

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. George Petersen

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

Official School Name Liberty Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1250 East Liberty Hill Road

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

Fresno CA 93720-4046  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Fresno County

Telephone (559) 327-7100

Fax (559) 327-7190

Web site/URL https://liberty.cusd.com/

E-mail georgepetersen@cusd.com

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\*Dr. Eimear O'Farrell

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail eimearofarrell@cusd.com

District Name Clovis Unified School District Tel. (559) 327-9000

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. Brian Heryford

(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

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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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 33 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 5 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 43 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
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	44	52	96
<b>1</b>	38	34	72
<b>2</b>	46	47	93
<b>3</b>	45	39	84
<b>4</b>	38	30	68
<b>5</b>	45	42	87
<b>6</b>	43	44	87
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	299	288	587

\*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
  - 8 % Asian
  - 5 % Black or African American
  - 41 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 38 % White
  - 5 % 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	26
(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)]	42
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	593
(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. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 6%  
36 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Spanish, Arabic, Punjabi, French, Korean, Filipino/Tagalog, Hindi, Armenian, Farsi/Persian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 36%  
Total number students who qualify: 211

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %  
45 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>18</u> Autism                 | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>20</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>9</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: 12
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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 29:1

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	96%	96%	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.

<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. 1995

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

The mission of Liberty Elementary School is to provide students with programs aligned to state and district standards which foster lifelong learning, service to society, and a commitment to the Sparthenian concept to be the best in mind, body, and spirit.

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

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Every morning, Liberty students start off their day with an enthusiastic “Good morning Skyeeehawks!” from the principal on K-SKY News, which is recorded as a video file, edited with special effects, and delivered to each teacher through Google Classroom. Morning announcements and other videos created by the school are used to recognize students, from champions in athletics to History Day medalists to sixth graders who read with first grade “buddies.” Finding ways to celebrate all students helps bring Liberty’s diverse population together.

Liberty Elementary School has a unique reputation. Earlier this school year, Dr. Eimear O’Farrell, Clovis Unified School District’s (CUSD) Superintendent, visited Liberty to congratulate them on their recent accomplishments. She told the staff, “Liberty has become the flagship of the district”, and she praised the school for being on the forefront of implementing the latest research-based instructional strategies. Dr. Lisa Bennett, department leader of California State University Fresno’s (CSUF) multiple subject credentialing program, visited the campus to observe and meet with the Liberty staff after hearing of the school’s success. She told Liberty’s principal, “Your school is actually doing what we read about in the literature. Liberty makes it happen!” Both the superintendent and the professor were referring to several instructional initiatives and innovative professional development models currently being implemented by the staff: Flexible Seating, Kagan's Cooperative Learning, Visible Learning, Growth Mindset, co-teaching, and lesson inquiry. These initiatives were an outgrowth of the staff’s passion to see ALL kids succeed.

Located in the northern part of the City of Fresno, Liberty services 587 students, who primarily come from a residential neighborhood of homeowners as well as renters. Several apartment complexes (one of which is section 8) and the Friant neighborhood, which is a low socio-economic community, are also within the school’s attendance area. The families that rent often intend to stay only a short time. Some are waiting for escrow to close, some are on temporary employment contracts, and some have difficulty finding work, struggling financially. These and other family situations contributed to a 7% mobility rate last year. Out of this year’s 85 sixth graders, only 38 students have been enrolled at Liberty from grades K to 6, and 29 sixth graders joined Liberty in the upper grade (4-6). This year 36% of the school’s student body are eligible for free/reduce lunch (also referred to as Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, or SED). The largest student subgroup is Hispanic (41%), ahead of the White subgroup (38%). For some, the school demographic is not the norm for high performing schools, and their recent California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) results are a testament for how passionately the staff has embraced the challenges of its community.

Results from the 2018 CAASPP show that 88% of Liberty students met or exceeded the standards in English language arts (ELA). This placed Liberty number one in CUSD among elementary schools. In math, 84% of Liberty students met or exceeded the standards, placing them 2nd in the district. In 2018, the state recognized Liberty as a State Distinguished School. Liberty also received the 2018 Elementary School Character Education Award from the Bonner Center for Character Education, and the school received Fresno Compact’s 2018 Business-School Partnership Award for its relationship with Island Photography.

Clovis Assessment System for Sustained Improvements (CLASSI) is CUSD’s accountability program. CLASSI evaluates three components of a school site: I. Student Achievement, II. School Management and Community Involvement, and III. Multicultural Review. Each component is given a point value and the scores are used to evaluate the quality of programs. In 2018, Liberty received the highest point total in CUSD.

Liberty’s theme this year is “Better Together.” Much of the school’s success comes from a strong value for relationships. The staff actively seeks to build trust with the home, and they believe that they are more effective when they partner with parents to support children. This relationship between the school and the home is strong. Annually, parents take a survey, called School Attendance and Review Team (SART) Survey, and 98% of Liberty parents selected “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” to the statement “This school provides a quality education” and 97% for “This school has a positive climate.”

Strong relationships also exist among staff members. On the annual staff Climate Assessment Survey, 94% responded with “A great deal” or “Quite a bit” when asked, “Do I enjoy the working environment at my school?” This is vital. When a team of adults feel this way while working together, students are the ones who really benefit. One student wrote, when describing what he liked best about the school, “Liberty’s greatest strengths are welcoming students, being kind to others, being respectful, and it’s an inviting place to be.” This is at the core of what makes Liberty unique and successful. Whether adult or child, everyone is valued, cared for, treated as an individual, and invited to join the “family.”

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

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

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

ELA curriculum and instruction are aligned to state standards, and progress is monitored through district assessments, which are accessed by staff through Illuminate Education, a data monitoring system. Teachers also use Interim Block Assessments (IABs), provided by the CAASPP website. Students are trained to comprehend a variety of rigorous texts, across core subject areas, and learn how to overcome obstacles that often occur with difficult texts. Students are required to evaluate a text and respond rhetorically, either verbally or in writing.

Students apply a strategy called a Close Read, which is a repeated reading process. Annotation is required, and this helps students to mentally engage the text while they read. After each read, students access resources to define unknown words or research the background of unfamiliar topics. Students apply the new knowledge to the text during an additional read. The Close Read helps with decoding and fluency, supporting struggling readers in their comprehension. As students become more confident with each read, they participate in class discussions more frequently.

Tasks are embedded into different phases of the Close Read, and they are designed to identify and discuss the author’s purpose, the targeted audience, and the craft. Through discussions or written responses, students explain how text functions at different levels, such as sentence variety and paragraph structures. Assignments are “text dependent,” meaning the students must refer to the text to find evidence that supports their inferences.

Liberty emphasizes writing in all core subject areas. Staff has standardized high-quality written responses across grade levels. Teachers conduct a collaborative writing process through units of instruction called “Brief Writes.” Students discuss, edit, and revise peer work, placing student work at the center of the school’s curriculum and providing all students immediate, individualized feedback. Students are required to respond in writing daily in their “Learning Journals.” Additional supports for struggling learners are provided by more intensive interventions. These students are identified through pre-assessments, which initiate interventions that build subskills in reading and writing, or post-unit assessments, which initiate re-teaching interventions.

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

Math curriculum is aligned to state standards. Progress is monitored through Illuminate and IABs. “Concept attainment” is at the heart of the program. The student is taught to “understand before solving.” Much of the curriculum is presented using text or math in real-world settings. Students learn to annotate math and consult resources to gain clarity. Once the core problem is identified, students are trained to break down problems into smaller components. They often use symbols, pictures, or graphs to represent concepts. Instead of rushing towards the correct answer, students debate the “reasonableness” of varying perspectives and multiple solutions within collaborative groups. Over time, students develop perseverance and build confidence by working as teams to successfully dissect difficult problems. The district-adopted textbook series provides websites for additional math practice.

An instructional strategy called “Two Proofs” has become popular with the staff. Students present how to solve a problem using two different techniques. After the students write their solutions on the board, a class discussion, guided by the teacher, resolves issues of disagreement. Through this open dialogue, students learn to construct viable arguments and critique each other’s reasoning. The interaction goes deep into the details of student thinking, addressing missteps and clarifying confusion. Students learn to identify patterns in math, which allow for repeated reasoning and the application of strategies over multiple problem types. This collaborative teaching method has successfully supported struggling learners within the math program, but additional supports for math are provided by interventions. Depending on their grade level, interventions

are available before, after, and during school. These students are identified through pre-assessments, which initiate front-loading interventions, or post-unit assessments, which initiate re-teaching interventions.

To develop communication skills even further, the staff has employed POWs (Problem of the Week). At the beginning of the week, a text, involving a math problem, is assigned. By the end of the week, the teacher requires the students to write “how to solve” and “why” paragraphs. The written responses are edited by peers and revised.

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

The science program is based on the Next Generation Science Standards, and further guidance is provided by the domains, Disciplinary Core Ideas, Crosscutting Concepts, and Practices. The program is monitored through Illuminate. Because science text tends to be the most difficult, students are often supported through the ELA reading interventions.

The staff has done a great job of integrating multiple core subjects into their science program. Teachers access digital libraries for science texts that present math problems. Reading comprehension, math, and application of science concepts are required to complete the assignment. Students are asked to collaboratively analyze and interpret data and present their explanations in writing. Teachers also access online videos of experiments and use them for a similar collaborative process.

Through an instructional program called “Genius Hour”, Liberty teachers harness the power of student curiosity within their science curriculum. Students investigate a topic of science that interests them and narrow their topics to formulate research questions. The goal is to allow students to pursue their own passion, but they are still held accountable for the competencies in reading, writing, research and scientific investigation.

Each grade level offers unique hands-on experiences in science. Sixth graders travel to Sonora Outdoor School for science camp, a three-day, sleepaway experience. They interact with nature, participate in hikes, and dissect owl pellets. Third grade takes a field trip to the CSUF Planetarium to gaze at the stars. The school’s co-curricular programs, such as Science Fair (grades 5 and 6) and Destination Imagination (grades 4-6), provide more challenging and elaborate experiences. During non-instructional time, students meet with advisors to prepare for county and state competitions.

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

Social Science is aligned to the state standards and assessed through Illuminate. Much of curriculum is integrated into the ELA instructional block. The Close Read process helps students to comprehend historical nonfiction text. To increase the interest, staff uses digital libraries to find articles with interesting topics and relevant issues. Written assignments deepen the understanding of social issues, and students participate in energetic debates to broaden their perspectives. If students struggle with the rigor of social science texts, they are supported by the ELA interventions.

Students read texts that address civic duty, how a democracy functions, the rights of all citizens and their respective social groups. For example, in 5th grade, students read Thurgood Marshall’s Liberty Medal Acceptance Speech, providing students an authentic perspective of an African-American, and allowing our teachers to present in a much more meaningful manner, a value for all individuals regardless of race, color and religion. In 3rd grade, students read a text about women’s rights advocate Alice Paul, presenting a more authentic perspective of a woman’s journey in this country and promoting gender equality.

Grade levels bring history to life through field trips. Fifth grade participates in Kearney Park’s Civil War re-enactment where students interact with President Lincoln and Generals Grant and Lee. Fourth grade uses a company that offers a virtual tour of the California Gold Rush. Through modern technology, students venture with the “49ers” in their quest for gold.

The concepts of social science are experienced through classroom activities. To begin the school year,  
NBRS 2019

students help teachers develop rules, giving them ownership and exploring the need for "laws." Through collaboration, students learn to value diversity, creating a democratic climate. Students learn how people with differences can be connected in positive ways. Students construct arguments and establish positions, allowing them to experience how a form of debate functions in a democratic society. Civic responsibility is also modeled and taught through charity fundraising programs.

**1e. For secondary schools:**

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Art enhances the learning process. An art coordinator informs the staff of and collects student work for art contests. Each month, student art is displayed in the school cafeteria, centered around seasonal themes. Grades K-6 integrate art into social studies through the celebration of cultural holidays. Drawings of insects, animals, states, famous people, or countries are requirements of science and social science projects. Liberty's Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Program is outstanding. Liberty has four certificated VAPA teachers who deliver state aligned curriculum. In grades K-3, students receive General Music throughout the year and participate in one public performance. All fourth graders are required to participate in General Music, using recorders and have the option to join Liberty Singers Choir. Third and fourth graders can join Oral Interpretation, which culminates with the CUSD Festival. In grades 5 and 6, students are required to join Band, Orchestra, or Choir. They receive instruction throughout the year and participate in two public performances, which are adjudicated. Additionally, instrumental music students are required to take a Fundamental Skills Assessment in the spring. Liberty offers Drama, a co-curricular program that rehearses outside of instructional minutes. This year's production was "Aladdin Jr.," featuring a cast of 70 students, who sang and danced for a packed house.

The physical education (PE) program is aligned with the state standards. Students are required to receive 200 minutes of PE instruction for every 10 school days. Students (grades 1-6) are assessed in pull-ups, sit-ups, sit and reach, and a distance run. Each grade level prepares their students for the assessment in a variety of ways, from aerobic videos in the classrooms to team competitions outside on the fields. Students set goals at the beginning of school year and monitor progress. Fifth grade scores are recorded by the state. When the testing window opens, grade levels test in the cafeteria, where students can cheer for their peers. Teachers and administration run with the students while music plays, parents cheer, and popsicles are enjoyed at the end of the "PE Fun Run." Students in grades four, five and six can participate in ten sports organized into four seasons. In each sport, Liberty competes against six other schools in the Clovis West Area (CWA) for a league championship.

Liberty has one of the most advanced if not the most advanced technology programs in the district. Over a five-year period, the Parent-Teacher Club (PTC) purchased laptops for every student in grades three through six. The PTC is an independent, nonprofit group of parents from the Liberty community, dedicated to supporting the school. Laptops are housed in carts and have access to printers. Other grades access the computer lab. Technology is integrated throughout all four core-subject areas. Each student has an internet account, allowing access to digital libraries, web-based supports from textbook series, and academic websites that strengthen skills. All websites have been vetted and approved by the district. Every student in grades 1-6 uses a Google Classroom account to access a variety of assignments, from writing to research projects. This year Liberty was certified as a Common Sense School. The staff was trained and delivered curriculum that taught students to be safe, responsible Digital Citizens.

Staff members teach the six pillars of CHARACTER COUNTS: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. These pillars are introduced to students at the beginning of school during "Character Counts!" week. Throughout the year, students in each class are chosen every two weeks as a

student of character for the pillar they are studying. The principal goes into the classroom to publicly praise the students. Students are acknowledged in the school's weekly electronic newsletter.

Video technology supplements the curriculum. Student leadership working with administration creates videos, where students model good behavior. "Dignity and Respect," a video based on the book "Fill Your Bucket," is used by grades K-3. Liberty recently adopted a program called Positive Behavior and Interventions Support (PBIS). Signs, posted around campus, provide a common language and remind students to "Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful." This is how a Skyhawk of character "flies high and proud" in the cafeteria, the bathrooms, hallways, and on the playground.

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

Liberty has an effective Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS), consisting of three tiers. Tier I and II are described in the Teacher Grade Level Expectancies (TGLE) Plan. Each grade level, called a Professional Learning Team (PLT), disaggregates and analyzes data from diagnostic screenings, CAASPP, and district mandated assessments to identify TGLE students. TGLEs also address the needs of English Learners (EL), Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), and Resource Specialist Program (RSP) students. Because of the mobility rate, TGLEs may change from year to year based upon the needs of incoming students.

Tier I occurs in the classroom with research-based best practices. The motto of the classroom is "Let's learn together." All students are supported by both peers and teacher as they struggle through the curriculum. Students express their learning, either verbally or in writing, in a collaborative context, allowing struggling students to receive clarifying feedback immediately. If students struggle within Tier I, the student enters Tier II.

Tier II interventions occur in ELA and math. Each PLT determines curricular needs, recruits and trains personnel, and schedules where and when the programs take place. Interventions may take place before school, as in grades 2-5, after school, grades 2 and 3, and during school, grades K-6. Full-time staff members work additional hours to teach within the programs as well as part-time certificated and classified personnel. Throughout the year, PLTs meet during early-release Wednesdays to monitor progress. From these discussions, staff may add to or promote students out of the programs.

Liberty's Behavioral Support Team (BST), consisting of the principal, GIS (Guidance Instructional Specialist), who functions as a vice-principal, and school psychologist, provides social-emotional support within Tier II. Each member of the team is given a list of students to monitor, which involves building a relationship with the student, meeting with teacher and parent, and creating a support plan. For more intensive support, these students can be referred to Clovis Support and Intervention (CSI) Program. Led by trained adults, this 8-week program meets one time a week for group discussions.

According to 2018 CAASPP results, the SED subgroup scored more than 10 points below the general population, but from 2017 to 2018, the SED group grew 13 points in ELA, compared to only a six-point growth for the general population. In math, again more than 10 points lower than the general population, but the SED subgroup posted a 28-point growth! This doubled the 14-point growth of the general population.

If students continue to underperform within Tier II, they are referred to the Student Study Team (SST). If necessary, the SST provides formal diagnostic assessment to determine eligibility for Special Education (SPED) services. If qualified, the student then moves onto Tier III, the school's SPED Program. The SPED team, which consists of the child's parents, two RSP teachers, a Speech and Language Specialist, the General Education teacher and school psychologist, designs an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). This plan is revisited and revised as needed by the SPED Team. The student can also qualify for a 504 Plan, which includes accommodations to ensure academic success.

Liberty supports two Autism (moderate to severe) Programs. One is for grades 1-3 and the other for grades 4-6. Each program is run by a Special Day Class teacher to facilitate the implementation of the IEP. Both teachers do an excellent job of partnering with General Education classes to mainstream as often as possible.

They also facilitate relationships with students outside of their programs and participate in school activities and events.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

The family environment often referred to by parents begins in the classroom. The staff purposefully builds positive relationships with the students. Teachers schedule time in their instructional day for team building activities. Students get to know each other as individuals by sharing personal information about their lives, such as their favorite food or movie. These connections are made at the beginning of the day to decrease anxiety before engaging a rigorous curriculum. Unique furniture (Flexible Seating) supports and values different learning styles. Some of the classrooms feel like a living room from home. Students can sit on ball chairs while they learn, and some of the classrooms use couches. Often, teachers sit on the floor with students to teach a lesson. Some classrooms look like a café with decorative walls, high tables, and stools.

Liberty leads with positive reinforcement. The Personal Responsibility Program begins with students setting goals at the beginning of each quarter, and they monitor their own progress in the Student Planner. Over 90% of the students earn the reward activity at the end of each quarter. These activities include a movie with snacks, a day to play on electronics, or a sports day. Programs for recognition of student achievement and citizenship are designed so that each student can be recognized. Quarterly programs that promote a positive learning environment include: Honor Roll, High Honor, Principal's Honor, and the Skyhawk Award (character award). The "Block L" is a yearly award for grades 5 and 6, which encourages excellence in "Mind, Body, and Spirit" (or character).

The PTC shows their appreciation of the staff by sponsoring a Back-to-School Lunch and giving each teacher a monetary gift to help with start-up supplies. During April, the PTC organizes Teacher Appreciation Week. Staff receives a special gift each day of the week. Once a month, a grade level team is invited to attend a PTC meeting to present the strengths of the grade level's program. The PTC president ends their time together with, "Is there anything we can do to help your grade level?"

Student leadership organizes fundraisers for charities, such as Pennies for Patients and the Canned Food Drive. Every classroom participates in the school's annual Valentines for Vets, celebrating Liberty families who are serving or have served in the military. During an assembly, Representative Jim Patterson receives student-created valentines, which are delivered to the local VA hospital.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

One of the most effective ways Liberty engages its community is through the PTC. Throughout the year, over 250 parent-volunteers team together with staff to provide fun social events, fundraisers, and assistance in the classroom. With a snack bar, Movie Night, parent-child dances, social media, and many other programs and events, the PTC provides multiple ways for school engagement. The principal attends monthly PTC meetings, providing the parents a brief update on the school.

The biggest PTC fundraiser is the schools Carnival, which takes place every October. This is an amazing testament to the dedication of Liberty's parents. For months, parents enlist the help of local businesses to donate to classroom baskets, booths, and silent auction. Local restaurants donate food and their employees help serve. The Carnival brings people from all over the community together. The camaraderie of working together on this event has increased business partnerships and parent participation. The \$50,000 raised from this year's Carnival helps fund the technology program, leveled readers, math and language arts materials, co-curricular programs, and campus improvements.

Liberty builds trust with the community with effective communication. During the first week of school, teachers and parents begin their partnership with the annual Back-to School Night, when teachers present classroom expectations and make time for a face-to-face greeting. The first week of school ends with the Family Social, when families and staff are invited to gather in an informal setting with food trucks. This partnership is strengthened with the annual Parent-Teacher Conference in October when parents and teachers meet one-on-one to discuss services offered by the TGLE. Ongoing communication is provided by

classroom websites, Parent Connect (the district's electronic grade book), Remind app, emails, and phone calls.

Connecting new families to the school immediately is crucial. "Welcome to Liberty" is a program run by staff members, that provides new students with a tour of the campus before school begins, a spirit shirt, and is partnered with students who can help them successfully navigate through their first week of school. The school's Bilingual Instructional Aide is assigned to families who are new to the country, helping them adjust to their new environment.

Parents are incorporated formally into the school's decision-making processes through parent-leadership groups. SART, Intercultural and Diversity Advisory Council (IDAC), School Site Council (SSC), and English Learners Advisory Committee (ELAC), all composed of staff and parents, function collectively as a systems management and instructional decision-making team.

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

Liberty has a tradition of providing its own Professional Development (PD) conducted by administration and staff. This is due to the effectiveness of Liberty's systematic PD Plan. Relying on the processes in place through the TGLE, administration and staff meet throughout the year during early-release Wednesdays to clarify and articulate staff and student needs. At the core of the discussions is student results from CAASPP and district mandatory assessments. The PD Plan considers individual, district, and statewide goals as well. The professional growth activities are selected based on their alignment with the state content standards and sound research. The district provides school sites three days of PD (working days without students). Additional days are provided by site funds to pay for substitutes.

Peer observation has been an invaluable component of the PD Plan. Staff often asks for coverage so that they can observe their colleagues teach a lesson. In 2017, the staff became aware of an 8th grade teacher at a local school who was experiencing a great deal of success on state testing. The principal allowed Liberty staff members to observe how this teacher implemented what is called "Kagan" strategies. After observing, the staff was ready to create a similar instructional environment in their own classrooms. The administration provided two full-days of Kagan training.

Liberty has gone to two unique staff development models, lesson inquiry and co-teaching. In the lesson inquiry model, teachers are provided coverage for a collaborative process where they sit down with administration to design a lesson, and then present the lesson in front of each other. After the lesson, a reflective dialogue takes place. In the co-teaching model, two teachers take turns presenting the same lesson. The goal of this strategy is to have one teacher observe the reaction of the students while the instruction is taking place. To explore an idea, the observing teacher may jump in and enhance the lesson or work with individual students during the lesson. Reflective dialogue between both teachers occurs during the lesson. This co-teaching model is designed for teachers to explore ideas while the lesson is happening.

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

Administration reminds parents and staff, "We lead together." Liberty has developed the "we" by working with teams of adults that meet to construct a plan for continuous improvement. This plan is called the Principal's Grade Level Expectancies (PGLE). Each year the principal is required to present the school's PGLE to the CWA Superintendent. The PGLE is developed through the input and information gathered from assessments, surveys, and committees.

The Principal's Advisory Committee (PAC) consists of eleven members of the staff: PLT leaders, a special education teacher, the school's Faculty Senate Representative, the GIS, and the principal. PAC meets monthly to address issues as they arise throughout year and may create a subcommittee to address an issue.

The Faculty Senate representative, elected by the teachers, advocates for the staff at the site level through monthly meetings with the principal. Faculty Senate also represents the staff at the district level through monthly meetings. The Climate Assessment Survey provides data on school's processes, procedures and

programs to the leadership. From Climate Assessment Survey results, Quality Improvement Teams (QIT) are created to address areas of concern. From the 2018 Climate Assessment, QITs reviewed the school's co-curricular assignments and dress code enforcement procedures.

Community members participate in the development, implementation, revision, and monitoring of the school's plan through various teams. SART assesses the overall performance of the school. Twenty parents attended the first quarter SART meeting this year. Annually, the principal presents CAASPP results to SART. SART also analyzes results from the annual SART Survey. Typically, two focus areas for improvement are developed from survey results, and a QIT is formed to address the issues. Recently, the community expressed a concern for the dangers posed by school traffic. In 2018, the PTC, working with SART, purchased a digital speed limit sign for a road that passes by the school. This year SART representatives met with a city council member to install a turn signal at a dangerous intersection.

IDAC is composed of parents and the school's principal, and they evaluate how the school addresses issues of diversity and multicultural curriculum. The SSC, composed of staff and parents, develops, implements, and evaluates the Single Plan for Student Achievement. SSC allocates categorical funds to supplement the curriculum. ELAC, composed of staff and parents of EL students, assess the school's EL services.

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

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For the past four years, Liberty has embarked on a quest to produce a Responsive Classroom, which involves the integration of several recent instructional initiatives: Kagan (student collaboration), Flexible Seating, Growth Mindset, and Visible Learning (expressive learning). This new classroom addresses the “whole child”, both social-emotional and academic. In this environment, the students feel cared for, appreciated, and accepted, no matter what their differences or needs. Students learn to view one another as a collaborative partner. They learn to disagree respectfully and explore cooperatively in teams.

The goal for the teacher is to create “conversational space,” meaning to increase the student’s capacity to express their own understanding or confusion, or as one staff member put it, “to vocalize their reasoning.” Once student thinking has been expressed, peers and/or teacher provide “quality feedback”, which is remedial input that is immediate, individualized, and sensitive to the potential anxieties of the student. Questions used by the teacher are organized progressively, beginning with easier questions such as "what" and "how," before addressing the "why." Staff uses “motivational interviewing” techniques to help students to take risks during discussions. Question stems are constructed to invite rather than command students to participate. Teachers differentiate student discourse by using revoicing, proxy voicing, and mini-plenary techniques.

Liberty has created a phrase, “page 56,” which stands for a classroom that is focused on worksheet completion and the percentage of correct answers. This phrase represents the “old,” unresponsive classroom. The Responsive Classroom encourages students to take ownership of their learning. Through a technique called “reflective interview,” students become mindful of how they struggle and succeed in the learning process. Through this verbal interaction, the teacher can more accurately analyze conceptual deficits, and then develop a more effective way to intervene. This is what makes the Tier I so effective with TGLE students.

Growth Mindset encourages students to accept struggle as a natural part of the learning process. This has tremendously improved the self-esteem of struggling learners and has increased their participation in the collaborative process. Flexible Seating was launched to support the implementation of Kagan. The school received new student desks with rollers and adjustable legs. The mobility allows desks to be configured into various collaborative groupings, and the height of the desk is adjusted to allow for a variety of learning positions. The furniture creates an environment that treats students as individuals, targeting specific needs and learning styles.

The staff believes that the Responsive Classroom initiative is the primary reason for the tremendous growth they experienced with the 2018 CAASPP results. In math, they grew 14 points over the previous year. In ELA, they hit a 13-point growth in two years. Not only did this validate their hard work, but also it rewarded their willingness to take risks.