

U.S. Department of Education
2018 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 Mrs. Laura Magee Jockish

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

Official School Name Rock Quarry Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2000 Rock Quarry Drive

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

Tuscaloosa AL 35406-3250
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Tuscaloosa

Telephone (205) 759-8347

Fax (205) 759-8348

Web site/URL

http://www.tuscaloosacityschools.co

m/rqes

E-mail ljockisc@tusc.k12.al.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. Mike Daria

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail mdaria@tusc.k12.al.us

District Name Tuscaloosa City School District Tel. (205) 759-3700

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. Eric Wilson

(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 2018 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 2012 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: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
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 (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 13 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 4 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 23 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	9	9	18
K	56	44	100
1	37	54	91
2	45	33	78
3	54	37	91
4	50	44	94
5	43	45	88
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	294	266	560

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 10 % Asian
 - 7 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 76 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 8%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

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, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	19
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	24
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	43
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	531
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 18 %
99 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Korean, Spanish, Greek, Dutch, Mandarin, Chinese, Tigrinya, Filipino, Gujarati, Arabic, German, Marathi, Bengali, Russian, Finnish, Turkish, Telegu, French, Kannada, Farsi

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4 %
Total number students who qualify: 22

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
64 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>3</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>11</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>34</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11
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, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	31
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a 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.	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 20:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2017.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

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

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

The vision/mission of Rock Quarry Elementary is that all children can and will learn when they experience school through a welcoming and nurturing 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

Rock Quarry Elementary School is located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Our school is home to 550 students in grades Pre-K through 5 along with fifty-eight members of our faculty and staff. Rock Quarry opened in 1997 due to rapid growth in the northern section of Tuscaloosa City Schools. We celebrate our heritage each year through "ROCKFEST". On this day students are immersed in activities to celebrate the history of our school culture and community. During the past twenty- one years, our school has continued to maintain a steady student population ranging between 550-575 students each year. A noted percentage of our children represent families with different home languages. We have twenty-one different languages spoken in our homes. Many of these student families are visiting scholars and professors at The University of Alabama. We celebrate our student diversity with an annual International Day. Our parents, teachers, and students partner together to create a day filled with authentic cultural experiences.

We have forty-five certified faculty members and thirteen staff members at our school. Seventy percent of our certified faculty hold advanced degrees, and one hundred percent are fully certified in their area of teaching. Over the years we have maintained a faculty/staff population with limited changes each year. We have a blended faculty of veteran and novice teachers.

The vision and mission of Rock Quarry Elementary is that all children can and will learn when they experience school through a welcoming and nurturing environment. Instruction is delivered by highly qualified, dedicated faculty and staff members who understand the strengths and needs of the children they serve. Administration, faculty, and staff work diligently to create and maintain a culture of learning and excellence for students. In addition to academic excellence, our priority is to develop life-long learners within an environment that is inviting for students and conducive to their learning. Developing relationships is a key priority at our school for all stakeholders. Building and nurturing relationships provides the groundwork for our students. Our focus is on the whole student and we strive to have a genuine understanding of every aspect of the children we serve. We realize that in order to meet the needs of each student it is of utmost importance to explore every aspect of the child and know his/her capacity and challenges.

The culture and climate of Rock Quarry Elementary reflect an environment that is focused on students and their academic, social, and emotional needs. We have a student Ambassador Program, Enrichment/Gifted Classes, Student Council Association, Geography Bee, Spelling Bee, National Junior Honor Society, Second Step Guidance Programs, International Showcase Events, ROCKFEST, Spring Fling, Field Day, Family Counseling Services, Junior Achievement with The West Alabama Chamber of Commerce, Service Awareness Projects (Childhood Cancer Month, Nursing Home Visits, West Alabama Food Bank Contributions and Field Trip, Juvenile Diabetes Awareness, Special Olympics, and the United Way Drive). Students and teachers also represent Rock Quarry in the "Tuscaloosa Can" showcase to develop and enhance engineering and architectural design talent. This project promotes student collaboration and teamwork.

At Rock Quarry Elementary, we enjoy working with all of our stakeholders. We have Adopt-A-School partnerships that include two long standing, award winning agencies. We have a tremendous amount of parent participation at our school as demonstrated through an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Parent volunteers and a strong PTA support our school, teachers, and students. Our PTA provides recognition of our students and teachers on a regular basis. Parents volunteer in the office, the school library and with the Parent Teacher Leadership Academy through The University of Alabama. In addition we have partnerships with The University of Alabama and The University of West Alabama where student interns come to grow as educators through professional learning with our teachers.

We foster a culture of ongoing learning at Rock Quarry Elementary School. This focus on learning includes every person in our building from the school administration to the youngest pre-k student. Our faculty and staff engage in regular professional development to strengthen their craft by learning from colleagues. We are proud to participate in the "Powerful Conversations Network" (PCN) through the Alabama Best Practice Center. Our work with the PCN over the past five years has extended our learning and impacted student

achievement to a noted degree. Rock Quarry Elementary has served as a model for site visits for the Best Practice Center in the state of Alabama for the past two years. We have developed our school professional development through “RQE LEARNS” (an opportunity for book study participation and summer learning including an EDCAMP each year), learning walks and classroom visits to peers/colleagues. Our growth has focused on the work and research of Jim Knight, John Hattie, and Ron Berger. Our professional learning has redirected our focus to expand on learning targets for student focus that are developed using state standards and common core guidelines/curriculum. We also focus on checking for student understanding through the use of formative assessment data and active student engagement in our daily practice. We are excited to expand our learning in future years to include a focus on quality questioning. Moreover, our administrative team, teachers, and staff participate in local and district professional development opportunities. Many of our teachers are frequently invited to present professional learning for professionals and colleagues across our district. We are ongoing learners at RQE!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Rock Quarry Elementary includes reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies instruction in our daily core curriculum. Language arts and math instruction are priorities and have protected instructional time each day. All students have a minimum of one hundred and twenty minutes for language arts instruction and thirty minutes for targeted intervention. This block of time includes reading/literacy instruction, writing instruction, and use of language/grammar instruction. We use state common core standards to drive our instruction in each content area. In addition to the state standards, teachers use the district pacing guides to ensure coverage of standards for each grade level. Targets for student learning are developed in each content area using the common core standards. All student work is directly related to these targets. Our school uses "Scott Foresman / Reading Street and My Sidewalks" as a template resource to guide our planning and implementation of reading lessons. In grades K-2 the program is used to teach foundational reading skills which include the following: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Students participate in whole group and small group lessons developed using the common core standards and Reading Street resources. Grades 2-5 use the template from Reading Street to follow the scope and sequence of the program and the skills outlined. They also incorporate additional text to a greater degree in order to extend student exposure to non-fiction and challenging texts. Teachers and students monitor their success on mastery of the targeted skills through the use of formative and ongoing assessments.

We use a blended approach to teach mathematics each day. Every grade level has a specific portion of their daily schedule that includes a minimum of one hour for math instruction. Rock Quarry Elementary is an "Alabama Math, Science, Technology Initiative" (AMSTI) certified school. The strategies for teaching math instruction that are promoted through AMSTI are used in correlation with Investigations math program. Students develop a deeper understand of "number sense" through exploration and direct instruction of conceptual math strategies. We follow the state common core standards outlined for Alabama and our district pacing guides. Furthermore, math skills are taught conceptually in order to build a scaffold to extend math instruction and application in a targeted and procedural manner. Through explicit instruction coupled with application of conceptual understanding, students use games and resources that encourage and promote hands on learning to demonstrate mastery of foundational skills. We have experienced positive academic achievement/growth in our math data following this blended approach over the past six years. Children are demonstrating a deeper understanding of math concepts, numbers and application of strategies through this method.

Science and social studies pacing guides and curriculum are used in daily planning. Much of the science and social studies curriculum is taught through the language arts block in lower grades. Teachers use non-fiction texts to support their instruction of these areas across the content. We also use STEM SCOPES and AMSTI science kits to ensure that students are provided avenues to apply the content learned through experiments and projects. Our approach to teaching science is hands-on and engaging! Children are given opportunities to inquire, investigate, and analyze during the learning process to develop a deeper understanding of content. Grades 3-5 also utilize the STEM approach to teaching these areas as well as resources from Project Lead the Way provided by the Alabama State Department of Education.

Our school leadership team is exploring the possibility of applying for STEM certification through Advanced Education with our state department. We will consider applying for school certification or program specific certification for the upcoming school year.

CORE CURRICULUM (B)

Rock Quarry Elementary added our first pre-K program for four year old children during the 2017-2018 school year. All Tuscaloosa City Schools pre-K programs follow the Office of School Readiness (OSR) guidelines. The OSR grant requires specific operational procedures. In addition to the OSR guidelines, our school system provides a reading readiness program for the four year old programs in our district. The title of the program is OWLS (Opening the World of Learning) and it is the precursor to the literacy program that

is used in our elementary schools Scott Foresman/Reading Street. The use of this program ensures alignment with academic standards in our schools. Students are introduced to beginning reading skills and strategies that include phonemic awareness and phonological/phonics awareness. The pre-k classroom is filled with developmentally appropriate centers and resources for the children. The pre-k unit has one certified teacher and one auxiliary teacher serving the students daily. Pre-k helps to prepare our children for future success in kindergarten.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Tuscaloosa City Schools place a great emphasis on providing educational experiences for children that prepare them to be well rounded, educated, and productive citizens. This approach includes a focus on core curriculum but extends to include additional curriculum areas; fine arts (music and visual art), physical education and the use of technology. Students at Rock Quarry Elementary participate in art and music lessons in grades K-3 on a rotating basis. Each class receives art or music lessons once per week for a semester. Classroom teachers also use art and music in their daily instruction to support learning opportunities. Students in grades 4 and 5 have both art and music lessons weekly throughout the school year. Tuscaloosa City Schools system's strategic plan proposed increasing the weekly approach for music and art to ensure that all children in grades k-5 receive weekly art and music lessons delivered by a certified teacher of the specific curriculum.

The children at RQE participate in an organized physical education class each day. The state of Alabama requires a minimum thirty minute block of physical education daily for elementary students. The students at RQE have forty minutes of their daily schedule for physical education. Two certified teachers deliver physical education classes to students in every grade level. The organized and planned lessons include physical activities blended with an awareness of the health curriculum and nutrition lessons delivered by certified personnel. Students also have ten minutes of walk and talk, free play, or sharpen-the-saw to interact with grade level peers in a less structured environment.

Rock Quarry has a library/media center that is used on a constant basis every day. The schedule for our media center is flexible and open to students throughout the day. Our media specialist has organized lessons each week for pre-k, kindergarten, and first grade classes for read aloud time and book selection. The media specialist collaborates with teachers of grades pre-k through 5 to plan lessons for students that include text exploration, technology, writing, and vocabulary lessons. Kahoot is an example of technology used to actively engage students in content and promote student collaboration. The media center has approximately thirty computers, and we also have a computer lab with twenty-five computers for classes. We have four classroom carts of Chromebooks with twenty-five devices that teachers check out for class projects and instructional purposes. RQE also uses I-Pads that are part of our Project Lead the Way training with students in grades 4 and 5. Each classroom has three computers for teacher and student use. The strategic plan for Tuscaloosa City Schools includes expanding the one-to-one Chromebook distribution to elementary schools beginning with grades 4 and 5 for the upcoming school year. Additional technology resources are provided and used with students as outlined in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) as deemed necessary.

Each classroom at Rock Quarry has a Promethean/Interactive white board and a set of response clickers. Teachers and students use this technology resource on a daily basis. The interactive white boards are used throughout the day, and the active response technology is used as a tool to encourage active participation and to collect formative data on student mastery of content in the classroom. Data from these responses assists our teachers in planning for remediation and acceleration.

Rock Quarry offers gifted/enrichment classes for students in grades 3-5. This program supports and extends daily classroom curriculum. Students in second grade are screened and tested for services that are provided in grades 3-5. Students who are identified receive enrichment classes taught by certified teachers in gifted education for three hours each week. In this program, students who qualify for services are engaged in lessons designed to support their academic and interest goals. We currently have two gifted specialists who serve our students. These specialists are shared with other schools in our district.

RQE proposes to extend enrichment/gifted practices in the upcoming school year to include school-wide

enrichment for all students. Approximately half of our student population in grades three through five currently participate. We feel that this school wide approach would extend an opportunity for all students at Rock Quarry to be challenged to excel. We anticipate the extension to be an opportunity to support our school wide STEM exploration in the future.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

The daily practices at Rock Quarry Elementary are formed by using a multitude of data resources. We are data driven in every aspect of our school. Student's academic, social, and emotional data is our focus for planning. Formal and informal data sources are used to drive student achievement, uncover gaps, and address learning deficits. These data sources range from formal district and state assessment data to classroom academic and behavior response data. As mentioned earlier, forming relationships with students and teachers are the primary driving source of data collections. At RQE, we believe that when we really know our student's strengths and needs, we are able to serve them on a higher level. We use this information based on student needs to develop quality questioning and higher order learning combined with rich student discourse in our daily practices. Adding technology resources and Bloom's higher order of questions serve to support student growth.

Teachers at Rock Quarry meet monthly in data teams along with the literacy coach, school counselor, and school administration. These meetings focus on current student progress monitoring and use of weekly/daily classroom assessments. Formal and informal data is used from our program weekly and unit assessments, Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) reading assessments, Scantron Achievement and Performance series data, and behavioral student data collection. During these meetings we collaborate to set classroom/grade level goals by examining student progress and forming plans for instruction to address student needs based on data. The next step is to set realistic "Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely" (SMART) goals for the students. Each child's data is evaluated in reading and math, and they are placed in one of four categories: proficient, close, far but likely, or needs support. Students whose data does not reflect growth during evaluations are targeted to receive additional support. This level of support is Tier 3 and includes specific and targeted intervention. Furthermore, after setting individual student goals we set classroom goals by evaluating the data of students. We then determine which students could move during the month as we aim toward proficiency.

Our school has a strong "Response to Instruction" (RTI) team. We provide plans and support for students who are not proficient in specific areas. This approach could include academic and/or behavioral support. Meetings are held each month to identify students and evaluate progress of students who have been identified and have a current plan, or for students in need of an RTI plan. School administration, the counselor, and the literacy coach meet monthly with teachers for RTI meetings. We update individual student plans and set goals for the students. Parents are notified and encouraged to participate in the RTI process. Tuscaloosa City Schools has partnered with Dr. Chris Webber, author of RTI is a Verb, to provide ongoing professional learning for administrators. This professional development focuses on the impact of strong RTI plans for students and schools. Administration has monthly webinar opportunities with Dr. Webber during administrative professional development. Our growth with RTI has evolved from identifying children in need of support to carefully evaluating their needs. We now develop and implement an ongoing plan that monitors their success.

Rock Quarry has demonstrated considerable growth over the past few years. A major contributor to this growth is our emphasis on targeted student learning. Our attention to maintain high levels of excellence extends to a focus on quality questioning, rigor of daily instruction, increasing project based learning, and RTI plans to include gifted opportunities. Through our professional learning with Powerful Conversations Network, we have refined our practices of teaching and instruction. In addition to this focus on teaching, our careful evaluation of student data has provided us with the knowledge of which students are not experiencing success and how we can best tailor our instruction to meet their needs for growth, mastery, and enrichment. Teachers use this data to collaborate daily in order to drive instructional practices and support learning. The use of technology promotes all areas of instruction. Teachers and student have access to MyOn, Imagine Learning (ELL language acquisition support), Reading Eggs (grades k and 1), Brainpop, and Clever resources provided to support student learning.

Finally, the partnership between administrators, teachers, literacy coach and counselor serve to provide a team approach to meeting student and teacher needs. Our daily work together provides a strong partnership in which we grow and learn from one another.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

A parent was recently asked to quote their thoughts on Rock Quarry Elementary. She responded with the following words, “Administrators, teachers and staff are all very personable. They know our children’s strengths and needs, and Rock Quarry Elementary feels like a family.” Our school has a very strong culture and climate that is focused on the children and families that we serve. Administrators, teachers, and staff put children first in everything we do! When you enter the doors of Rock Quarry Elementary, it is evident that children are our priority. Our faculty and staff greet students every day as they enter the building. School administrators are highly visible throughout the day interacting with students, teachers, and parents. This atmosphere of openness coupled with our dedication to being on-going adult learners emphasizes our dedication to promote a culture and climate of learning and dedication. This devotion serves to promote a positive environment that supports every aspect of the school experience for the children we serve.

Daily classroom instruction is planned to motivate the students. Teachers plan lessons that engage the learner and encourage their participation in class each and every day. Lessons are planned that are interactive and require student participation individually and through work as teams. Specific programs and opportunities for students motivate and encourage their participation as well. These include gifted/enrichment classes, National Junior Honor Society, RQE Student Council Association, Student Ambassadors, ROCKFEST (held each fall), Community Service projects, Spelling and Geography Bee Participation and “Tuscaloosa Can”.

Students at RQE are immersed in many opportunities for social/emotional growth. We implement the Second Step guidance curriculum. Our counselor provides academic, behavioral, and social/emotional counseling sessions in small group and one/one sessions as needed. Children with specific behavioral needs are placed on an RTI (response to intervention) plan in order to meet their individualized needs. Additional activities include HALT (anti-bullying support), Red Ribbon Week, Secret Meals Program, Big Brother/Big Sister, Random Acts of Kindness, and Gifts from the Heart.

Our parents play a vital role in supporting and valuing teachers. The parents at Rock Quarry are deeply devoted to our school. They have a great appreciation of our faculty/staff and volunteer regularly at school. Teachers are provided with duty free lunches by our PTA, recognition, and accolades by parents. Parents participate in school events, field trips and parent involvement work days to assist teachers.

School administration sets the tone through a positive daily message. Teachers are supported by administration participation through classroom visits/learning walks, data team, grade level, RTI, eligibility and IEP meetings. Our administrative/leadership team is available to assist teachers during parent conferences. School administration works to ensure that teachers have the materials and resources needed along with appropriate professional learning opportunities. In addition, school administration supports a culture of teacher appreciation at RQE with a variety of teacher incentives including: snacks during meetings, leave early passes, ‘jean’ days, and duty free lunches. Teacher input is valued by school administration as evidenced through faculty exit slips, formation of leadership teams, engaging faculty in planning for changes and various committees. Our faculty works together during a series of meetings each spring to plan for the upcoming year. Schedules, interventions, events, calendar items, and a school theme are developed through team collaboration. Additionally, school administration, teachers, and staff enjoy social events throughout the year to strengthen and support our personal relationships and promote a healthy school culture/climate. New teachers are supported through an organized mentor program, professional development, and time devoted to their instructional and emotional growth.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Rock Quarry Elementary values the relationships that we have with the families and stakeholders that we serve. Every opportunity to include parents in our effort to educate students is embraced. We have a very

strong PTA that supports our teachers and students. Parents are consistently informed of school events through daily/weekly RQE FACEBOOK and teacher blog pages. We have an automated phone message system (ParentLink) to contact parents with reminders and messages. Parent/teacher/administrator conferences are frequently held. Parents are encouraged to participate in all meeting that involve reviewing their child's progress (Student Eligibility, IEP, RTI meetings and teacher conferences).

The 'Alabama Continuous Improvement Plan' (ACIP) for Rock Quarry Elementary is on our school website for parents and community members to view our school data, our goals and plans for growth. This plan is also available for review in our media center. PTA has representation during this planning for our growth along with teachers and staff.

Parents and community members participate in surveys and interviews throughout the year to provide information on how we can improve our efforts as a school. Parents and students are included in our RQE Mid-Year Review Visit each spring when the central office team comes to visit our school. The information that they provide assist us in planning for improvement to meet the needs of our families. The Tuscaloosa City Schools superintendent has a website that encourages parental participation called "Let's Talk". The information he receives through this avenue is shared with school administration as appropriate.

We have members of our PTA association who participate in the Parent/Teacher Leadership Academy provided through The University of Alabama. Selected parents and teachers learn together through six evening classes throughout the year. These courses are focused on school climate, practices, governing boards, policies, and procedures of school operations. These groups form a project each year to support their learning. During the 2016-2017 school year, our focus was on promoting and supporting the diverse population that we serve at RQE. The project developed was an "International Day" for students. During this day students used their "Passport" to visit countries. Each country that they visited included activities prepared to represent the country by the parents of the families we serve at RQE. This year our parents and teachers worked to develop the leadership "School Ambassador" program. Students in grades 3 and 4 applied as ambassadors and were interviewed by members of our community for selection. Sixteen of sixty-eight students were selected through this process to serve as our 2018-2019 RQE Ambassadors. Two of the selected ambassadors participated in the presentation of this project and shared their leadership experience with schools and administrators across the district.

3. Professional Development:

Administrators and teachers at Rock Quarry participate in all district and state professional development provided. Tuscaloosa City Schools' professional learning includes a strong emphasis on developing literacy and math skills by grade three. Our district has specialists in reading and math who provide support and professional learning to teachers. Our system has a 'Summer Bridge' program each year where teachers from every school work with central office specialists to develop and refine pacing guides, district assessments, and practice teaching strategies with our summer school students. This learning is then shared at the local level with colleagues.

In addition to our system professional learning opportunities, our school has participated in Powerful Conversations Network (PCN) through the Alabama Best Practice Center for the past five years. We have experienced amazing growth during our partnership with PCN. Our journey with PCN has challenged the way we think about student learning and changed the way we approach instruction. Teachers' conversations now focus on what will make the biggest impact in the classroom. We focus on practices in our building, as well as form goals and plans that extend our personal learning and the learning of our school colleagues. The practices learned through PCN have grown in our building through voluntary professional learning groups. This group is called "RQES Learns". The work of this group is focused on the research of Ron Berger, Leaders of Their Own Learning. Participants in "RQES Learns" meet after school in homes and coffee shops to explore their learning. This team also incorporated Learning Walks as part of our professional development. Teachers visit colleague's classrooms to expand their knowledge of 'learning targets' and 'checks for understanding'. Teachers learning from teachers has been a powerful learning tool and has created a sense of community in our building. Remarkable things can happen when teachers implement strong teaching techniques, students are held to high expectations, and are taught how

to think about their own learning. Our PCN participants have provided professional learning during extended planning times. The focus of this learning is on the use of learning targets and how to unpack the target. Focusing on the verbs and academic vocabulary in the target helps to engage the students in the process of owning their learning and checking frequently for understanding. Rock Quarry Elementary School is proud of how far we have come with our professional learning. We know there is much more learning ahead, and we are eager to continue to grow!

4. School Leadership:

Connecting with students, families, and the faculty and staff at Rock Quarry is a significant interest of school administration. The school administrators at Rock Quarry Elementary place a very strong emphasis on being visible and interactive with students, parents, and teachers. The administrators are continually networking with stakeholders throughout the day. School administration participates in a variety of meetings such as the following: student eligibility, RTI, IEP meetings, data reviews and grade level meetings. The philosophy of the school administrators focuses on meeting all students' needs. This is exhibited through daily interactions and specific behaviors such as signing all student report cards each grading period, knowing each student by name, building personal relationships with children and their families and greeting children daily with a smile. Spending time in the classrooms supports the administrators' knowledge of the whole child, their strengths and opportunities for growth. Participating and leading RTI and data meetings provides an avenue for the school administrator to have knowledge of student academic and behavioral data. Our goal is to ensure that each child reaches their highest potential and masters academic goals and standards.

School administration values the importance of a team effort to meet student needs. The school administrator works daily with the counselor, literacy coach, and assistant principal to ensure that all academic and school initiatives are purposeful and aligned with our school's vision and mission. This leadership team participates in all student focus meetings: RTI, data teams, IEP meetings, and parent/teacher conferences. The leadership team meets to collaborate on the school's direction, initiatives and current goals to ensure that the schools' focus remains on best practices in education.

Following school and system policies and procedures is of utmost importance to the school administration. Care is taken to ensure that the day to day operations at Rock Quarry Elementary follow protocol established by our board of education and the state department of education guidelines. Through participation in all meetings, the administrators are able to ensure that procedures and policies are aligned with daily practices. The school administrators stay abreast of current practices and research through professional development with colleagues and teachers.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At Rock Quarry Elementary our Response to Instruction (RTI) is noted as our single most influential practice that contributes to our school success. Over the past four years we have embraced and refined the process of using RTI to drive everything that we do. This process includes multiple tiers of instruction and tailored intervention. We analyze each tier of instruction for effectiveness, beginning with Tier 1 classroom instruction which all students receive. Tier 1 instruction is standards based. Learning targets are used to focus lessons on student mastery of standards. Targets encourage student centered learning such as discourse and self-assessment. Teachers utilize multiple data resources to make instructional decisions. When learning deficits are noted, and the student is not progressing or meeting standards with Tier 1 instruction, students are transferred to a Tier 2 plan.

In Tier 2 we identify and analyze academic and behavioral concerns which impede student progress. We develop student intervention plans and progress monitoring plans for ongoing review. We implement the plan to fidelity, and we collect and record the progress monitoring data. Weekly reports are sent to parents charting their child's progress.

If a student isn't adequately progressing, or a student regresses, our team moves the child to a Tier 3 plan. At this point, a child receives Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions. Tier 3 plans for students include additional 'pull out' intervention by a specialized teacher. Goals are set for children with Tier 3 plans that are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely). Daily data is collected by teachers and provided to parents weekly. The RTI team (administrators, counselor, literacy coach, ESL specialist and teachers) meet monthly to review the data and revise the SMART goals. During this review we collaborate to identify instructional practices and strategies to assist students in attaining mastery.

The leadership team reviews data each time a district or state assessment is given student by student. The team is knowledgeable of which students are in need of support prior to teacher data meetings. We also have monthly data team meetings in which we use a data teams process to identify students who are proficient, close, far but likely, or in need of support. Once students are identified, we prioritize needs according to subgroups and create instructional plans based on these needs. The RTI process has been instrumental in our students' achievement and our school success.