

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Angela K Garza-Viator

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

Official School Name Jennie Reid Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1002 San Jacinto Street

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

City La Porte State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 77571-5461

County Harris County

Telephone (281) 604-4500 Fax (281) 604-4555

Web site/URL http://jre.lpsid.org E-mail viatora@lpsid.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. Lloyd Graham E-mail lwgraham@lpsid.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name La Porte Independent School District Tel. (281) 604-7000

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. Dee Anne Thomson
(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):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 12 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	29	29	58
1	39	43	82
2	33	47	80
3	37	47	84
4	44	42	86
5	35	39	74
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	217	247	464

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 8 % Black or African American
 - 41 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 46 % 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: 14%

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	32
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	42
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	74
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	513
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.144
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %
9 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 48 %
Total number students who qualify: 226

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
41 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>9</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>9</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>5</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
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	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	7
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.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 16:1
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	95%	95%	95%	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.

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.
Develop critical thinking and character traits that prepare students for college by building relationships, holding high expectations, and learning within a caring and collaborative environment.

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

Jennie Reid Elementary (JRE) is in the heart of the La Porte Independent School District in La Porte, Texas. It is home to 471 students who have a wide range of needs and strengths. Named after an inspirational school counselor, JRE opened its doors in 1981 to serve a growing suburban community. The petrochemical industry and the nearby Port of Houston drive the local economy. Housing includes a government-subsidized apartment complex adjacent to the school, in addition to a well-established neighborhood, where families take pride in the community and school. Parents expect and support the tradition of excellence in this neighborhood school.

JRE has been a proud and steady learning community for generations. It is traditionally said, “once a Roadrunner, always a Roadrunner.” Many alumni have returned to the school as teachers, staff and/or volunteers, and are invaluable contributors to the school's vision and mission. The school selectively invites past students to be guest speakers at the monthly school assemblies to promote the importance of hard work and character.

Changing demographics, family structures, mobility, and increased academic standards, pose both challenges and opportunities for student achievement and continued parental involvement. Although these changes have posed unique challenges, the JRE staff has been proactive in their efforts to maximize student achievement. This is evidenced by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) designation of distinctions, including Top 25% Student Progress and Top 25% Closing Performance Gaps, awarded in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016.

To address the ongoing challenges, JRE developed a master schedule that embeds intervention time throughout the school day. Retired certified teachers provide targeted interventions in small group settings to support the efforts of the classroom teachers. Opportunities that support increased student engagement and achievement include enrichment clubs, an outdoor nature center, a chess team, gifted and talented programming and robotics. JRE is especially proud to develop student leaders to serve as mentors for students in need as a way to develop leadership and stewardship skills. In addition, students in kindergarten through second grade participate in a summer reading camp to maintain and grow their literacy skills. To accommodate parent schedules and changing family structures, JRE has effectively promoted electronic communication, allowing easy access to student data, campus events, and recognitions.

The JRE mission is "to develop in every student the critical-thinking skills and great character traits that will afford them every opportunity to be prepared for college by building relationships, holding high expectations and learning within a caring and collaborative environment."

Collaboration is critical to JRE's success. It starts with a year-long commitment to vertical meetings that ensure aligned learning, effective professional development, parent events and leadership meetings. These and other priorities are scheduled and communicated through a shared master calendar to illustrate their importance and to guide work at the school. To further achieve the school's mission, teachers utilize a carefully designed lesson template that incorporates critical-writing prompts and planned questions for turn-and-talk strategies. The school has a deliberately designed data room where teachers come together weekly to brainstorm and engage in discussions about student achievement to further ensure alignment with annual goals. All vertical resources and current student data are maintained in the room so they are easily accessible to stakeholders.

JRE's commitment to purposeful collaboration with students, parents and staff supports ongoing improvement and success. At the annual Open House, teachers share a school-wide presentation with parents to communicate the school's expectations and mission. In addition, teachers create student-driven social contracts that the teachers post and the class members sign as an important symbol supporting character expectations. Furthermore, the principal, assistant principal, and counselor kick off the first week of school by posting a large conduct pledge poster in the main hallway. Students and staff take pride in signing their names as a promise to respect the rules and character expectations that will contribute to their success. The culmination of the year would not be complete without Water Day, an annual celebration that brings together staff, community and families to recognize the success of the school year.

The school philosophy is simple: JRE makes no excuses to ensure the character and academic success for all students. Even through adversity, this belief remains true. In 2008, Hurricane Ike hit the Texas Gulf Coast and JRE welcomed displaced students for one and a half school years while their school was being rebuilt. In 2015, a tornado struck our school and neighborhood. Teachers and staff came together to reorganize water-damaged classrooms and prepare for the students return. In spite of these natural disasters, JRE was recognized as a High Progress Title I Reward School in 2015-2016.

Although the school mascot, the tenacious roadrunner, is not found in this southeastern part of Texas, the mascot and school motto, "Racing Towards College Success," serve as reminders to strive for excellence in this competitive generation.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Engaging, quality instruction is the cornerstone to student success. Focused small-group teaching, flexible scheduling, enrichment opportunities and individualized intervention assure that JRE students have opportunities to engage in a rigorous and relevant core curriculum.

Civic learning is displayed and demonstrated throughout JRE. As examples, campus expectations are proudly posted in every classroom, encouraging students to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring citizens. Each class creates a social contract based on campus expectations and student input. Students actively participate in the democratic process through voting opportunities and mock elections. Students explore citizenship and help others by donating food to a community pantry, books for a children's home, and money for medical research. Monthly college assemblies provide opportunities for community volunteers to share career experiences and discuss citizenship.

All grade-level content areas follow the district's curriculum as articulated in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) aligned scope and sequence.

A readers and writers workshop model forms the basis for the Reading/English Language Arts (ELAR) curriculum. JRE selected this model because it allows students to participate in teacher-modeled mini-lessons and independent practice. It also provides the opportunity for individualized feedback. The model includes opportunities for students to demonstrate listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, builds in needs-based differentiation, and promotes rigorous instruction that guides students to become critical readers and writers. The school supports the curriculum with a leveled literacy library, allowing students to read books on their specific levels and interests. Guided reading groups are conducted according to individual levels.

The math curricular approach is based on a problem-solving model. JRE chose the approach because it allows students to engage in a specific problem-solving strategy that integrates three explicit steps: vocabulary instruction, cooperative student groups that analyze word problems, and collaborative critical writing experiences to explain process and solution. Students build foundational skills through teacher taught mini-lessons utilizing manipulatives, task cards, games and high-level questioning. Spiral review provides students with opportunities to revisit concepts and remain proficient in foundational skills needed for higher-level work. Instructional methods support problem-solving and skill mastery through differentiated small-group instruction, hands-on learning, computer-based instruction and learning stations. Interactive notebooks are created to support state standards and allow objectives to be pre-taught, spiraled and revisited. They also provide a valuable home-to-school connection.

Students participate in science through total engagement, including brain-based strategies, multiple intelligences, learning by doing and hands-on activities. This curricular approach was chosen because it affords students the opportunity to build foundational skills and engage in higher-order thinking by conducting experiments, building models, testing hypotheses and making connections to prior learning. It provides opportunities for students to see themselves as scientists in the real world through field trips to the zoo, a local aeronautics agency, farms and horticultural exhibitions. JRE has a fourth- and fifth-grade robotics team that participates in robotics competitions. The campus nature center serves as an outdoor classroom, where students investigate creatures and plants in their natural habitat. Students track growth rates, analyze the effects of nature on plants, and evaluate weather and climate effects on nature. These experiences facilitate understanding of cause and effect relationships, and expose students to a relevant and rigorous science curriculum that integrates real-world applications and builds skills needed for a future career.

Learning in social studies centers around an interdisciplinary curricular approach. This approach was chosen because it connects social studies with other content areas. Students make connections to their world outside of the classroom while building foundational skills, such as vocabulary development, knowledge of world

cultures, customs, geography and traditions, as well as contributions of historical figures. Teachers utilize a weekly newspaper publication to analyze and synthesize the social studies content. The newspaper incorporates nonfiction and historical fiction genres, engages student groups in discussions and allows students the opportunity to experience life from different viewpoints. By providing project-based learning opportunities, discussions, class read-alouds, and exposure to historical content, students are able to transfer their knowledge and advance academic achievement.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Through the school's performing and visual arts, health and physical education (PE), and technology curriculum, JRE students are challenged physically, creatively and technologically. All courses across all grade levels incorporate aspects of the performing and visual arts, health and PE, music and technology TEKS into the curriculum framework. Kindergarten through fifth grade students also access other curriculum areas by attending PE, music and technology classes on a weekly basis.

The performing and visual arts program at JRE incorporates a variety of experiences in which students participate. The lessons are developed to address the specific, grade-level expectations set by state standards and include kindergarten through fifth grade. In music, students have the weekly opportunity to explore a variety of instruments, both through example and hands-on experience. Instruments include, but are not limited to, ukulele, recorder, percussion, string, woodwind and brass. Through the music program, students learn basic music literacy in the study of notational symbols and durational values. A cross-cultural element is introduced in the form of music history. For example, Italian music vocabulary terms for various tempi and dynamics are the same as those used in written composition.

Second and fifth graders experience a yearly field trip to hear and participate in a local symphony's outreach program. The instrument families are explored, and students have a chance to hear many different styles of music and ask questions directly to the performers. In addition, first and fourth grade students attend area theatre performances that enhance the students' understanding of dramatic and literary elements.

For visual arts, selected masterpieces are displayed via technology, and artistic elements are discussed across courses. Visual composition and use of color are studied and applied to classroom artwork. Students have the opportunity to participate and compete in the livestock rodeo art show. Classroom teachers commonly incorporate performing and visual arts across the curriculum in a variety of ways.

In addition, all students participate in the district's TEKS-aligned curriculum for health and PE designed to increase physical activity and foster healthy lifestyle habits. The health and PE scope and sequence is organized in strands. Students demonstrate mastery of the TEKS through their participation in a variety of activities. For example, the campus-wide running program is designed to support the goal of increasing physical activity and encouraging health throughout the students' lifespan. Students track their mileage and are rewarded with a foot charm necklace and school recognition for every eight miles completed. JRE reports these miles to a campaign with a national goal of reaching one billion miles. In addition, students and teachers participate in a school fun run, supporting their love for running and moving. Field Day encompasses a half-day of twelve favorite games and activities.

Health education is vital in supporting JRE's commitment to teaching the whole child. The PE teacher and the nurse work together to provide students TEKS-aligned health lessons on a regular basis. In addition, all JRE students participate in enrichment activities that support health education. For example, a water safety program provided by the beach patrol and a drug awareness program is used to encourage saying no to drugs. JRE also participates in Fire Prevention Week, a dental health presentation, and a shelter-in-place presentation for safety in the event of releases from chemical plants in the area. JRE students and families engage in an annual "Get Off the Couch Night" to encourage families to come together to promote fitness, fun and health.

JRE implements a district-developed technology applications curriculum addressed in the TEKS. During computer lab time, kindergarten through fifth graders are required to earn a Digital Driver's License through participation in internet safety, network etiquette and digital citizenship lessons. Once the Digital Driver's

License has been earned, students then learn how to use productivity applications. Teacher-developed lessons introduce and extend students' knowledge of creating documents, spreadsheets and presentations. These technological skills, along with keyboarding, are integrated into the curriculum through the creation of projects specific to learning in the classroom. Students synthesize these technology skills to create TEKS-driven products that communicate academic learning.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

JRE utilizes both formative and summative assessments to collect data, inform instruction and improve student performance. Reading growth is monitored through numerous tools. Kindergarten through second grade students are given an assessment measuring letter recognition and word knowledge. All students complete a monthly computer-based reading assessment identifying appropriate reading ranges and providing teachers with data on reading tiers, areas of need and suggested intervention activities. Three times each year, teachers administer a developmental reading assessment to determine independent reading levels that drive purposeful, targeted, guided reading instruction. In other curricular areas, students are given unit assessments and weekly quick checks both to ensure retention of instruction and address gaps in student learning. More formal data is collected through benchmarks twice a year and annual state testing.

Assessment data is continuously utilized to meet the needs of students and improve instruction. Ever-present student data binders are created annually and maintained by teachers. The data includes, but is not limited to, academic history, current performance data and plans for helping each student achieve academic success. Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings are held weekly to analyze assessment data, and quintile reports are created to assist teachers in forming instructional groups that address the needs of all students. Vertical team meetings are held throughout the year to discuss both grade-level expectations and gaps in student learning. Based on current state accountability, no achievement gaps of 10 or more percentage points exist.

JRE works hard to meet the needs of all learners through a variety of strategies, beginning with the use of tiered instruction. In Tier 1, instruction delivered to all students, teachers use the 5-E model to guide students through the learning process by allowing them to engage, explore, explain, expand and evaluate each unit of study. Lessons are designed to meet all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, focusing on the higher levels as often as possible. Teachers plan for learners by incorporating Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals for special education students and English language proficiency standards for English language learners.

In Tier 2 and Tier 3, differentiated instruction is delivered to reinforce skills for struggling students or extend learning for high achieving or gifted students through the use of small group instruction, learning stations and independent activities. When students demonstrate academic struggles, Tier 2 interventions are implemented, including small group instruction within the classroom, peer tutoring, study buddies with community members and computer-based intervention programs. When a student is unsuccessful with Tier 2 interventions, more intensive interventions are put into place. Students who are in need of Tier 3 instruction are pulled out by interventionists, who work on specific, skill-based deficits that have been identified through on-going assessments. Struggling students also participate in before-, during- and after-school tutoring provided by classroom teachers, interventionists, special education teachers and many other staff members who are willing to help. JRE is home to various special education programs including resource, life skills and an approach to positive student success for students with emotional disturbances. Each of these integrate program-based interventions for students with special needs.

JRE not only focuses on the academic needs of students, but also the social-emotional needs through programs such as monthly guidance groups, faculty-student mentor partnerships and study buddies with community members. Students from families experiencing financial difficulties are provided food on the weekends in a discreet manner through our partnership with the food bank.

To ensure that gifted and high-performing students maintain high levels of academic achievement, JRE's Gifted and Talented program (GT) provides enrichment opportunities through a pull-out program with problem-based learning activities. Gifted students are required to participate in the TEA's Texas

Performance Standards Project, giving them the opportunity to focus on an area of personal interest. GT students are required to participate in at least three competitions a year, including spelling bee, robotics, storytelling, oral reading and number sense. High-performing students are provided with differentiated instruction within the classroom, as are GT students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

JRE students love their school! Student motivation, engagement and ownership is evident in the students' academic growth. Students recognize and value the importance of attending school every day, and this commitment does not go unnoticed. Grade levels are challenged to meet perfect attendance goals by rewarding children with dress passes for the entire team. Daily, the principal makes school-wide announcements, recognizing the grade level for their achievement. The outcome of stable attendance results in successful mastery of the learning standards. Another student motivator is the JRE reading program. Reaching their reading goals results in incentives such as celebrations, awards and a “mystery” end-of-year field trip. Participation in this year-long program yields consistent increases in student performance.

A positive campus environment also supports social growth. Relationships are built through Roadrunner Talk Time, a morning meeting occurring daily to discuss citizenship topics. These topics are reinforced campus-wide, supporting a common social language. Students participate in extra-curricular clubs and organizations with offerings including chess, reading, cooking, leadership and fitness. These social opportunities provide them opportunities to collaborate and compromise as well as understand diversity and social tolerance.

Positive emotional health is developed through the JRE character education and guidance programs. The counselor provides guidance lessons monthly, focusing on topics ranging from self-esteem to trustworthiness. Students are recognized for demonstrating character traits by earning incentive cards for weekly drawings, recognition on the announcements, classroom recognitions, positive office visits and opportunities to become a “Student of the Month.” Participation in the character education and guidance programs foster the emotional growth of JRE students by allowing them to acquire the skills needed to face challenges during their lifetime.

JRE teachers are developed and supported by recognizing specific contributions, accomplishments and service to the community. This recognition validates their ongoing desire to develop professionally. Teachers demonstrating outstanding instructional strategies earn diplomas that are proudly displayed. Faculty meetings begin with staff members gathered in a support circle to collaborate and share the positive connections taking place within the team and with students. Recognitions occur daily through email and face-to-face affirmations, as well as weekly through a staff newsletter. Special events, such as team building outings and themed luncheons for holidays and birthdays, allow teachers time to visit and enjoy one another. Teachers often remark that JRE is a positive place where hard work is honored and students are celebrated, resulting in increased teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parent and community engagement is a fundamental component of student success at JRE. The school strives to create meaningful relationships, ensure that families feel valued and promote engagement in all campus initiatives. JRE kicks off the year with a kindergarten orientation and meet and greet night prior to the first day of school to give families a chance to visit with staff and see classrooms. Student success is also tied to the ongoing communication with families, such as the monthly newsletter and calendar, campus webpage, call-out system, email reminders, teacher messaging, parent grade portal and notes home. In addition, two days are set aside each year to conduct parent-teacher conferences to ensure individual attention that solidifies the school-home partnership that is important to overall success.

Partnerships with local businesses, colleges and churches also are significant to student success. When students' basic needs are met, learning can occur. This is evidenced by community partnerships, such as dental and vision assistance, school supply and clothing drive and Christmas gifts for families in need. The La Porte Fire Department provides fire safety education and demonstrations for all students. A local petrochemical partner hosts a math/science night, nature center cleanup and provides study buddies to assist students academically and socially. Local college students participate in JRE's school-wide reading event,

read with small groups and mentor students, contributing to increased reading proficiency. Corporate funding allows students to attend the symphony, theatre productions and visit a local aeronautics attraction and the zoo. The local education foundation hosts a yearly district night that showcases student talents and individual projects. These worldly experiences become part of each student's toolbox allowing them to make connections to learning and increased success.

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) sponsors the Student of the Month celebration, Supper with Santa, Field Day, Reading Celebrations, Family Reading Night and Get Off the Couch Night. The PTO also supports the monthly college assemblies in which community speakers are invited to promote positive character traits, good citizenship and post-secondary readiness. PTO members recruit volunteers to support campus initiatives such as sight-word testing, reading buddies with students and mentoring. These family and community engagement events foster healthy relationships, provide role models and directly contribute to increased student achievement in the classroom.

3. Professional Development:

JRE has a life-long learner culture that is a critical component to student success because professional development is directly tied to the campus needs assessment. Ongoing professional development equips teachers with research-based instructional tools to support school improvement.

The campus professional development plan is derived from professional collaboration, data analysis and instructional teacher walkthroughs. The development plans target key components, such as curriculum, instructional strategies and research-based practices.

Every summer, the principal and a core group of teachers attend a designated professional conference supporting the philosophy and mission of the school. This group then plans training and activities for the rest of the instructional team. Teachers own the learning and share the wealth. The year begins with purpose and training that supports the campus mission.

Knowing the strengths and needs of staff is as equally important as knowing the strengths and needs of students. Data is collected throughout the year. State assessment data is analyzed to determine specifically which objectives continue to be a focus and which are reinforced. The collaborative work happens during professional learning team meetings, as grade level teams discuss how to address student instructional needs for the year. Action plans are developed that support the targeted objectives, which include listing research-based practices and finding professional development opportunities to be implemented and evaluated throughout the year.

The administrative team is committed to providing feedback through effective walk-through practices that support growth and development. Collegial observations provide opportunities for teachers to visit other classrooms to glean positive instructional practices. Knowledge gained through these observations is presented at vertical team meetings and professional development sessions.

PLC and campus vertical teams are critical to the ongoing communication of activities and strategies. Weekly horizontal and vertical meetings bridge the curriculum continuum from grade level to grade level, allowing for opportunities to debrief and support instructional strategies.

At the start of every school year, school administrators and teachers provide professional development to benefit teachers, staff and other administrators. In addition, a wide variety of courses is offered by the district, including those on state standards, dyslexia, ADHD, curriculum updates, core course instructional strategies, technology and safety. New teachers participate in the initial 30 hours of GT professional development during their first year in the classroom, and returning teachers participate in the annual six-hour GT update.

4. School Leadership:

John G. Agno stated, "Leadership is an interactive conversation that pulls people toward becoming comfortable with the language of personal responsibility and commitment." To that end, JRE educators value and remain committed to developing school leadership. Every decision at JRE starts with the question, "How will this commitment impact student success?" The leadership philosophy at JRE is to do whatever it takes to ensure the academic and character success of each student. Every decision directly impacts student achievement. This focus drives all interaction with staff, teachers, students and other stakeholders to ensure that leadership decisions contribute positively to overall success.

The leadership team includes the principal, assistant principal, counselor, interventionists and special education support staff. In their respective roles, each member has clearly defined responsibilities impacting overall student success and learning. The principal sets the tone for the leadership team, schedules time for collaboration, ensures that resources are available and oversees the implementation of the curriculum. The assistant principal provides instructional leadership, analysis on assessment and monitors attendance and discipline. The counselor, interventionists and special education support staff maintain and monitor student data within the response-to-intervention (RTI) process and share their expertise regarding research-based instructional strategies that support students.

The leadership team sets the stage for each school year by working with the staff to create a social, professional contract that details common values, an understanding of professionalism and a commitment to continuous improvement. All members of the staff sign the final document, serving as a declaration to uphold the vision of the campus.

Through the implementation of specific systems in the areas of collaboration, intervention, curriculum alignment, assessment and data, campus leaders maintain the focus on student achievement. These systems are carried out with fidelity throughout the year in many different settings, such as professional learning teams, faculty meetings, vertical meetings and the campus improvement team.

The leadership team is further enriched by the input of experienced staff members, as well as teachers new to the profession. All members work to advance and ensure an environment of high expectations and success. This results in a unified focus on student outcomes, with leadership flowing from the campus leadership to staff, from staff to peers and from staff to campus leadership. At JRE, all members are valued and accepted as leaders on the campus and in the community.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Collaboration is the heart of JRE's success. Effective collaboration occurs when students, staff, parents and the community work together to achieve the school's mission. At the student level, important examples of collaboration include goal setting and peer mentoring. For example, students, with teacher assistance, develop academic and social goals for the year. Student goals then become the conversational topics at parent conferences and data meetings and afford parents the opportunity to support and monitor their child's goals for the year. Peer mentoring occurs within the classroom and across grade levels or programs to support challenging standards in a cooperative learning model.

A collaborative culture which addresses campus objectives and student performance makes it possible for staff to maximize time and resources while continually refining campus practices. Norms created and agreed upon by the grade level team set clear expectations for all members. The campus leadership team develops the yearly JRE Focus Calendar that includes timelines for vertical meetings, faculty professional development, response to intervention meetings, parent events and leadership meetings. The school's mentoring program is a collaborative effort to ensure that students are supported by an adult mentor. Staff members mentor a targeted student with social and emotional needs. Collaboration also occurs when teachers observe other teachers to glean best practices and receive non-threatening feedback. This fosters professional growth and development. Regardless of how these collaborative opportunities are structured, action plans are developed in response to identified campus needs.

Parents and the school community are essential to the academic success of JRE students. The school has dedicated a parent conference day each semester to foster parent-teacher collaboration. Parent volunteers take part in academic activities that support sight-word development and reading comprehension skills. A strong partnership exists with a business that supports the school's mentoring and career awareness program. These professionals foster relationships with designated students during their weekly lunch visits to promote educational, civic and emotional growth. They also develop a career awareness program with the assistance of the counselor to provide sessions for students that promote college and career readiness.

Our nation's 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, once said, "Determine that the thing can and shall be done, and then we shall find the way." These well-chosen words reflect the belief and attitude apparent in the JRE community that is committed to the character and academic success of all the students who proudly attend.