

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Kelly J. Faught-McCoy

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

Official School Name Grove Valley Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3500 NW 192nd Street

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

City Edmond State OK Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 73012-9094

County Oklahoma County

Telephone (405) 359-3195 Fax (405) 359-3198

Web site/URL http://www.grovevalley.org E-mail kellymccoy@dcsok.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. Ranet Tippens E-mail ranettippens@dcsok.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Deer Creek School District Tel. (405) 348-6100

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. Jerrod Roberts
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2011 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	0	0	0
K	55	53	108
1	59	54	113
2	53	55	108
3	67	44	111
4	54	55	109
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
Total Students	288	261	549

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 9 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 9 % Asian
 - 9 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 66 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 10%

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	29
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	27
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	56
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	537
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.104
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7 %
47 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Tagalog, Twi, Telugu, Malayalam, Chinese, Vietnamese, Nepali, GA, Arabic, Filipino, Akan, Korean, Russian, Hindi, Farsi, Japanese, Urdu, Swahili, Tamil

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 10 %
Total number students who qualify: 78
8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %
32 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
- 1 Orthopedic Impairment
- 4 Other Health Impaired
- 7 Specific Learning Disability
- 26 Speech or Language Impairment
- 1 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 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:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

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

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

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

Grove Valley strives to promote critical thinking skills among students and a lifestyle of integrity and learning as we work to meet individual student needs.

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

Grove Valley Elementary in Edmond, Oklahoma, is a suburban school located north of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area. The district serves approximately 72 square miles over two different counties. Our district and school population is one of the fastest growing in Oklahoma. The school was built in 2009, and despite redistricting neighborhoods to alleviate crowding in 2012 and relocating 60+ pre-kindergartners to another site in 2014, over the past 5 years, our student population has grown from approximately 450 students to the current enrollment of 549.

Although the percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch has historically been quite low, in recent years it has begun to trend upward. In addition, the diversity of our student population has expanded dramatically. However, our students' academic success levels have improved as demonstrated by our latest state test scores that show an increase across the board in reading and math (tested subjects) of 2%-16%. This increased success can be attributed to two strong factors: instructional excellence and parental support.

Our ethnic diversity has changed over the past five years. According to our 2016 Home Language Surveys, we now have twenty different languages that are spoken in our students' homes, up from eight languages in 2012. Despite the language, cultural, and communication challenges this has created, our students have not only continued to be successful, they have thrived. We are very proud to celebrate our growing diversity. For example, in our weekly school-wide assembly called Antler Alert, we recognize students in a variety of ways including cultural, academic, athletic, and behavioral.

A primary reason that our students have not only been successful but continue to improve is because of the high level of excellent classroom instruction that is provided by the teachers at Grove Valley Elementary. We adhere to the research which suggests that of the factors that are within the school's control regarding a child's education, it is the teacher that makes the difference. A visit to our school on any given day would find teachers delivering quality lessons and assisting each and every student on his/her instructional level. Teachers spend countless hours working to implement what research tells us helps students succeed. For example, teachers pre-test students on required standards and then carefully scaffold lessons that meet the varying needs of students. Teachers use whole group, small group, and individual instruction. Additionally, small group interventions and enrichment are part of everyday delivery of lessons with reassessment at each step until mastery by students is demonstrated. Blended learning, the use of technology in the classroom, is used to personalize, enrich and advance students who need it.

Technology allows teachers to adapt a single lesson into varying instructional levels according to the needs in the class. Blended learning allows students to access their learning online, at home, or within the brick and mortar walls of the classroom. Creativity and risk taking by teachers is highly encouraged.

Building relationships with students and their families is a particular strength of our staff. It is not unusual to see a teacher come early, stay late, or even give up her lunch to help a student. A peek outside on the playground might find a teacher giving her own time to go outside and play with her students. Students love coming to school and give tremendous effort in order to be successful. Our Parent Teacher Organization goes beyond expectations whether it is volunteering as a "Deer Mom" (our mascot is Antlers) to run off copies or provide lunch for our teachers on in-service days. Parents organize activities such as Walk-a-thon, Fall Carnival, and our Grove Valley Auction-and those are just the major events. Last year, more than 2,000 volunteer hours were recorded by parents.

Because of the outpouring of parental support we have at Grove Valley, our student needs continue to be met at a high level. Parents support our school by raising funds for instructional materials, supplies, equipment, and other needs. Funding from the state has been cut to the point that we operate \$200.00 per student less than our 2008-09 funding. For example, because we did not have enough money for technology, last year, our PTO raised more than \$20,000 to provide additional iPads to support personalized learning in classrooms.

Besides financial support and volunteering, parents are involved in their children's education. More than

98% attend Parent/Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring to support and encourage student success. This partnership we have with parents extends to other activities in our school. We offer before/after school teacher-led clubs that students can participate in such as Running Club, Art Club, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Club, Academic Team, Midi (piano lessons), and chorus. Yearly, the principal sends out a parent satisfaction survey to obtain feedback about Grove Valley.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Grove Valley Elementary uses the Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS) to determine the foundational skills that are taught in the classroom. Standards-based grading practices are utilized to track students' progress toward mastery of these standards. The standards are divided into quarters and assessed through teacher-created common assessments. Quarterly benchmarks are given and tracked to show growth. All students K-4 take ownership of their learning by tracking their progress toward their mastery of standards in a data binder.

Students are responsible for updating their data tracking binders, and teachers individually conference with the students to discuss progress toward their mastery of standards. In the lower grades, students are highly engaged in work stations that further reinforce the standards, and teachers assist students in tracking their progress in their individual data binders. Vertical alignment and collaboration with colleagues allows for cohesion of practices throughout the building.

In conjunction with our district-adopted reading curriculum, Grove Valley teachers hand pick lessons and activities that address our specific OAS standards and are based on the five big ideas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Our teachers have developed curriculum maps that identify the standard, student learning goal, possible activities, and common pre- and post-assessments. Each teacher has access to standards tracking software, Mastery Connect. This helps the teacher disaggregate student data to quickly determine what skills students have mastered and which standards need more attention. School-wide, reading is integrated across the curriculum to incorporate non-fiction literature into social studies, math, and science topics. Additionally, in kindergarten, students participate in a rotation schedule that addresses sight word fluency, sentence structure, and vocabulary.

As in reading, teachers have developed curriculum maps that identify essential OAS standards, list student learning goals, scales, activities, and pre/post assessments for math. Gaps were found in our commercial curriculum, and at the time of this writing, teachers are in the process of developing their own online resource guide that is based on our state standards. This will be completed and ready for use in the fall of 2017. Like reading, math learning is individualized and progress is tracked through Mastery Connect. Blended learning in the classroom allows students to be able to work at a higher level or receive remediation without having to leave the classroom. Students can also continue their learning at home.

Students meet the OAS science standards and are engaged through the use of STEM activities. These activities are tailored to different age groups and abilities. Last year, we wrote a grant and were awarded funds to purchase robotics materials that teachers can use to enrich and engage students. This includes coding and computer programming. Student engagement was so elevated in these activities in the classroom that Grove Valley now offers an after school STEM club. Over 100 students have participated this year. We even had four students enter a 2017 STEM competition, placing fourth in their age division and top 30 overall out of approximately 500 teams.

Additionally, students meet standards through participation in our annual science fair. We have approximately 15 judges from our community that come in and evaluate the students' projects and award placement. This year we had 75 entries. The winning project was entitled "Fingerprints: Do people from the same family have the same or different fingerprints?"

Teachers use aspects of civic learning and duty through the use of our district social studies curriculum. This year, students learned about the democratic process during the presidential election. They were able to "register" to vote at school, receive a voter registration card, and vote in a voting booth at school. Older elementary students were encouraged to learn about current world geography and recent political border changes through National Geographic Geography Bee. Students engage with national history through the use of textbooks, partner plays, reader's theater, songs, and books.

School-wide, character education is taught through the use of quotes and words that depict personal character traits and personal integrity. Each character word (e.g. respect, leadership, etc.) requires thought about how students interact with the people in their community. Students who show these character qualities are nominated by their teachers and recognized weekly in a school-wide assembly.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Each Wednesday, the Grove Valley faculty meets as Professional Learning Communities (PLC's). This is a time for core and non-core curriculum teachers to collaborate in order that subjects can be integrated together to benefit student learning. Student data is analyzed and instructional decisions are made.

Our physical education program uses SPARK curriculum to incorporate core subjects into all classes K-4th. For example, first graders might play "Literacy Fitness Relay." The object is for team members to use jumbo letter sticks to build words in a running relay race format. This year, Grove Valley has been named a Certified Healthy School by Oklahoma's Schools for Healthy Lifestyles organization receiving the highest overall rating possible of "Excellence." Realizing we should model a healthy lifestyle for students, our staff had 100% participation in our district "Creek Classic," a 5K and 10K annual community race. We wrote and received grant money that has allowed classroom teachers to purchase wobble chairs, bouncy bands, turtle shells, and other kinesthetic learning tools to aid students who need help with focus/engagement during daily core curriculum lessons.

In addition, Grove Valley was one of four schools in Oklahoma this past year to receive the Schools for Healthy Lifestyles Grant to purchase an Action Based Learning Lab. This \$12,000 lab/materials will allow all classes access each week to incorporate movement into their learning. Our students also participate in Jump Rope for Heart which benefits the American Heart Association. For the past four years, Grove Valley has been among the top five fundraising schools in the state of Oklahoma.

Every student is able to attend music class during the school day at least once per week. The Grove Valley music program includes four musical performances 1st-4th grades per year. Each performance is unique and developmentally appropriate to the grade level. These performances are also held at night so that parents and community patrons can attend. In addition, our music teacher conducts an honor chorus for fourth grade students who perform in various venues including on the steps of our state capitol in the fall as well a local nursing home during the holidays. Our music teacher also provides piano classes after school for students who desire additional enrichment in music.

This once per week art program at Grove Valley includes all students K-4th, and skills students learn in core subjects are reinforced in this class. For example, students are able to apply skills from geometry at an age-appropriate level in such ways as using line segments and parallel lines. Additionally, students are exposed to many different cultures through art projects. Our art teacher incorporates the history of art and introduces famous artists. Students display their art through Artsonia, an online program. Individuals can access this site and actually purchase the art. Grove Valley parents are active participants in this.

Students K-4th attend bi-weekly lessons in the library and, among other things, learn how to conduct research. Our librarian takes topics that students are learning about in their core subjects and uses her library lessons to enrich the content. Often technology is used in this enrichment. Students learn how to safely navigate the internet to find information about a particular subject or project. This year, our library media specialist wrote and received a grant that will integrate STEM activities into literature. All students will be exposed to STEM through a different genre via instruction in the media center.

The guidance counselor at Grove Valley teaches class lessons to all students twice per month. These lessons center on students learning how to successfully interact with their peers and explore ways to become productive citizens in our society. Each year our counselor presents a unit on bullying and also conducts an anonymous student safety survey regarding this topic. Because we want all students to feel safe and have a positive experience at school, we are vigilant about identifying the potential for situations in which bullying might occur. Community and volunteerism are also important topics that are covered in guidance lessons.

Our school conducts a fall food drive for a local charity. This year, we broke our record in pounds of food brought by delivering over 2,500 pounds of food.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Instruction in the classroom begins with pre-assessment to determine the instructional level for each student. Using the information, teachers develop lessons to meet the needs of the students. While whole group instruction may be used at the beginning of a lesson, students quickly transition to small groups where teachers facilitate learning. Quick data checks using formative assessments help teachers and students track their progress. The results of this data drive the small group instruction. Personalized learning is used to help individualize instruction and either remediate, enrich, or accelerate a student.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The culture and climate of the school are foundational to the overall success of students. We seek to build a positive climate and culture by targeting specific needs of students and teachers as well as collecting feedback from all stakeholders. For the past 8 years, Grove Valley has been named a Great Expectations Model School. This means that an outside assessment of our school has determined that Grove Valley demonstrates a climate of mutual respect with a strong emphasis on a positive mindset by the stakeholders. Currently there are 84 Great Expectations Model Elementary Schools in Oklahoma.

Each week, we have a school-wide assembly specifically designed where students and staff are recognized for birthdays, special awards, Terrific Kid, and to participate in a patriotic celebration. Terrific Kids are recognized for exemplifying such important life principles as honesty, citizenship, effort, etc. Every student in the school is recognized at some point in the year for a character quality that he/she has shown.

Daily, students may be recognized as the “Antler of the Day” for effort in their academics or behavior. Students who need extra social or emotional support to be successful in class are provided a time to check in with the principal each day. During this time, the principal and student discuss the academic or behavior goal, and the student chooses a reward to earn if the goal is met. At the end of the day, the student checks in with the principal again to determine if the goal has been met, thus the reward earned.

Staff are included in major decisions that will impact students. Teachers are recognized each week in our staff meetings with “Shout Outs,” that publicly celebrate fellow teachers for lending support to other teachers such as helping with technology or covering a duty. The principal also gives out “Rock Star Bucks” for exceptional teacher acts. These bucks can be cashed in for chocolate, a free casual dress day, or paid forward to another deserving teacher.

Quick data surveys are used by the principal to obtain feedback from various stakeholders. School climate surveys are sent to parents to get suggestions of ways that Grove Valley can improve the school experience for students and their parents. Overwhelmingly, the feedback each year has been positive with our climate rating over 95%. Quick data surveys are also sent to staff for their feedback and have also been positive.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

With school funding always tight, it is imperative that we partner with our parents and community to ensure our students have what they need to be successful in school. Our parents and community not only help us meet our needs, but they are also true partners in our children’s education. They do this in many ways.

We have an incredible Parent Teacher Organization. This group organizes fundraisers for the school such as our annual school-wide auction. Parents seek partnerships with our community patrons to secure items for this event. Additionally, volunteers at school help teachers run copies, create bulletin boards, and staff booths at our fall carnival. This year alone, we had a group of volunteer moms who helped us write the grant which will provide us classroom equipment as part of our Healthy Schools Initiative.

Each year, we have a Veteran’s Day assembly to honor veteran relatives of students and teachers. During the assembly, our honor chorus sings for the veterans and cards expressing gratitude for service are given to these heroes. The cards are made during art class. Students are able to learn the history of Veteran’s Day and develop an appreciation for these outstanding men and women. This year, we had 2 World War II Veterans that we highlighted. We were thrilled when their stories were picked up and shared by a local news station.

Grandparent/Special Person Day includes a time in which a significant individual in a child’s life can come and visit the classroom during the day. Children interview their grandparents/special persons, and then

present the information to the class. Children use these real-world encounters to further develop their literacy and writing skills. Students journal about their experience interviewing and, depending on the grade, write reports using narrative formats as well as poetry. Poems are recited and songs are sung for our special guests. A small keepsake craft is made by each student to commemorate the time together. It is not unusual for grandparents to fly across the country for this event.

Our close partnership with parents is a result of effective communication between the school and home. Teachers have a web page that is updated weekly to include learning goals for the students, so that learning expectations are well defined and can be accessed easily. Parents can also access grades using an online portal at any time.

3. Professional Development:

As the lowest in General Fund funding of any school district in Oklahoma, we must be very creative and purposeful when it comes to professional development, as we have virtually no money for this. Each week, Grove Valley faculty meets for Late Start Wednesday. This is a district-designated one hour time every Wednesday. The teachers come at their regular contract time, and students come one hour late. During this one hour, teachers participate in Professional Learning Communities and do such things as review student data, develop common assessments, and share feedback about W.I.N. time.

Additionally, teachers participate in “Virtual Instructional Rounds.” As the principal does classroom walkthroughs, she videos examples of best instructional practices. During Late Start Wednesday, these videos are viewed by the faculty and discussed to help teachers apply these excellent instructional practices in their own classrooms. Also, during this time, teachers provide short presentations that deliver information based on Marzano’s 41 elements of most effective teaching strategies.

Because teachers desire to improve their instruction in the classroom, they participate in “Instructional Rounds.” These rounds include one team of teachers who go as a group and observe other teachers in the building. They use our Grove Valley Instructional Framework as a guide to look for best pedagogical practices in the classrooms. The observation lasts approximately twenty minutes. Afterward, the team leader facilitates a debriefing conversation about the effective instructional elements that were observed. Teachers have even begun observing and videoing effective practices they observe while on Instructional Rounds and sharing these videos during Late Start PLC’s.

In addition, we have two Swivls in our building. Swivl is a robotic platform which can be used for recording presentations or class lectures. Teachers connect these to their iPads and use a Swivl app to video themselves teaching. These videos can be used for self reflection and growth. Teachers sometimes share their videos during Late Starts in order to create dialogue about strategies that are working well with their students.

The result of this building embedded professional development has been powerful and positive. Teacher evaluations continue to improve across the building. Since implementation, teachers have become more collaborative, and we in part credit the rise of our student test scores to this. Teacher retention has also improved. This past year, only two teachers left Grove Valley for reasons other than relocation of spouse/family or retirement.

4. School Leadership:

Research substantiates there is an empirical link between school leadership and improved student achievement. Grove Valley’s leadership begins with a shared vision among the principal and teachers of high academic expectations for students. The principal uses a leadership team made up of grade level representatives to manage people, data, and communication. Leading by example, everyone strives to achieve our primary strategic goal: fostering an environment that is conducive to students thriving academically, physically, emotionally, and socially. The leadership team meets once a month to share successes, struggles, and feedback to one another. These meetings are focused on developing leadership skills among the group. Actual communications of logistical information (meetings, dates, activities, etc.)

are kept to a minimum or communicated via email.

Every teacher at Grove Valley also serves on a core curriculum team, which has one major school event as well as other smaller duties they are responsible for leading. The reading committee is responsible for our school-wide Accelerated Reading challenge. Students set a reading goal for themselves and each quarter are rewarded if the goal has been met. Besides helping students develop a love for reading, comprehension skills are reinforced. The science committee is responsible for the science fair, which, as described earlier provides hands-on authentic learning experiences that stimulate students' interests in science and prepares them for later learning in high school, college, and future careers. The math committee is responsible for our Math/Science night when families come to school and explore various games and activities. Students make home to school connections and discover how math extends far beyond the curriculum. The social studies committee is responsible for our Veteran's Day celebration. The history and experience of this event provides opportunities for students to make history/literacy connections in a real-world setting.

A vital cog in the wheel of leadership is the involvement of parents as they are primary stakeholders in our students' education. The principal communicates information weekly through email. Additionally, a parent advisory committee has been formed to obtain feedback in order to constantly improve the education we provide to our students. For example, this committee brought to the school's attention the possible need for alternative seating for very active students in the classroom. As a result, we now allow parents the option for their child of a bouncy band that attaches to a chair and helps a fidgety student minimize behavior issues.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Three years ago, Grove Valley Elementary became a pilot school for the Marzano Research Laboratory to implement the High Reliability Schools Model. Dr. Robert Marzano and colleagues have taken forty years of educational research regarding what high reliability organizations do as well as what we know works in schools and developed a systematic framework for implementing this research into the classroom. It is called High Reliability Schools.

High Reliability Schools encompasses five levels of effective strategies that build upon each other. Those five levels include:

Level 1: A Safe and Collaborative Climate

This level is foundational to all other levels. The degree to which a school can foster a healthy and thriving school climate where risk taking is encouraged has a direct correlation to the success of other levels.

Level 2: Effective Instruction in Every Classroom

Ensuring that every student has the opportunity to learn under a skilled professional is imperative and drives the decisions we make each day. Our use of instructional rounds as described previously has helped us accomplish this.

Level 3: Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

Our teachers have worked diligently to develop curriculum maps that ensure all students have the opportunity to learn the required curriculum and essential standards during the year.

Level 4: Standards Referenced Reporting

Grove Valley has led our district in transitioning from antiquated traditional grading practices to a standards-referenced reporting system. We have developed standards-referenced report cards to reflect these grading practices. Students are able to individually progress toward mastery of essential standards.

Level 5: Competency Based Education

Currently, we have been certified through level 4 and are now working toward a level 5 certification. We are thrilled to have introduced blended learning in our classrooms, which has allowed us to personalize learning for our students. Through use of iPads and research-based computer programs, our struggling students can receive individualized remediation, and our gifted students are able to be challenged and accelerated at a pace that meets their needs.

Becoming a Marzano High Reliability School has yielded amazing results for our school. Since becoming a High Reliability School, our students have flourished. According to parent surveys, more than 95% are pleased with the education their students are receiving at Grove Valley. Since becoming a High Reliability School, our third and fourth grade state test scores have shown a 2%-16% increase in both reading and math.