

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Richard Gayle Stinnett M.Ed.

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

Official School Name Alhambra Traditional School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 5725 N. 27th Avenue

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

Phoenix AZ 85017-2657
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Maricopa

Telephone (602) 484-8816

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Web site/URL

https://www.alhambraesd.org/Doma
in/8

E-mail richardstinnett@alhambraesd.org

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*Mr. Mark Yslas

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail markyslas@alhambraesd.org

District Name Alhambra Elementary District Tel. (602) 336-2920

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 Mr. Adam Lopez Falk

(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):
- 14 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 14 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	0	0	0
K	40	45	85
1	57	44	101
2	49	42	91
3	32	56	88
4	31	52	83
5	36	55	91
6	41	48	89
7	41	42	83
8	26	36	62
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	353	420	773

*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 8 % Black or African American
 - 75 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 11 % 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: 2%

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	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	16
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	712
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 64%
Total number students who qualify: 497

8. Students receiving special education services: $\frac{1}{9}$ %
9 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>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>3</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</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: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	29
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
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 27:1

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%	97%	97%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

ATS is committed to academic excellence: accomplished through high expectations, a caring learning environment, consistent discipline, and the partnership among students, staff, and parents.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Alhambra Traditional School is a school of choice within the Alhambra Elementary School District. As we do not have our own attendance boundaries, all students who attend ATS are on open enrollment status. All families from within and outside of the district are welcome to apply to attend ATS. Parents are required to attend an orientation meeting and must agree to support the traditional philosophy of our school. Prior to enrollment, students are assessed in the areas of reading and mathematics in order to assist with placement.

PART III – SUMMARY

Alhambra Traditional School, the home of the ATS Eagles, is a school of choice located in the heart of the city of Phoenix. We are a proud part of the Alhambra Elementary School District which has been serving students since 1888. Approximately 25% of our students reside within the school district boundaries, while the other 75% are drawn from throughout the surrounding metro area. As a result, we have a rich and diverse student body of many ethnicities and backgrounds. Many of our current students have parents who attended ATS themselves and have chosen to continue to be a part of our amazing school community.

What makes Alhambra Traditional School unique is that it was founded by a group of parents thirty-six years ago who envisioned an alternative public school based on a traditional model. The goals established then and carried forward to this day are: 1) Ensure a strong academic focus for all students to excel; 2) Develop students who are respectful, self-disciplined, conscientious, and self-motivated; 3) Provide a safe, secure, and caring environment for all students, staff, and visitors; 4) Formulate a partnership between home and school using effective communication and encouraging parental involvement in all activities.

The founding parents of ATS believed in certain principles that formed the basis of current policy. They believed the parents' responsibilities encompassed all aspects of their child's education. Those parents chose to teach basic family beliefs, morals, and values at home, not at school. The ATS program was founded on the principle that parents and staff work together as partners to provide an education that encourages students to pursue academic excellence to the best of their abilities. The back to basics curriculum, pace of studies, and specific expectations for academic achievement, behavior, and dress require a firm commitment from every parent, student, and teacher. By selecting ATS, parents, students, and staff are responsible for and committed to supporting ATS programs, upholding standards, and following the rules and policies of the school.

As a part of the Alhambra Elementary School District, we support the 4 A's which are: Academics, Athletics, Arts and Activities. In regards to academics, ATS earned an A letter grade from the Arizona Department of Education once again this year. In fact, our school has always achieved the highest label awarded by the state since Arizona began ranking schools. The ADE rankings are based upon: overall proficiency levels of all students on statewide assessments, growth of all students on these same assessments, attendance, and readiness of students for high school.

While maintaining the highest of academic standards, ATS also supports and develops the whole child. We have recently won championships in volleyball, flag football and basketball. Our teams also compete in athletics such as baseball, softball, soccer and cheer. Younger students have opportunities to learn skills and sportsmanship in noncompetitive sports such as kickball. All of our students are enrolled in our fine arts and performing arts programs during the school day, and many elect to participate in clubs which are tailored toward their interests and abilities. We have many activities happening before and after school daily such as: Alhambra Achievers, Student Council, National Junior Honor Society, Yearbook, Band, Choir, Alhambra Leaders, Design Squad, JROTC, and much more.

Alhambra Traditional School was founded in 1983 on the Westwood campus with a small group of students who were nurtured by extraordinary teachers to help them reach their full potential. In short order, the student population grew to the point where a new site was needed, as more and more families determined that ATS best fit their needs and offered the best alternative. We have moved this year to an even larger campus with greater public visibility to better showcase who we are. Our students now have a spacious media center, a multi-purpose room with a stage for performances and ceremonies, a Paxton-Patterson lab, and a soon-to-be-dedicated gymnasium. Exciting developments are afoot!

We are a school that defies the odds. We willingly accept all students and parents who are committed to a better educational experience. Many of our families face very real challenges presented by economic circumstances and other factors. We look at this as a tremendous opportunity to give the children that we serve the very best tools, resources, instruction, and learning so that they may tackle the world and change it for the better. This is who we are. We believe that all students can become whatever their hearts desire, and

we have a track record of success, over the past several decades, demonstrating that the high expectations we hold ourselves to are not just dreams.

The Alhambra Traditional School community is excited at the possibility of obtaining National Blue Ribbon School status! Our faculty, parents and students are fully supportive of the ideals inherent in this distinguished program. We look forward to continuing to challenge ourselves to reach even greater heights as part of a national network of schools and educators committed to excellence.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

We base our Reading/ELA curriculum and instruction on the Arizona Academic Standards which include: reading for literature, informational text, foundational skills, writing, writing foundation, speaking and listening, and language. Our core program is the Spalding Method supplemented by Wonders and StudySync. We intentionally integrate direct instruction in listening, speaking, spelling, writing, and reading in order to challenge students of all ability levels to produce their best work and heighten their intellect.

Spelling is phonics-based with both oral and written components. Manuscript and cursive handwriting are emphasized. Spelling words are based on the Ayres list, as well as Latin- and Greek-based words. Students in grades four through eight are given the opportunity to compete in an annual school spelling bee with the winners moving onto a district bee. Vocabulary and dictionary skills are key areas of focus.

Students participate in creative writing experiences as well as written book reports and research papers. Reading skills are developed utilizing quality literature and the classics. We allocate time each day for sustained silent reading. Students receive incentives as part of the Accelerated Reading program. In collaboration with their teachers, students set quarterly reading goals based on their current levels. Appropriate listening, speaking, and memorization exercises are required at each grade level. Dictation is a component of ELA lessons each week.

The methodology used to teach is explicit instruction and modeling for every new skill or concept. Teachers engage students continually in dialogues and activities to ensure that all are learning. Teachers carefully observe each student's progress and differentiate instruction to meet individual needs. Progress monitoring formally takes place weekly. Teachers use the data collected to plan for upcoming lessons and to inform ongoing instruction. Our goal and practice is for students to function one year above their grade level.

1b. Mathematics:

Our math program centers around the Arizona Academic Standards which include: counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, numbers and operations in base ten and using fractions, measurement and data, geometry, ratio and proportion, expressions and equations, statistics and probability, and mathematical practices. Our core program is Ready Mathematics which has an i-Ready online platform. Through the use of direct instruction and technology, we are able to teach students one year above their grade level while filling in any potential gaps from their current grade level. This allows our eighth grade students to promote to high school having already earned an Algebra I credit.

At ATS, mathematics includes the mastery and practical application of basic and advanced mathematical principles. Students understand that mathematical problems have absolute answers and that precision and accuracy are required. The use of multiple choice questions is discouraged. Students demonstrate persistence in solving multi-step problems, and they provide justification for their answers. All students are given diagnostic assessments three times per year, and teachers progress monitor on an ongoing basis to identify concepts that need to be retaught or reinforced. Concepts are spiraled throughout the school year in a logical sequence. The Rocket Math program is key to having students develop automaticity with their basic math skills. Tutoring is a critical part of our program structure. Teachers work with students outside of the school day in small groups and one-on-one in order to provide remediation and enrichment as appropriate.

1c. Science:

The Arizona Academic Science Standards contain the following: physical science, earth and space science and life science. Additionally, the standards focus on: patterns, structure, function, scale, proportion,

quantity, cause and effect, stability and change, systems, models, energy and matter. Our core program utilizes FOSS science kits which provide students with opportunities for hands-on experiments to see learning in action. The wide breadth of experiments that students get to participate in includes: materials and motion, trees and weather, plants and animals, sound and light, solids and liquids, insects, matter, water and climate, structures of life, energy, landforms, environments, mixtures and solutions, earth and sun, living systems, diversity of life, chemical interactions, earth history, populations and ecosystems, heredity and adaptation, electromagnetic force, gravity and kinetic energy, waves and planetary science. We also use curriculum materials from the Science Education for Public Understanding Program.

All fourth and eighth grade students are tested on science concepts using the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards. These scores are factored into the annual letter grade that our school receives from the state department of education. Additionally, students at all grade levels are given unit assessments from our adopted FOSS and SEPUP programs.

The scientific method is woven throughout our science classes from kindergarten through eighth grade. We are fortunate to have dedicated science laboratories available for students in the upper grades. Safety and health standards and practices are interwoven into our science coursework. Substance abuse is addressed. Technology is utilized by teachers and students whenever applicable.

One of the major events each year at ATS is our science fair for students in fourth through eighth grades. All participate and receive scores based on the science principles presented. Ribbons and recognition are given for outstanding projects. Parents attend an open house in the evening where all projects are displayed. It truly is incredible to see the wide variety of projects as students are allowed to explore what most interests them in the realm of science.

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

The Arizona History and Social Studies Standards include: civics, economics, geography and history for Arizona, the United States and the world. The inquiry method is infused throughout all of the standards. Additionally, the following skills and processes are taught: change, continuity, context, multiple perspectives, gathering and interpreting data, causation, and argumentation. Harcourt is our core program, and we utilize our district's pacing guide.

Arizona is in the process of adopting new history and social studies standards. This may mean that schools in our state will take mandatory assessments in this curricular area at some future point. Currently, students at all grade levels are given unit assessments from our adopted Harcourt series.

In accordance with our ATS handbook which guides our actions, the history/government program consists of the study of ancient history, American history, Arizona history, world history, and grade level appropriate current events. Geography includes the study of place, location, and movement across the earth's surface, regions, relationships within places, and map skills appropriate to grade levels. Citizenship and patriotism are emphasized. As one example, we gather all students together every Monday for a morning assembly where we recite the Pledge of Allegiance, sing the National Anthem, and give certificates to students who have demonstrated good citizenship at school.

As with science, field trips are a key component of our social studies curriculum. As students visit our state capital or the court system, for instance, they are exposed to learning that they could not get from just the classroom itself. Along with all subjects, Kagan Cooperative Learning strategies are an important part of the structure of our social studies classes. Thinking maps also provide a common visual language which facilitates deeper understanding of concepts within our students.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All students from kindergarten through eighth grade receive instruction in visual arts once or twice per week throughout the school year. The art program includes manipulative experiences in the areas of drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics, crafts, and sculpture. The visual arts standards for Arizona are followed and include: creating, presenting, responding and connecting. In the process of creating, students conceptualize and develop artistic ideas. As part of presenting, students select, analyze and interpret artistic work for performance. One of the keys to responding is to apply criteria to evaluate art. Finally, as part of connecting, students relate their own knowledge and personal experience to make art. There is also the component of looking at art through a historical and cultural lens. Every year, our school district hosts a Saturday community event called Arts Alive. Students from all schools, including ATS, have the opportunity to display and present their artwork for thousands of people to see and appreciate. Also, children are encouraged that day to participate in several art projects on site under the direction of teachers and community partners. Another great annual event is our district showcase. On this evening, families come to tour the district office buildings where selected pieces of art from students is on display for a full year.

Every student from kindergarten through fifth grade participates in general music classes once or twice per week over the course of the entire school year. All 6-8 students elect to be part of either our band or choir and meet once or twice weekly. The music program emphasizes music appreciation, music history, note reading, composition, rhythm, instrument identification and choral skills. The performing arts standards for music in Arizona mirror those for the visual arts. At Alhambra Traditional School, students are given regular opportunities to perform in front of their classmates and parents. For instance, during the holiday season students perform sing-alongs and concerts in our new venue. Additionally, honors band/choir students join together from across the district to showcase their talents in the spring at a special concert.

All students from kindergarten through eighth grade attend physical education classes once or twice per week. The PE program is structured to engage students in various physical skills to promote good health and lifelong involvement in physical activities. The physical education standards in Arizona contain the following: demonstrate competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns; apply knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies and tactics related to movement and performance; demonstrate the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness; exhibit responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others; and recognize the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and/or social interaction. Students look forward each year with great anticipation to our field day where K-7 classes get to compete and participate in games that are led by our 8th grade students.

All students have access to our school media center individually and with their classes. The library is centrally located on our campus and is a hub of activity. We have a full-time library clerk who oversees students researching and checking out materials. Parents volunteer their time to come in and read to students. Classes participate in Read Across America Day activities.

Technology is infused throughout our classrooms and used by teachers and students. We are fortunate to have laptops, iPads, document cameras, projectors, and SMART boards in classrooms. Although we follow a traditional school model, our students are exposed to all the latest technology in order to prepare them for future opportunities.

3. Special Populations:

The demographics of students attending Alhambra Traditional School over the past two decades has changed significantly. Sixty-four percent of our students now qualify for free/reduced-priced meals. We have a larger number of our students than ever before who have been diagnosed with disabilities or whose primary home language is something other than English. In spite of the challenges that these children and their families face, we are proud to note that ATS does not have an achievement gap for any subgroup of students. Our program actually helps lift families out of poverty and sets students up to successfully navigate

the world of secondary education and beyond.

Our core programs are designed to meet the needs of all students. Veteran teachers at ATS provide high quality, differentiated Tier I instruction daily in all subject areas. Students are progress monitored using real-time assessments throughout the day which helps teachers know how and when to make adjustments. Students have opportunities for ongoing interaction with their peers during learning activities. Engagement by our students is mandatory as they must justify and defend their answers with logical reasoning at a deep level of understanding.

ATS is an inclusive school. We have a number of students on Individual Education Plans and 504 Plans covering a wide range of disabilities. We also have many students on Individual Language Learner Plans. Students whose families speak a language at home other than English are assessed on the AZELLA to determine their language proficiency. At our school, these children rapidly acquire English skills and are then placed on monitor status where we follow up and make sure that all students are maintaining and increasing their language development skills.

We have three Teacher Assistance Teams at Alhambra Traditional School which are school-based groups of people whose purpose is to provide additional Tier II support to students who are experiencing difficulties that are preventing them from benefitting from general education. Students may be referred to TAT if they are performing below or above grade level expectations in the areas of academics, behavior, communication, etc. The TAT assists general education teachers in developing appropriate instructional interventions for students in their classrooms. For students who may ultimately qualify for Tier III support, we have a Child Study Team process. The CST collects data from teachers, parents, and students to inform the team about the child's abilities, academic performance, medical history, and so forth. Our school psychologist may recommend further testing in order to get a better picture of the child. The resulting plans may lead to interventions outside of the classroom, such as before or after school, and/or more specialized services.

All students in all core subjects are taught at an accelerated pace allowing them to be exposed to above-grade-level standards. We utilize technology to provide additional differentiation for those students functioning at even higher levels. The Accelerated Reader program has been a fixture at ATS for many years and is highly motivating for students. More recently, the iReady Math program has opened up new avenues for students to explore additional learning opportunities. Our veteran teachers are highly adept at working with students at the top end of the spectrum and meeting their needs to grow and learn so they are well prepared for future college and career opportunities.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

As ATS continues to grow each year, we are mindful of how we integrate new students and their parents into our community. This begins at events such as our Prospective Family Night where we host hundreds of people and showcase what our school has to offer them. They learn about our core academic programs and other offerings. Our amazing cheer team performs, and we celebrate the successes of our sports' teams. We highlight the numerous clubs and programs that students have available that are part of at our wonderful school. National Junior Honor Society and Student Council representatives give testimonials of why they attend Alhambra Traditional School. Teachers open up their classrooms and welcome in new students with open arms.

New students are provided free summer school options to help prepare them to successfully join ATS in the fall. As students continue to enroll during the school year, they are offered similar supports outside of the regular school day. Once a family joins our school community, they typically stay until their children promote from the 8th grade. This continuity is important in building relationships. Teachers, as well, choose to teach at ATS for many years as they feel valued and know that they are making a real difference in the lives of so many children.

We make sure to recognize students who are working hard and demonstrating good citizenship traits. This is done through personal calls and messages home, at Monday morning assemblies, by students earning Eagle Bucks which they can spend at the ATS store for prizes, and Spotlight recognitions at monthly school board meetings. The latter is also an opportunity to recognize dedicated faculty members, as well.

Our classrooms are wonderful places to be where students feel safe and secure and teachers have uninterrupted time to teach. Students earn preferred activity time as teams and classes for adhering to established class culture norms. For students who may need some helpful guidance with behaviors, we have a responsible thinking classroom with a loving, skilled educator who can give one-on-one support. We also have counseling services available when needed.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parents play a central role in the operations and support of our school. ATS was founded by parents partnering with the Alhambra Elementary School District to open a school of choice based on a traditional model. All key governance decisions are made by our School Community Council which is composed of the principal, parents who serve as PTO officers, members of the School Improvement Council, and other community representatives. The stated purpose of the SCC is to provide for a cooperative procedure for determining goals and educational philosophies of the school. We operate on the the core belief that parents have rights and responsibilities that include all aspects of their child's education and that family beliefs, morals and values are best taught and reinforced in the home.

The PTO functions to promote, assist, and facilitate the goals, aims, and purposes for which ATS was established. The PTO is responsible for maintaining a forum to encourage communication and cooperation between parents and teachers to provide an enhanced learning environment for every child. Fundraising efforts contribute to this. The PTO sponsors and oversees events such as: honor roll night, 8th grade promotion, high school night, dances, family fun night, and other community builders.

We partner with parents in hosting our annual Meet the Teacher day and curriculum nights throughout the year. Bring Your Parent to School Day has been successful--such as the 5th grade sharing what they have learned about careers from JA Biztown. Box Tops for Education is a popular and helpful program. Parents love coming onto campus for our Thanksgiving Day luncheon and to be present at Monday morning assemblies when their children are being honored with various awards. Homeroom parents run our class parties on a handful of special days.

All parents are required to use ParentVUE to keep track of their child's grades and attendance in real time. Parents are invited to monthly Parent Involvement Network meetings to discuss agenda items submitted by parents that support the continued success of ATS. The principal hosts monthly community breakfasts to share out information from the school and to promote parent networking opportunities. ATS partners with the Arizona Attorney General's office and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program to provide parent classes on topics such as cyber bullying and nutrition. Finally, parents are grateful for our extended day program that greatly assists working parents who desire to have their children here safe at school for times extending before and after our normal school day.

3. Professional Development:

At ATS, our professional development is aligned to our district's plan which is based upon the Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) with an emphasis this year on strengthening the core. Our core English Language Arts program is Spalding, and so we have had outside facilitators assist us with providing quality trainings for our teachers in this area during the afternoons of our early release Wednesdays. We have also invited in facilitators from i-Ready to work with teams of teachers on math instruction. All professional development is grounded in making sure students achieve academically as a result of effective teaching, early intervention and ongoing support. Professionals working collaboratively make the best decisions through studying data and problem solving. A systematic approach is used to address the wide range of abilities and needs exhibited by our students.

Layered into our professional development is the district-wide Speed of Trust initiative through Franklin Covey. We hold trust huddles regularly where we discuss how to continually improve ourselves in areas such as: talking straight, creating transparency, confronting reality, keeping commitments and extending trust. This has helped with building stronger teams and opened up communication in a very positive way as we strive to build on excellence.

Recently, our staff has begun a book study on A Framework for Understanding Poverty by Dr. Ruby Payne. With the shift in demographics, it is imperative that administrators and teachers understand the dynamics that poverty plays in the lives of many of our students so that we can better serve them. Related to this has been our ongoing discussions centered around vertical articulation. We teach an accelerated curriculum, and so teams of teachers work together to ensure that essential on- and above-grade-level standards are taught and that supports are in place for students wherever they may be on the learning spectrum.

Part of our professional development is geared toward Kagan Cooperative Learning strategies. We send teachers to workshops and use a training of trainers approach. With more technology available in our classrooms than ever before, teachers are trained on new devices and programs. Safety procedures are a regular topic that we revisit during our staff meetings.

Because much of our professional development takes place in our PLC's, we have built our schedule so that all grade-level teams and the special areas team have common planning time every day. This is an important commitment of time that we have made, and it is certainly yielding positive results.

4. School Leadership:

At ATS, as in all schools in the Alhambra Elementary School District, we adhere to the servant leadership model. Administrators, teachers, and support staff members all strive to serve students each day to the very best of our abilities. That is our motivation and what drives everything we do. We make sure that our students are thriving and growing. All interests other than this are secondary.

School leadership is shared. The principal has an important role in decision-making, but major decisions are made through consultation with leadership councils and committees comprised of faculty members, parents and community leaders. The principal is assisted by an outreach coordinator who is a second administrator on the campus. We also enjoy the benefits of having a full-time academic coach to mentor and train teachers.

Students have a strong voice in their own education at ATS. Our Student Council and National Junior Honor Society are movers and shakers. Many of our former students serve in student government roles at their high schools. We even have students designated who meet regularly to advise the superintendent on matters related to our school and the district.

The principal, outreach coordinator, and academic coach meet with assigned PLC's regularly to provide support and solicit input on important matters. Teachers have a say in our professional development plan and are encouraged to lead training sessions when appropriate. Hiring decisions of new teachers and staff members are made through a panel interview process involving key stakeholders.

All decisions hearken back to our founding principals and the philosophy of our traditional model as a school of choice. This helps to ensure that what we do is grounded in best practices and will stand the test of time.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that defines the success of Alhambra Traditional School is that we, as a school community, hold ourselves to the very highest of expectations. Most every school will make this same declaration, but the proof is in the results. Year after year, ATS has demonstrated consistent, sustained success regardless of the different measurements employed. This only happens when teachers, staff members, parents and students fully commit to excellence and cast off potential excuses.

Young people today face so many very real challenges in life. Families have to deal with all sorts of societal issues that could scarcely be imagined in previous generations. Our students are no different than any other children as far as having to navigate these difficult times. Additionally, each child has their own unique circumstances that they may struggle with.

Given what students face, it is easy to sympathize with them. However, our faculty takes a proactive approach, and the results are truly startling because of it. Our teachers and staff really get to know each individual student extremely well. This allows us to accentuate the strengths of each child as well as shore up any needs that they may have.

In other words, people matter. A school is so much more than buildings and programs. This became abundantly clear this school year when we moved to our new campus. It was hard to leave a site that had so many wonderful memories, but we have discovered that the most important thing remains which is enduring relationships amongst our school community. Now, we have the grand opportunity to forge new traditions that are even bigger and better than those we still hold dear. It is an exciting time to be part of Alhambra Traditional School. The Eagles are truly soaring!