

**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) [X] Title I    [ ] Charter    [ ] Magnet    [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Shawn Halland

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

Official School Name Thompson Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 7351 N. Campbell Road

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

City Las Vegas                      State NV                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 89149-0618

County Clark

Telephone (702) 799-3430                      Fax (702) 799-3432

Web site/URL https://www.thompson-ccsd.net/                      E-mail slh372@interact.ccsd.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. Pat Skorkowsky                      E-mail psorkowsky@interact.ccsd.net  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Clark County School District                      Tel. (702) 799-2273

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. Deanna Wright  
(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

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
  - 216 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 59 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 49 High schools
  - 10 K-12 schools

334 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- 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
- 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>	88	59	147
<b>1</b>	71	67	138
<b>2</b>	55	50	105
<b>3</b>	65	59	124
<b>4</b>	60	72	132
<b>5</b>	69	66	135
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	408	373	781

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 5 % Asian
  - 18 % Black or African American
  - 25 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 40 % White
  - 10 % 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: 24%

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	108
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	82
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	190
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	794
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.239
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	24

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %  
26 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: 45 %  
Total number students who qualify: 364

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %  
121 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.

<u>22</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>6</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>31</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>33</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>27</u> Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8
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	32
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 26:1
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%	96%	96%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.  
Yes \_ No X

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

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

The commitment of Thompson Elementary is to instill a sense of lifelong learning through service, challenge, and excellence within our school community to ensure our students become responsible, productive citizens of a diverse society.

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

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Thompson elementary School, located in Las Vegas, Nevada, is one of 216 elementary schools in the Clark County School District, the fifth largest school district in the United States. The school serves approximately 800 students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Thompson Elementary is named in honor of Sandra Thompson, a tireless advocate for youth in the Las Vegas valley until her tragic death in 2002. Sandra Thompson, a reporter for the local newspaper, served as a voice and an agent for positive change in the community, making the community a better one for kids. Since the day it opened, the school has worked tirelessly to honor Mrs. Thompson by doing whatever it takes to help all students succeed.

Three words capture the school's mission: Service, Challenge, and Excellence. The staff and students work hard every day to challenge themselves, live as productive citizens of the school and community, and reach high goals for excellence in all they do. The staff consistently goes above and beyond to do whatever it takes in order to reach all students, every day. Decisions using one overarching benchmark: what is best for kids? Regardless of the time or effort it may take, teacher consistently do what is best for kids. The school community has consistently been united in working together to ensure that we provide the best education possible to each of our students.

Thompson has consistently been one of the higher performing elementary schools in the state, and has seen consistent improvement over the years. The results are simply the positive effect of a great many adults coming together and working to provide high quality, engaging lessons that foster large amounts of student learning. Along with great academic success, our students are also involved in many extra-curricular activities as well as providing community service to the surrounding area.

The student body of the school is unique for the area. It is a diverse student body, and this is seen as a strength for the school. There is good balance of ethnicities present in the school, and the school is designated as a Title I school, with approximately 45% of the student body eligible for free or reduced lunch. In order to meet the needs of the varied learners in the school, teachers continue to refine their practice by engaging in sustained and embedded professional development. This allows teachers to provide rigorous and engaging lessons that promote deep learning of subject matter and skills. Student engagement is seen as a hallmark of good instruction, and teachers utilize cooperative learning structures to promote student engagement and allow all students to benefit from high quality teaching. Higher-level thinking is promoted by providing cognitively demanding tasks, and students regularly engage in meta cognitive practices as they reflect on their learning. Grade level teams meet regularly to analyze data, plan instruction, and improve their teaching expertise. Shared leadership is seen as a key strength of the school, with grade levels collaborating regularly to make decisions related to their grade level and the school leadership team working with the administrative team to promote school improvement and assist in key decision-making processes. Extra-curricular activities help promote a further sense of belonging to the school, with activities such as pep squad, honor choir, instrument ensemble, student council, running club, and basketball provided as opportunities for students to grow and prosper outside of the classroom.

Forging a strong partnership with parents and families is another notable achievement for Thompson Elementary. The school collaborates with a dedicated and robust PTA, collaborating to help engage families in the school in a variety of ways. The PTA sponsors many outstanding activities such as parent involvement week, movie nights, skate night, restaurant nights, fall festival, fun run, pastries with parents, monthly coffee with the principal meetings, family game nights, and breakfast with Santa. Teachers benefit from the assistance of a large number of parent volunteers who are in the school daily, assisting teachers in a variety of roles. The school is proud to promote the Watch DOGS (Dads of Great Students) program, increasing the number of fathers who volunteer at the school. As a result of our partnerships with parents and families, the school was named a National PTA School of Excellence for 2015 – 2107.

The school works tirelessly to promote and recognize students for being responsible, respectful, and kind citizens. By also promoting key character strengths such as grit, optimism, self-control, and zest, the school instills in students the belief that each of them can and will achieve great things in life. Twice yearly awards ceremonies recognize student accomplishments, and students are invited to a winter and spring Thompson

Tribute, which aims to recognize and reward students for being positive and hardworking members of the school. Above all, each staff member promotes the belief that through hard work and kind actions, all things are possible.

Previously recognized as a National PTA School of Excellence, 2015-2017, a National Title I Distinguished School for 2016, and a consistently high achieving school in Nevada, Thompson Elementary School is proud to be a candidate for the National Blue Ribbon Award.

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

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

A hallmark of Thompson Elementary is the academic standards that are set for all students. The Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) are rigorously taught throughout the year, with mastery expected by the end of the academic year. Teachers have spent countless hours over the past several years to unwrap these standards and design high quality, rigorous, and cognitively demanding tasks and activities that reflect the high bar these standards set.

Reading instruction encompasses a balanced approach. In the primary grades the focus is on building the foundational skills critical to future success. Daily lessons, based on teacher designed long range plans, include activities that focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, with an intense focus on early literacy skills. Computer adaptive programs are used to support student learning of early literacy skills, and data from the programs is used to help inform teacher-led instruction. The focus for intermediate grade students shifts gradually to a focus on deep reading of narrative and informational text, using authentic texts and cognitively rigorous tasks that also integrate significant amounts of writing. Units or modules are designed and implemented in order to provide meaningful and connected literacy tasks and activities. Strategies and structures such as close reading, small group instruction, whole group novel sets, exemplar texts, and read alouds are used in conjunction with daily whole group instruction in order to promote deep learning of the academic content standards. Ninety minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction and practice is provided daily, including a mix of whole group instruction, small group teacher-led instruction, and blended learning instruction using a computer adaptive reading program. In addition, 30 minutes of tier 2 reading instruction is provided by a licensed staff member for any student not meeting grade level standards. All students in Kindergarten through fifth grade engage in fifty minutes of writing instruction and practice daily, utilizing the writing workshop format. Units of Study in Writing, by Lucy Calkins, served as the chief curricular resource for writing instruction. Writing is deeply integrated within the reading block as well, with students engaged in short and long answer essay practice, using textual evidence to support their answers.

High quality and rigorous math instruction is provided for 70 minutes each day. Primary grade students are provided meaningful and engaging hands-on activities to build concrete and abstract reasoning skills. Daily fluency activities, appropriate for each grade level, are provided to promote foundational skill acquisition. Eureka math is used as the primary curricular resource, and teachers provide daily lessons that require students to use critical thinking skills, discourse, and reasoning in a variety of ways in order to successfully master the content standards. Structures and tools such as math notebooks, notetaking, cooperative learning, and performance tasks are seen regularly in the classrooms in an effort to promote high levels of student learning. All students use Dreambox math, an online computer adaptive program, to remediate or enrich student learning.

Science standards are learned by students using hands-on science learning. Full Option Science System (FOSS) serves as the primary resource in science, but students also engage in the reading and analysis of science-related informational texts as reading and science is integrated regularly. Students regularly work collaboratively with their peers as they engage in hands on activities with real-world connections. Students engage in scientific inquiry as well, with the fourth grade science fair an annual tradition at the school.

Social Studies instruction focuses on history, geography, economics, and civics. While social studies topics are often integrated into the English language arts areas, using information texts, students also participate in specific social studies lessons on a weekly basis. In third grade, students integrate writing and social studies by studying a famous person who made significant contributions to the world, writing a biography, and demonstrating their newfound knowledge through a Living Museum, held in the spring each year. Fourth grade students engage in a months-long study of Nevada history, and students strive to attain the status of Distinguished Nevadan by learning relevant information related to their home state. Fifth graders participate in the Great American Award Challenge by completing six tasks, including memorizing all U.S. Presidents, in the order they served, and memorizing both the Gettysburg Address and the preamble to the U.S.

Constitution. Fifth graders also intently student U.S. government and civics using the We The People curriculum and text, resulting in students gaining an in-depth understanding of the three branches of government and the democratic process. Students in all grades participate in real world civics by participating in the student elections and having an elected student government.

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

The school strongly believes that in order to be a great place for learning, students must have additional engaging experiences in the other specialty areas. Students participate in art, music, physical education, library, and technology. By having strong programs in each of these curricular areas, student interests are honored and individual strengths are fostered outside of the typical classroom setting. All students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade attend each class once every six days except for physical education, which they attend twice in each six-day period.

In visual arts, the students are immersed in hands-on learning opportunities that focus on many different artistic media. This includes painting, sculpting, sketching, ceramics, drawing, and printmaking. Students also engage in the study of art history as well as art criticism. Students are encouraged to use art as a form of self-expression and an opportunity to foster creativity and critical thinking skills.

The music program promotes a love of music and dance through singing, movement, listening to music, and the playing of various instruments. Like all forms of artistic expression, music and dance are used to allow students to explore their creative side in a manner different that the regular classroom. The music teacher also has a robust and highly popular instrument ensemble and honor choir, and these student groups perform both at the school and in the community as well.

The physical education class at Thompson offers dynamic and highly engaging activities that promote physical fitness for all students. Getting and keeping students active is the primary mission of the class. Students also learn how to participate successfully in various sports, both individual and team. Students are challenged to improve their physical fitness by setting goals and tracking progress throughout the year. In addition, the teacher provides a before school running club to further promote students' well-being as well as their sense of belonging to the school. Along with rigorous and engaging physical activity, the physical education class also promotes healthy choices and teaches students the importance of making healthy choices now and into the future.

By going to the library regularly, students learn how to successfully use the many resources a library has to offer. The librarian teaches all students critical skills such as how to conduct research, internet safety, information literacy, and how to use print and digital resources. The librarian collaborates with classroom teachers to support grade level literacy standards as well, and she provides resources to teachers as well. The library is open at all times during the day, allowing students to access library books and resources as often as needed and not just once a week. The librarian tracks circulation regularly and updates the library's collection in order to increase the number of books students have access to and can read.

Thompson elementary has been fortunate to have a technology class for the past two years. The technology specialist teaches students in all grades skills that allow students to successfully use technology as a tool for learning and not just for entertainment. The use of technology also helps increase student engagement and excitement for learning as they use twenty-first century technology tools. Students are taught to use various programs and tools that allow them to create presentations, videos, web pages, and other forms of technological platforms that provide evidence of student learning in unique and engaging formats. The technology teacher offers an extracurricular technology club, and those students create the school's web page. By promoting the appropriate use of technology, students are equipped to be responsible users of technology that allows them to enhance their own learning.

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

Teachers at Thompson Elementary school have a shared vision for what high quality classroom instruction looks like. While teachers are empowered to use a variety of effective instructional strategies, the

underpinnings of the teachers' approach narrow down to two components: 1) rigorous learning tasks are provided that reflect the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) and that require high cognitive demand, taught in a manner so that all students can be successful; 2) a focused emphasis on student engagement so that all students are fully invested in their own learning. Grade levels collaborate extensively to plan and create long range and daily lesson plans, use common assessments that reflect the rigor the standards, and share instructional approaches that have proven effective at increasing student learning. Teachers regularly analyze learning tasks and corresponding student achievement data, making adjustments as needed, to ensure that students are provided learning opportunities that allow them to successfully master the standards.

A three-tiered model of instruction is utilized within a clear and coherent instructional schedule that ensures adequate instructional time is given to each subject area. The school has a relentless focus on maximizing every instructional minute possible in an effort to accelerate student learning. All students receive high quality tier one instruction, while students needing additional assistance to meet grade level standards are also provided tier two or tier three instruction during the day in an effort to provide "catch up" growth to those students. Tier two instruction is often provided by another licensed teacher, with students placed in groups that have similar academic needs. This occurs daily for 30 minutes. Within each classroom, teachers skillfully differentiate instruction in terms of content and processes so that all students can benefit from grade level instruction. Small flexible grouping is used in English language arts and math to provide targeted assistance to specific groups of students based upon student data and assessment results.

Technology-based support is provided to all students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade with the goal of these support programs being to accelerate student learning, assist in filling academic deficiencies that students may have, and support the lessons that teachers are providing during class. For those reasons, programs that adapt to the unique needs of each student have been selected and used. These programs place each student on a different learning path based on assessment results and student progress.

The school has set ambitious school improvement goals focused on reducing the achievement gap and ensuring all students are reading at grade level by the end of the third grade. In order to meet these goals, the school regularly analyzes data, provides tier two and tier three instruction, and uses the selected online learning programs so that students receive the support they need. Along with these supports, the school has a robust Response to Instruction (RTI) team comprised of teachers from each grade and department that meet regularly to identify struggling students and formulate plans so that these students receive intensive instruction. In the event that any identified student does not make progress after all supports and interventions have been implemented, the RTI team consults with the special education department to determine the need for further evaluation.

Along with high quality instruction and an intense focus on maximizing instructional time, ensuring students are engaged in the learning process has been a significant emphasis for the past several years. The staff has been trained to utilize cooperative learning structures across all settings and grade levels, and this has led to significant increases in student engagement with a corresponding decrease in student off-task behavior. Not only has this promoted student learning, but student collaboration and discourse has increased significantly as well.

In an additional effort to meet the needs of all learners, the school's Gifted and Talented program (GATE) provides instruction that challenges gifted learners in grades three through five. Students in GATE receive 150 minutes of instruction focusing on their unique learning needs. The GATE teacher collaborates with teachers in all grades to help ensure that these diverse learners' needs are also being met in the general education classrooms as well.

The analysis and use of student assessment data is a significant factor in the school's success. A variety of assessments are used to determine student proficiency levels, track progress, and determine students' deficit areas so that focused instruction can be provided to rectify any of these areas. Assessment data is regularly used to determine areas for growth as well as areas of strength at the classroom, grade level, and building level.

Universal screeners such as AIMSweb are used at least three times each year to identify students not meeting grade level proficiency targets. Using this assessment information, students are typically grouped based on their needs and provided high quality and intensive tier two and tier three instruction. Diagnostic assessments such as Core Phonics and the Developmental Reading Inventory are also used to identify the specific deficit areas so that teachers can provide assistance in those areas and accelerate student progress toward proficiency. Technology-based platforms such as i-Ready are also used to provide diagnostic information and assist in planning for further instruction. Progress monitoring data is collected weekly or biweekly to track progress and make adjustments.

Common grade level assessments are using in reading, writing, and math, and the results are analyzed by grade levels using a pre-test and post-test format. This allows teachers to analyze student growth as well as proficiency. In grades three through five, SBAC interim assessments are used to determine student proficiency levels and track students' progress toward standards mastery as student prepare for end of year assessments in reading, math, and science.

At the classroom level, formative and summative assessments are used to help guide instructional decisions on a daily basis. Assessment data is gathered from a variety of sources, such as performance tasks, quizzes, written responses, exit tickets, and end of module or unit tests. Feedback is provided to students and parents regularly using the school's online grade book platform Infinite Campus to track student progress.

Assessment results are used by grade levels and the school leadership team at the end of each year to determine the effectiveness of school improvement efforts and to determine whether the school's efforts were successful or where there is additional room for improvement.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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

The culture of Thompson Elementary is embodied in the school's common expectations posted in each classroom: Be Responsible, Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be Kind. Students and staff firmly believe that hard work pays off, and being a good citizen inside and outside the school is the right way for each member of the school community to act.

The school culture promotes and recognizes achievement and belonging in a variety of ways. Monthly student of the month luncheons recognize exemplary student behavior. Awards assemblies are held at the end of each grading period to recognize outstanding student performance both academically and behaviorally. The school promotes character strength education, focusing on one character strength each month that has been shown to correlate to future student success in life. Morning announcements include a daily quote that reinforces the importance of each month's character strength. Twice each year the school invites students who have good attendance and behavior to spend the evening at the school while the staff provides engaging activities, games, dance, and food. These events have proven to be a smashing success, with hundreds of students attending. The school proudly promotes acts of kindness, and the school has been a proud partner with the Josh Stevens Foundation's Be Kind program, recognizing random acts of kindness on the school campus. The school strives to build in the students a sense of a larger purpose in life, promoting and supporting various community service projects such as food drives, clothing drives, visits to senior citizen homes, and angel tree gift donations during the holidays. The student council organizes recycling initiatives as well as conducting school supply donation drives to help schools in need of assistance.

Extra-curricular activities assist in strengthening the sense of belonging students have to the school. Clubs such as choir, instrument ensemble, running club, basketball, the technology team, pep squad, and student council give students another way for them to participate in the school outside of the classroom.

The school strongly believes that the most important factor in a child's education is the teacher the student has each year. As such, teachers are highly valued, and their input and ideas are included in the most important decision-making processes. The culture of the school related to the professional staff is embodied in one sentence: Going above and beyond is the norm for the teacher and staff at Thompson Elementary School. Teachers are recognized weekly for their outstanding contributions in the school's staff newsletter. Each month "teammates of the month" are recognized and honored at a staff meeting. Teachers take an active leadership role in a variety of committees and initiatives. Shared leadership and decision-making have helped promote high staff morale and a sense of camaraderie. Teachers provide input on key decisions by serving on the school's leadership team as well as the school organizational team, which also includes parents and support staff personnel. The administrative team believes that the best way to sustain and enhance a "no excuses" culture at the school is to be a resource and asset to the teachers and staff. Reflective practice is encouraged and promoted, and a cycle of continuous improvement is evident among all staff. Teachers regularly engage in conversations with administration and colleagues focused on doing what's best for students. Teachers set ambitious goals and action steps each year in an ongoing effort to improve their instructional practice.

All stakeholders move in the same direction, promoting and recognizing hard work, applauding excellent behavior, promoting a sense of belonging for all students and staff, and supporting a collaborative culture that focuses on building one team focused on doing what's best for all of our students.

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

Thompson Elementary School consistently strives to engage families and the community and not only make them feel welcome but also make them an integral part of the school's success. Parents are seen as key partners for ensuring student success. Meaningful two-way dialog between the school and all families help ensure a trusting and collaborative partnership is sustained.

Engagement with families start before school has even begun. The Meet Your Teacher event is the first opportunity for many families to learn about the school each year. Parent involvement continues in even more meaningful ways such as the Watch DOGS (dads of great students) program, regular parent volunteering opportunities, monthly PTA events, and a monthly Coffee with the Principal session when parents are provided current information related to the school, provided a forum to ask questions, and have their concerns addressed in an informal yet meaningful setting. Parent engagement is also enhanced by offering parent trainings related to literacy and also assisting parents with yearly registration by having district personnel on campus during the spring.

Fall Open House, Choir performances, and Award Ceremonies are also well attended by parents and help keep parents engaged with the school. Communication is emphasized consistently through various forms, including personal contact, email, phone calls, and the school's website. Parent-teacher conferences are held each winter and consistently result in 99% of parents attending one or more conferences. Parents utilize the school's online platform, Infinite Campus, to receive up-to-date information related to student grades and attendance. The school sends out regular communication to parents using email, text, the school's website, and newsletters.

Half of the school's organizational team, responsible for advising the principal on the school improvement plan as well as the school's annual budget, is made of parents who were nominated and elected to this team. The organizational team is another way for parents to be engaged with the school.

The school strives to engage with the community as well. Community groups such as church groups, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and the Las Vegas Safekey (before and after school care program) all partner with the school and use the school's facilities on a regular basis. The school performs various community service projects, including performing at senior citizen care centers and conducting food and clothing drives for homeless outreach organizations and the local women's shelter. The school also works with area colleges and universities to assist in mentoring and training pre-service students interested in a career in education.

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

Professional development at Thompson Elementary School is based upon the belief that to have a results-oriented professional learning culture, teachers, administration, and staff must consistently strive to improve their professional practice. A cycle of continuous improvement has been built into the professional development culture of the school. Based upon staff survey input and school improvement data, areas for growth are identified and concrete actions steps are developed and embedded throughout the school year. For example, when the Nevada Academic Content Standards required teachers to adapt their teaching practices to ensure that there was high cognitive demand and rigorous learning tasks provided, ongoing professional development was developed by teacher leaders and administration and provided to staff throughout the year. As a result, the level of rigor in the classrooms increased dramatically. In another example, as the school's demographics became increasingly more diverse, the staff participated in cultural competency activities during the school year in order to be better able to meet the needs of all diverse learners. Individual teachers engage in self-assessment at the beginning of the year, and teachers set individual improvement goals for themselves, tied to student outcomes, in an effort to improve their professional practice. Administration supports teachers by providing training, identifying resources, identifying additional training, and providing mentors who can assist teachers in a variety of capacities. New staff members and staff members in need of more extensive support are paired with a grade level mentor who assists the teacher in improving classroom instruction. A literacy strategist develops assistance plans with teachers who either request additional help or have been identified by administration as needing more support in order to improve the teaching and learning in the classroom. For assistance needed that is beyond the expertise of school staff, assistance is provided at the district level so that teachers receive the support and guidance they seek. For example, the special education staff receives professional development from district staff that is relevant to their position and the students they serve. Lastly, teacher teams are provided four training days per year that take place during the school day when teachers can collaborate to focus on professional development unique to each grade level as selected by the teachers themselves.

The professional development focus at the school results in a continuous cycle of improvement, with the result being increased student learning.

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

The leadership philosophy and structure at Sandra Thompson Elementary begins with the principal who works to ensure that all decisions are grounded in doing what is best for kids. Through both shared and direct leadership practices, the principal has helped to build a results-oriented culture where “going above and beyond” for students is the norm. The principal is highly involved and visible throughout the campus and has built strong relationships with students, staff, and families. Driven by the belief that strong instructional leadership is one of the essential components of a successful school, the principal works to effectively communicate and demonstrate the school’s vision and mission, set high expectations, collaborate with staff to identify and implement promising practices, provide necessary resources, motivate students and staff, and provide high quality supervision and feedback to teachers that result in large amounts of student learning. Lastly, the principal strives for meaningful and ongoing two-way communication with all stakeholders, and he has an open door policy that welcomes all thoughts, ideas, and solutions.

Shared leadership is embedded throughout the school. The school’s leadership team is comprised of teachers from every grade level and department, and decisions related to staffing, budget, hiring, and professional development initiatives are decided within the structure of the school leadership team. The school leadership team, with input from all teachers, also helps to create the annual school improvement plan.

The school encourages and promotes teacher leadership opportunities in a variety of other roles as well. School committees are led by teacher leaders who decide the direction and focus for each committee in collaboration with committee members. In addition, each grade level is led by a grade level chairperson who collaborates with administration and communicates with grade level colleagues to ensure that policies, procedures, and expectations are clearly understood, meaningful, and implemented.

At the conclusion of each school year teachers are surveyed to gather their input regarding what worked and what did not work during the school year. This feedback is used for planning the next school year’s areas of focus. By giving staff a voice in the process and input in decision-making processes, the staff is better able to support leadership initiatives.

Taken as a whole, varied stakeholders engage in meaningful leadership endeavors with input and support from all teachers and staff. Promoting and recognizing a culture focused on doing what is best for kids, all school leaders work tirelessly and selflessly to meet the needs of all students and staff.

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

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The one practice that has been critical to the success of Thompson Elementary School has been ensuring there is great teaching happening in each classroom, teaching that meets the rigor required for our academic content standards and engages all learners in the teaching and learning process. The school believes there is no magic program or formula for success when it comes to helping all students achieve. Rather, we have worked to build a system of support across the school setting, starting with effective core instruction, robust tier two and tier three support, and a dedicated RTI framework that strives to catch students up as quickly as possible. It all starts with having effective teaching happening in every classroom, and we continue to try to find ways to improve ourselves to make sure this is our school's reality.

Teachers work tirelessly and collaboratively to develop effective units of study that engage students in meaningful learning tasks with the appropriate amount of support needed to ensure student success. Teachers provide lessons that are interactive and engaging for all learners, and that promote high levels of student discourse and higher-level thinking. Instructional time is seen as sacred, and all school schedules and activities are built around the need to ensure teachers and students have large blocks of uninterrupted learning time. Additional time and support for struggling students is built into the schedule as well. Believing that the critical factor to student success is great teaching, teachers regularly engage in self-reflective practice and they are provided feedback and guidance from school leadership. Professional development is consistently focused on the improvement of teaching practices so that student learning increases. The use of data is embedded in the school's culture, and teachers and staff use data to identify strengths and areas for growth and to determine the effectiveness of current practices and approaches. Teachers collaborate and provide assistance and mentoring to one another so that each classroom is led by an effective teacher who consistently provides high quality instruction to students.

A relentless focus on great teaching in each classroom has helped ensure that the success at Thompson Elementary School has been sustained and improved consistently since the school opened. Teachers at Thompson make the difference, and they exemplify the school motto: service, challenge, and, excellence.