



## 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. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - Middle/Junior high schools
  - High schools
  - K-12 schools
- 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, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	21	36	57
K	15	23	38
1	28	15	43
2	11	23	34
3	21	16	37
4	13	22	35
5	17	25	42
6	24	27	51
7	31	29	60
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	181	216	397

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 9 % Black or African American
  - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 85 % White
  - 2 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 7%

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, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	14
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	29
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	389
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %  
66 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>2</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>41</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>3</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</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: 9

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	5
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	29
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., school 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 14:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2018.

<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.

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

Prattville Christian Academy seeks to create a meaningful difference by preparing Christian leaders for life.

## PART III – SUMMARY

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Prattville Christian Academy (PCA) Lower School is a suburban school located in Prattville, Alabama in Elmore County outside of the state capital of Montgomery. In the Prattville and Millbrook area, PCA is the largest private school in Autauga and Elmore Counties. It is the only Christian school that is non-denominational and not associated with any specific church. The school is located in a rapidly growing community and draws students from various ethnic, socio-economic and demographic backgrounds. PCA Lower School is a Christian school serving grades PreK-7th-grade, with the Panther as its mascot. PCA Lower School is a private, independently incorporated organization dedicated solely to providing academic excellence in a caring Christian environment. Guided by an independent board of Christian directors, the school is devoted to Kingdom Education.

The mission at PCA is to create a meaningful difference by preparing Christian leaders for life. The children of today will be the leaders of tomorrow, and the aim of the school is to make the world of tomorrow a place that is full of hope and security.

PCA Lower School is committed to building faith in God, love of His Word, and respect for His creation. We are committed to providing a quality, Christ-centered, Bible-based education in a caring Christian environment, with emphasis on the individual and the importance of the family.

PCA was founded in 1997 with 13 students, as a vision of Don and Marilyn Greer. At that time, there were few if any options for Christian education in the Prattville-Millbrook area. Classes were held in Hunter Hills Church a few hundred yards from where the current buildings stand. In 2000, as the school grew it became necessary to build the first building, which is now the lower school building. Soon after that, the school had outgrown that building and was in need of even more classroom space. Construction began on the student center and upper school building in 2008, and it finished the following year. PCA Lower School now has an approximate enrollment of 400 students from grades K3 through 7.

The PCA Lower School course of study includes classes in math, language arts, social studies, and sciences. In addition to core academics, the school offers daily instruction in physical education and the arts, such as music, art, drama, library classes, IDEA learning labs, and foreign language to develop well-rounded students who can utilize their talents and creativity. Students have available technology in every classroom for student use and technology is 1:1 starting in 6th grade. Bible classes and devotional periods are part of each student's day in addition to multiple chapel times with teachers and peers each week.

PCA Lower School also offers a wide range of extracurricular activities including band, choir, drama, color guard, and majorettes as well as a full athletic program in volleyball, soccer, football, and cheerleading for K5-6th-grade. Swim, wrestling, cross country, baseball, softball, indoor track, outdoor track and field, and fishing are added in 7th-grade.

Students participate in the Science Olympiad program in 4th-7th grades with daily classes and multiple competitions in and out of state to develop deeper science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) thinking. Students also participate in the National Scripps Spelling Bee, National Geographic Geography Bee, Zaner-Bloser Handwriting, and annual art competitions. All students participate in summer reading and math enrichment studies. Students in 1st-5th grades can also participate after school in the Junior Master Gardener 4-H club and the Girls On The Run Program. Students in grades 6-7 can also attend Zero Period each morning for an extra 45 minutes of free tutoring or one-on-one work with the teacher before school any day.

Student leadership opportunities include participation in the National Elementary Honor Society, Ambassador Program, Panther Patrol, the 7th-grade overnight leadership workshop, and before-school leadership book clubs. Students in these programs and events lead peers through academic and civic responsibilities such as service.

PCA Lower School differentiates for learners through an on-campus resource center where students can

receive testing accommodations, tutoring, and dyslexia services. Free speech therapy services are provided for students on campus as well. The help of a reading coach for all 1st-3rd-grade classes ensures students are given the extra help they need to be successful. The launch of a new gifted education program beginning this year will further differentiate learning for those with above-average talents and academic gifts.

Accreditation by AdvancEd and the National Christian School Association (NCSA) differentiates PCA Lower School from other private schools in the area. Credits earned at PCA are completely transferable to any other public school as well as colleges/universities throughout the world.

Caring, state-certified teachers are foremost among the many benefits that a PCA education provides. The school has been blessed to attract the interest of some of the most talented and devoted teachers in this area. From this group, we have chosen those teachers whose hearts and minds are completely focused on Kingdom Education and helping children to obtain maximum results in the classroom and life. PCA Lower School would be honored to receive the National Blue Ribbon School designation as a school of excellence and quality striving for continual school progress and growth for every student.

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

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

Reading/English language arts in the PCA Lower School includes the use of a reading program that incorporates authentic novels and trade books as its base reading material to meet state standards in a balanced approach. The students combine the book studies with visual tools and response journaling. Each unit contains three book options so every small group works on one book together. These small groups work in three-week units with their teacher to focus on different types of literary analysis, in-text vocabulary, and critical thinking questions while working through the visual tool. Students are assessed summatively through a performance assessment, skill assessment, vocabulary assessment, and celebration of learning through a large collaborative piece of intellectual art for each small group that allows students to practice public speaking.

Grammar and writing are incorporated into reading lessons each day. Students write reflections on the novel they are studying, create author chats, respond to thinking topics given by the teacher, summarize what they have read in a map form, and respond to the literary work's biblical integration possibilities. Students also work on isolating particular grammar skills within text that they are focusing on for the week. This is supported by additional lessons from the language arts curriculum in grammar and spelling as well as grammar interactive notebooks. Students are assessed formatively in grammar and spelling each week so they can be prepared with feedback for summative assessments in writing pieces.

Students use the Four-Square writing method and additional writing curriculum to write informational, descriptive, expository, persuasive, or narrative writing pieces that deepen with increasing grade level as indicated by Alabama state standards. Students learn the writing process through a writing workshop format. Writing begins to include cursive handwriting in second grade for all students and earlier for students with dyslexia.

In the early childhood grades, a strong phonics program is used in conjunction with reading that focuses on multisensory learning for each child to give them the foundation they need to decode and begin to read fluently. This early childhood approach sets students up for success when moving into a deeper comprehension of texts and greater writing expectations in higher grades.

PCA Lower school provides a reading coach and two Orton-Gillingham trained dyslexia specialist teachers to provide students additional reading and language arts support. These teachers help in reading fluency assessments for all early childhood students.

At the end of the year, PreK and kindergarten students are assessed through checklists and portfolio assessment. First and second grade are assessed through classroom formative and summative assessments throughout the year. Beginning in 3rd-grade, students are assessed in reading/language arts areas through the Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP) by Education Records Bureau (ERB) in reading, vocabulary, writing mechanic, and writing concepts to show student growth and any gaps in learning.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

Mathematics curriculum in the PCA Lower School includes a foundational conceptual base that scaffolds students to higher order thinking skills beginning from PreK and extending through elementary grades to prepare them for higher math. Students learn math lessons aligned to the state math standards as clear goals to focus student learning. Learning tasks are set to promote reasoning and problem solving while connecting mathematical representations. Teachers facilitate meaningful mathematical discourse while posing purposeful questions. They build procedural fluency from the conceptual understanding through teacher modeling, group work, independent work, practice, and performance.

Students begin in pre-kindergarten with counting and cardinality, numbers and operations in base ten, operations and algebraic thinking, geometry, measurements, and data, and standards for mathematical practice. In third grade, they add number and operations of fractions and in sixth grade, they move into ratios and proportional relationships, the number system, expressions and equations, statistics, and probability. This provides continuity and gives students the foundation to begin functions when they move on from the lower school to the upper school.

Students are taught the importance of productive struggle and how to use evidence to support their thinking. The math curriculum provides multiple methods of solving problems for deeper learning in math topics. Students problem-solve with critical thinking skills in higher order thinking (HOT) word problems. Multimodal activities are used to help students in math learning to include rhyme, drawing out problems, use of hands-on materials to solve problems and learn one-to-one correspondence, reading and solving word problems, and acting out problems spatially. Students also use a variety of technology programs to support mathematics learning and provide a daily spiral review.

Students have formative assessments weekly through group work, independent practice, performance assessments, spiral review using technology games. They are summatively assessed at the end of a topic unit and older students participate in final exams each semester. Students are assessed yearly in 3rd-7th- grades using the CTP by ERB in areas of quantitative reasoning and mathematics 1 and 2 to show student growth and curriculum needs.

### **1c. Science:**

Science curriculum in the PCA Lower School includes a beginning with hands-on investigations and celebration of curiosity in pre-kindergarten. Through project-based investigations, students learn to think critically and solve real-world problems and engage in topics relevant to their everyday lives. Moving through their studies in science, students work through the scientific method to find solutions, make new discoveries, and define answers.

Students learn science in alignment with the Alabama Preschool Developmental Standards and then the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards in upper grades. This includes scaffold learning in the physical sciences through motion, stability, forces, and interactions. In life sciences, students learn about ecosystems, their interactions, energy, and dynamics. In Earth and space sciences, they learn about the world around them and Earth's systems. Science concepts are not taught in isolation but are designed to be taught in a progression through the grade levels that will developmentally appropriate methods.

Inquiry, investigation, and curiosity are promoted through design thinking and hands-on laboratory work. With the design thinking approach, students are taught to empathize with the user, ideate a solution through convergent and divergent thinking, prototype a product, test the product, and make improvements in a cyclical pattern until they find success. This method promotes resilience, engagement, and high levels of critical thinking. Students further practice this method through weekly IDEA Lab classes that were added in 2018, where they go to solve problems with hands-on makerspace materials and technology. Experiences coincide and align with ISTE Standards (International Society for Technology in Education.) This enables students to develop the digital citizenship skills that are critically needed in today's technology-driven, business world.

Students also learn hands-on science through the outdoor classroom at the PCA Lower School where they can experience nature and life sciences. The outdoor classroom program includes four woodland classrooms, a sensory garden, a butterfly garden, an international garden, and raised bed gardens. Students can get learn through gardening and discovering the scientific world around them by investigations led in the outdoor classroom.

Students are assessed throughout the year with formative assessments and summative unit assessments. Laboratory activities are evaluated through performance assessments. They are also assessed with scientific principles through the science portion of the CTP by ERB to show student growth and additional instructional needs.

## **1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

Social studies at the PCA Lower School is designed to develop responsible citizens. Students are taught their connections with the world, how to be decision makers, informed, and active. The curriculum follows the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards encompassing economics, geography, history, civics, and government.

Through thematic learning in the lower grades, students are actively engaged in developing an appreciation of community, empathy-building, customs, and traditions. The social studies curriculum integrates language arts, mathematics, science, fine arts, technology, current events, and physical education throughout all grade levels. In kindergarten, students focus on family and community. Then, in 1st grade, they focus on living and working together in community and state. Second grade moves into state and nation aspects of working together. In third grade, students learn about how the states, nations, and world interconnect while also learning a separate geography curriculum in atlas studies. Fourth-grade social studies are focused on Alabama History.

Located in the birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement, PCA Lower School has a unique opportunity to immerse students in the study of equality and history with primary sources. Students are able to visit and learn first hand from the history around them. In 5th grade and above, students learn world history, geography, and civics. Learning focuses on US history, research, understanding the global connections and interdependence of the United States worldwide, civic responsibility through service-learning, digital citizenship as students receive issued laptops and current events through technology sources. Students are taught soft skills such as how to debate issues in a respectful manner and how to discern truth from deception in current media.

Students are assessed through formative and summative classroom evaluations including performance assessments, projects, and service learning. Students in the upper grades also develop a technology portfolio that is used as an assessment. With social studies integration into other areas such as reading and language arts, those aspects are evaluated through the CTP by ERB yearly.

### **1e. For secondary schools:**

### **1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:**

PCA Lower School's K3-K4 preschool program offers a comprehensive curriculum that provides young students with opportunities to learn through investigation, discovery, and play.

The Creative Curriculum provides a research-based, approach to project-based learning where students engage in investigations of science and social studies topics that integrate literacy and math concepts into everyday instruction, teachers encourage all students to think critically, solve problems, and connect ideas. It allows for the development of the whole student in the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills that are equally important to the student's success in school and life. It aligns with the Alabama Preschool Developmental Standards that flow into the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards the students learn in grades K5 and up.

In addition, auxiliary art, music, and Spanish classes enrich the learning experience along with physical education classes and recess that serve to develop physical agility and strength of each child.

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

Bible is a part of every child's day at PCA Lower School. Students in K3-7th-grades begin their day with prayer and participate in a Bible lesson from a curriculum with a scope and sequence that moves students from the beginning in the Old Testament to into the New Testament. Students in Preschool attend chapel every morning with songs, stories, and read alouds. Students in 1st-3rd-grades attend chapel three days a

week, while students in 4th-5th-grades attend a separate chapel three days a week and students in 6th-7th-grades attend chapel twice a week for a longer period of time each. In PreK-5th-grades, student chapels are led by teachers, but in 6th-7th-grades student chapels are designed and led by students with teacher facilitation and guidance. In 6th-7th-grades, students participate in family chapels with a large assembly and small breakout groups once a month.

All students in PCA Lower School have daily physical education (PE). In PreK through 2nd grade, students have a daily PE lesson with a coach and a minimum of two recesses for exploratory play either in the gym or outside on one of the playgrounds. In 3rd-5th-grades, students enjoy one free time recess a day along with PE daily to create healthy and active students while practicing games and cardiovascular exercises in a collaborative manner. In 6th-7th-grades, students enjoy a break and athletics daily where they focus on play, sportsmanship, skills, and strength training.

Spanish is also a part of each student's week. PreK-5th-grade students attend Spanish classes once a week. Student progress through a scope and sequence that teaches numbers, colors, reading, and conversational Spanish. Students in 6th-7th-grades choose Spanish as an elective class that they attend daily. Students take this foreign language to broaden their perspective and provide skills to help them communicate in an interconnected global community.

Art classes are taught weekly to all students in PreK-5th-grades and daily by chosen elective in 6th-7th-grades. Students learn art composition, layout, texture, form, history, appreciation, and application. Students study the art masters as models for their own creative work. Students in the 6th-7th-grades also help design and create drama props and scenery for school performances.

Music is taught in a weekly class to all students in PreK-5th-grades. Students learn music appreciation, instrumentation, singing, tempo, beat, music history, and performance. Students in third grade learn to play the recorder in an ensemble. All students perform in the yearly Christmas musical. Students in 6th-7th-grades have the option to take music appreciation, chorus, or beginning band in daily classes.

Library/media classes are held for all students in the PCA Lower School. In the lower grades, students participate in library lessons including story time. In upper grades, students participate in IDEA Lab with media lessons, digital citizenship, makerspace, and design thinking lessons.

Other class offerings for students include a P.A.N.T.H.E.R. Character Program where teachers take a set-aside time each month to focus on one character trait for each letter included in the acronym of the school panther mascot such as pride, attitude, and respect. Students also receive creativity lessons at different parts of the year by the academic director to promote curiosity and innovation and family-time lessons monthly by the school counselor to promote healthy socio-emotional skills.

### **3. Special Populations:**

PCA Lower School is a unique private school in that it offers a large amount of support for students of various abilities. Students who struggle and have been diagnosed can attend the PCA Resource Center where they get specialized tutoring, learn organizational skills, and receive extended testing accommodations for two to three days a week during the school day. Students in the early childhood grades also attend PCA's Resource Center to get specialized lessons in dyslexia learning with two certified Orton-Gillingham teachers. Students have the use of adaptive technology through PCA's Resource Center such as C-pen readers to help them in reading and language arts. Multi-modal phonics teaching in the K-1st-grades further supports those students in the classroom.

A reading coach pulls students in early childhood for testing, fluency testing, oral reading practice, and reading comprehension. The reading coach also assists the regular classroom teacher in pulling small groups of students to focus on their visual tools, response journaling, or vocabulary. In the lowest grades, the reading coach also pulls students for extra work in phonics areas where the student may be lacking.

Students who have specialized speech needs are screened and evaluated on campus through a partnership  
NBRS 2019

with a local university speech program department and speech clinic. Diagnosed students receive free speech therapy on campus 1-2 times a week eliminating parents' needs to seek outside help.

Students who need additional support in 6th-7th-grade can attend zero periods every day in the class they are struggling with so that they can receive one-on-one help from their teacher of that subject matter. These free sessions are held before school every morning. Students struggling in math also have the option for free morning tutoring from upper school Mu Alpha Theta Honor Society student volunteers.

Gifted services are provided by a certified gifted specialist for students who excel and need more challenge in the classroom. Students in PreK-2nd-grades receive consultative services and periodic pull-outs. In the 2017 school year, formal identification of high achieving students through a multi-criteria approach in second grade began. These students are eligible to receive pull-out sessions multiple times a week where students of high potential are encouraged to engage in higher order thinking, deeper knowledge construction, STEM project-based learning, and more advanced design thinking with service-learning components. Students in 6th-7th grade have the opportunity for advanced placement in science and math. Students in various grade levels from Kindergarten and up can be accelerated in grade or have material compacted for them based on proven need.

Students with autism and spectrum disorders have the extra benefit of outside help on campus through therapy sessions, service dogs, and periodic visits with the reading therapy dog. Students at PCA strive to include and appreciate all students regardless of their differences, and the school culture is always working toward a supportive, inclusive environment.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

The school climate at PCA Lower School is immersed in Christian love and learning. Students' spiritual, physical, and academic growth are nurtured in a family-like atmosphere. The school is a supportive, caring, and safe environment for all students. Parents are welcome to volunteer and partner with the school to support their child's learning and progress. Being a Christian school allows teachers and classes to stop and pray when they are presented with difficulties. Students are taught daily through faith-infused lessons that promote living out one's faith in everyday life. Along with these life skills, the students are taught productive struggle and independence as they mature. Empathy and civic responsibility are infused into each school day through high character expectations.

Teachers, parents, resource workers, office staff, specialists, teacher's aides, and custodial workers are known and loved by the students. The Christian family atmosphere at PCA Lower School encourages students through academics, sports, and faith. Parents feel confident in sending their children to a school that knows their children as more than just students. A focus on service-learning helps families, students, school come together to provide a culture of love for others.

Teachers receive support from their administrators, parents, and support aides in many ways throughout the school day. They know their principal has an open-door policy and the academic director is available for problem-solving and classroom support. Teachers integrate lessons to help teach topics when an opportunity arises and have remarkable camaraderie within grade-level teams. Parent support for teachers is evidenced by their volunteerism to the class and the excellent relationships built each year. PCA Lower School has an exceptional culture and climate for students that encourages students to thrive.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Community and family stakeholders are a vital component of PCA Lower School. Parent and community partnerships help bring a well-rounded education to all students. Parents donate their time to read and pull small groups for tutoring during reading and math times, bring certified reading therapy dogs for library classes, participate in class events, and help in unending ways.

Watchdog Dads is an example of one parent partnership program that PCA Lower School is proud to have. Fathers are encouraged to sign up to be a Watchdog Dad and spend full days at the school helping out. They can be in and out of the classrooms, help teachers with preparing materials, and make lists through their unique perspective of the areas they see the school could make changes. This is especially helpful in identifying safety needs. Students love when the dads are in the school building, and their presence provides a good role model for the children.

The PCA Lower School parent volunteer group is a task force of parents ready to help with any request. Besides normal continuous classroom and concessions stand help when the school needed help weeding the outdoor classroom, blazing a new outdoor woodland path for track students, or help to build wooden lockers for the football field house, parents showed up to help and often lead the efforts. The parent volunteer group send monthly letters to the teachers and administration to let them know they are appreciated and provide snacks at monthly faculty meetings. If a business contact or support are needed that a parent can provide, they are willing to do that.

PCA is blessed to have a supportive parent group that extends into the community and local business groups. The communities and businesses of Prattville, Millbrook, Wetumpka, and Montgomery help the growth and success of PCA Lower School through financial donations, sending guest speakers for student class topics, promoting a positive school environment, and collaboration.

Parents and community are kept informed through multiple methods. An online school organizational software helps keep teachers informed of up to the minute grades changes in every subject, weekly

classroom newsletters, and testing information. Yearly assessments are provided with information on how to interpret their child's standardized test scores. Parents attend fall conferences with their child's teacher and other conferences as needed. Parent, faculty, and student surveys are taken and results shared in the direction of the school. New family surveys are taken after the first semester so that PCA Lower School can continue to improve.

Other forms of parent and community engagement are three yearly open houses for the community to attend, multiple drama presentations and musicals for the parents and community, service-learning projects that specifically target community needs, spirit nights held at partner businesses throughout the year. PCA Lower School also utilizes local universities for professional development speakers and to provide speech services to students at no cost to the families. Parent seminars on digital citizenship, child anxiety, and other similar topics are hosted by the school yearly.

Other forms of communication with parents and the community are global school-wide newsletters, monthly press releases, social media avenues such as Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook pages, text alerts, lobby displays, and periodic television interviews for innovative teaching methods. Through these things, PCA Lower School strives to blend community, school, and home into a successful partnership to support students.

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

Teachers, administrators, and support staff participate in our professional development program led by the academic director. The faculty and staff work on individual, small-group, and whole-group levels in continuous professional development that is created for directly increasing student learning.

Teachers create yearly goals for their professional development plan that is reviewed for growth and participation. Teachers grouped by grade level participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) groups according to their common goals or a particular book study throughout the year. Through PLCs, teachers meet to set norms, talk, and bounce ideas off one another. Teachers are required to bring research they have found, go on peer observations, and develop a product or method they can use in their classroom to help them in the area of their goal for the PLC. To discuss book studies, teachers break into grade level groups to discover implementation strategies in school improvement areas such as differentiation, collaboration, or innovative methods. This allows teachers to work with peers on how to best implement methods with their level of students.

Along with this type of professional development, PCA Lower School has whole-group meetings for the entire school three days a year where an outside professional development speaker comes to the school to work with the teachers in areas such as student engagement, design thinking, promoting leadership, or collaboration that aligns with academic standards and support school improvement. The school also develops and hosts a regional conference every two years to benefit the state-wide National Christian School Association member schools on themes that leave an impact on our state affiliate schools to directly increase student success.

Professional development is also held with teachers who are new or need coaching in particular areas or methods based upon a specific action plan. Identified teachers are given the resources and guidance to make substantial change. This includes regular observations and meetings to ensure teachers are meeting their goals for improvement.

A unique feature of PCA Lower School professional development is the New-Teacher Mentoring Program that helps acclimate new teachers to the school or a new grade. This program includes an assigned mentor, and paid mentoring days once a month where the mentor, academic director, and principal conduct regular meetings. This makes sure new teachers are getting dedicated time set aside for help with questions, review curriculum pacing guides, catch up on their grade books, and to plan for the next month.

Besides monthly faculty meetings, teachers also meet weekly with their principal for check-ins, discuss curriculum changes in committees, meet by grade level or department for assessments, have planning

periods with their co-teachers daily for horizontal teaming, and conduct yearly vertical teaming professional development. The faculty is sent to attend specialized conferences to help them in particular subjects of student learning and for special training to help struggling students succeed such as Foundations and Frameworks, and Orton-Gillingham. All of these efforts in professional development help support the academic achievement of all students.

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

The leadership at PCA is one of transformational leadership where leaders seek to create stronger leaders in others. Overseen by an independent board of Christian individuals, the school is led by a president. The president oversees both the lower school and the upper school in different buildings. The PCA Lower School is lead by a principal over K3-7th-grades. The K3-K4 preschool has a director under the principal. Grades 6th-7th have an additional middle school principal and an athletic director. All K3-7th-grades have an academic director and a school counselor.

Each level of the PCA Lower School administrative team work together in their areas of specialty to support teachers, encourage the leadership of others, support student achievement and success, and support parent needs. The board members meet monthly with the Executive Team (president and principals) to look at current school organizational needs. The Executive team meets monthly with the remainder of the leadership team to share in professional development through book studies, discuss area needs, and celebrate successes.

In 2018, the President's Council was created that includes parents and business owners that have a special heart for the school. They meet along with the leadership team and board to discuss the needs of the school, review data, brainstorm solutions, and give input. Members of this council are broken into specialty areas for assisting the school based on their talents.

Yearly, the leadership team and board meet in a summer session to revise the athletic and academic handbooks, revisit the mission statement, and complete an analysis of the status of the school on all fronts. Through this summer session leadership review resources, areas of strengths, areas of weakness, safety, and opportunities for the future of the school.

The PCA Lower School leadership is focused on building leadership in other by having teachers lead faculty meetings, professional development sessions, clubs, and competitions. Also, they encourage teachers to serve on curriculum committees, accreditation committees, and to voice ideas for new opportunities or changes that they see could be implemented. Working with teachers, parents, and students to make positive change is how the school's mission of creating meaningful differences by preparing Christian leaders for life is successful.

## PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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One practice that PCA Lower School has implemented that has been instrumental to the school success is service-learning. Service-learning is woven into the daily workings of the school and not just in Bible classes or chapels. Students learn the importance of helping others and thinking outside themselves. Results include leadership opportunities, learning civic responsibility, creating a good work ethic, understanding of the need to contribute to society, and developing important socio-emotional skills such as empathy. These skills feed their academic success by increasing 21st Century Learning Skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication.

Students are allowed to be part of the school Ambassador Program where they learn to watch out for and help new students to the school as well as serve as helpers on special occasions. They also assist with new family orientations, student orientation activities, and school tours.

Another way this school works to incorporate service-learning is through individual projects at every grade level. Students in classes work to complete projects such as collecting items for the homeless, feed families and provide presents for Christmas, make cards showing appreciation for support staff, and encourage younger students through mentoring.

The Elementary National Honor Society of 4th-6th-grade students work hard through service-learning to design and implement two activity days for the K3-2nd-grade students to celebrate in Cookies with Santa in the winter and the Annual Easter Celebration in the spring.

Students who participate in the Outdoor Classroom Program and the Junior Master Gardeners 4-H Program at the school are developing a long-term social impact design to create a Heritage Giving Garden. With the use of a sensory garden, butterfly garden, international garden, and raised garden area, students are using the design thinking method to develop the outdoor classroom into garden spaces where they can grow food for the hungry. While students learn about the native and non-native plants in their state history, they are working to solve community problems. Along with donating their harvests to the lunchroom, they are partnering with local area food banks to donate food for those in need.

Students in the 6th-7th-grades participate in spring Spiritual Emphasis Day. Students partner with multiple community stakeholders to help in areas of need. Students and teachers plan for this day with excitement for areas of the community they can volunteer to help such as the local food banks, animal shelters, creek walk clean-up efforts, the Salvation Army, local nursing homes, the outdoor classroom, and other areas nearby. All of these special efforts make service-learning an integral part of the school.

## PART VII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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1. Non-public school association(s): Christian

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes X      No

3. What is the educational cost per student?      \$9281  
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$1226

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      6%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      48%

**PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS**

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**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** CTP

**Grade:** 3

**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Publisher:** ERB

**Scores are reported here  
as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	339
Number of students tested	33
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CTP  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 4  
**Scores are reported here as:**

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	404
Number of students tested	42
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CTP  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 5  
**Scores are reported here as:**

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	488
Number of students tested	45
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** CTP

**Grade:** 6

**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Publisher:** ERB

**Scores are reported here as:**

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	534
Number of students tested	56
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CTP  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 7  
**Scores are reported here as:**

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	613
Number of students tested	60
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CTP  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 3  
**Scores are reported here as:**

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	448
Number of students tested	33
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CTP  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 4  
**Scores are reported here as:**

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	508
Number of students tested	42
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CTP  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 5  
**Scores are reported here as:**

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	520
Number of students tested	45
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CTP  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 6  
**Scores are reported here as:**

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	563
Number of students tested	56
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CTP  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 7  
**Scores are reported here as:**

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	623
Number of students tested	60
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**