

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 [X] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Shawn Kuennen

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

Official School Name Jeremy Ranch Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3050 Rasmussen Road

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

City Park City State UT Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 84098-4758

County Summit County

Telephone (435) 645-5670 Fax (435) 645-5679

Web site/URL http://jres.pcschools.us E-mail skuennen@pcschools.us

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*Dr. Ember Conley E-mail econley@pcschools.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Park City School District Tel. (435) 645-5600

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. Julie Eihausen
(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	26	31	57
K	38	35	73
1	42	48	90
2	56	40	96
3	51	42	93
4	53	45	98
5	59	51	110
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	325	292	617

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 16 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 79 % White
 - 1 % 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: 4%

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	14
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	26
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	617
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.042
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 15 %
90 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13 %
Total number students who qualify: 81

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %
45 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>4</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>2</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 9
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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1
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	92%	95%	96%	94%	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.

The JRES community believes "Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see" (Neil Postman), and the school is committed to developing personal integrity and learning for ALL students.

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

Jeremy Ranch Elementary serves all students within our defined boundaries. Also, families may choose our school if space is available.

PART III – SUMMARY

Jeremy Ranch Elementary School (JRES), in Park City, Utah, primarily serves the Jeremy Ranch community, and is also the community school for neighboring Pinebrook, Summit Park, and Elk Meadows. Our families represent the spectrum of formal education and socio-economic status, and we do have a large percentage of affluent, well-educated parents. About 20% of our students are from families for whom English is not their home language.

Throughout its 22-year lifespan, JRES has been a high-performing school. Although it may not be easy to identify exactly what practices have consistently enabled our students to achieve at high levels, there are two aspects of our school culture that serve as a basis for most of our efforts. First, the JRES faculty has long functioned as a team that lifts and supports each other while also providing unique and high-quality educational opportunities which benefit our students on a daily basis. Second, our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) has developed and nurtured a culture of support for our teachers and students in numerous ways and over the long term.

The teaming structure is not new to our faculty. Three years ago we formalized our teaming process by adopting and implementing the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model. We continue to incorporate and refine our PLC practices into daily school operations. As such, we identify ways to share the many responsibilities our teachers juggle, while also creating individualized learning opportunities that meet all students at their place of academic need. Our PLC structure also serves as the headquarters for the many curriculum choices made throughout the year. This has revitalized our whole-group and small-group instruction, as well as our Response to Intervention (RtI) process; we attribute this to our ability to diagnose student strengths and weaknesses through the ongoing use of common formative assessments.

In addition to focused, targeted classroom instruction and support, the JRES faculty strives to provide experiences with the whole child in mind. At JRES we find the greatest success in character education by focusing on positive behavior supports, in addition to appreciating and recognizing the right choices that are made on a daily basis. We highlight the core traits of Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibility, and endeavor to recognize students for what they do well. Furthermore, we provide our students with opportunities to grow in Music, Physical Education, Computational Thinking/Coding, Healthy Lifestyles, and Library Media on a schedule that rotates each day.

When students begin 1st grade, JRES provides families with two distinct options. One is our French Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program, in which students spend 50% of their time in a French-speaking classroom. The other option is the more traditional classroom model with the added component of STEM instruction twice weekly. Regardless of the choice made, our faculty's goal is to enhance our students' education and future.

The community that surrounds JRES has built and nurtured a rare and effective system of support for our faculty and students. A hallmark is our Masterpieces In Art (MIA) program, which is a hands-on, self-sustaining, parent-run, monthly experience in art for all students. Our PTO has also been the conduit to provide students with opportunities to participate in our massive Science Fair, made all the more authentic with the use of community scientists volunteering their time to judge student projects. The PTO runs the largest Scholastic book fair in the state of Utah, twice each year, and funnels the proceeds into each classroom. They also provide grant opportunities to teachers who need funding for their innovative ideas.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Reading and Language Arts: For the past three years, JRES has followed two ELA Curriculum Maps. Grades K-2 use the Louisiana Believes maps and grades 3-5 use the New York Engage maps. Both programs were chosen for their strong links to teaching standards and processes in a way that solidify students' skills and knowledge, and then layer on additional proficiencies. Additionally, K-2 teachers are using the Phonemic Awareness, Primary Curriculum program as a way to strengthen students' foundational skill development. In order to support those who need additional reading interventions, we use the LLI (Leveled Literacy Intervention) program for K-5. This program allows our teachers to meet their students' needs in a small group setting. The growth these struggling readers demonstrate is unbelievable. Lastly, teachers are using the iReady program for ELA for 45 minutes a week. This online program allows students, of all levels, to develop skill or strengthen skills while providing teachers with solid data that is used for differentiation, scaffolding, and targeted instruction.

Mathematics: Comprehensive Math Instruction (CMI) places a premium on deep understanding of math fundamentals and a systematic approach to advancing through the principles of Mathematics. The JRES faculty spent two years advancing our skills in bringing mathematics alive for students through CMI. To complement those skills and assist in targeting the core standards, we are using the My Math program, K-5. Teachers are focused on teaching real world skills and are constantly striving for mathematical thinking and application of skills and knowledge. iReady is also a component of our mathematics instruction at JRES. Students spend 45 minutes weekly, and this program allows for practice with and refinement of skills they have struggled with or it introduces more challenging mathematical concepts as students demonstrate mastery of previously learned skills. For students who are ready or need enrichment, we offer the online Math league as well.

Science: STEM is a huge component of our school. This year, we have added a STEM specialist who works with students in grades 1-5. Students learn scientific thinking skills and real world problem solving and application that build upon their genuine curiosity. Collaboration between the STEM teacher and the grade level teachers is ongoing. Together they are developing a process in which the STEM teacher can deepen student knowledge of certain grade level specific core science concepts requested by the classroom teachers. Furthermore, our PACE (Program for Academic Challenge and Enrichment) specialist works with each grade level on STEM related projects. Computational thinking (or coding) has also been introduced K-3 and will move on to 4th grade next year. This program encourages and reiterates solid scientific thinking and problem-solving, while also teaching resilience.

Social Studies/History/Civic Learning and Engagement: Teachers are committed to teaching social studies and helping foster critical thinking skills. Not only do they follow the state's core curriculum, the ELA modules also introduce social studies concepts that the students may not be exposed to in a typical classroom setting. For example, in 5th grade, students read *Esperanza Rising* and connect it to the Declaration of Human Rights. This module fosters respectful civic dialogue and the development of appreciation for other cultures and human struggles.

Another opportunity our students have to learn about social and civic topics is in our Healthy Lifestyles class. These skill-building classes encourage our students to do their academic best and to be mindful of community, to show kindness to each other and to be good citizens. Topics addressed include: Setting Goals/School Success, Recognizing Emotions, Anger Control, Career Exploration, Authentic Strengths, Self-Control, Internet Safety, Friendship Skills, Decision-Making, Environment Impact, etc.

JRES is fortunate to house preschool programs for both 3- and 4-year-olds. The core curriculum areas provided in this program include oral language, vocabulary, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge and letter sounds, pre-writing, book knowledge, math, social-emotional skills and gross motor skills. The curriculum follows the Utah early childhood core standards. The demonstration of program impact through

data is of vital importance, and we are monitoring the academic performance of our first group of preschool students (now in 4th grade) and how they compare to their non-preschool peers.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The JRES specialist team plays a vital role in our development of the Whole Child. Students attend a rotation of specialist classes. PE classes are often doubled, so that students have two opportunities each week. Other specialist classes are on a four day rotation. The specialist teachers support students outside of the traditional classroom setting, and expose them to essential life skills. Our students are taught explicitly to research and think critically, to identify the roles music plays in our lives, the development of body awareness and physical skills, as well as the meaning of fair play, the concepts of equality and equity, consideration for others, and so many other elements.

We are fortunate that our Library and Media position is taught by a licensed teacher. That teacher focuses her instruction with all students, K - 5, on fostering the development of critical thinking and appropriate research skills. And, most importantly in an elementary setting, she develops and nurtures a love for learning and living through the magic of books.

Our school counselor teaches a Healthy Lifestyles curriculum, which includes a variety of topics focused on mental, physical, and social health. This year's curriculum centers around mindfulness and improving focus and attention. Additionally, each year a cadre of fifth-grade students are trained as Peer Mediators to resolve student issues. We have had great success with this program in not only solving low-level discipline problems, but in the mediators themselves learning skills in conflict resolution, confidentiality, and service to others.

As part of our Specialist Teacher rotation, students learn how to read music and play music on a variety of instruments, as well as music theory, from our licensed music teacher. Students also perform in several productions each year. Our Masterpieces In Art (MIA) program is a hands-on, self-sustaining, parent-run, monthly experience in art for all students. The MIA parents have created a vertically aligned curriculum that exposes students to the fundamentals of artistic expression throughout their elementary years.

Our students enjoy two PE classes each week with a licensed PE teacher who fosters the connection between skill development and love of physical movement. We also utilize PE as the opportunity to teach Playworks recess games in a fun, safe, non-threatening way.

We offer the French DLI program in 1-5th grade. Roughly half of our students spend 50% of their educational day in this thriving program. It is staffed with innovative teachers (French and English native-speakers) who are developing their own curriculum maps that work in concert with the curriculum we use school-wide.

The Instructional Technology Coach works to raise our teachers' skills with educational technology, in addition to coding and computational thinking curriculum for our students in grades K-3 (so far). We are a high-access school, with laptop technology at 1:1 for grades 3 - 5. In grades K - 2 we utilize a suite of apps on iPads, at a ratio of 2:1.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

The reduction of our achievement gap between our English language learners and our native English speakers remains our paramount goal, and informs our approach to interventions. Moreover, we have placed tremendous resources and intention into early education at JRES and district-wide. In addition to preschool for 3 and 4 year olds, we provide full day kindergarten to all students, with a full-day aide assisting each kindergarten teacher.

School-wide, teachers are committed to implementing scaffolds and differentiation to meet the needs of all. We have a structured, 30-minute daily intervention time (Hawk 30) where all available adults in the building push into classrooms for more individualized student support. During Hawk 30 our specialist teachers work

with students using the LLI program, help facilitate success on iReady and Imagine Learning, read with students individually, and reinforce previously taught or new skills, etc. We provide two newcomers classes during this time, as well, to focus on the discrete skills needed by our few students who have virtually no English when they arrive.

At other times of the day we have paraprofessionals who push into classes to support teachers with mathematics instruction. These individuals work with students so that the classroom teacher can either re-teach parts of the lesson to small groups or individualize content and skill development. Whenever possible, our students are given the opportunity to work on real world problems and to try and develop solutions to them.

We have a full time Academic Coach as well as an Interventionist. These two individuals provide ongoing support for teachers and students. The academic coach focuses primarily on supporting Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction and interventions, while the intervention works closely with teachers and students in need of Tier 3 Interventions. They each use a variety of strategies to include co-teaching, data collection and analysis, modeling lessons, working with small groups, and leading meaningful professional development. They also collaborate with grade level PLCs and help them to understand available data. They facilitate data based decision-making through various assessments and classroom observations.

We use a multitude of assessment measures at JRES. DIBELS is used in K-3 classrooms. This identifies students in need of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. iReady was introduced this year to our staff, and teachers are beginning to understand and see the wealth of student data available to them, as well as the re-teaching lesson opportunities. Teachers in grades 3-5 also use Galileo (our district benchmarking system). Galileo provides student performance data in math, ELA, and science. Our teachers make use of this data to determine content or skills in need of re-teaching. Furthermore, many teachers are using Galileo formative quizzes as an ongoing method of determining student learning needs. Grade level teams in K-5 have also developed common formative assessments. The results of these are examined closely in PLC meetings as teachers are working to determine grade level next steps. This data has helped our teachers to adjust and modify their pacing as needed to meet the needs of all students.

JRES is a high-performing school. Teachers are extremely reflective and continually examine data for trends and patterns to help determine student needs. There is ongoing communication between team members regarding daily classroom needs, but also as a component of the PLC process. Teachers use data from the benchmark assessments to drive their instruction and to ensure that students have opportunities to continue to build their knowledge and refine their skills. Teachers meet not only in grade level PLC teams, but also ongoing, informal vertical alignment meetings between grade level teachers. These meetings are not purely academic in nature but address students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs. We have also redefined the RtI process and how we identify student needs. Documentation is cleaner, more thorough, and continuous. This information will be passed on from grade level to grade level, ensuring continuity of knowledge and the opportunity for future teachers to begin the year doing what is best for all students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The elementary level is a wonderful place for engaging and motivating students. School is still “cool” and we make it a point to have tremendous fun every day. In fact, each day begins with the morning news, broadcast by video to each classroom, and featuring a team of students that rotates in each week. All 3rd - 5th grade students get to be a part of the news crew. This is the venue for school and student celebrations; we endeavor to bring students on camera for all celebratory events, such as goals achieved, awards won, and Hawk Slip drawings.

We work to help all students understand that the qualities of Success involve: Caring, Responsibility, Honesty, and Respect. We call it our success plan, and we recognize students with Hawk Slips when we find them demonstrating those qualities. Those slips give us more opportunities to celebrate success.

We have found through the years that a good recess leads to a good day. We treat our playground as our largest classroom. The playground is where our students learn to solve their conflicts productively, and to invite and include everyone into their games.

When our students encounter social issues that go beyond their resolution skills, we often involve the school counselor. Our counselor helps children work through their emotional or behavioral needs individually or in small pull-out groups, as well as supporting parents and teachers with short-term issues.

Another tremendous support system managed by our counselor is our 5th grade “Spirit Kids,” a volunteer group of students who tutor reading and math in grades K-2, run the school-wide recycling program, manage events, and mentor other students through our Peer Mediation program. These student ambassadors also help welcome new students and make sure they are comfortable and adjusting well. These programs ensure that all the students are mindful, safe, productive, learning, making friends and progressing towards their goals.

The efforts made on behalf of the students to create a school that is fun and supportive come from a core of behavior among the adults. Our teachers band together to support each other and recognize their frequent successes. This happens typically within the grade-level PLC meetings. In an effort to formally nurture an environment in which teachers feel valued and supported, we have established a peer observation system to highlight and replicate the quality teaching that takes place within JRES on a daily basis. At least two times in a school year, each teacher spends time formally observing other teachers and providing feedback. All teachers benefit by watching another’s practice, and each teacher receives positive, professional feedback from respected peers. Another illustration of how we try to demonstrate support outwardly is our ABC award. The ABC award circulates among the teachers once each month. The previous winner is tasked with awarding a teacher that has been outstanding in one way or another in that intervening month. The ABC acronym changes to fit each individual celebration. Every exchange is eagerly anticipated by the faculty, because it is always warm and heartfelt, and frequently funny.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

As previously mentioned, JRES is fortunate to have a dedicated and supportive community. The school is in many ways the center of this tremendously family focused neighborhood. We at the school are certainly partners in the daunting task of raising children. As such, we work closely with the parents and families of our students. While some of the community activities that take place are managed by the faculty, some of the academic challenges that take place at school are managed by the PTO.

This partnership has developed over many years, and is the product of mutual respect and desire to place students needs first. One example is our Read Across America challenge. School personnel sought to increase the at-home reading our students do regularly, and brought the idea of building a challenge that would involve all students to the PTO. In short order, parent volunteers created a program that turned the

hallways of the school into a giant map of the United States national park system. They developed a tracking system that would be minimal work for the teachers. They secured a thousand books to use as incentive rewards for the readers, and they fit the challenge around the teachers' schedules. The end result was a massive amount of reading by students, and a tighter bond between the school and the community.

Another important example of our school-community connection is our volunteer reading program. This connection is especially unique and impactful because most of our volunteers are grandparents or otherwise retired adults who have available time to spend reading with kids. It is truly a win-win situation, because our adult community benefits by time spent mentoring our beginning readers, and our students benefit by forming relationships with caring adults, as well as building their reading skills.

3. Professional Development:

JRES has a team of teachers that make up our school's professional development committee. This team has representatives from each grade level, from the specialist team, the French DLI teachers, as well as the Academic Coach and our Principal. Together we discuss the needs of the school based upon PLC conversations and student data. These conversations drive our school based professional development. This year, for example, we have developed PD sessions based upon John Hattie's Visible Learning and connected it to our literacy instruction.

Our committee also works with the belief that we already have some of the greatest expertise within our own faculty. Using this mantra, we have developed sessions on the most effective parent teacher conferences, where teachers shared their best strategies. This session generated powerful conversations and changes were made to a number of teachers' conference structures. Recently nine teachers attended our state's educational technology conference. Each teacher came back excited and ready to share with their peers. We held a technology round-robin where teachers chose two sessions to attend and learn. One hundred percent of our staff indicated on a follow-up survey that they would be implementing some piece of technology they were introduced to during these sessions. The best part is that our teachers are still teaching one another three weeks later, and the use of cutting-edge educational technology is spiking. Finally, we have chosen to devote some of our school based professional development time to reviewing and refining our school's identified priority standards. Our school's goal is to use these as our step into developing proficiency scales and standards based evaluation.

Our district has set aside district directed professional development days. The topic this year has been our ELA curriculum maps. However, the district has allowed each elementary school to determine its plan for this professional development. JRES chose to give our grade level teams time to scaffold or differentiate elements of the maps to ensure access for all students. We asked them to reflect on the two years of implementation and to determine next year's pacing guide. Grade level teams have worked as PLCs during these sessions to examine work samples from the modules and to collect data about student skill development. Our French teachers are developing their own curriculum maps, from scratch. These complement or supplement what is being taught in their partner teacher's classrooms so that all standards are taught to our students.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership team at JRES consists of the principal, the counselor, the interventionist, the academic coach, and the technology coach. The philosophy places the student at the center of all we do. Because the student's teacher has the most direct impact on his or her development, we endeavor to provide tools and support to the teachers.

Previous examples illustrate this philosophy in different ways. Another illustration of this philosophy is the P.I.T. Crew. The P.I.T. Crew is a creation of our Interventionist, our Academic Coach, and our Technology Coach, and it stands for Partners In Teaching. The P.I.T. Crew recognized early this school year that they could offer more support to teachers if they pooled their skills and resources. They recognized that the best way to help teachers develop their grade-level PLCs was to model a successful PLC of their own. So they collaborate to improve classroom instruction, to offer a deeper toolbox, to take a teacher's class so she may

watch another teacher in action, etc.

The counselor and the principal work in tandem on behavior issues, and share a belief in restorative practice. Their focus is to discover the root of the problem that is causing the misbehavior, rather than issuing consequences. They recognize that the purpose of school is growth and development, and that those are stunted in a punitive or negative system. This belief is what led to the adoption of an on-site counseling opportunity for select students to meet with a therapist from outside of the school system.

In order to ensure appropriate input and ownership of school functions, the principal operates a committee structure that encourages distributive leadership. The specialist team and each grade level team is represented on each of four committees, and the teachers self-select. We have committees for Technology, Safety, Professional Development, and Building Leadership. In this way teachers have a voice in decisions that may impact them and/or their students, and they are informed as decisions are made.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

This is a school with almost no turnover. Teachers and our classified staff want to be at JRES. They genuinely care for and about one another. This type of relationship has contributed to the development of strong PLC teams. They are invested in one another and they are invested in students. Our faculty and staff care about all students regardless of whose class they are in. Because of this compassion and personal investment, it has not been difficult for our teachers to develop strong common formative assessments that provide solid data. It is not a challenge for teachers to be willing to share their best ideas or strategies with a colleague because it is what is “best for kids at this point in time.”

Parents and students recognize the commitment of the faculty and staff at JRES; they feel valued and welcome. For example, this year we set a goal of engaging our ELL families more fully. We began with parent teacher conferences. We created an opportunity where parents could schedule their appointments and we would have translators available, and our teachers would come to the parents. The families could have back-to-back conferences with a guaranteed translator, in a comfortable, welcoming environment. This was a huge success and 95% of our parents attended these conferences. The feedback from teachers was equally amazing. They felt as if this was the most effective and productive set of conferences in years. This set the stage for more open and ongoing engagement between the families and the teacher.

Maintaining and increasing any school’s achievement level is a challenge, due to a wide variety of factors. We believe at JRES that our success with students starts with a staff that is united and caring. It is creating this type of environment that allows for academic success at Jeremy Ranch Elementary School.