

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):
- 39 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 12 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 6 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools

57 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	25	12	37
K	57	40	97
1	45	47	92
2	39	51	90
3	43	46	89
4	54	47	101
5	42	42	84
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	305	285	590

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 78 % White
 - 9 % 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: 5%

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	16
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	28
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	579
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Kurdish, Nuer, Spanish, Dinka, Turkish, Russian, Arabic, Portuguese, Chinese, Kurdish, Bosnian, Bengali, Japanese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 33 %
Total number students who qualify: 193

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %
104 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>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>12</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>28</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>135</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</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: 6
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, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	27
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	18
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	96%	97%	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.

Learn at High Levels. Think Interdependently. Lead with Character.

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

Maude Rousseau Elementary School is the 10th largest elementary school (out of the thirty-nine elementary schools) in the Lincoln Public Schools (LPS). LPS has over 41,000 students K-12 and is the second largest urban school district in the state of Nebraska. Rousseau has a current enrollment of 598, serving students preschool through fifth grade. We are fortunate to have many families living outside our boundaries that desire to have their children attend school at Rousseau. Currently, 32% of our students obtain permits to attend Rousseau.

Rousseau's student demographics have changed significantly in the past eight years. Our students living at or below the poverty level has increased from 13% in 2009, to the current 32.6%. The racial/ethnic composition at Rousseau is also more diverse today, with 21% of our student population being minority students, compared to 11% just five years ago. Today, twenty-four students are English Language Learners (ELL). Our ELL students speak thirteen different languages, with the dominant language being Spanish. Eighteen percent of our students receive Special Education services. Students with special needs are included in our classrooms and are supported through in-class support, pull-out resource classes and additional paraeducator support, when needed.

Twelve percent of our students are identified as gifted with thirteen of those students identified as highly gifted. Our gifted students receive differentiated instruction in the areas of reading and math. In addition, our highly gifted students work individually with a mentor in the area in which the student is gifted. Each grade level has a large population of High Ability Learners (HAL). These students receive differentiated instruction although they are not identified as gifted students.

Rousseau Elementary School recently celebrated its 50th birthday. The school was built in 1964 to ease the overcrowding of surrounding elementary schools. Construction of the school was completed after the start of the school year, opening its doors on November 13, 1964. The school was named after C. Maude Rousseau who was a teacher and principal within the Lincoln Public Schools. Additions to our school building were made in 1968, 1970, 1997, and 2011. In 2013, a walking track was completed on the upper playground.

The Rousseau attendance boundaries have changed throughout the years. The majority of our school attendance area is residential, with a blend of family-owned homes, rental homes, and apartments. Several businesses, restaurants, and retail stores are located along a highway corridor that runs through the middle of our attendance area.

Rousseau has some challenges due to our physical space and geographic location. Our school is bordered by two major streets and a bike path. Due to the busy streets and highway, many of our parents drive their students to and from school, which causes congestions during drop off and pick up times. Parking continues to be of a concern due to a small school parking lot and the lack of parking on the arterial streets.

The foundation for our success at Rousseau Elementary is based on our belief that all students can achieve and learn. The staff uses a laser-sharp focus to drill down and look at the individual needs of all students. We offer a continuum of quality programs and services that meet the needs of all our students. This includes a variety of high-quality interventions before school, after school, and throughout the school day, using research-based curriculums and materials. In addition to staff members, a large group of volunteers (community members, business partners, parents, grandparents, high school students) come to Rousseau on a regular basis to assist students in their learning. There are opportunities for gifted and high ability learners to receive differentiated instruction in the area of reading and math. Students showing potential in the area of art receive art mentors. After school and summer clubs provide enrichment opportunities for our students (chess, break-out box club, Spanish, art club, fitness club, walking club, math club).

Students who struggle to acquire academic skills become part of the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. Further support is available through our Student Assistance Process. When needed, the Multidisciplinary Team process is initiated to determine if students qualify for Special Education individualized services.

The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) process has provided Rousseau with a framework for helping all students succeed behaviorally and develop social/emotional skills. PBiS is a system of supports that includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create a positive school climate and learning environment.

Rousseau has many traditions that are important to our students and families, as they help to build a sense of community and a positive school climate. Reggie, a golden retriever, is the school's Edu-Pup. Reggie comes to school every day with the principal. Reggie adds a lot to the positive school climate. At Rousseau, we also encourage student leadership. One of our student's favorite traditions is our Character Council. Each semester, classrooms select one student to be their Character Council representative. Students are honored to be selected. Other traditions that are important to the Rousseau Community include: Fall Fun Night, Heritage Night, Grandparents' Day, Art Night, PTO after-school clubs, Books and Beyond Reading Incentive Program, field trips, end of the school year program/video presentation.

The principal brings to Rousseau a strong mission of high academic achievement for all students, as well as the importance of creating a positive and welcoming school culture. During the six years the principal has been at Rousseau, school themes (Believe, 50 Years of Academic Excellence, 212. -The Extra Degree. Press On and Press In. Relationships Matter) have been selected that support the importance of student achievement and a positive school climate. The principal leads School Improvement efforts, where data is used to determine future goals. Team building activities (Top Chef, challenge courses, Goose Chase) are some of the activities that have developed positive relationships among staff. Monthly gatherings with parents, "Coffee and Conversations with Dr. Badje", provide opportunities for parents to share information, thoughts, ideas and give feedback.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At Rousseau Elementary, we provide students with knowledge and skills necessary for success in school and for life-long learning. Curriculum & instruction are reviewed periodically to keep it current and relevant.

To ensure that all students read with meaning, write clearly, and speak and listen effectively, our district provides a comprehensive, balanced and inclusive language arts program. The Wonders Program and the LPS Writing Curriculum use the Gradual Release of Responsibility framework and align to the Nebraska standards. This comprehensive curriculum encompasses learning to read, personal reading, reading to learn, writing for multiple purposes, and speaking and listening. The instructional program focuses on direct, explicit systematic instruction in foundational skills including phonological and phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge and automatic word recognition of sight words. We use a writing workshop approach that includes a daily mini-lesson, independent writing time, one-on-one and small group conferences, and a sharing time. All seven modes required in the state standards are taught. Strategies such as trait-based writing and the writing process enable students to write to different audiences for a variety of purposes. Teachers use a variety of instructional technology tools to engage learners.

The Mathematics Program has four broad goals for students: Become mathematical problem solvers, learn to value mathematics and the quantitative nature of our world, develop an understanding of fundamental mathematical concepts, acquire mathematical skills, including the ability to perform routine computations. In order to meet these goals, we have adopted the Math Expressions curriculum. These curriculum materials support the balanced use of purposeful learning tasks and mathematical discourse to develop conceptual understanding, followed by guided practice and appropriate independent practice to help ensure mastery, fluency, and retention. Core concepts at each grade level build in-depth understanding of major mathematical ideas. By focusing on a small number of mathematical targets for each grade level, students using Math Expressions have the time to develop critical understandings.

Our science curriculum is based on the Nebraska State Science Standards and the National Science Standards. The program stresses hands-on activities to develop an understanding of practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts of science. It is structured to help students realize that science is part of everyday life and affects all individuals. The Stemsscopes curriculum utilizes technology to bring inquiry-based scientific thinking into our classrooms. The three themes studied in our elementary school are living things and the environment, the physical world, and space/earth. Embedded within these themes are connections to engineering, technology and science. Students study the scientific process and all of our 5th graders conduct a scientific experiment and create a display for our school's Science Fair.

Social Studies education engages all students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be informed and active citizens, while also contributing to our diverse and interdependent world. The curriculum is guided by the Nebraska State Standards. In addition to content, teachers expose students to historical thinking through the use of visual images and short texts. These methods teach students how to "read and think" like historians, which emphasize important literacy and critical thinking skills. In grades K-3, students become familiar with their community, nation, and world. Students begin to explore elements of effective citizenship and study the US Constitution. To reinforce economic concepts such as financial literacy, Junior Achievement volunteers teach curriculum that provides real world experiences for students. In grades 4 and 5, students study the history of Nebraska and the United States in greater detail. Students learn about individuals who made an impact on our state and nation, while also exploring how they can make a difference in their schools and communities. Students are engaged through field trips in many grade levels. All fourth graders also participate in a full day immersion experience as a student in a one-room school.

Our Early Childhood Program prepares children for kindergarten and beyond. We know that high quality preschool programs have a significant impact on achievement in elementary school. Rousseau provides a comprehensive program where all children learn through play, making choices, gaining social skills, and having opportunities to build confidence. Our preschool staff uses the research validated Creative

Curriculum for instruction and the Gold assessment to measure progress. The Second Step social skills curriculum is taught for social-emotional skill development. Our preschool serves children with diverse backgrounds and learning needs. Teachers partner with families and complete home visits which focus on the family. Parents also have opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and on field trips.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

We are fortunate, at Rousseau, to offer additional instructional opportunities to help our students acquire essential skills and knowledge. Kindergarten through 5th grade students participate in art/technology, music, library and physical education classes for 50-minutes, on a four-day rotation schedule.

Visual Art

Through the participation in the visual arts, students develop critical-thinking skills and draw upon core academic areas to solve problems through creation, design and execution. Students develop individual expression, perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively to achieve common artistic goals, while preparing for a lifetime engagement with the arts. Students who attend art classes acquire skills to be able to analyze, reflect, understand and communicate their ideas. Students identify and understand cross-cultural understanding that happens within art. As global interdependence between people and societies continue to develop, art helps students understand the diversity of cultures, as well as commonalities. Student artwork is displayed throughout the school. Art Night is scheduled every other year, when families can roam the hallways, viewing art created from each student.

Art is a favorite class for students. Students at all grade levels manipulate clay to make pinch pots. Multicultural education is fused into the classes as students create pictures, drawings and objects, such as plaster masks. Students make printed masks which is then the basis for Rousseau's Traveling Art Banner that is displayed at businesses throughout Lincoln. Rousseau's Art Specialist takes pride in displaying student artwork around the school. Art Night is a scheduled every other year, where families can roam the hallways, viewing art created from each student. Students are also encouraged to submit artwork for art contests that are held community and nation-wide.

Vocal Music

Lincoln Public Schools offers a comprehensive and sequential K-12 music curriculum. This curriculum provides experiences through continuous and systematic instruction in areas of music congruent with the music framework outlined in the National Core Arts and Nebraska State Fine Arts Standards. Each grade level has essential learning outcomes that focus on skills and knowledge of music literacy. Music literacy is defined as reading and notating music, listening and responding to music, performing music, and creating music. It is our goal to enrich the lives of all students through the experiences of creating, performing, and responding to music. The fourth and fifth grade choir meets before school and performs twice a year. Fourth and fifth grader students have the opportunity to take lessons during the school day on a band or string instrument. The students meet for group practice after school and perform concerts twice a year.

Physical Education

Students participate in a comprehensive program of physical activity that contributes to the total development of students and promotes healthy, active life-styles. Children in primary grades participate in physical activities which help them learn to manage and control their bodies in a variety of situations. These movement experiences include large muscle activities such as running, skipping, climbing, rolling, throwing, catching and kicking. In the intermediate grades, body management skills are refined as children mature. Participation in activities in the areas of games, sports, physical fitness, dance and gymnastics provide opportunities for students to practice a variety of physical skills. Acceptable social behavior is encouraged through group participation. Rousseau is one of only a few schools in LPS with a climbing wall. A Before School Walking Club is organized each fall and spring. Students are also able to participate in the Elks Hoop Shoot Contest, Bike Rodeo Night, and an all school field day the last week of school.

Computer Science/Library/Media

Technology is a strong emphasis in the Lincoln Public Schools. Computer science classrooms are active places that encourage exploration, creativity, collaboration, communication, persistence, and problem

solving. We use Code.org as the foundation of our students' experiences, and supplement that with a wide variety of other resources. Digital citizenship and technology expectations are taught, practiced, and reinforced at all grade levels. Rousseau has purchased IXL Reading and Math accounts for students in grades three through five. Students are able to access their accounts at school and home. Parents have access to teachers' classroom webpages, where teachers post current information and activities that parents can do at home with their children.

The Rousseau Library empowers learners to be curious, critical, and creative thinkers; enthusiastic readers; skillful researchers; and ethical users of information. Each week, the students meet in the library to learn skills that are essential in today's information-dense world. Because our librarian studies classroom curriculum, she has a unique view of the focus across all grade levels. This allows her to fill in the gaps between subject areas and help students gain confidence in transferring these skills from one curricular area to another, ultimately teaching them to be lifelong learners. In addition to these roles, our librarian works as an instructional partner as she collaborates with teachers to create meaningful, student-driven projects.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

School improvement is an ongoing process at Rousseau that involves analyzing achievement data, finding strengths and weaknesses, setting an improvement goal, and implementing a plan to improve student learning. Our school improvement plan is developed to focus our entire school on the goals using research-based strategies for curriculum, instruction and assessment. Data analysis is a continuous process.

An integral part of our School Improvement Process is Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Each month, we dismiss early for PLC time. The professional learning community is based on the premise that to be effective, we must change our focus from teaching to learning. Our PLCs have three goals: Ensuring that all students learn. Creating a culture of collaboration. Focusing on results.

Our staff utilizes best practices strategies for instruction and classroom management. Teachers have received training in the principles of Explicit Instruction, led by Anita Archer. Training has included design of instruction and delivery of instruction. Classroom Instruction that Works, 2nd Edition, is a resource that is used by teachers to refine their teaching strategies. Staff use the nine categories of strategies that have the most positive effect on student learning and match specific strategies with student needs. Jan Richardson's guided reading strategies and templates from her book, *The Next Step in Guided Reading*, are used at all grade levels to systematically teach guided reading.

One of our strengths at Rousseau is providing differentiated instruction opportunities for students. Curriculum extensions and problem-solving activities are used to challenge students who have met grade level objectives. At kindergarten through fifth grade, a gifted specialist provides daily instruction in differentiated reading and math for gifted students. Highly gifted students are assigned a mentor in their specific area of strength.

Our students not meeting grade level objectives have numerous opportunities to receive additional instructional opportunities based on data from grade level assessments. Reading Recovery, literacy support and Response to Intervention (RtI) are available for individual students and small groups. Another system we utilize is the Student Assistance Process (SAP) which is a problem solving approach. This process is designed for use by all staff who, after making the normal day-to-day adjustments in the student's learning materials and environment, determines that their efforts have not been successful in helping the student. In following the SAP process, we use a teaming approach to problem-solving to design the most appropriate educational program for the student. In some instances, this leads to a referral to the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) special education process or the development of a 504 plan. Students who have IEP goals receive specialized instruction in their deficit areas.

Technology programs/interventions, such as IXL Reading and Math, and Online Wonders Reading Tiered Intervention Supports, are utilized by students. Research opportunities, Google Classroom and skill building games/sites are also used to meet the needs of learners. Assistive technology is available for students with special needs. Our resource teachers and paraeducators utilize reading interventions such as: Six-Minute

Solution, Sunday, Structured Teaching. Math objectives are retaught and retested, as needed.

At the beginning of the school year, Rousseau staff analyze the Nebraska State Assessment (NeSA) results in reading, math and science. The Iowa Achievement Test and CogAT assessments are given to students in grades three and five, each fall. These assessments are compared to students' current formative and summative assessments to see if the results are similar. If not, further analysis is used to see if reasons for the discrepancies can be determined. Additional data that is analyzed throughout the year include criteria- and norm-referenced tests at the state and district levels, alternate and modified assessments, IEP goals and informal classroom assessments. Weekly Math Quick Quizzes, Math Unit Tests, District Reading Assessments (DRAs), Reading Unit Tests, and Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), are examples of the assessments used. Technology allows us to efficiently track student data and progress.

Each year, Rousseau teachers use the School Improvement process to determine goals and areas of need/focus. In reviewing the 2017 NeSA scores, there was an achievement gap between the test scores of all students and the test scores of students receiving Special Education, and students receiving free or reduced lunches. To close the achievement gap we have implemented strategies identified in our PLCs and individualized education plans for the 2017-18 school year. For some students, we changed their daily schedule to add additional math and reading times. Para-educators, practicum students, student teachers and volunteers are used to give additional help and support to students throughout the school day. Before and after school clubs, funded by grants through the school district, assist students with homework and skill development. Examples of these clubs include After School Math Homework Club, Before School Reading/Vocabulary Club, Summer Math Camp, and Summer Breakout Box Classes. We received district funds to provide summer school programs for students with special needs and students identified by teachers as having academic deficits.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Creating a warm and welcoming school environment is of utmost importance to the staff at Rousseau School. As a result of this dedication and focus, Rousseau School has the reputation in Lincoln of being a school where students love to come to school and learn, teachers teach with excitement and passion, parents visit often, and volunteers and visitors feel welcomed. Reggie, a golden retriever, is the school's edu-pup. Reggie welcomes students, staff and visitors every morning. Reggie listens to students read, calms students who may be upset, and helps students to develop responsibility and learn social skills.

Creating positive relationships also fosters a warm and positive school environment at Rousseau. Our theme this year, is "Relationships Matter". We are purposeful in making and spending time to create relationship within and among team members. The administrators and social committee plan welcome-back-to-school and end-of-the-year gatherings, staff luncheons, and team building activities as additional ways to build relationships. Teachers take time the first weeks of school to do team-building activities with their students.

8 Keys of Success is also used to promote positive behaviors and develop character. A bulletin board in the main hallway displays the "Keys" of Integrity, Failure Leads to Success, Speak With Purpose, This Is It, Commitment, Ownership, Flexibility, and Balance. Morning messages share ways in which the "Keys" can be incorporated into daily life. Rousseau also uses the Second Steps program to teach social/emotional skills. Students earn Reggie Bucks for being caught doing the right thing. The Einstein Award and Do the Right Thing Award are weekly awards given to classrooms that show effort in academic achievement and positive behavior.

"It's all about engagement!" This quote, from Anita Archer, is one that we put into practice each day. Teachers have watched Anita Archer's video clips, Golden Principles of Explicit Instruction, and have put the following practices in place: Avoid the Voids. Up on Your Feet. Pace of the Lesson. Learning is Not a Spectator Sport. In addition, teachers have increased the opportunities for all students to respond to questions, rather than just calling on one student. Student time-on-task has increased as teachers have increased their engagement strategies. Kagan Cooperative Learning strategies are used often to give students opportunities to work with partners.

Rousseau began a district-wide implementation of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports' framework (PBIS) during the 2014-2015 school year. Staff use proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school learning environments. Universal school-wide practices were developed and common area expectations posters are displayed throughout the building. Tier 2 supports are designed to support students who may need additional assistance. Check In – Check Out (CICO) is the initial Tier 2 intervention. Students check in with staff members who greet them and encourage them to have a successful day. Tier 3 is designed to provide intensive, highly individualized interventions, for students as needed.

The administrative team at Rousseau has created an environment where teachers are valued and supported. The school leaders are visible and are in classrooms often. The principal and coordinator give notes to teachers regarding the good things they see. The staff know that if they need help or assistance, the administration is there for them. Administrators meet monthly with new staff members to make sure their needs are met. Staff members are also part of the recognition system. School staff members complete "drop in the bucket" notes describing something nice that a staff member did. A "Drop Drawing" is held monthly to recognize selected staff who wrote the drop and received the drop. Treats in the lounge is always a good way to say thank you to staff.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Rousseau, we recognize the importance of involving parents, families and our community members. We know that collaborating with families and our community partners supports learning and helps create a positive learning culture. Rousseau has created a shared sense of purpose that permeates our faculty, students, parents, and the community. Therefore, at Rousseau, we provide many opportunities for parents/families to be engaged in their child's learning.

All teachers made a positive contact home within the first month of school as a way to engage families and build relationships. We schedule Parent-Teacher conferences for all students twice a year. Approximately 94% of our families attend parent/teacher conferences. State testing results, school improvement goals and celebrations of student achievement/effort/behavior are reported to parents through various school communications. Communications include a monthly newsletter, Rousseau webpage, teacher websites, and the Rousseau Facebook page.

The Rousseau PTO plays an important role in supporting our school. The PTO is vital in promoting a sense of community between parents, teachers, staff, and the students. Aside from raising funds for the school, the PTO provides numerous activities for students and staff (e.g. After school clubs, Rousseau Book Fair, movie nights, Rousseau Summer Swim Night, Color Run, and Family Fun Night). PTO meetings are a time when parents can share ideas, offer support, ask questions and give feedback. The principal has an open door policy and welcomes stakeholders to stop by her office, call or email her.

Another innovative strategy that is new this year is the app, myLNK. This app was created through the community organization, Leadership Lincoln. The site includes all nonprofit, city, and state services in Lincoln and Lancaster County. Schools and community agencies have been sharing this app with parents, so they can access, learn about, connect, and utilize services that will benefit and support their children/family.

Parent and community groups have been established as valuable assets to the school. School staff have worked in partnership with parents, district office, community groups, and businesses to write grants and raise funds. A new walking track, additional landscaping, and new playground equipment have resulted due to these efforts. We partner with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Doane University, and Union College to invite student teachers and practicum students into our building. Mentors have been shown to make a difference in the lives of students. We appreciate the time and attention that the Teammates, Ameritas and other business volunteers give to our students.

Grandparents Day, Living History Museum, School Breakfast Week, and the Rousseau Science Fair (using community members for judges), are a few of the events that bring community members into our school and help create connections. Other community connections are made as students deliver May baskets and Valentines to our residential neighbors. We encourage community service through Student Serve - a district-wide program where students give back to the community. Students clean up trash in the neighborhood, write thank you notes to our neighborhood firefighters, collect items for the animal shelter and books for the Malone Center. The past two years, our grade level teams have invited family/community members to school to see the what students are learning/creating in the classroom. Poetry readings, using green screen technology, was a favorite among our guests.

3. Professional Development:

"When teachers are engaged in practicing, studying, and learning together, they are able to build capacity at all levels throughout the school". This quote, by Michael Fullan, from his book the Change Leader, is the approach that both LPS and Rousseau Elementary School use to guide professional development. Teacher quality and continued improvement in instruction is one of the greatest factors contributing to student achievement. Through LPS Staff Development, employees have the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge that will allow them to be effective and grow in their positions.

Each year, the district provides 10.5 hours of professional development for all teaching staff. Professional

development is closely aligned with curriculum implementation or the district's focus. This year, the district adopted a new math curriculum. Significant professional development was focused on the adoption and implementation of the math program. District math leaders and coaches worked closely with teachers, at each grade level, to train them in the implementation. Over the past few years, teachers have received professional development in a number of areas. This included implementation of a new science curriculum, Second Steps Social Skills curriculum, and instructional technology. A variety of optional professional development is offered, where teachers can earn stipends, salary advancement or participate for personal growth. Topics for these sessions include: Classroom Instruction That Works 2, Instructional Technology, Jim Knight, Adaptive Schools, Explicit Instruction. The district also provides an Administrative Cadre and a Coaching Cadre for teachers who aspire to become leaders in the district. At the building level, we provide 10.5 hours of professional development each year that is tailored to the staff needs at our building. At Rousseau, we provided professional development this past year in Trauma Training, technology and relationship building. The trauma training was especially beneficial to staff, as our student clientele continues to change.

Administrators are provided professional development at bi-monthly principal meetings. Summers are also a time where professional development is offered to administrators, along with teachers. Offerings may include: School Improvement, Multicultural Institute, Appraisals, PBIS Workshops, technology, the coaching process. New administrators are provided two years of support through New Administrator Monthly Meetings. Administrators are also offered a variety of staff development classes they can take to meet their instructional or leadership needs/goals.

Our Instructional Technology Coach (ITC) assists teachers with the use of instructional technology tools in the classroom setting. She provides professional development to individuals, teams, and the entire staff on the use of district-approved technology tools to engage students and improve instruction. Our ITC is available to co-plan and co-teach as well as assist teachers in the creation of products that can be used to assess learning.

4. School Leadership:

Research consistently suggests that developing a vision unites the school community of teachers, parents, and students by providing a school-wide commitment to educational outcomes. The principal and school coordinator have developed a vision of high academic achievement for all students at Rousseau. However, a vision will only be achieved if the leaders can get the stakeholders to buy into the vision. The administrators have accomplished this buy-in through the building of relationships, trust, and developing a roadmap of how to get there.

At the beginning of each school year, Rousseau administrators develop a shared building focus centered on a theme that guides staff and student learning for the year. Themes, over the years, have been: Believe. 50 Years of Excellence. 212° - The Extra Degree. Press In - Press On, Relationships Matter. The theme is reinforced daily, weekly, monthly in staff, student, parent, and community communications. We are extremely proud of the concerted efforts that have been made to ensure all students are successful.

Over the past six years, we have witnessed that, in spite of the odds, all children can learn regardless of their background or socioeconomic level. Children have become inspired and motivated to perform at extraordinary levels. All students have made remarkable gains on their NeSA assessments. Just six years ago, we ranked 10th-13th out of 39 elementary schools in LPS, on our NeSA scores. Now, Rousseau consistently ranks among the top four schools in LPS, reaching the 1st place ranking many times.

Rousseau is a school that models collegiality, collaboration and shared leadership from all individuals. This has resulted in a better climate for the exchange of ideas, problem solving and decision making. The School Improvement team, PLC teams, grade level teams and administrators continually look at data in an effort to make informed decisions regarding our instructional program. Our existing school improvement plan has been the product of this approach. This plan has become the fundamental roadmap to where we would like to be.

Our student services team, (principal, coordinator, counselor, PBIIS coach, school social worker, school psychologist, school nurse), led by our coordinator, meets weekly to review student behavior data and overall student progress. Team members share their expertise and knowledge to create and update plans so that students can be successful in school, both behavioral and academically.

Our school counselor has been a wonderful addition to our school. She meets with individual students, small groups, and provides classroom lessons that help students grow academically, emotionally and behaviorally. She is often seen leading sessions at staff meetings. Parents appreciate her as a resource. Our Instructional Technology Coach (ITC) is also an important leader in our building. Her role has evolved over the past 2 years, moving from primarily focusing on technology, to now being an instructional leader in various curriculum areas.

Shared leadership is also accomplished through a committee structure at Rousseau. Committees at Rousseau include, School Improvement, PBIIS, Gifted, Multicultural, and Wellness. Thoughts, ideas, questions, and feedback are shared during committee meetings. Committee members then take information/decisions from these meetings and share them with their grade level team members. Staff meetings are also a time where shared leadership and collaboration happens. Staff members may lead a discussion or share their expertise. Decisions are made at staff meetings allowing all voices to be heard.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The foundation for our success, at Rousseau Elementary, is based on our belief that all students can achieve and learn. We achieve success by using a laser sharp focus to look at the needs of each individual student and providing specific supports for those students. The book, *212° - The Extra Degree*, written by Parker & Anderson, is the philosophy that our staff believes makes the difference in student achievement at Rousseau Elementary School. The premise of the book is that at 211° water is hot. But at 212°, water boils. With boiling water comes steam. Steam can power a locomotive! Thus, the power of one additional degree. This message reminds us that small things can make tremendous differences. We believe that we give that “extra degree”.

Our school team (administration, counselor, teachers, paras, parents, support staff, volunteers) gives that extra degree of time, support, and encouragement in working with students. Our purposeful planning and focus on prevention versus reaction often takes care of the needs of many of our students. However, there are many factors that impact academic success (e.g. instruction, behavior, trauma, social-emotional skill development, attendance). When there are concerns or needs in any of these areas, student performance can be affected. Our Tier 1, 2, and 3 systems provide numerous interventions which address these needs.

One system is our weekly grade level collaborative team meetings. Each grade level team, along with a variety of support staff members, follows an agenda which addresses specific student needs. Teachers, collectively, take responsibility for student learning. Students are not “yours” or “mine”, but “ours”. We follow-up on each of these questions/concerns in order to collaborate on the best way to address these needs.

Additionally, our student services team meets on a weekly basis. Specific student data is reviewed, including: check-in/check-out data, office referrals, attendance, major and minor behavior data, health office data, as well as any additional student concerns. This data is analyzed and action steps are determined to ensure individual student’s needs are met.

Professional learning communities collect, analyze, and interpret student data to make effective decisions, determining what each individual student needs. Students are identified by name and by need for intervention or enrichment. Teams review the following questions: What do our students need to know, understand and be able to do? How do we know if students have learned it? What do we do if they experience difficulty learning it? What will we do if they already know it?

The Rousseau staff persistently focuses on 212° to ensure that we “turn up the heat” to meet the needs of our students.