meeting also includes the board election and adoption of the budget. The overriding philosophy of the leadership of Peoria Christian Elementary School is to help students be all that God has created them to be.

This must be done through prayer and a commitment to excellent work. When the school made the decision to switch to a conceptual mathematics book, the change was not well received. Many criticized the leadership for this change; some still do today. However, the students have benefited from the change. This change is one that will continue to have benefits as the students reach middle and high school and require a solid understanding of number sense. The leadership also believes that the use of technology in the classroom needs to be continually evaluated and is in the process of rewriting a technology plan. The passion of the leadership team is to see Peoria Christian Elementary School continue to move forward in all aspects of education, rather than be satisfied with the status quo. All decisions are made prayerfully and with the needs of today's students in mind.

## PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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Peoria Christian Elementary School serves as an extension of the Christian family. It is the aim of the school to provide not only an environment of academic excellence, but also one where Christ is preeminent and where students grow spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally. This is what makes Peoria Christian Elementary School distinct. This is what makes Peoria Christian Elementary School successful.

## PART VII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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1. Non-public school association(s): Christian

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes X      No

3. What is the educational cost per student?      \$7074  
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$997

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      10%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      37%

**PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS**

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**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** Terra Nova 3/ACSI  
Edition

**Grade:** 3

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2011

**Publisher:** Terra Nova 3:  
CTB/McGraw-Hill

**Scores are reported here**  
**as:** Percentiles

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	69
Number of students tested	42
Percent of total students tested	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** Terra Nova 3/ACSI Edition

**Grade:** 4

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2011

**Publisher:** Terra Nova 3: CTB/McGraw-Hill

**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	70
Number of students tested	37
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA

**Test:** Terra Nova 3/ACSI Edition

**Grade:** 3

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2011

**Publisher:** Terra Nova 3: CTB/McGraw-Hill

**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	67
Number of students tested	42
Percent of total students tested	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA

**Test:** Terra Nova 3/ ACSI Edition

**Grade:** 4

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2011

**Publisher:** Terra Nova 3: CTB/McGraw-Hill

**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	70
Number of students tested	37
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**