

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

[] Public or [X] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Jennifer Dozier

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

Official School Name Grace Community Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3215 Old Jacksonville Road

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

City Tyler State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 75701-7505

County Smith

Telephone (903) 593-1977 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.gracetyler.org/ E-mail kforeman@gracetyler.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*Mr. Jay Ferguson E-mail jferguson@gracetyler.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Grace Community Tel. (903) 566-5678

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. Chuck Bauman
(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

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

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	0	0	0
K	31	47	78
1	37	28	65
2	33	28	61
3	33	27	60
4	20	35	55
5	34	37	71
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	188	202	390

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 89 % White
 - 3 % 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: 29%

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	71
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	43
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	114
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	390
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.292
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	29

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: 0 %
 Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %
28 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.

- 3 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 1 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 12 Multiple Disabilities
- 2 Orthopedic Impairment
- 15 Other Health Impaired
- 13 Specific Learning Disability
- 14 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 4 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	19
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.	7
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 20:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

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

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes No
- If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

To assist Christian families in educating, equipping, and encouraging their children to influence the world for Christ.

PART III – SUMMARY

In 1973, a group of Tyler families saw the need for a faith-based community school that would serve the educational and spiritual needs of their children. They began Grace Community School with an enrollment of 60 students in grades 2 through 12.

In the mid-1980s, the oil bust and resulting recession in Tyler led to the closure of the high school, but Grace continued kindergarten through eighth grade. After the high school restarted in the mid-1990s, the upper grades moved to a separate campus across town leaving the elementary school at its current location. Classroom and lunchroom renovations, a new classroom wing dedicated to long-time principal Sue Johnson, and a garden were added in the following decade.

Grace Community School is a ministry of Grace Community Church of Tyler, Texas, and is accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and AdvancEd. Grace is also a charter member and is certified through the Council on Educational Standards and Accountability (CESA). In 2015, on the basis of a site visit from educational leaders, Grace Community School was one of the first two schools to be awarded Exemplary status from ACSI. The school is ecumenical in its focus, with GCS students representing over 100 different churches.

Grace Community Elementary School currently serves 390 students kindergarten through fifth grade. Because the curriculum is rigorous, admissions testing helps to determine an academic match, and parents interview with the principal to better ensure a true and trusting home-school partnership on the behalf of the student.

The GCS mission is to assist Christian parents in educating, equipping, and encouraging their children to influence the world for Christ, which it accomplishes through three core values: educational sanctification, redemptive community, and life as worship. The school's mission is to assist, not replace, parents. Therefore, GCS regularly holds parenting seminars, benefits from extensive parent volunteers, uses its publications as parent education vehicles, and uses every touch point to empower parents to exhort, encourage, and hold each other accountable in the context of community.

To provide a challenging and holistic education, the elementary faculty meets together regularly for training in best practices in instruction and classroom management, and team members from each grade level collaborate closely to provide consistency in each student's experience. Redemptive discipline policies require much time and training for the entire school staff, but the emphasis on helping elementary students develop respect, self-control, and an understanding of appropriate behavior for time and place yields fruit as the most important preparation for a uniquely positive experience in junior high.

A priority is to intentionally equip students from the youngest ages with public speaking skills through frequent opportunities to speak before large groups in chapel, at speech meet, programs, concerts, and through the Toastmasters program in fourth grade. A commitment to developmentally appropriate physical education has remained stable from the first days of the school. Regular P.E. classes, participation in the Presidential Physical Fitness program, and inviolable unstructured recess times provide balance in an academically challenging day. Enrichment classes are provided in library, art, computer, P.E., music, and Spanish.

Academic support serves a changing demographic of students. A trained NILD (National Institute for Learning Development) therapist oversees other certified teachers and aides in the identification of and intervention with the youngest at-risk learners through "Search and Teach", as well as supplying educational therapy for those with diagnosed learning differences and reading labs for those who need on-going support.

Redemptive community is built within the school with programs like "Reading Buddies", Kite Day, and elementary nights or camps at high school sporting events. Families engage with one another through "Door Dads" and special classroom events. In the frantic pace of our culture, the elementary school makes every effort to keep to a minimum homework and other after-school expectations, encouraging families to capture

time together as profitably and as long as they can.

Finally, to equip our students and families to live lives of worship and service, a well-developed character education program is a hallmark of the elementary school. Each six weeks, two character qualities are emphasized. Six qualities recur every year (gratitude, honesty, obedience, respect, responsibility, and self-control) and the other six qualities rotate from among a list of sixty more including things like sensitivity, hospitality, joy, flexibility, and humility. Students learn a definition and Scripture, observe examples, and are selected to receive recognition for displaying or growing in the featured qualities. Fifth grade students perform original skits at the "Honors Chapel" where these awards are presented to one-sixth of the student body every six weeks.

Fifth graders apply and serve as "Servant Leaders" who help out in various capacities around the school. Other service opportunities for elementary students include Veteran's Day, Pastor Appreciation Day, Grandparents' Day, Kairos prison ministry, Operation Christmas Child, Salvation Army, and many projects that arise as needed.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Like everything else at Grace Community School, the core curriculum is driven by our core values. The curricular implications of those values as articulated in the “Portrait of an Elementary Graduate” provide purpose and guide decisions that make the curriculum distinctive.

As a faith-based school, we can boldly promote the concept of Life as Worship as the best way to regard learning as a way to love God with the mind, and faithful academic work as a way to bring honor and glory to the Lord. Redemptive Community at the elementary school forms the bedrock for civic engagement by creating a culture where actions and words are gracious and others-centered, and where the goal is to become peacemakers and caretakers. Students practice how to demonstrate the GCS core character qualities of respect, honesty, gratitude, obedience, responsibility, and self-control, and they respond to the needs of others in our school, community, and world. Additionally, Educational Sanctification dictates that students should be prepared academically. The learning standards based on such a “Portrait” are unique, but they have also been informed by Texas standards, Common Core State Standards, standardized test standards, and they anticipate College Board and ACT college readiness standards.

Generally, a classical template is applied to the “grammar” of each subject, emphasizing memorization and skill practice over conceptual understanding. However, brain research has confirmed that memorization of new content and processing content for understanding is always a both/and proposition, so that must be reflected in instruction. This modified classical approach is very effective in shifting the emphasis from memorization to understanding in developmentally appropriate ways over the course of a student’s elementary career.

Establishing a strong foundation through intensive phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and grammar in the early grades prepares students for more sophisticated thinking, reading comprehension, and writing skills as they mature. Kindergartners enjoy rich reading, thinking, and speaking experiences, and master decoding long and short vowel words as well as beginning cursive writing. First graders become readers and enjoy a special relationship with a 5th grade reading buddy. By the time students leave 5th grade, they are using tools to establish sequence; summarize; determine cause/effect or fact/opinion; compare/contrast; draw conclusions and problem solve; determine setting, main idea, and plot; make inferences; and explore character. They are proficient in the grammar required to write good sentences and paragraphs, have practiced the writing process, and have a toolbox of style devices to make their writing more interesting.

Similarly, the math curriculum is fact-fluency and procedure-based, supplemented with manipulative activities for developing conceptual understanding. By the end of 5th grade, students are expected to be fluent in operations with multi-digit whole numbers and fractions.

Science in the primary grades is integrated into reading and writing, but becomes a separate graded subject in 4th-5th grade. Again the emphasis is on the grammar and vocabulary of science, the scientific method, and the joy and wonder of design.

History also becomes a separate graded subject in 4th-5th grade but fosters cultural engagement and civic learning in every grade. Students memorize important American documents, learn national and world geography, and apply the aforementioned reading comprehension skills to historical accounts. Third grade American history is biography-based, culminating in the American History Hall of Fame, where students in costume present a pithy summary of their character’s impact on history to the entire student body. Fourth grade is responsible for the annual program to honor Veterans, while 5th graders enact a living wax museum of figures from world history, using research and summarization skills to compose a brief museum placard. Fifth grade also employs a humanities approach, combining reading and history in ways that are engaging and mutually reinforcing. All students show grateful respect for our civic leaders, and 5th grade “Servant Leaders” routinely use their intercom prayer to ask for our leaders to have wisdom.

All grade levels practice public speaking skills before large audiences, developing the poise to be

comfortable and articulate. Students serve the community and the world through Kairos Prison Ministry, Ministers' Appreciation, Veterans' Day, Salvation Army, Operation Christmas Child, and more. All this equips Grace Community Elementary students to be extraordinary blessings in this world.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

One of the descriptors in the "Portrait of an Elementary Graduate" is that students would "appreciate the visual and performing arts as well as understand the importance of keeping one's body healthy through regular physical activity." Consequently, the non-core subjects of art, music, foreign language, technology, and P.E. are indispensable to learning at Grace. All students can engage profitably because they attend as a single class rather than in combined groups.

Research demonstrates that involvement in fine arts supports student academic success, but as a faith-based school, we also teach children to regard the arts as a form of worship and an opportunity to be good stewards of opportunities, giftedness, and joy. All students participate in music once per week, acquiring skills in singing, playing instruments, and listening to a variety of styles, learning to recognize the beautiful expressions of praise to God written and performed through the ages. All students have the opportunity during the year to perform what they have practiced in a larger venue through Kindergarten Graduation, 1st grade Bo Peep, 2nd-3rd grade Christmas Musical, or 4th-5th grade Spring Concert. In weekly art class, students learn to incorporate the elements of art and principles of design when creating and observing art, encouraged to find their artistic talent through experience with a variety of activities and media. Though drama is not a subject, speech meet, chapel, and 4th grade Toastmasters are integral to helping students develop poise through frequent presentations and public performances.

Students are introduced to Spanish language and culture in a twice weekly class for grades K-4, capitalizing on the ability of young learners to acquire the accent most efficiently. Fifth graders begin a study of Latin grammar and vocabulary integrated with English grammar, designed to be mutually reinforcing. The study of Latin is good not only for vocabulary development but also for laying a foundation for future foreign language acquisition. Through studying foreign language, students recognize that all people of all nations are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Practicing digital citizenship and patiently guiding students through the possibilities and pitfalls of ever-available access to information has become a priority in a world where students will be called upon to use technology without being distracted or consumed by it. Grace Elementary, a Google Apps for Education school, has a three-pronged approach to address this need. All students attend a weekly computer class focusing on keyboarding, file management, and cross-curricular research and presentation collected in personal learning portfolios. Additionally, the weekly library class augments and reinforces classroom curriculum content with apt and timely media resources. The Grace Elementary library/media center is the place where many forms of both print and electronic media are used efficiently to teach reading comprehension, appreciation, and information skills providing materials and experiences that will empower students to be lifelong learners, able to locate, retrieve, evaluate, and productively use information from a wide variety of sources. Thirdly, each classroom is equipped with a student desktop, SMARTboard, or Apple TV used for instruction, and has access to an iPad cart for individualized learning and reinforcement.

Finally, physical activity has been linked to cognitive skills in brain research, but also enhances both the spiritual and physical wellness. All students attend P.E. class in a group no larger than 24 from two to five times per week, depending on their age. Grace Elementary also places a premium on unstructured free play, so students break regularly from the structured classroom environment to enjoy recess either once or twice per day, outside whenever possible. The P.E. class very intentionally develops basic motor skills like body awareness, spatial awareness, balance, dynamic balance, cross laterality, bi-laterality, tracking, center line, eye-hand coordination, eye-foot coordination, eye-hand-foot coordination, and loco-motor skills. Instruction about a healthy lifestyle including exercise, nutritious eating, and rest, as well as avoiding unhealthy substances is incorporated into the curriculum. Attention is also given to proper procedure regarding exercise as well as to basic anatomy of muscles and their function. Finally, the class integrates order, the rules of games, and fair play emphasizing good sportsmanship with a Christ-like attitude through play, games, and competition. At the end of the year, participation in the Presidential Youth Fitness Program is recognized in a special P.E. chapel.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

The instructional methods, interventions, and assessments at Grace Community Elementary School are a hybrid of learning-centered educational approaches. Learning may be defined as a transfer of information and skills from a teacher to a learner. But, since we are multifaceted beings bearing God's image (physical, emotional, social, spiritual, solitary, moral, communicative, worshipping, gendered, rational - what we call "aspects of the learner"), that transfer includes holistically addressing all of those components in a context of mutual trust and respect. Pedagogically, we strive to be not teacher-centered or student-centered, but rather learning-centered, and that depends on what skill or content is being taught, as well as on those aspects of each individual learner. So from the many educational approaches in use, we try to choose what best fits the content and honors the learner.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

A common reaction from a first-time visitor to Grace Community Elementary is something like, “Wow! There is such a sweet spirit and sense of peace here!” That palpable peace describes the climate and culture of the school.

Peace is cultivated through the approach to student discipline which is designed to be more relational and redemptive than rules-based. Teachers can be seen counseling privately with students in the hall in quiet and gentle tones, respectfully helping the student recognize how her actions are disobedient or how they damage the community, and seeking a verbal acknowledgement of understanding with a request for forgiveness. Each teacher knows she will be supported by the assistant principal should the student need more attention. There is clear and immediate communication to the family, so that everyone can be “on the same page” in reaching the heart as much as possible. The assistant principal takes the opportunities afforded in discipline situations to supply practical counsel to students, teachers, and parents, again with gentleness and respect.

Peace is cultivated in the in practical ways GCS demonstrates value for its teachers. Faculty compensation packages have historically exceeded the 90 percent of the local school district, and GCS remains the highest-paying private school in the East Texas area. Teachers know that they have access to principals and the headmaster when they have concerns or ideas. More importantly though, teachers are covered in prayer. They are affirmed and supported by parents, their principals and headmaster, and each other in their call to the grand purpose of the school’s mission.

Peace is cultivated in the careful design of the schedule to create times for all the teachers in a grade level to have time to plan together and build a tight-knit team, which ultimately benefits students and learning. Students are taught and coached in the classroom, in recess, and at lunch how to be peacemakers and caretakers, contributing to the overall climate. Fourth graders study a curriculum about friendship, and fifth graders learn how to be young peacemakers. The emphasis on the character qualities of gratitude, honesty, obedience, respect, responsibility, and self-control and others like sensitivity, hospitality, joy, flexibility, and humility also impacts school culture.

GCS has a predisposition to find ways for members of our community to stay members. This may result in complicated admissions and complex relationships with students and families, but it creates security and trust which makes Grace Community Elementary a great place to work and learn.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

A recruiter once commented about our school, “The good news is, you’re a family. The bad news is,...you’re a family.” This statement captures the essence of relationships at Grace where families truly, however imperfectly, love each other.

Teachers conference with parents yearly and as needed, to gain maximum insight from each other for the best interests of the student. Parents are also encouraged through seminars, publications, and a weekly blog. Events such as Donuts with Dads and Muffins with Moms; volunteer opportunities like Door Dads or helping with productions; school auctions, elementary nights at high school sporting events, and other special activities are designed to engage the entire school family. Through visits from high schoolers, high school fine arts performances at elementary chapel, and pep rallies held at the elementary school, GCS works to promote cross-campus community, and provides opportunities for older students to pour into the lives of younger ones, edifying both age groups.

The Grace Single Parents Network comes alongside single moms to help where needed, and the school family rallies powerfully around families in crisis through Praying Parents of Grace. Grace families serve the school through involvement with task forces composed of various stakeholders to develop plans for school programs. They respond faithfully to a biannual survey to make adjustments that will positively

impact the experience of the students.

Facebook, Twitter, and other forms of social media are employed to communicate with parents and the broader community while RenWeb, the school management system, also facilitates regular home-school communication. GCS holds regular informational meetings where parents can have question and answer sessions with school administrators. School families who transfer from other educational institutions comment frequently on the high level of school-family communication.

Service is a part of the school's regular culture, as students ring the bell for Salvation Army, write letters to prisoners through Kairos, pack boxes for Operation Christmas Child, host veterans and ministers at special chapels, and carol at nursing homes.

All these things help Grace Community Elementary students see themselves not only as part of a nurturing community but as blessings in a bigger world. This supplies a powerful purpose for learning that will transcend elementary school.

3. Professional Development:

An essential component of Educational Sanctification is professional development. It is carefully planned to be intentional and mission-driven, providing both large group and individually differentiated opportunities and accountability. Every Friday, classes are dismissed early in order for regular professional development to happen within school hours. The Friday meetings include vertical alignment, professional learning communities, curriculum review, all-school meetings, and campus staff meetings. Professional development also occurs for two days during Thanksgiving, before every new school year, and in an extensive new teacher induction process.

Grace conducts professional development whether it is needed for certification purposes or not, but it is also helpful for the school to continue to provide ways to meet the ACSI CEU requirements. Differentiated professional development is normally determined as part of goal setting on each teacher's yearly summative evaluation because providing diverse opportunities that are more specific to individual needs and interests cultivates a genuine desire to grow and learn. The school helps to pay for conferences and seminars, dedicating a significant portion of the annual budget to support teacher growth.

The annual curriculum review cycle along with evaluation of test scores reveals areas that need attention and help to determine the professional development calendar. Subjects or initiatives identified for all school professional development are filtered through philosophy, mission, and student outcomes. For example, because the math curriculum is fact and procedure focused, elementary teachers have recently attended workshops and webinars to learn how to successfully include more manipulatives and visual models in math instruction. "Tiny Tech" has become a monthly 10 minute exposure to new apps or helpful strategies to help teachers keep up with ever-changing technology. Experiencing an uptick in social/emotional issues resulted in acquiring a local counseling group to conduct training for our faculty. Whether school-wide or differentiated, initiatives must be focused and repeated for enough years to be sustained and become part of the school culture.

Professional Learning Communities are important forms of professional development. They may or may not involve new professional learning, but they are indispensable for building relationships and school culture. Frequent classroom observations by the principals with substantive, actionable feedback are well received in the powerful culture of trust. These, along with the yearly peer observation requirements, provide the most valuable and lasting professional growth for Grace Community elementary teachers.

Finally, since the school needs a consistent structure for evaluating the effectiveness of all professional development and whether the new learning is actually implemented, one Friday meeting each spring is devoted to this evaluative exercise.

4. School Leadership:

The head of school has authority from the school board to carry out the operations of the school. As his direct report, the elementary principal has an extensive job description including roles in supervision, personnel, admissions, curriculum, instruction, discipline, student programs, and budget. Her direct report, the assistant principal, supports teachers and parents in discipline situations and works on scheduling of classes, chapels, and events. Though their job descriptions are separate, they work as a team to shepherd the students, faculty, and parents of the school.

Roland Barth has said, “The nature of relationships among the adults within a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of that school and on student accomplishment than anything else.” At GCS, we have found this to be very true.

Key to building these relationships are the twice yearly retreats and the extensive weekly meetings of the leadership team which reflect the GCS approach to leadership - one that is relational as opposed to policy-driven. The elementary principals meet weekly with the head of school, other building principals, and the director of curriculum, alternating with a larger meeting including all administrative staff. In the context of trusting relationships, the leadership team learns together, robustly debates, and prayerfully hammers out solutions and initiatives.

In every meeting, the school’s mission and core values guide the discussion and most topics impact student learning to some degree. For example, discussion begun in these meetings eventually resulted in enhancing academic support for struggling learners in the elementary.

Documented in a philosophy of leadership in the faculty handbook, the leadership culture of the school is manifested in these meetings by a willingness to take risks, take responsibility, and give credit. This culture sets the tone for a learning community of teachers and administrators who model lifetime learning not only for the sake of students, but also for personal growth, constantly reading, studying, and exploring new ideas and technologies. Striving toward excellence requires a commitment to the process of change that is essential for this growth. Doing this in a community of grace means that leaders have a bias towards thinking the best of those they lead, acknowledging that every member of the community has value, and that no faculty member or administrator is more important to the success of the community than any other. Leaders at GCS are characterized by kindness, respect, and love which filter to the elementary principals as they lead their faculty and families.

PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The single practice responsible for the success of Grace Community Elementary School has to be the careful and intentional cultivation of a culture of care and love. It manifests itself in relationships among teachers, students, and parents, and is noticed by the broader community. It motivates the commitment to restorative discipline, gently but firmly training students to obey with intrinsic motivation. It is tied to student outcomes because it contributes to the development of tender hearts and obedient children. When students are equipped with the ability to govern themselves, motivated by genuine care for others, classrooms become optimally safe and efficient places for learning. Students, who become self-governing motivated by others-centeredness, are prepared for the greater freedom and responsibility they will have in junior high because they have developed an acute sense of behavioral propriety, and they are inclined to consider the impact of their actions on others.

PART VII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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? \$8080
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$2527

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 12%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 57%

PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2010

Test: ctponline
Publisher: Educational
Records Bureau

Grade: 3
**Scores are reported here
as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	304
Number of students tested	59
Percent of total students tested	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: Two students were absent and did not make up this sub-test.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2010

Test: ctponline
Publisher: Educational
Records Bureau

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here
as: Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	311
Number of students tested	53
Percent of total students tested	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: Two students were absent and did not make up this sub-test.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2010

Test: ctponline
Publisher: Educational
Records Bureau

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here
as: Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	322
Number of students tested	68
Percent of total students tested	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: Three students were absent and did not make up this sub-test.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2010

Test: ctponline
Publisher: Educational
Records Bureau

Grade: 3
Scores are reported here
as: Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	330
Number of students tested	59
Percent of total students tested	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: Two students were absent and did not make up this sub-test.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2010

Test: ctponline
Publisher: Educational
Records Bureau

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here
as: Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	343
Number of students tested	55
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2010

Test: ctponline
Publisher: Educational
Records Bureau

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here
as: Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	352
Number of students tested	70
Percent of total students tested	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: One student was absent and did not make up this sub-test.