



## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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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

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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):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 2 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 10 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
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	34	21	55
<b>1</b>	32	22	54
<b>2</b>	29	21	50
<b>3</b>	24	28	52
<b>4</b>	27	29	56
<b>5</b>	33	26	59
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	179	147	326

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 83 % White
  - 3 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 13%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	21
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	22
(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	336
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.13
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 44 %  
Total number students who qualify: 142

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %  
58 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>4</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>2</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>39</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	19
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
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 17:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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. 2009

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

To ensure all children achieve high levels of learning.

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**

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Sagebrush Elementary serves a small, rural community of hard-working families. Our students come from many backgrounds, including low income families, and therefore we are a designated Title I school. Without exception our students and staff walk through the doors of Sagebrush excited for their learning experience each and every day. This is a tribute to the culture that our staff has committed to building.

Upon entering Sagebrush, you can both feel and see the physical presence of the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) philosophy. PLC is not a buzzword or the latest thing at Sagebrush; it is simply the way in which we approach all of our work. Evidence of the collaborative spirit is on display as teacher teams and professionals engage in deep and meaningful conversations about learning. This continuity and commitment to continuous growth did not happen by chance; it is the byproduct of dedicated professionals committed to ensuring student learning and success.

If afforded the opportunity to make your way through our school, you would see collaborative teams of teachers working in the interest of students. You would find aligned grade level instruction, displayed learning targets for students to see and talk about, and behaviors that support student learning at all costs. On our walls you would find our collective commitments reminding us of our responsibilities to our students and ourselves: Our Students - Not Mine, Maintain a Collaborative Spirit, Celebrate Learning, Make Data-Driven Decisions, Maintain a Growth Mindset, Commit to Best Practices, Teach with Passion and Urgency, and Build Strong Relationships with Students and Families. All of these commitments support our purpose of “Ensuring ALL students achieve high levels of learning.”

Sagebrush is a learning community full of dedicated and collaborative professionals. Our commitment to a growth mindset is genuine and communicated passionately to our students. We teach a growth mindset, model it for students, display the language of growth mindset, and expect it from our students. Evidence of its impact can be found throughout our building from “#NotYet” signs to our book study on Carol Dweck’s research. This consistent message has allowed our students (and staff for that matter) to be comfortable in taking the risks necessary to achieve high levels of learning and reaching their full potential. The pledge of growth is real and evident at Sagebrush.

We have committed to improving in every capacity of our work. To illustrate, our staff meetings no longer eat up time talking about logistics, procedures, or good of the order. We instead communicate these pieces through a weekly memo and utilize this time to learn and grow together. As an example, our 2nd grade team recently shared their dedication to our commitment, “Make data driven decisions.” They shared with our staff their unique and innovative way of tracking data and how it helps them evaluate the progress of every child on specific standards. Additionally, they showed how this format assisted them in providing targeted instruction to students through our WIN (What I Need) process. Each team has now implemented a similar strategy that helps them better meet the needs of our students. Rick Dufour said, “If your teachers are not learning from one another, then you are not a true PLC!” What a powerful way for our teachers to learn and grow!

Sagebrush has been blessed to be a recipient of the Blue Ribbon award in 2009. Additionally, we were recently selected as a National Title I Distinguished School (2017). We are humbled by these accolades and proud to accept them on the behalf of our students and families. These selections have been powerful in our growth process in that they validate the hard work of our students and staff. We have taken time to stop and celebrate these great honors, as they are a reflection of the persistence and hard work of our students and staff. We have leveraged these honors by working to engage our families and build their knowledge of the success of their school. As a result our families and community are proud of Sagebrush and the dedication to excellence that is on display each and every day. Additionally, we have used this success to leverage our most powerful asset: teachers! Linda Darling-Hammond’s (Stanford University) research found that teacher quality has 6 times greater impact on student learning than all other factors combined, including ethnicity and socioeconomics. While supplemental programs and resources can assist teachers in meeting the needs of our students, we know nothing can replace the learning experience provided by a highly trained teacher. Therefore, we utilize our funding and resources to hire, train, and retain highly trained and effective

educators. Furthermore, we have welcomed other Wyoming schools into our building to collaborate around best practices. This year we have hosted five visits from schools around the state to observe and collaborate with our staff about the PLC process. This has been an invaluable experience for our staff and allowed us to grow while simultaneously share many of our successes with educators from around the state. What a powerful way for us to grow as Wyoming educators.

To summarize, Sagebrush is committed to being a Professional Learning Community, focused on student learning as our fundamental purpose. We are truly a community who ensures all children achieve high levels of learning.



## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

The Professional Learning Communities (PLC) framework provides the platform for which all work is done at Sagebrush. We create a guaranteed and viable curriculum through complex and detailed work with all standards at each grade level. We utilize resources and best practice to drive our daily instruction as well as a variety of assessments and data sets to measure growth and proficiency of our students. In every instance, we utilize the data from these assessments to measure student learning and instructional effectiveness, and to guide our future instruction. Without question, Sagebrush is focused on student learning as our fundamental purpose.

In each content area, we have unwrapped standards through a rigorous process aimed at identifying the success criteria of each standard. This process has allowed our teachers to develop a deep understanding of the standards themselves as well as what is expected of our students in order to master the standards. Our Priority standard documents allow our teacher teams to target the most essential standards for grade level success while simultaneously ensuring school-wide, vertical alignment.

We use the PLC process, as well as summative and formative data, to target the literacy focus at Sagebrush Elementary. Formative Benchmark reading assessments are used by all grade levels to target what each child has control of and what items they might still be struggling with in order to reach the next reading level and grow as a reader. Our data wall, which is the center of weekly PLC meetings, breaks down the CCSS into learning targets that are assessed with grade level common formative assessments. Students are then placed into WIN groups, allowing teachers to target what each child needs to ensure their growth in the understanding of grade level expectations. Our highly trained interventionists work hand in hand with the teachers to review data and target intervention instruction based on the same data. A huge success for the 2016-17 school year was that 100% of our 1st grade students graduated from Reading Recovery and our students continued to show growth in the areas of reading on the PAWS statewide assessment. An instructional facilitator is also used to support all teachers in implementing best practice literacy instruction as well as provide staff development in the area of literacy. The focus on data that drives instruction has helped Sagebrush grow all learners in the area of literacy.

Our teachers have embraced the math standards and work diligently to ensure that students are mastering standards that are essential to their growth as mathematicians. We do not rely on a single program to teach our students, rather we work to utilize best practice and valid and reliable data to know where our kids are and how to move them forward. Again, the PLC framework drives our work in the area of math and the success we have seen is confirmation that our time is spent on the Right Work. We remain passionate about the 4 questions of this framework and work to: 1. Identify what we want our students to know, 2. Identify accurately, whether they have learned it, 3. Develop responses when they haven't learned, and 4. Plan appropriate action when they have learned. Much like reading, we have taken the time to analyze and understand the Common Core State Standards. This process aids us in the delivery of our math curriculum, as well as the supplementation necessary to ensure our students reach their potential. Additionally, our teachers are trained in Strength in Number and Developing Number Knowledge, which outline the foundational knowledge children must conceptually understand to be successful. For example, we teach students to structure numbers, which includes grasping how numbers work and how to break them apart flexibly.

In science and social studies, we focus on an integrated approach. It is clear that these content areas rarely exist in isolation from reading, writing, and mathematics. Each grade level has mapped out units of study which guide instruction. Collaboratively, teams plan how to teach these content areas, using reading, writing, and math as their launch point. For example, in fifth grade, students learn about influential leaders in American History whose growth mindset influence students' lives today. In reading, students read articles, biographies, informational text, and primary accounts to learn what it was like during each particular era of history. In writing, students write pieces from the viewpoint of these leaders and discuss the impact of their work has had on the world. In math, they are presented with challenges relevant to each

point in history, like analyzing the taxation of colonists or stretching out History in the context of a number line. Integration helps advance academic achievement in two major ways. First, our students reap the benefits of time because they are learning more than one curriculum area at once. Also, our students remain more engaged because they experience content that is multi-faceted.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

We have many activities both during and after the school day which help us reach our Mission: “Ensuring ALL children achieve high levels of learning!” We support our mission by addressing the whole child through not only academics, but through diverse learning opportunities.

Sagebrush has a multitude of non-core curriculum areas that help to support students’ acquisition of essential skills and knowledge. During the school day, our school provides music, physical education, health, piano keyboarding, orchestra, technology, and art for first through fifth grades, as well as library/media time for K-5. In addition to regular learning opportunities for students, each of these programs goes above and beyond in the following ways: Physical Education coordinates Play Day at the end of the year as well as incorporating Jump Rope for Heart. Our school participates in the Healthy Habit /Healthy Kids program which encourages students to make smart snack choices throughout their day. This program also provides newsletters that go home to provide resources for families about appropriate nutrition. The art program has a Fifth Grade Art Show at the local Bradford Brinton Art Museum. Music and P.E. collaborate for a dance unit that promotes teamwork, acceptance, peer teaching, modeling positive expectations and manners as well as respecting of personal space. In March, the whole school celebrates Read Across America and Music in Our Schools Month with special activities making a connection which is a life long memory. Together, music, movement, and literacy incorporate cultural specific materials to support 21st century learners.

Social skills instruction is provided by the school counselor for kindergarten through fifth grade on a weekly basis. These lessons include: self regulation, character traits/habits, acts of kindness, and mindfulness, to name a few. Peer mentor social skills groups are provided for specific students to continue to develop essential leadership skills as they help younger peers practice social skills, important communication techniques and how to create lasting friendships.

We work diligently to teach and support positive behaviors through our PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) framework. At the beginning of each year, our school organizes a “Mustang Roundup” which frontloads our school’s expectations. These character traits are also taught and reinforced throughout the school day all year long. Our expectation is that these skills generalize into our children’s lives. They include being respectful, responsible, safe and kind, student of the month, choose excellence tickets on Friday mornings, celebrating excellent behaviors, and organized roundups to teach essential skills twice a year.

Sagebrush has organized a “Walking/Mileage Club” which encourages students to walk/run laps during recess and accrue miles. This club encourages comradery with others students, self-initiative and perseverance, as well as the importance of physical activity.

Sagebrush continues to provide support for students after school hours. First through fifth grades have the opportunity to participate in our after school program which fosters creativity, independence, social skills, language enrichment, and executive functioning skills. We offer a variety of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) classes which include folk dance (beginning and advanced), robotics, fly fishing, legos construction, school newspaper, science/technology, and many others. Folk dance encourages acceptance of cultural diversity, empathy, and understanding of others. These specific activities enhance our students’ physical strength, development, agility, and coordination. The percentage of students participating in after school programming ranges from 20-50% of the school depending on the classes being offered at any given time. The breakup of students between the varied activities offered are: Science (34%), Technology (13%), Engineering (13%), Art (22%), Math/Lit (less than 2%), and Community Partner classes. Joey’s Fly Fishing, sponsored by Joey’s Foundation, Inc. and Sheridan College Broadway Center are examples of community partners that offer extended learning opportunities to our students.

Sagebrush also encourages our students to participate in meaningful work such as service projects. Our food bag program includes our students helping community volunteers organize and distribute food bags for students' families who are in need. These families have signed up for the extra food that they receive weekly. Student volunteers help weekly to deliver the 69 bags of food to different classrooms in our school. Our school has also encouraged Acts of Kindness where students purposefully choose to leave a kind note, say a "thank you," help others complete tasks, etc. in order to teach that every life matters and is valuable.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

In the implementation process of the Common Core State Standards, our district focused on building success criteria and proficiency scales in both language arts and math. Sagebrush School then created priority standard documents for each grade level. These documents target the power standards, student I can statements, examples of rigor, prior skills needed, common assessments, and resources. We use this document to drive all instructional decisions, and it acts as a pacing guide in our PLC meetings.

As teachers determine instruction, we implement the Gradual Release method in all subject areas. The Balanced Literacy Framework is the reading instructional model used throughout the school. This includes Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Close Reading, Interactive Writing, Guided Writing, daily Guided Reading Groups, and Independent reading and writing with teachers conferring with students. Formative Benchmark reading assessments are used by all grade levels to target what each child has control of and what items they might still be struggling with in order to reach the next reading level or grow as a reader. Math standards drive all instructional decisions and teachers pull from many resources to ensure students' needs are being met. We do not rely on a single program to teach our students, rather we work to utilize best practice and use valid and reliable data to make instructional decisions.

Our data wall, which is the center of weekly PLC meetings, contains all of our Common Formative Assessment data which drives targeted instruction. Our tiered intervention process allows us to meet the needs of learners beyond initial classroom instruction. All students are placed into WIN groups (What I Need) based on data, allowing teachers to target what each child needs to ensure their growth in grade level expectations. WIN groups are generated after analyzing common formative assessments. This error analysis guides small group instruction that is targeted to meet the needs of every child. If students still do not reach proficiency, they are taken to the next level of the tier process to receive targeted, smaller group (or even one on one) instruction with our highly trained interventionists or classroom teachers.

Our highly trained interventionists--including Reading Recovery, Math Recovery, and Title I teachers--work hand-in-hand with the teachers to review data and target intervention instruction. Instructional facilitators are also used to support all teachers in implementing best practice literacy and math instruction as well as provide staff development in these areas.

One-to-one technology allows teachers to enhance instruction and engage all students in the learning process. Technology is used as a tool to support classroom instruction, administer assessments, and analyze data. As an example, teams utilize technology to build assessments. This allows us to provide timely feedback and targeted support to meet the needs of all students.

For students to achieve at high levels, Sagebrush believes that growing our staff is as important as any other factor in our success. We participate in school-wide book studies that strengthen our understanding as an entire staff. Professional development opportunities are offered that align with our school goals and the needs of our staff. For example, all of our Special Education staff as well as our Title I staff is involved in intensive literacy training this year in an effort to provide targeted, more intensive support to our most at risk learners. Also, we have set aside one hour after school each week to grow as educators with our Wednesday PD. Finally, we have implemented our Peer Learning Opportunities that allows us to learn and grow from each other through observation in our peer's classrooms.

Sagebrush uses the PLC process to focus all instruction, intervention, and assessment implementation. We know that our commitment to best practices and the tiered process of support ensures our students achieve at

high levels. Building our teachers' capacity is also very important to us. Without their knowledge and expertise our students would not be where they are today. The PLC framework drives our work and the success we have seen is confirmation that our time is spent on the Right Work.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Sagebrush Elementary creates a climate where students and families feel welcome and part of our family. We employ many strategies to foster a supportive, positive environment, including the following:

We celebrate success and build inclusiveness by recognizing a role model student who has a growth mindset and good character. This student is celebrated by getting an award and a special lunch. When receiving this award, entire families are invited to join the celebration. This builds relationships and models high expectations for students to follow. In order to recognize more students, we also have a weekly celebration for a student from each classroom who modeled appropriate expectations.

We motivate students to regularly attend school by acknowledging the importance of attendance, providing classroom attendance incentives, meeting with parents, and involving our parent liaison. We emphasize that strong attendance leads to stronger academics. This approach emphasizes the value of school and learning for the whole child. Emphasis is placed on teaching students to develop strong character and to grow academically.

To help build and encourage appropriate social skills, we have school-wide, planned social skills lessons, as well as Monday Mini Lessons which teach and model important skills using a common language. Our school expectations are taught and practiced. They include being respectful, responsible, safe, and kind. These four characteristics are consistently discussed and practiced throughout the building.

We encourage parents to visit with teachers before and after school each day. We also offer two parent-teacher conference sessions each year. As a staff, we celebrate each other by focusing on school teams with written notes identifying individual strengths and their valuable contribution to our Sagebrush family. We also involve parents in Title I nights, Reading Nights, Math Nights, and Thriving Kinders, to name a few. At these events, we provide dinner for families and share resources and information to help learning continue at home.

For students who need additional positive role models, we pair them with a Big Brother or Big Sister through our local Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. Another way we reach students who need more positive guidance is to place them in a friendship group which further engages students with their peers by playing games and spreading kindness throughout the school.

To keep students safe and active after school, we provide healthy snacks, and fun, engaging enrichment activities that grow individualized achievement and continued engagement in learning. To further develop children's strengths and interests, students are given opportunities to participate in Folk Dance, Sagebrush Singers, musical programs, talent shows, and art shows.

To ensure all children achieve high levels of achievement, we provide targeted instruction and further concept development through our WIN (What I Need) groups. This allows students to feel success and to progress at their level. When a grade reaches a specific instructional goal, we celebrate and acknowledge this hard work by rewarding them with a fun, engaging reward.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaging families and community is essential to the success of our students at Sagebrush Elementary. To foster strong ties with students' families, we utilize our Title I program, collaboration with the PTO, and the expertise of our counselor and parent liaison. As part of our Title I program, we host multiple family events throughout the school year, including our open house, literacy night, and math night. The purpose of these activities is to encourage communication between teachers and families in order to support academics at home and strengthen the community bond. Teachers work to plan activities and provide resources for students to utilize at home with their families as a means to extend the powerful learning that occurs in the

classroom.

Our PTO works diligently to engage families through additional community outreach events such as Bingo for Books, Scholastic Book Fairs, and Donuts for Families. In order to ensure all parents have an opportunity to participate in the PTO's efforts to support our students, they offer rotating meeting times to allow for parents to attend day meetings and/or evening meetings. PTO is active in supporting fathers or male role models in our school through a birdhouse workshop for our kindergarten students, as well as field trips and school wide spirit T-shirts.

Examples of school leadership providing parent outreach can be found through the dedicated work of our counselor and parent liaison. Through our Next Level program, our parent liaison works to engage and support the success of each individual student. First, she makes it a priority to contact all incoming families to welcome them to Sagebrush. This includes extending a welcome to each family who has an incoming kindergarten student. During these initial conversations, she provides helpful information about our school and explains her role to parents and guardians. As a result of her proactive approach and enthusiastic presence, our teachers and families readily reach out to her for support when there is a family in need.

As additional community outreach, our counselor works closely with a local non-profit, the Food Group, to provide food bags for students to take home over the weekend. These additional resources are offered discretely and with permission. Families are given nutritious food items to keep healthy. The Food Group also provides this service through the summer and over holiday breaks. Students in our school take on leadership positions to help fill the food bags, as well as deliver to classrooms.

Summer Book Check Out is a summer reading program where students are able to come to the school each week to check out books, at their reading level, so they can continue reading throughout the summer.

Throughout the year, our afterschool program works collaboratively with several organizations within the community to provide high-interest, project-based, authentic learning experiences for students at each grade level. At the culmination of each six-week session, parents are invited to an open house to explore what their students have achieved.

At Sagebrush, we value all stakeholder input and work hard to create an environment where students, staff, families, and community members can engage in and enhance the learning experience of each and every one of our students.

### **3. Professional Development:**

At Sagebrush, we are passionate about growing our professional capacity in order to ensure that each and every one of our students achieves high levels of learning. We collaborate around book studies that challenge our past practices and encourage us to think outside of the box in meeting the needs of our students. We continue to send our teachers to professional development opportunities that align with our vision as a school. This summer that opportunity was an All Things Assessment conference in Denver. This conference provided us with great insight on how to address question #2 of the PLC framework - How do we know students have learned what we want them to learn? Furthermore, the 10 staff members that attended presented to the rest of our staff in order to share their learning. Additionally, we have implemented a Professional Development framework that allows us to build off our learning and knowledge, while simultaneously applying our learning to the classroom. Each Wednesday afternoon is dedicated to growing and learning about the education profession and improving our capacity to help all students learn at higher levels.

We also have district level training and support available to our staff. We currently have multiple staff members who are growing their capacity in literacy through a Literacy Lessons class provided by our district Reading Recovery Coordinator. This Professional Development opportunity allows them to build their capacity in Reading Recovery concepts while simultaneously applying their knowledge to our literacy framework in order to grow our at risk readers.

This year we have made a commitment to utilizing the expertise and knowledge within our building. On a

consistent basis, we have teacher teams who take their learning and knowledge gained from conferences, literature, and graduate level classes and present their findings or AHA moments to their peers. As an example, one team recently provided professional development in the area of Data Collection and Analysis - Driving our Intervention and Enrichment Plans and Instruction. These learning opportunities allow our staff to have real, grassroots discussions about how to meet the needs of our students. Our staff is passionate about student learning and we understand that we too, must stay on our cutting edge of learning in order to provide the highest quality education to every single child that walks through our doors.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

The leadership philosophy at Sagebrush is to ensure all children achieve high levels of learning. Through our Professional Learning Community framework, we continue to strive for educational excellence through mentors, coaching, professional book studies, and a strong focus on the growth mindset. Ultimately, the leadership philosophy at Sagebrush is collaborative in that we have built our culture, vision, and collective commitments together and are all accountable to them in the interest of student learning.

Our principal is consistently present to guide and support teachers through the PLC process and protect the integrity of our Purpose - "To Ensure ALL children achieve high levels of learning." The principal is a part of each PLC meeting to provide insight, ask probing questions, and ensure that each team is functioning at a high level. This support extends into classrooms, PD opportunities, and social settings - all with the intent of ensuring student learning and success. Additionally, the principal assists in maintaining high levels of positive behavior within our student population. To gain relationships with students, the principal greets them by name throughout the day and interacts with them during recess, building a rapport to help support behavior and academics within the building.

The Leadership Committee is comprised of a representatives from each grade level and area of concentration or specialty. The purpose of this committee is to guide educational direction and ensure student success. These leaders protect the integrity of the school's overall vision, its goals and priorities, the next steps that will be used to achieve that vision, and the alignment of resources to accomplish our goals. The purpose behind all committee work and decisions is "to ensure all children achieve high levels of learning."

The stakeholders at Sagebrush work diligently to engage families through community outreach nights such as Bingo for Books, Scholastic Book Fairs, and Donuts for Families, to name a few. These programs all support student achievement by providing families with resources and information to ensure student success. Through our Next Level program, our Parent Liaison works to engage and support all Sagebrush families. As an example, she makes personal phone calls to all incoming families (including kindergarten) to welcome them to Sagebrush and provide some specifics about our school and her role. We value all stakeholder input and work hard to create an environment where students, staff, families, and community members can engage in the learning experience provided at Sagebrush Elementary.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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At Sagebrush, we believe that all students can learn at high levels and it is our job as educators to ENSURE that this happens.

We believe that the strongest change agent for continuous improvement is the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) framework. We have committed to the three pillars of PLC: a Focus on Learning, a Focus on Collaboration, and a Focus on Results. These pillars along with the four critical questions now guide all discussions at Sagebrush and center our work. The four critical questions are: 1. What do we want our students to learn; 2. How will we know if they have learned it; 3. How will we respond when they haven't learned; and 4. How will we respond when they have learned? Without highly trained professional educators committed to and focused on the right work, our purpose of "Ensuring high levels of learning for ALL children" would simply be a statement written on the wall.

In our quest to ensure ALL children achieve high levels of learning, we are in a constant state of improvement and growth. The four critical questions of the Professional Learning Communities framework have had the most significant impact on student achievement and are the guiding questions that drive our work. Unwrapping standards and creating success criteria allowed our teachers to become experts in the standards. Analyzing each standard vertically led to a deep understanding of how standards build complexity through each grade level and has allowed our teachers to provide more targeted and intentional instruction while ensuring long term mastery and success of our students. Additionally, this knowledge has allowed us to create valid and reliable assessments that tell us what our students truly know. When students have yet to learn, we have a systematic intervention process that breaks down standards into specific learning targets, making learning and teaching more intentional and available to our students. When they have mastered the essential skills, we utilize the same systematic approach to extend their learning.

Linda Darling-Hammond's (Stanford University) research found that teacher quality has 6 times greater impact on student learning than all other factors combined, including ethnicity and socioeconomics. Because our purpose statement is To ensure ALL children achieve high levels of learning, we focus on the highest yield resources available - educators! Highly trained educators combined with the PLC framework to promote continuous learning and collaboration has been the driving force behind our continuous growth as a learning community.