

U.S. Department of Education
2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Joshua Evert Weatherly

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

Official School Name Guin Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 7980 US Highway 43 PO Box 10

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

Guin AL 35563-2249
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Marion County

Telephone (205) 468-3433

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Web site/URL http://www.mcbe.net/8/home

E-mail jweatherly.ges@mcbe.net

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mrs. Ann West

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail awest@mcbe.net

District Name Marion County School District Tel. (205) 921-7333

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Belinda Mcrae

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. 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

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 11 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	9	8	17
K	18	25	43
1	12	24	36
2	15	13	28
3	15	15	30
4	9	16	25
5	24	17	41
6	15	22	37
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	117	140	257

*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):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 7 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 84 % White
 - 6 % 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: 8%

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

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	18
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	20
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	257
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 63%
Total number students who qualify: 162

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
32 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay | <u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>13</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>3</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
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 21:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
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 2018.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Guin Elementary is committed to impacting students so they will become high achievers and lead the world of tomorrow.

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

Guin Elementary School (GES) is a Pre-K - 6th Grade school serving two hundred fifty seven students. The city of Guin is comprised of approximately two thousand people. Guin also supports the school with giving a half a cent sales tax to the school. The city tax money is used to help teachers purchase school supplies and instructional materials. The school is located in the northwest corner of Alabama in Marion County. The racial demographics include a majority of Caucasian students with the African American racial group being the second most predominant. There are also eight Hispanic students. GES is a school-wide Title 1 school with a free and reduced lunch rate of approximately sixty four percent. The school faculty includes twelve classroom teachers, one administrator, half time counselor, half time librarian, half time instructional coach, one PE coach, and two half time resource teachers. Other personnel include a school nurse, speech pathologist, gifted teacher, and ESL teacher. There are two instructional aides, one American Sign Language interpreter, one school secretary, one custodian, and four lunchroom workers. Notably, there are two non-tenured teachers on staff.

Guin Elementary School's main building was built in 1938 and an annex was later added in 1970. In addition to the two main buildings, the school campus also includes a gymnasium, Pre-K building, and a cafeteria which serves Marion County High School as well. The school buildings stimulate a sense of pride in school identity as the mascot, school colors, and emblems are displayed. There is an outward show of school cleanliness, and student created work displayed in hallways. Strong academic success has been the standard of expectation for students, teachers, and administration alike. Since Guin Elementary School is a part of the Marion County School System, which receives ten mill funding, additional staff are very limited. We utilize our resources in the most practical manner possible. GES has twenty-two special education/speech students. For the 2018-2019 school year we have had to cut 2 teacher units due to lack of student enrollment.

Our school tries to make every effort to provide the best school experience for each and every student. At the beginning of each school year the principal meets with the school counselor and the instructional coach to review areas of strength and weakness for the school. After completing the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), goals for the upcoming school year are discussed and relayed to the faculty at faculty meetings. Once the school's goals have been identified, strategies and plans to meet those goals are discussed in monthly grade level meetings. If a school goal affects the whole faculty, outside speakers are invited to work with teachers and staff. GES is consistently looking for new ways to prepare our students to be successful at the high school and become college/career ready by graduation.

GES has several innovative academic programs that we feel benefit our students. Some of those key programs at our school include our Success Maker program, mentoring program, and positive behavior support program. First, our Success Maker program is used approximately 120 minutes a week for the majority of our students. This research based program allows students to take an achievement test and place them in the appropriate skill level. The students can even move above their current grade level if they achieve appropriate scores. This program is our main supplementary program to the excellent teaching that our teachers provide. Secondly, GES provides at risk students with a mentoring program provided by the principal and counselor. During this program, the principal or counselor meets with students on a bi-monthly basis. Civic leaders, local professionals, and other faculty members are sometimes asked to attend the mentoring meetings to discuss topics such as respect, responsibility, and becoming a conscientious student. Lastly, our school uses a positive behavior support program called Learning Earnings. Learning Earnings is another research based program where students are rewarded with "credits" for positive behavior such as grades, attendance, and citizenship. These students can in turn purchase prizes or activities with their credits.

We are very proud of the accomplishments of our students and staff. In the 2014-2015 school year our students scored the highest in our system on the ACT Aspire. In the 2015-2016 school year our students scored the highest on the ACT Aspire. In the 2016-2017 school year our school scored the highest in our system on the ACT Aspire. In the school year 2017-2018 we had the highest state report card in our county with a 91. In the 2018-2019 we had the highest state report card in our county with a 95. We are super

proud of our staff and students for their accomplishments over the past several years. Teachers at our school are dedicated to accomplishing the vision that our school has set before them. We plan to continue setting the bar high and look forward to setting the standard of performance for our county and the state with increasing student success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Guin Elementary School's curriculum is aligned with the Alabama Course of Study which is comprised of Alabama's College and Career Ready Standards. The teachers use these standards to design lessons to meet the needs of the students at GES. Along with the Alabama Course of Study, student data is carefully analyzed to further identify areas of strength and most importantly, areas that need improvement.

Reading instruction at GES is based on a variety of resources to help meet our students' needs. Early literacy skills begin at the kindergarten level and set a strong foundation for our students. Teachers provide research based reading instruction by using the McGraw Hill's Wonders reading program. This program allows for us to differentiate based on the individual student data. Our reading curriculum builds from one grade level to the next with a focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing. The Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) provides our teachers with instructional practices that are scientifically based. ARI is a model of best practices for teaching reading skills and provides our teachers with a variety of instructional strategies which include, whole group, small group, literacy centers, guided and independent reading. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are applied throughout the curriculum. Additionally, GES uses Reading Horizons to supplement our core curriculum. The Reading Horizons program was implemented because assessments showed phonics as an area of weakness for our school system. This phonics based program helps teachers provide students with direct phonics instruction and set a solid reading foundation for early learners. This program is new to our school this year, but we expect to see good results.

Other valuable assets currently in use at Guin Elementary include Accelerated Reader and two computer based programs, Classworks and Success Maker. These programs have made a significant impact on student performance. Students use these programs for remediation as well as acceleration.

1b. Mathematics:

Mathematical practices aligned with the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards form the basis of our math curriculum. Our kindergarten through second grade math classrooms set the foundation by providing instruction in the domains of operations and algebraic thinking, number and operations in base ten, measurement, and data and geometry. Third through fifth grade classrooms develop these along with fractions and decimals and work to expand their thinking and progress into real world situations that involve math concepts and operations around them. Teachers have received training from the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI). This program uses a hands-on approach to help students develop a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts and mathematical thinking. Teachers use these strategies to help engage students and build foundational skills through explicit instruction. Along with AMSTI, the Alabama standards are also addressed through the county adopted Pearson enVision program. Problem solving is incorporated throughout the lessons and teachers encourage students to share mathematical and logical thinking. Data from classroom assessments and continuous formative assessments, such as Scantron, help teachers with differentiated instruction. Teachers in the upper grades have small group time where they can provide Tier II intervention to struggling students and to reinforce specific skills. To complement classroom curriculum, GES students use two computer based learning programs, Success Maker and Classworks. We have found that these programs provide both remediation for those students performing below grade level and acceleration for those students performing at an advanced level.

An important area of aligning the mathematics curriculum is the methods of assessment we employ. Our assessment model is built around the use of Scantron. Performance Series from Scantron, the preferred state assessment tool, is given to students three to four times during the school year. The state requires two tests, but GES gives the Scantron an additional time in the middle of the year and in the early spring. This tool

allows us to identify students who are at risk of falling below performance standards in a timely and efficient manner. It also allows us to target students who are exhibiting performance well above the standards, and to service this population effectively. The combination of all of these instruments and the combined educational experience of our faculty and support staff gives us ample diagnostic potential, as well as differentiated and individualized intervention plans.

1c. Science:

Our Science curriculum is also based on the Alabama Course of Study. Teachers at GES have been trained in strategies from the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI). AMSTI provides resources, including instructional tools, equipment and consumable supplies, along with professional learning that explains how these resources should be effectively used to help create active learning experiences. Students investigate topics such as weather and climate, habitats, simple machines, forces and motion, and ecosystems. Science kits are received periodically throughout the school year and are based on the five E model of instruction: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate, which are evidenced during investigation activities. Using science journals to record, analyze, and interpret data, helps students develop critical thinking skills. Pearson's Interactive Science is the county's adopted textbook. It is used as a resource and provides a logical progression of skills that are introduced in kindergarten and built upon in subsequent grades. Lessons engage students in science inquiry, STEM activities, and problem-based, hands-on learning.

Teachers in lower grades often integrate science into their reading curriculum. Many of the skills that are critical for growing strong readers and writers are also core skills in the study of science. Predicting, understanding cause and effect, understanding sequence, acquiring a rich vocabulary, building background knowledge, and developing the ability to read informational text can be taught along with the reading curriculum.

Our 4th grade was chosen to take the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). This assessment measures what U.S. students know and can do in various subjects across the nation, states, and in some urban districts. Our 5th graders at GES are assessed using the Scantron Performance Series for Science. The test is administered at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the year. This assessment data gives us information concerning growth for individual students and helps direct instruction.

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

Our social studies curriculum adheres to the Alabama State Course of study for each grade. Kindergarten through second grade covers standards that include community helpers, cultural differences, and how to read maps. All grades go on local field trips to the fire station to learn about community helpers. Social studies is integrated with the reading series for these grades and the teachers cover any additional standards throughout the school year. In third-sixth grade, students have a scheduled social studies time, but teachers use other resources to cover standards.

Third grade's main focus in social studies include American history and they are also responsible for presenting the Veteran's Day assembly each year. Fourth and fifth grade teachers use Scholastic Social Studies Weekly to cover their standards. Students cover all standards through the weekly consumable newspaper. Sixth grade covers their standards with a textbook, Growth of a Nation. Teachers cover American history spanning World War I to present day. Sixth grade students have the opportunity to go on a field trip to Washington, D.C. in the spring. They fund raise the whole school year to cover the cost. On the field trip, students tour the capitol building and national monuments, attend a play, and go to a MLB baseball game.

Students in fifth and sixth grade participate in monthly 4-H meetings. They learn about agriculture, engineering, art, and cooking. Students can participate in poster contests and students get to go to the 4-H county roundup field trip in the late spring. Sixth grade students participate in the FAWN (Forestry Awareness Week Now) field trip in fall.

Students in third to sixth grades have a separate social studies grade comprised of classwork, tests, and class activities. Students are not tested in social studies in any standardized form, but work may be assigned and graded on the Achievement Series piece of our Pearson Scantron computer based program.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

Our school is fortunate to have a pre-k program. Our pre-k program is set up for eighteen students. The teachers provide instruction using the Creative Curriculum. This curriculum is center based. The teacher does give instruction to the children but the primary belief of this program is that students at this age learn through play and social interaction. The state of Alabama has adopted pre-k Gold Standards for the education of these children. We find that through the teaching of these standards it sets the foundation for our k-6 teachers to build on. We believe that this program is one of the cornerstones to our academic success.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Guin Elementary celebrates the arts in various ways within our school. Our school is known for having one of the best Veteran's Day Programs around. During this program our 3rd grade students are able to speak and sing for our veterans. We also offer other opportunities through our Learning Earnings program. This is a positive behavior support program that allows our students to purchase art opportunities. Students receive points for behavior, grades, and attendance We also organize special activities for our Beta Club students. Our Beta Club students use their creative skills to do things like decorate doors for the nursing home.

Other curriculum areas offered at GES include a physical education program, technology lab, and library. Physical Education at GES is forty-five minutes daily all five days a week for each student at our school. Students learn how to play team sports such as basketball, volleyball, and flag football as well as strategic team activities. The P.E. instructor also has a Wii gaming system that he projects on the wall for students to learn dance aerobics and games. Third graders at GES have an eight-week long nutrition class sponsored by the extension office. During this program, students learn to make healthier choices, learn new recipes, try new foods, and they all get aprons and chefs hats.

Students at GES have a scheduled computer lab time each day. GES has used funds to pay a teacher/aide to stay in the lab. There are twenty four desktop computers so each student has an assigned computer. Larger classes use the Chromebooks for students during that time. The school has a roving laptop cart and multiple Chromebook carts for students to use in the classrooms. Each classroom has five iPads or mini iPads to use as a center and most classrooms have multiple desktop computers for reading and math centers. Kindergarten students begin to learn basic computer skills in their classroom and start attending computer lab during the second semester.

In addition to the main computer lab, GES has a smaller computer lab for the lower grades with twelve desktop computers and another lab with ten desktop computers and five iPads in the RTI/Afterschool classroom. Other technology at GES includes projectors and ELMOS.

The library/media center at Guin Elementary School has a part time librarian. The librarian works with teachers to cover topics that build background for reading and other subjects. Students can check out books using the computerized check-in/check-out system. Students can check out books throughout the week and each classroom has one scheduled day a week to go to the library and have a lesson. Students are encouraged to read with motivational posters and incentive programs such as the Pizza Hut Book It program.

3. Special Populations:

Guin Elementary School tailors instruction, interventions, and assessments to meet the needs of each and every student. At the beginning of each year, students in grades 1-6 take the Performance Series Scantron computer-based test for reading and math. Our 5th grade students also take the science portion of this test. These assessments provide baseline scores and help to determine growth over the school year. Kindergarten students are tested using classroom tests and the reading fluency test, DIBELS.

The principal, reading coach, RTI instructors, and classroom teachers meet after this initial test to address trends in student progress. Students who perform in the bottom 25 percentile are considered “below average” and placed into daily Tier III Response to Intervention (RtI) instruction. Students in the RTI program receive an additional reading and or math intervention lesson by the RTI instructor for 30 minutes every school day. Lessons are developed with each students’ instructional needs in mind. Monthly RTI meetings determine the students who are progressing, not progressing, or may need to be tested for speech or special education. In addition, students who performed below average on the Scantron reading tests are also screened by the reading coach to determine if the student has dyslexic tendencies. If the screener shows a student has reading difficulties, he/she is also placed into the RTI intervention with a focus on Orton-Gillingham based phonics instruction. Students remain in the RTI intervention program until the end of the school year or they have shown more than adequate progress in their areas of weakness.

There are times when students are not progressing with the RTI interventions and show a need for possibly more rigorous instruction. Students are referred to special education by the classroom teacher, parents, or the RTI team. Once the student is referred, evidence of student work is collected and observed. If outside testing shows a learning disability, then the student is placed into the special education program and will receive an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) written by the school and guardians. Depending on the IEP, students in special education are pulled throughout the day for more individualized instruction with the special education teacher. The IEP may also provide detailed accommodations for testing such as limited number of responses or a screen reader. If students fail to meet the requirements for special education, other options such as a 504 plan can be developed. Students with 504 plans do not qualify for special education, but may have a diagnosed disability such as ADHD to require accommodations such as longer test time or a screen reader for the state testing in the spring.

Students are screened by the gifted teacher in second grade. If a student shows an exceptionality such as gifted, then they are referred to the school's gifted program. Students receive an IEP for giftedness or an IEP for the need for enrichment. Students are provided with enrichment lessons weekly in the gifted classroom. Teachers condense classwork assignments for the days that students attend the gifted program.

GES ensures that each student receives high quality education and has each and every opportunity to achieve success with programs such as RTI, Special Education, Gifted, and 504.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Guin Elementary School (GES), students, staff, and visitors immediately feel welcome as they enter the building. The school provides a comfortable, safe learning environment which not only ensures academic success but promotes emotional and social growth as well. Students are met each morning by a staff member as they arrive. The morning routine consists of the Pledge of Allegiance, a moment of silence, and a character education lesson led by our school counselor.

Students are rewarded for positive behaviors through the Learning Earnings token economy program. They receive credits as they strive to reach goals in attendance, behavior, and classwork. Students can use these credits to purchase special privileges. They can save them or spend them each month. High achieving students and students who show growth throughout the year are recognized through a variety of rewards ranging from “shout-outs” in the morning messages to assemblies and bowling trips for high scores on standardized test. Other small incentives such as encouraging notes from teachers, honor roll names in the local paper, and Pizza Hut coupons for Accelerated Reader (AR) points serve as motivation for our students to do their best. Classroom teachers also have treasure boxes or other rewards that they give as incentives for positive behavior.

Through monthly guidance lessons, our school counselor addresses the emotional, academic, and social needs of our students. The principal and counselor also conduct a mentoring program where they meet with two groups of students each month. Emphasis is placed on attendance, academic and non-academic goals, as well as personal growth. This program helps to increase the positive relationships students have in their lives, while also emphasizing factors that lead to educational success, improved relationships with others, and improved feelings of academic competence.

The staff at GES sets high expectations for themselves and their students. This is evident as teachers spend a large amount of time collaborating on individual students in RTI and data meetings. Teachers attend professional development at various times throughout the year and are eager to come back and implement what they have learned. The administration has an open-door policy that allows staff to feel comfortable providing feedback, asking questions, and expressing concerns that allow the school to identify opportunities for continued growth.

Ultimately, being a smaller faculty, the staff and administration of GES functions at its highest level as a family. The interweaving of academic and social activities, the personal relationships across grade levels and areas of expertise, and the close-knit environment between community and school allows for a flexible and responsive curriculum dynamic.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Guin Elementary tries to work with our families and communities in various ways. At the beginning of the year we have a meeting with our parent leaders to discuss our school successes from the previous year and goals for the upcoming year. At this meeting, parents are allowed to ask any questions they have and make any suggestions they would like. We also are a Title 1 school. We try to have meetings at two different times during the year to discuss with parents the finances of Title 1 as well as the responsibility of Title 1 staff.

Not only are parents involved in the planning for the upcoming year, but they are also kept informed of their child's progress through multiple measures. We have weekly folders that go home to parents on Tuesdays. In these folders parents are given students' grades for the week but also any notes that a teacher may have for the parent. Next, we have an INOW parent portal. In this portal parents can log in any time they would like to. This portal can keep parents informed of grades and attendance. We send out mid nine weeks progress reports as well as nine weeks report cards. The administration also communicates student attendance to the parents through individualized letters. Letters are sent out for ten day absences,

unexcused absences, and tardies. When a child has two unexcused absences the parent is invited in for a meeting with the principal.

The principal meets on a quarterly basis with the city council to discuss any expenditures and accomplishments of the school. He meets with the advisory board quarterly as well. This board is made up of parents and other community stakeholders. During these meetings he also discusses finances, accomplishments, and goals for the school. In addition to the meetings that the principal attends, we also keep stakeholders informed of school events on the message board, Facebook, and school website. We feel that parents are very well informed on the happenings of our school.

Lastly, we invite our parents to be involved in our school through volunteering, book readings, school fairs, and field trips.

3. Professional Development:

Continuous development of professional knowledge and skills for educators is essential for teacher and student growth. Effective professional development is dictated by the consideration of a number of sources including data analysis and performance on standardized state test instruments. After reviewing such data, plans are made and implemented to target professional development to enhance teacher and student performance.

The Marion County School System builds seven days into the system's calendar for professional development and continued technological education. All certified personnel in the system complete a Professional Learning Plan annually, a process realized in several steps that guide the employee through the process and ensure a productive and relevant outcome. This tool provides a way for the educator to reflect, self-assess, and set goals for professional learning and growth. Proposed actions, strategies, and implementation are part of the PLP and reviewed often by the administrator and teacher during the evaluation process.

The teachers at GES have participated in professional development opportunities involving Alabama Math, Science and Technology (AMSTI) Math instruction, AMSTI Science modules, and the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI). Professional development opportunities such as data meetings, grade level meetings, and faculty meetings are conducted in support of the improvement of instructional practices. The reading coach provides peer coaching through coaching cycles, modeling, monitoring, conversations, and reflection.

This past summer teachers attended workshops on the new phonics program, Reading Horizons. The teachers were given extensive training, including instruction in the basic framework of the program and a hands-on approach with the activities and games that are highlighted in the program. Additional training was offered during the school year to support teachers in the implementation of the program.

One final instrument that is becoming available to educators at GES is the implementation of Google Classroom. This program is designed to create a streamlined approach to classroom management, assignments, grades, and records. It will allow teachers to give immediate and direct feedback on student performance and areas of need. Additionally, the program offers a more direct and manageable communication portal with parents and guardians and a more efficient form of peer integration and cooperation. Though new, the Google Classroom shows much promise.

4. School Leadership:

Guin Elementary School has a full time principal, half time counselor, half time reading coach, and parent leaders who make up the structure of the school leadership. The principal and leadership team's philosophy is that we are committed to impacting students so they will become high achievers and lead the world of tomorrow. It is the principal's philosophy that all students can learn and achieve at high levels. The principal believes that students who are economically disadvantaged can prosper academically and socially through high expectations, guidance, and mentoring. The principal meets regularly with the leadership team to evaluate the effectiveness of academics and school culture. This leadership team includes lead teachers,

and community stakeholders. The principal also meets quarterly with the advisory and city council to discuss the school's accomplishments and finances.

The principal leads Response to Intervention (RTI) and Data meetings with teachers on a regular basis to discuss the strengths and weaknesses. If students fail to show adequate progress, strategies are suggested and then implemented. The leadership analyzes the data and displays easy to read graphs that include discipline, truancy, Scantron, and Success Maker scores. On the school scoreboard we also show which way the data is trending. So for example, if the school was monitored in December and then retested in January, we look at the scores per classroom and decide if the class progressed or regressed. Upward trends are shown using a green arrow, downward trends with a red arrow, and a yellow star for scores that remained the same. The reading coach emphasizes individual progressions of students by meeting with teachers and moving student data markers up or down to help teachers map out their students' progress.

School leaders meet together at the beginning of the school year to review scores and goals from the previous year's assessment data. After goals are set and shared with faculty and community stakeholders, teachers and leadership of the school meet to address areas of focus for the upcoming school year.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Guin Elementary believes that the characteristic that makes our school a success is an expectation of high standards for all stakeholders. A few years ago we participated in a program called The Leader in Me. This program became too expensive for our school to continue. However, the core principles of this program aligned with the beliefs of the school principal. We met with our leadership team and developed core beliefs that we thought students would need in order to be successful in our school. We gave the name of those beliefs, "The Traits of the Tribe". Our school has an Indian mascot that is why we named them accordingly. These traits are posted all throughout school. When you enter the doors at Guin Elementary you are greeted with the word Leadership. We believe that every child can become a leader no matter their economic status. We have an expectation that our students will learn and that our teachers will teach to the highest standards. Alabama State standards are kept in a red binder. The principal and or the reading coach check these binders periodically to see if the teacher has dated it as being taught. The principal reminds students prior to testing that we have a tradition to uphold and that we intend for that not to be any different from year to year.

We also reward students for their growth and achievement on standardized tests with a bowling trip. This bowling trip is an expense paid trip where students receive pizza and bowling for their efforts. Our school also offers Beta Club membership to students that have exemplary behavior and academics. We reward students for leadership behavior in our positive behavior support program. We reward behaviors such as perfect attendance and academics. In this program students are given online credits that they can spend on our school online store. These items include things such as Wii Bowling with the principal, computer time, art time, and various other child incentives. We not only focus on students who achieve, but we also work with at risk students. The principal and counselor meet with these at risk students periodically to give them some reminders of what makes people successful. We feel that this positive behavior support program helps keep students motivated. We believe that all these expectations collectively work together to produce a student that is ready to lead.