

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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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	6	8	14
K	17	15	32
1	7	7	14
2	17	6	23
3	7	7	14
4	14	6	20
5	0	0	0
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	68	49	117

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 88 % White
 - 4 % 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: 12%

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	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	117
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.12
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 43 %
Total number students who qualify: 50

8. Students receiving special education services: 32 %
38 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>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>10</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>5</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: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	6
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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

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%	97%	97%
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.

To promote an atmosphere of excellence in order for students to reach their full potential by becoming self-directed learners and productive members of society.

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

The Kimball District serves a large majority of agriculture families, many of these families are third, fourth and even fifth Generation farm families. Kimball is a strong agricultural community as we alluded to, sharing the passion of agriculture including hands-on activities, agriculture safety lessons, agriculture literacy lessons, and the care of plants and animals are a focus of the Kimball School Agriculture Department. The Kindergarten through fourth graders get many opportunities to experience this passion through hands on activities.

Kimball School District traditionally strives towards keeping current on all needs of students, families, and staff. We provide updated technology, professional development, continual curriculum rotations, and hire highly qualified staff. Staff works hard at building relationships with our students and families to create the best learning environment possible. Salary for teachers has been increased in order to attract educators to our District and keep them. Time is made for staff collaboration to assure students' needs are being met.

About half the student population qualifies for free and reduced meals, which has helped us qualify and develop a quality district wide Title program. The Kimball School District promotes positive partnerships with families because it truly takes a village to help create successful learners. We work hard to build bridges with our students and parents, including: PIE Conferences (Parent Involvement in Education) to start the year and understand parent goals for their children for the upcoming school year and any worries or concerns they may have. The Kimball community has been very supportive of the schools and value the education of their children but we still continually work to improve our communication and positive involvement with the families.

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We view our milestones in a multitude of ways. Facilities have been updated and this is an ongoing process, due to strong community support, the growing number of students in our district and open enrollment from neighboring districts. Students have been successful at the state and local levels in Spelling Bee competitions and enjoy our youth athletic programs started for the Pre-K to 4th grade students to build skills and add to a foundation for success in the future for the sports and our kids. We want to produce well-rounded students and it all starts with getting them involved and active at an early age.

Our teaching staff are also well aware of the studies that show that learning loss is experienced by many students over summer break. The District Reading specialist and school librarian work closely together to coordinate summer reading opportunities for elementary students. Children are provided with books to take home over summer. Books are selected based on each student's independent reading level to encourage maintenance of reading skills over the summer. A variety of recording forms help students keep track of the books read. Incentives help motivate students to reach a summer reading goal. Free homework pass, classroom game time, special lunch opportunities and other extra privileges are offered to children who complete their summer reading goals. We also have an ESY (Extended School Year) program offered to students in need to help avoid falling backwards too far during those summer months.

In order to encourage and challenge all students to develop their full potential in all areas we use key strategies in our school. As mentioned above, a wide range of curriculum and athletic opportunities are offered, as well as family involvement opportunities with the PTO, our Library and youth theater to name a few. Staff is available to students before, during, and after school when additional support is needed in academic areas. The local PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) is very active and supportive of helping bring in supplemental academic opportunities, such as Lego Club and onsite classroom enrichment programs such as having the state zoo visit and bring exotic animals not common to our climate, we also were able to bring in 2 astronomy projects and classrooms for our young students to hopefully help light a burning desire to

explore that as a career choice as they grow up and make academic decisions like college and major choices. The school industrial technology program also bring our youngest students in to experiment with things like an aviation simulator, working with older students collaboratively to use a 3-D printer and make something that they drew up on a paper and then worked on computer with our older students to create a finished product and again light that fire and keep them engaged.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The curriculum is chosen based on meeting the needs of all levels of learners and all of our varied learning styles. We look for research-based core-curriculum that offers instructional support and on-site training for all staff, as well as online resources to help meet the growing technology in society. Curriculum is aligned to South Dakota State Standards to insure our students are acquiring foundation skills in every subject in order to attain their maximum potential. The Math and Reading curriculum we have chosen to implement is research based.

Our engagement strategies were developed through our professional training with APL Associates, Jill Jackson, and Reading First. We incorporate the Rule of 10:2, brain breaks, Hit-Run-Push-Pull, Bell Ringers, Think-Pair-Share, pass option, and Ashlock word template routines. Our paraprofessionals attend our professional development classes in order to develop continuity with all forms of engagement strategies with small groups and whole class instruction.

Our elementary ELA program is a comprehensive reading and language arts program. It provides teachers with materials and guidelines that emphasize whole group and small group activities. Whole group activities involve a "big idea" and "essential question" for the day, a teacher read aloud, and the Big 5 activities. Small group activities follow up these same skills in small groups. Classroom lessons are delivered with approximately 90 minutes daily of reading instruction and 30 minutes for language arts, all guided by whole group instruction. Additional leveled small group interventions are guided by classroom teachers, reading specialists, and support staff. The reading program can be implemented by using print resources and digital resources. Area assisted living facilities have become pen pals and reading buddies with our elementary students. Activities include reading together, writing, visiting, crafts, playing games, and sharing stories. By going to the facilities, we are building a stronger community bond and building students' social skills in addition to reinforcing district expectations.

Our elementary math programs using teaching methods that are highly effective, such as, explicit and systematic instruction. The use of data to drive decision making for individualized homework practice and math centers. It is our belief that early detection and remedy of math difficulties eliminates future struggles. Those early math indicators help us engage students in effective math practice under the watchful eye of classroom teachers, Math Specialists, and support staff. These are math activities that are incorporated in our math lessons every year to supplement our standards. Students organize a classroom store. Their responsibilities include sorting food into categories, cashiering, buying, and restocking shelves. Students used real-life application of the concept of money. Lower and upper elementary students work with high school Family and Consumer Science (FACS) students cooperatively to read and follow recipes. Working cooperatively, understanding fractions, and following multi step directions allows students to apply math to real-life skills. Third grade also practices fractions through "Fraction Bowling." "Origami Wednesdays" is a fun way to practice math skills, such as: following directions, recognizing shapes, naming angles, vertices, and sides. Elementary complete daily problem solving bell ringer and fact fluency.

In science, many experiments make science and learning come alive. A few highlights of our inquiry based curriculum - kindergarten students make habitats, first graders grow plants, and second graders keep science journals to record data and observations as experiments are run and they make data collection instruments. Third and fourth graders create multiple STEM activities, such as building and testing bridges and working with programming mini-Robots. The elementary utilizes extra curricular opportunities offered in our high school to broaden learning opportunities. Our school's FFA (Future Farmers of America) Chapter is involved in science exploration to teach our K-4 students a variety of agricultural hands on lessons. Baby animals are brought into the classrooms that have been raised by FFA members. Baby chicks are incubated and hatched, as well as other live animal exhibits for first hand experience to the elementary students.

Social Studies is taught elementary wide. The primary grades focus on being an American citizen, American symbols, maps skills, and community jobs. The upper elementary grades focus on South Dakota

history, American states and capitols, and hands on projects to explore engineering and building of homes. We also use a nonfiction classroom activity magazine, which aligns to Common Core State Standards to help enhance skills in math, science, and social studies.

Kimball School's four-year old preschool students receive core curriculum in the following five domains: 1) learning approaches, 2) social and emotional development, 3) communication, language, and literacy, 4) cognitive development, and 5) health and physical development. By focusing on these five domains, preschool students are able to develop the baseline concepts and skills necessary for their transition to kindergarten and beyond. Learning to cooperate in group settings, following rules and routines, and learning to make smooth transitions from one activity to another provides a strong foundation for preschool students to be successful in primary grades to come.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Kimball School District supports instruction in other curricular areas, such as: visual and performing arts, physical education, technology, guidance and library. In the performing arts, we offer the Missoula Children's Theater, Children's Honor Choir, Artist-in-Residence, and integrated weekly art projects in the classroom aligned with standards and integrated with core curriculum. Our Pr-Kindergarten through 4th Grade Music program uses "Game-Plan" curriculum which is organized by grade level and sequences musical skills and objectives that support the National Standards for Arts Education. We promote being active while learning rhythm, melody, folk songs, folk rhymes, dances and games. All of this is done while following the Orff Schulwerk and Kodaly approaches.

Physical education classes are scheduled for 45 minute periods, twice a week. The students learn about how leading an active life helps support a healthier lifestyle and to help lower things like childhood obesity, Diabetes and other diseases that can be aided by lack of activity of our young people and also affect them as they grow up. Our Elementary Physical Education classes goal is to encourage Psycho-motor learning in play or movement. This means to demonstrate physical skills like coordination in movement, manipulation, dexterity while also demonstrating speed, strength and grace in actions that also include fine motor skills.

Library classes are scheduled for a 45 minute block, once a week. Besides the regular library time we have 3 book fairs each year to help involve parents in purchasing materials for their kids and reading at home all year around. The increased exposure benefits our kids and helps boost their confidence which in turn improves their academic standing. We also run a "book buddies" program where we read to older students and adults, again just one more exposure to reading in a more personal setting to help our kids improve individually.

Technology is taught once or twice a week for 45 minutes, pending grade level of the students. Keyboarding skills are also taught in grades 3-4. Grades 1-2 implement computer skills during writing and research projects.

Our school counselor meets in the classrooms with each grade every other week to focus on character traits. We incorporate the Character Counts Program to promote an attitude of respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, citizenship, fairness, and caring for each other, our school, the Kimball community, and our country. They spend time building relationship bridges with the students so as they get older they can develop a more trusting relationship for later in life.

As we stated prior, Kimball is a strong agricultural community. Sharing this passion of agriculture with our youngest learners we have a rich 4-H program and include other hands on Agriculture activities for our youngest learners that focus on Agricultural, safety and Literacy, as well as the proper care for plants and animals. The youngest members of 4-H also get the chance to compete at regional, state and even national competitions if they know their information and present it well enough. These opportunities help develop leaders at a young age and this really does benefit our students especially those in 3rd and 4th grades.

Kimball School District provides opportunities for family involvement in other curriculum areas. These include: Read Across America Days, classroom reading and math showcases, field day activities, classroom

field trips, holiday festivities, concerts, book fairs, Bring-Your-Parent-to-School Day, and Open House events. We also supplement our curriculum with a very active PTO group that plans academic enrichment for our students inside and outside of our school days. They have brought a Planetarium in for our students. We have a Lego Engineering Club that helps supplement our Science and Math curriculum. Our school librarian organizes a District Book Fair twice a year. Parents are encouraged to come to school and shop for books with their children. The book fairs are scheduled during the evening of Parent Teacher Conferences.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Students receive explicit instruction in the whole group setting with opportunities for differentiation and problem-based learning. Kimball School uses a tiered instructional process where all students receive Tier 1 research based whole group instruction in reading and mathematics. Each student receives Tier 2 targeted interventions for half an hour daily in the subject areas of reading and mathematics based on a variety of assessment data including Houghton Mifflin Reading Progress Monitoring, CORE Reading Assessment, and MAP Reading and Mathematics testing data. The MAP testing data is used to help pinpoint any gaps that might exist in each individual student's academic level in both Reading and Math. Once trained, our staff can work on remediation for our students to specifically fit their needs. We can also work on assignments to better challenge our accelerated learners. We do not have a one-size-fits-all education system. Our instructional practices meet the needs of our students' different learning styles through differentiated instruction. We try to use that concept with our students to continually push them to a higher achievement level.

Teachers also use a variety of technology-based support including Moby Max, Extra Math, IXL Math, and Prodigy to collect mathematics data and differentiate student learning. We also use IXL for Science and English proficiency work to help either in a review format or to adapt work for students on IEP's. Moby Max is also used for the lower levels Reading and ELA support for our students. Tier 2 daily interventions provide teachers with an opportunity to differentiate student learning based on student strengths and concerns. Upper grade level students also take on-line mathematics assessments weekly. To assist in closing the achievement gap based upon the data collected, Tier 3 students receive additional intensive interventions from Title I Mathematics and Reading staff and Special Education Services.

Title I staff is also utilized to advance and maintain high achieving students and provide them with rigorous enrichment opportunities. Intervention groups are flexible and students are placed in tiers based on needs as determined by assessment data and classroom performance. Teacher teams consisting of the classroom teacher, Special Education staff and Title staff meet monthly to adjust grouping and discuss student progress or concerns. The best approach is discussed and selected for each individual student to help assure his/her success.

We also transition teams and meetings to help our staff understand the most successful ways to reach the students that are moving on to their classrooms each year or semester. We do this not to profile or track but to give ideas to staff of things that have been successful for these students when we have observed growth. This is similar to RtI (Response to Intervention), which is a multi-tiered early identification and intervention for students with learning and behavior needs. We are trying to use the best information we can gather from both our MAP test scores and our Smarter Balance testing to recognize and attack the learning gaps we find in our students learning. We understand that early identification of struggling students prevents the likelihood that they will be behind their entire educational career. We do believe that every dollar we spend at an early age for intervention will save us multiple dollars later on in their academic careers and likely in their lives.

In reading and mathematics, Title I and Special Education programs are utilized for flexible small group instruction. All lessons are based on students' strengths and needs. We arrive at this through the use of data analysis, and overall classroom performance. Staff members meet to continually discuss and monitor academic growth. All teaching staff communicates with the families of students about children's academic progress. Paraprofessionals are utilized as instructional support under the supervision of certified staff. Teachers are available to students who need additional support outside of school hours.

We feel proud and successful when our students reach our high expectations, and perform at a high level despite their varying backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and cultural differences. Approximately half our student population qualifies for free and reduced meals and more would but because of pride they do not fill out the paperwork unfortunately. Our subgroups are lead by a large number of students who require Special Education services.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Kimball School engages and motivates students by providing them with a safe and positive learning environment. Students are welcomed by staff every morning as they enter their classrooms. To support student academic success, students are challenged with monthly reading incentives. Socially and emotionally, students receive opportunities to participate in youth activities ranging from youth wrestling, cheer, basketball, and art programs. High school organizations provide students with opportunities to participate in food drives and school spirit dress-up activities. Emotionally challenged students are supported by receiving school counseling services once a week and on an individual basis as needed. A Student of the Month program is held to promote the display of good character based on the "Character Counts" pillars. Older students interact with elementary students on Read Across America Day and meet multiple times a month to read with their Buddy Readers. Teaching staff also volunteer during their planning times during the work day to listen to young readers practice their reading skills. Our school librarian offers engaging literacy activities during the weekly library time with grades K-4.

Our school culture creates an environment where teachers feel valued by supporting staff in a variety of ways. Community members provide a back-to-school breakfast to welcome staff into the new school year and the district provides lunch as well. During parent-teacher conferences, the school district provides staff with a warm meal in between conferences. Staff appreciation week is celebrated with an activity each day held for teachers. The local PTO furnished staff with personalized desk plates for Teacher Appreciation Day. The PTO also helps provide programs for the students to lift their spirits and provide challenges to help us rise to a different level in our classrooms. They have also supplemented educational programs like a Planetarium program through the Dakota Discovery Center. An exceptional opportunity for our students came because of our involvement in the Planetarium program with a program with the Harvard-Smithsonian Youth Astronomy Network to work on using a robotic telescope to take photos of our solar system and the constellations. This along with hands-on learning, which involves building your own mini-telescopes and figuring out the light source necessary for it to work are some added academics we were able to provide because our PTO is involved in such a positive manner in our students' education. We also have a Lego engineering club. We have added Art classes to benefit our students in ways we had not planned or would have been able to afford. PTO is also in the process of organizing the first Father-Daughter dance to continue to add to our school culture and improve our school climate.

All staff attend monthly full staff meetings and Bi-weekly partial departmentalized meetings to stay on top of issues that could be brewing or affecting our students. Teaching staff attend monthly School Board meetings when possible, which helps keep lines of communication open to all employees and helps maintain the goal of a working community within our school. Members of the community have been in attendance as well. PTO meetings are posted on the school calendar. Teachers and community members are encouraged to attend PTO meetings.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Kimball School has found several successful strategies when working with family and community members. District staff understand that building a strong positive home-school connection is vital in creating successful students and citizens. Students have Parent/School communication folders that are taken home daily with special notes being sent home specifically on Thursdays. To utilize technology, school announcements are posted online daily and staff members use Class Dojo as a way to communicate with parents and share day-to-day classroom activities. Student grades can be accessed through the on-line Parent Portal. Families are invited to begin the school year with an District-wide open house where students and families meet teachers, bring in their school supplies, attend a short informational report about Title I services and gain information about middle school, and then the staff and school board members serve supper to families during the Open House night. Parent Connection newsletters are sent home monthly in addition to Title I Newsletters quarterly, and weekly classroom newsletters. Phone calls are made on an as-needed basis when students are doing well or when there are concerns. Parents are invited

to attend parent-teacher conferences twice a year in addition to a Parent Day. Families are invited to come in and observe a day in the life of their student. Individual classrooms invite parents in for a variety of student showcases throughout the year as well. Parent readers are invited in to share Dr. Seuss stories with students during Read Across America Day. Parents are encouraged to accompany their child's class on spring field trips. Community members, including business owners and parents, attend our spring track and field events as cheering fans or assistants. Our daily lunch time is often a popular attraction for family members to partake in joining their students in our lunchroom for their noon meal.

To engage the community, many students visit their 'buddies' at the local assisted living center and care facilities. Field trips are taken to local community businesses to see how they operate and contribute to our town success. Local volunteer firemen come into our classrooms for Fire Prevention Day and hold fire safety activities for students. Community members are also given the opportunity to provide input on the school calendar each year. To keep the community informed, the monthly school calendar is published in the community newsletter. Recently, the community assisted in fundraising projects to help raise money for a newly purchased playground for our elementary school.

Student Artwork is placed on display throughout the school year at the local bank, U.S. Post Office and our Assisted Living Center in town. We work hard to instill pride in our students in and out of school. We also practice the six pillars of Character, instilling in our students Respect, Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Caring, Fairness and Citizenship.

3. Professional Development:

We use peer coaching as an effective way to improve our staff effectiveness in the classroom and continue open communication among the staff. Our goal is to improve our classroom instructional methods, delivery of strategies to reach all learners, and to establish continuity between classrooms to help all of our students learn at a reasonable cognitive rate.

This is our first year using PLC's (Professional Learning Communities) to gather staff together from specific areas or specific ages to discuss different student issues and share instructional approaches used with success. This is more like RtI (Response to Intervention, which is a multi-tiered to early identification and intervention for students with learning and behavior needs). Though we do not officially have either PLC's or RtI specifically in place, we use the best information, programming, and staff development ideas to benefit our staff and students. We also use and share successful parent communication ideas with colleagues in order to establish a welcoming, non-threatening environment for families. Established teaching staff mentor new teachers in the district. All staff have opportunities to share with colleagues any new knowledge gained from professional development they have attended.

Our district hosts professional development classes on-site. Any training that encompasses a wide range of grades is brought to the attention of our administration. At staff meetings, all interested teachers sign up for the training, which is held at our campus in early spring, once school has ended for the year. Our district administrators then contact surrounding school district leaders to offer their staff an opportunity to attend this training at our school. Scheduling some of our staff training this way has helped cut down on our costs because staff don't have to travel and the district doesn't pay for substitute teachers during the school year. Staff training can be offered for no cost or lower cost to our staff when it is held on our campus.

New teaching staff are mentored in order to maintain classroom practices that are researched based and work best for students. Our goal is to maintain a community atmosphere and a safe environment for staff and students. As we mentioned previously, we also make sure all Para-Professional staff are included in our training session so that we all understand the goals and the language to make the learning experience easier for our students.

4. School Leadership:

Our Administration has an open door policy where concerns can be brought forth as needed without fear of reprisal and they work with staff to solve problems with "outside the box" thinking and problem solving.

Our Superintendent is also our Pre-K/Elementary Principal, and our Middle School/High School has a Principal as well. The two administrators are available and willing to assist teaching staff at any grade level in our building and at our Colony school (located off site). Staff meetings are planned and led by the administrative team. Because our building is Pre-K to 12th grade, both administrators are in attendance at meetings, as well as in our separate elementary and middle school/high school staff meetings.

Administrators are available in the building during all school functions, including athletic events, concerts, parent-teacher conferences, open house, parent day, showcases, IEP meetings, grade-level team meetings, and special meetings (transition meetings, scheduling meetings). Our administrators keep us updated on policies and changes following School Board meetings. Administrators attend local trainings when needed, but use their best judgement and prioritize how often they are absent or out of the building. Our school counselor is our next chain of command for contact if both administrators are not in the building, in which case, staff are notified on such occasions. Our administrators give staff opportunities for sharing input on events during the school year. These may include but are not limited to: the school calendar, snow make-up days, hosting special events, professional development needs, teaching schedules, special family/community events, testing schedules, parent concerns, student concerns, and changes in staffing. Administrators are timely and responsible in their responses when concerns and questions are brought to their attention from staff.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Trying to pick just one area where our success has made the most impact is difficult. However, the area where we have likely been the most instrumental to our success is in the strength of our staff to build relationships with each other, our students and families. Our staff spends infinite time and energy on creating classrooms that look inviting and feel welcoming. Our classrooms are set up to encourage educational conversation among students, ease for cooperative grouping, and provide a visual advantage for teachers to observe students during work time. Staff also have classroom designs that provide privacy during test time, and enough room for each individual's personal space. Our lower elementary rooms have small carpeted areas that allow students to sit closely and manipulate educational tools on a smartboard or whiteboard. We feel fortunate to have amazing students that each bring a little bit different perspective to the classroom. Our staff is strong in people skills. We take what we have been given with the varying dynamics of our classes and use our talents, training, compassion, and patience to form a strong bond with our colleagues, families and students, so much as to where most of our students will go the distance for their teachers and vice-versa.

We have very educated staff, both young to this career and seasoned in varying levels of teaching experience. Despite our years of experiences in education, our staff is vibrant and stays hungry for learning themselves. We never have the conversation about whose job is it to do this or that. It is more about what can I do to help my students better understand a certain topic and how can I get some hands on activities and extra practice in order to gain understanding of a certain standard.

People use many academic words in conversation. We feel that our teachers use those professional terms because they live those words. We continually challenge our classes to push that expectation bar higher and be fully engaged in education. Truthfully, our staff sets themselves apart from others because we do not have anyone looking to blame others or back away from the hard work. We jump in and ask what else can we do to be more successful teachers, and to produce more successful citizens for our future world. There are plenty of days when we all go home emotionally spent. We may discover an unsettling personal issue our students are going through, or a parent has been upset with us, or a student has not experienced many successes. Nonetheless, we come back the next day ready, refreshed, and rehearsed in what our true purpose is in the classroom.