

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 Mr. Christopher Allen Laypath

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

Official School Name J A Taylor Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 293 East Pages Lane

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

City Centerville State UT Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 84014-2202

County Davis County

Telephone (801) 402-1500 Fax (801) 402-1501

Web site/URL http://www.davis.k12.ut.us/Domain/ E-mail claypath@dsdmail.net

2684

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. Reid Newey E-mail rnewey@dsdmail.net

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

District Name Davis School District Tel. (801) 402-5252

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. John Robison

(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):
- 62 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 17 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 9 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 88 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	25	27	52
1	28	18	46
2	25	22	47
3	27	20	47
4	25	20	45
5	30	25	55
6	30	14	44
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	190	146	336

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 87 % 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: 19%

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	40
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	30
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	70
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	371
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.189
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	19

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
16 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 21 %
Total number students who qualify: 92

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
58 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
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 11 Other Health Impaired
- 21 Specific Learning Disability
- 20 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 3 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
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	13
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.	4
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 27:1
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	94%	94%	95%	94%	95%
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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 1987

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

The purpose of J.A. Taylor Elementary is to promote the mission of learning first for all.

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

A strong tradition of academic achievement began in 1962, the year J. A. Taylor Elementary School was built in Centerville Utah. Centerville is a city with a population of approximately 17,000. The city lies between the beautiful Wasatch Mountains to the east, and the majestic Great Salt Lake to the west. It is located about 15 miles north of Salt Lake City. J. A. Taylor is one of four elementary schools located in the city and enrolls about 375 students in Kindergarten through sixth grade. Our school also houses a district special education preschool classroom which enrolls 55 additional students. The majority of the preschool students reside outside of our boundaries and do not attend kindergarten at J. A. Taylor which is why preschool data is not included in this application.

In many ways our school may appear to be a “typical” elementary school. We are at the 50th percentile in the district for the number of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. We are not a particularly large school but are certainly not the smallest. We are not a magnet school. With the exception of our preschool classroom, we don’t house extra programs. We also have an average amount of technology in our school. However, J.A. Taylor is anything but “typical” when it comes to the learning and achievement of our students. From the Principal to the part time custodians, and on to each student, we have internalized a culture of high expectations and academic and social-emotional success. This culture is recognized by every student, parent, and staff member at our school.

J. A. Taylor has a history of student achievement and recognition. Thirty years ago in 1987 our school was one of two in the State of Utah to receive a Blue Ribbon School award in a ceremony attended by President Ronald Reagan. The school has changed a lot in thirty years. Our student demographics are more diverse and the teaching staff has completely turned over in that time. However, the tradition and expectation of excellence remains the same. In 2013 the Deseret News, a local newspaper, rated us as one of the top ten highest scoring elementary schools in Utah. The Davis School Board recently honored our school with a “Learning First” award given for outstanding achievement and growth as measured in the Utah Comprehensive Accountability System (UCAS).

One of the things we are most proud of is student growth. Our school’s academic proficiency rates are high but our growth rates are where we truly shine year after year. A focus on student growth in addition to proficiency is part of what makes our school so successful.

To the staff, students, and parents of J. A. Taylor Elementary success is more than just related to academics. We believe physical activity is important for students. In addition to weekly physical education classes, we promote a “walking club” at recess where students have the opportunity to be recognized for prolonged physical activity at recess.

Social-emotional proficiency and growth is also valued at J. A. Taylor. Each classroom receives regular character education lessons from a counselor. The school counselor uses a character education curriculum designed by the school district but also delivers instruction based on the needs of each classroom and as requested by the teacher. Additionally, students have access to various friendship and recess groups facilitated by the counselor. Each year we have a student council lead service project where students have an opportunity to help others experiencing hardship. Our student council also provides a bully prevention tip to students each week through the morning announcements.

Our school vision echoes that of our school district, “Learning First.” The school’s purpose is to promote the mission of learning first for all. To accomplish this purpose we provide data-driven instruction using the Davis Essential Skill and Knowledge (DESK) Standards. Instruction is delivered by highly qualified teachers who have internalized this purpose.

The students of J. A. Taylor leave the school prepared for Junior High School and beyond. Our school theme this year is “The Hero Within” and we want each and every student to recognize his or her potential for greatness. A component of this greatness is helping others. We are a small school with an average socioeconomic level but we were able to raise the funds to purchase over 100 video games and DVDs for

sick children at Shriner's Hospital in Salt Lake City, to be used by patients. Last year almost 500 hats were made or donated for cancer patients at Primary Children's Hospital, also in Salt Lake City.

J. A. Taylor Elementary is part of an involved and supportive community that promotes volunteerism. Many parents volunteer in the classroom and serve on the PTA or community council. We have an active volunteer run school choir and two years ago we started the tradition of a school musical each year.

The administration at J. A. Taylor believe that "programs" don't lead to success, good teaching does. We hire high ability teachers who have demonstrated proficiency in their knowledge of the content areas they teach. Every teacher at J. A. Taylor Elementary believes that each and every one of their students can learn and that each and every teacher has the ability to help students reach their learning potential. We try to recruit teachers that can forge relationships with their students, who understand the importance of data in guiding their instruction, and who can list each student's strengths and weaknesses and what they are doing to address specific deficiencies.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

One of the goals at J. A. Taylor Elementary is to ensure competency in English Language Arts (ELA) for all students and to enable a love of reading and writing that lasts a lifetime. The Davis School District has adopted the McGraw-Hill Wonders Program for grades K-6. This program is used in conjunction with district provided research based tools for whole class and small group instruction. At Taylor teachers use planning guides and curriculum maps to help plan instruction in each grade level. There is a focus on both vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum in Davis Collaborative Teams (DCTs). The district standards are a focal point of instruction. These standards act as a foundation for high quality instruction. An English Language Arts Coordinator (ELA) helps teachers provide this instruction by consulting, modeling instruction, and helping link assessment data to teaching and learning. Lessons are planned through collaborative teams with focus on class wide instruction as well as small group lessons. The district provides high quality instructional resources and training in the key literacy skills of phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency, print concepts, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, speaking and listening

The Davis School District has created their own math curriculum called Advantage Math. Resources are available in the iBook format and contain a teacher guide, teacher resources book, parent resources, student resources, student pages, and manipulatives and literature kits. Vertical and horizontal alignment are a major component of this program as is the plan, teach, check model. In grades three to six there are five books per grade level. Each book contains research based teaching practices revolving around a big idea. Every lesson includes ideas for differentiation. Parent guides provided by the district explicitly explain each critical area that students should learn by grade level and gives tips for parents to use when helping their children with homework. Teachers use various software programs as a component of the math curriculum. J. A. Taylor elementary currently uses Think Through Math (TTM), ST Math, Moby Max, Reflex Math, and Sum Dog. These programs supplement and support the quality classroom instruction delivered by teachers.

The science curriculum at J. A. Taylor Elementary is based on the Utah State standards, the Davis Education Skills and Knowledge Standards (DESK), and the district science vision of student/teacher collaboration, literacy integration, scientific inquiry and data based decision making. There is an increasing focus at our school this year on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). This year we participated in the hour of coding where students as young as kindergarten and first grade learned coding skills. The district will be adopting a new science curriculum next year that also places emphasis on STEM skills. Our school has really been helped this year by district provided collaborative teams where our teachers have been able to collaborate with teachers of the same grade level at other schools to plan, teach, check, and adjust their science lessons and assessments. Our school also participates each year in a science Olympiad.

Our school uses the “Exploring Where and Why” social studies program developed by Nystrom: Harff-Jones Education. The intent is to make social studies relevant and engaging to our students. The social studies curriculum is more than a program however. Students at each grade level are provided age appropriate information on engaging in their community and civic learning. One example would be the annual participation of our 5th grade students in “Biz Town.” This involves daily lessons that connect what students are learning in school to life beyond graduation. They get practice interview skills and simulate working as employees at various businesses. This program also teaches students how to manage personal and business checking accounts. Another example would be the annual 1st grade program for parents. Students perform patriotic songs tied to their curriculum and some earn a “Master of First Grade” award for completing such things during the year as memorizing a poem, reading a news article and sharing with the class what they learned, and things around the home such as washing a window, emailing someone, and making a meaningful phone call. Students in the upper grade levels have the opportunity to participate in the Constitution Bowl where their knowledge of the United States Constitution is tested. We also try to provide many immersive experiences for students such as the 4th grade Mountain Man Rendezvous and the 6th grade Wax Museum. Field trips are often tied to the social studies curriculum like the 2nd grade field

trip to the State Capitol Building, or the 3rd grade trip to the Centerville city offices. Select students are rewarded for exemplifying civil engagement each month with lunch with the Mayor of Centerville.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students receive forty five minutes of arts or music education every week taught by a qualified professional. Students get art instruction one week and music instruction the alternating week. This is in addition to music and art taught by their general education teacher in the classroom. Instruction is aligned with the Davis School District standards. These subjects are also tied to other curricular areas. For example, earlier in the year the sixth grade was studying ancient Egypt. The art teacher tied their projects that month to creating mummies and pyramids.

J. A. Taylor Elementary also has a volunteer lead choir that allows children in all grade levels to learn music from various cultures and time periods and to perform for the community. In addition, we have added an annual musical theatre production that is primarily for grades 3-6 but younger students may also participate.

Students receive forty-five minutes of physical education a week. All lessons are aligned with the district curriculum. The PE teacher instructs students how to play sports such as volleyball. They also learn dancing, and activities that promote a variety of body movements and gross and fine motor skills. Our school also participates in a decathlon each year where students in grades 4-6 are given a pre-test in the fall in the standing long jump, basketball dribbling, jump rope, cup stacking, 200 meter run, and mile run sit-n-reach, shuttle run, push-ups, and sit-ups. A posttest is given in the spring and the top boys and girls in each grade level get to compete. Students also receive health instruction from their teacher and the school counselor in areas such as making healthy and safe choices. In addition to the structured activities during physical education class, students have 45 minutes of recess a day to participate in structured and unstructured physical activities. One of our recess activities is a mileage club. Students earn punches on their card for sustained physical activities. They trade the punch cards in for prizes and recognition.

Students also receive forty-five minutes a week in structured keyboarding and computer literacy provided by a qualified professional. These lessons are tied into grade level curriculum. For example, when the fourth grade students are assigned to do a power point presentation on one of the counties of Utah they may be given explicit instruction on using power point from the computer teacher. Students also practice keyboard and participate in keyboarding and coding competitions.

Teachers who have shown a desire to use them, have Smart Boards in their classrooms. All rooms have projectors and a document camera. Our school has two classroom sets of iPads on mobile carts that teachers can check out and each classroom has at least five additional iPads to use in small groups. Our school also has three computer labs available for teachers to use with students. Two of our teachers have been chosen to participate in a district pilot program called the Davis Leading EDGEucator Academy where they are part of a small group of teachers district wide receiving extra training and technology resources to create a digital teaching and learning environment for students. These teachers are sharing what they are learning with other teachers in the school.

Each student in the school also receives thirty minutes a week of library media instruction from a qualified media specialist. They learn about books, research, and digital literacy. Our school librarian also sponsors a "Battle of the Books" competition. Students get a button when they read a book on the list and pass a comprehension quiz on that book. In the spring the students get into teams and compete against each other to show their knowledge of the books read.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

J. A. Taylor Elementary follows a three-tiered instructional model. It all begins with high quality whole class instruction aligned with rigorous district standards. Learning objectives are clear and frequent assessments are both formative and summative. Teachers meet weekly in Davis collaborative teams (DCTs) which are similar to professional learning communities (PLCS) to ask and answer the questions of what we expect our students to learn, how we will know they are learning, how we respond when they don't learn

and how will we respond if they already know it. This collaborative process helps determine if classroom instruction needs to be altered to maintain student engagement and a high degree of learning. For example, our fourth grade team may meet and review a common assessment that shows a specific weakness in both classes. The team will then discuss ways to reteach the concept in tier one instruction and also brainstorm ideas for small group or tier two instruction. This process is facilitated by our English Language Arts (ELA) Coordinator and administrative team. Teachers are provided with 30 minutes a day to provide individual and small group interventions to students with identified deficits in reading, writing, or math. Teachers use this time to re-teach and differentiate instruction to meet individual student learning needs.

At J. A. Taylor our emphasis is growth over proficiency. Both are important but a focus on growth ensures that our efforts are concentrated on learners at the low and high end of the learning spectrum and not solely the middle group. Teachers gather data from End of level testing, benchmark assessments and formative assessments to guide teaching. Teachers are given the tools to access the data but they are collecting it and interpreting it themselves to empower more meaningful instruction. For example, at the beginning of the year teachers use their students' end of level testing to help assess strengths and weaknesses of their new group of students. This helps to scaffold and map their instruction for the year. Benchmark testing such as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) also help to determine student baseline levels which assists teachers in planning instruction. Instruction is altered as formative teacher-created assessments give additional information. Benchmark and formative testing identify specific deficits that can be addressed through re-teaching as an entire class or through differentiated instruction in small groups. Teachers have the opportunity each day to work with students in small groups. A large portion of the class goes into the computer lab where a trained para-professional monitors their work on a computer based program such as MobyMax, or Think Through Math. The classroom teacher holds back a small group of students and works with them to address specific deficits. Students that do not respond to this instruction are often referred for special education testing to further identify specific strengths and weaknesses and to determine whether tier three instructional intervention is required for a particular student to make adequate progress. Our special education team is trained in Wilson reading program and in providing high quality individualized instruction in all subject areas.

Even though our school is rated as high performing as a whole, there are subgroups that aren't performing quite as well. Groups that have at least a ten percent discrepancy lower than the entire group of students are: Hispanic, Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English Proficiency, and Students with Disabilities. However, our focus on growth and targeted intervention have shown positive results in each of these subgroups. Each of these subgroups score at least 10 percent higher than the school district average for that particular subgroup.

J. A. Taylor has a school cultural expectation of high performance and high growth. This has been internalized and disseminated by our dedicated staff. Our certified staff, including teachers, administrators, and the counselor average 15 years of experience. Many of our classified staff including our head secretary, head custodian, and chief recess supervisor have worked at the school more than 15 years. Each employee at the school has internalized this culture of student growth and high achievement and students and parents know and feel this. Previous administrators and teachers have communicated this expectation to current administration and teachers. Parents and teachers communicate this to students. Teachers back up this expectation with high quality instruction and intervention, students back up this high expectation with academic performance and actions demonstrating character.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Teachers at J. A. Taylor are observed multiple times a year in part to assess and advise on how they can continue to engage and motivate students to be successful. Engagement begins at our school with a well-planned lesson that is aligned with DESK standards. Teachers plan activities that are tied to learning objectives and help students' master curriculum content and skills. Our teachers try to add activities to each lesson that can be differentiated to the needs of each student. They also ensure that lessons are well organized and follow a logical sequence. Teachers also try to make connections to content the students have learned previously and will be learning in future classroom instruction. Lessons begin with the teachers explicitly stating to students what they will be learning and why. Lessons include a variety of learning activities to facilitate student engagement. Teachers ensure that students are actively participating in the lesson or they modify instruction when students are not engaged. Technology is used as a tool to enable and encourage engagement. Transitions are practices by students to maximize learning time and teacher pacing is adjusted as needed to meet learning needs.

At J. A. Taylor, teachers have internalized the need and desire to positively acknowledge and interact with all students. There is an environment where students are empowered to take risks in learning while also demonstrating a positive and respectful attitude about learning. Each student is held to high expectations for learning and modifications to assignments are made as needed. Each teacher's classroom is organized and inviting. Teachers ensure that behavioral expectations are clear and consistently applied. Our school has a school-wide positive behavioral support system where all employees are encouraged to recognize and reward positive student behavior with "Caught Being Good" slips that are entered into a regular drawing for rewards. Students also have opportunities to be nominated by their teacher for various incentives such as lunch with the Mayor of Centerville or pizza with the Principal.

At J. A. Taylor we know that this culture of learning and high expectation cannot be realized when teachers do not feel valued and supported. Gratitude for teachers is communicated regularly through a weekly memo, regular classroom visits and with the assistance of our PTA who provide meals for teachers on special occasions and regularly praise them and provide teacher incentives. The intention of the school administration at J. A. Taylor is make sure that every interaction with a teacher includes words and actions that communicate support and value for the things they accomplish. Teacher accomplishments and recognitions are often communicated on the school website as well and in newsletters and emails to parents.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Communication is an important component of working with families and community members. School information including successes and challenges is communicated through various methods such as a bi-monthly principal's newsletter and monthly parent teacher association (PTA) newsletter. Information is also communicated by regularly scheduled phone calls that go out to all parents and emails.

Our school website is an excellent source of information for parents. The school PTA has a Facebook page that they also use to communicate information.

Our school has an active PTA that regularly plans nighttime activities involving parents, as well as students, in events such as a literacy night, math night, and school carnival. Our PTA actively recruits parent and community volunteers to help in the classroom and library and staff school activities such as drug awareness week, safety week, vision screenings, hearing screenings, teacher appreciation week, class parties etc.

J. A. Taylor also has a well-functioning school community council that is involved in school effectiveness by developing a school improvement plan and an internet safety plan. The community council also helps shape policy such as the school dress code, homework policy, and recess policy. This council is made up

of parents, community members, and school personnel, however there is always at least two more parent and community members than school personnel on the council. The council meets regularly and in addition to the duties mentioned above, they also help allocate financial resources to different school programs and fund raise to purchase things to help fulfill the school improvement plan. We also have a business partnership committee that reaches out to local businesses and families to solicit donations that go directly to classroom teachers to use to purchase items related to delivering instruction.

Our school actively recruits volunteers from the community. We partner with two state programs to bring “foster grandparents” to our school to help students. These agencies are Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and the Foster Grandparent Program. It has been wonderful to see senior members of our community partner with teachers to help tutor children in many different academic areas. These volunteers are invaluable to our school and community.

3. Professional Development:

The primary approach of J. A. Taylor elementary concerning professional development, is to follow a three tier approach similar to that used with students. Needs of the entire staff are determined by assessment results, teacher surveys, the school improvement plan, and district mandate. For example this year our school improvement plan has a goal to improve Davis collaborative teams. The district wanted us to focus on this area but the specifics of the goal were first created by the school community council to ensure the voice of parents was heard. Once the goal was produced, the focus of these teams this year was determined by school assessment and survey results. Some aspects of the trainings provided by the school administrators and ELA were also informed by these survey results. Training in this area has been provided on a whole group level by the principal, assistant principal and school ELA.

Grade level teams receive additional school based professional development provided by the ELA based on needs of the grade level team and individual teachers and in part determined by how those needs are shaped after whole school training has been received. Teachers also have the opportunity to receive more individualized or tier three professional development provided by the ELA or school administration. This individualized professional development is provided upon teacher request.

The Davis School District also provides a high level of professional development opportunities. Teachers can choose to attend these trainings based on their individual profession growth plan. This plan is aligned with each teacher’s professional goals which are in turn aligned with DESK standards. The district also provides extensive mandatory training for new teachers in conjunction with a school assigned mentor.

The district also provides training for our school counselor, related servers, and specialists in areas aligned to the district standards and in classroom management.

4. School Leadership:

We have a principal, and this year for the first time in eight years, we also have an assistant principal. The principal acts as the facilitator in the school. J. A. Taylor has a longstanding tradition and reputation for academic success. Teachers have long used data to guide instruction and have focused on individual student needs. The school administration has helped keep that focus sharp through their support of teacher, parent, community, and student needs and district policy, procedures, and expectations. The leadership philosophy is one of relationships and respect. Our teachers need guidance and corrections like those at any other school but this correction comes from a perspective of respect for the great things our teachers have accomplished over the years. When hiring new teachers, the administrative team makes a concerted effort to find and recruit teachers that share the cultural values of the school. While we have a very experienced group of teachers on the staff, the current principal has hired a third of the total number of teachers at the school over the last three years. One of the most important things a principal can do is hire high functioning teachers and results have shown the effectiveness of this philosophy. Overall intelligence, past relationships with stakeholders, and focus on growth and development are qualities in teachers which are valued over years of experience, pedagogy, and communication skills, although those are important as well. The school leadership communicates with teachers every day through face to face contact, and weekly

through a staff memo focused on sharing successes as well as information on policy. The administration is also responsible for acquiring resources teachers need to be successful. This happens through recruiting business partners and facilitating a warm relationship with school community members as well as budgeting with the purpose of "Learning First."

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Data based decision making is a large part of what makes our school successful. Whether this is related to overall student proficiency, student academic growth, or socio-emotional development. There are some wonderful programs that can have excellent results whether they are related to character education, academic proficiency, assessment, etc. At J. A. Taylor the emphasis is on the R's: Relationships, Rigor, Relevance and Results. It all starts with positive interactions with every member of the school. It could be a warm welcome from the secretary or principal as a student walks in the door. A kind word from the custodian or recess supervisor outside and in the lunchroom, and the obvious evidence of a teacher who cares about them and their progress and a counselor providing a research based lesson on character education to each student in the school.

Rigor is tied into everything we do. The DESK standards are a guideline toward academic competence. Teachers know that these standards will not be met without high expectations, quality instruction, high student engagement, and meaningful assessment.

Daily lessons start with the classroom teacher telling students not just what they are learning but “why” Relevance is absolutely essential. J. A. Taylor students know that it is more fun to learn when a lesson is engaging and meaningful to them. This leads to higher motivation and commitment to learning.

Results come from meaningful instruction tied to high quality assessment. J. A. Taylor teachers excel at both formative and summative assessments. These assessment tools provide important data to assist in planning instruction that leads to lasting learning. Assessment and instruction is talked about constantly in student centered DCTs as are interventions to address student academic deficits.