

**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. Erin M Roche

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

Official School Name Prescott Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1632 W Wrightwood Avenue

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

Chicago IL 60614-2268  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Cook

Telephone (773) 534-5505

Fax (773) 534-5542

Web site/URL https://prescottparents.com/

E-mail eroche@cps.edu

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. Janice Jackson

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail jkjackson@cps.edu

District Name City of Chicago School District 299 Tel. (773) 553-1000

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 Frank Clark

(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

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
  - 479 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 165 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools

644 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
  - Urban or large central city
  - Suburban
  - Rural or small city/town
- 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>	26	29	55
<b>1</b>	30	25	55
<b>2</b>	23	28	51
<b>3</b>	26	28	54
<b>4</b>	28	24	52
<b>5</b>	31	30	61
<b>6</b>	30	28	58
<b>7</b>	16	10	26
<b>8</b>	13	21	34
<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>	223	223	446

\*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
  - 7 % Asian
  - 15 % Black or African American
  - 33 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 39 % 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: 24%

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

Please note that the school district's mobility rate definition is different: 3.4%. From the district: This number is aligned with the Illinois State Board of Education's definition of mobility rate. For further questions, please contact ISBE's Data Strategies and Analytics Department at [reportcard@isbe.net](mailto:reportcard@isbe.net).

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	12
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	74
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	86
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	354
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.24
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	24

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %  
45 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Spanish, Turkish, Haitian-Creole, Konkani, Mandarin, Russian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 39 %  
Total number students who qualify: 173

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %  
64 Total number of students served

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

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>4</u> Autism                  | <u>13</u> Multiple Disabilities                |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>13</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>10</u> Developmental Delay    | <u>27</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</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: 11
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.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 14:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	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.

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

Prescott School's mission is to nurture creative minds and caring hearts that contribute significantly to their communities.

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

Students who live within the school's attendance boundary can be enrolled automatically and do not have to apply. Contact the school for registration instructions.

Students who live outside of the school's attendance boundary must submit a Choice Elementary Schools application between October and December. Available seats, if any, are filled via computerized lottery. Priority is given to applicants with a sibling who is currently enrolled in the school in grade K-7, and who will remain enrolled in the school for the coming school year.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Prescott Elementary School is located on the western edge of the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago. A long-time area of mixed light industry and housing, the community gentrified in the early 2000s and now is mixed residential and commercial. One of the few diverse Chicago Public Schools, Prescott boasts a cosmopolitan student body of 40% low-income, 6% two or more races, 7% Asian, 15% African-American, 33% Hispanic, and 39% white, a variety of neighborhoods, and over 15 languages spoken at home, from Twi and Konkani to Turkish and Spanish.

As a result of gentrification, the school's population plummeted from over 450 students to a projected 170 in 2010. Prescott School was to be closed for low enrollment. The closing's specter created a sense of urgency within the Prescott community and accelerated internal improvements. A new school vision and plan, strong family engagement via the parent-led organizations Local School Council (LSC) and Prescott Parents, and high-quality instructional improvements convinced the district to keep Prescott open. Parent leaders dedicated thousands of hours to improving the school.

Despite subsequent budget cuts and other obstacles, Prescott's student learning elevated the school from the district's lowest accountability rating to its highest in four years. Moreover, the culture of the school transformed to focus tightly on high expectations of holistic student growth, their sense of belongingness, cognitively challenging content across the curriculum, and embedded social-emotional learning. The school welcomed parents through annual evening events such as Curriculum Night, Family Reading Night, Family Science Night, and Family Math Game Night. The school warmly invited families to attend quarterly Recognitions of Learning (teachers acknowledge student academic achievements) and Celebrations of Learning (student classes present their learning to the whole school). Early on, teachers proactively nurtured positive relationships with families by reaching out to parents with good news about individual student learning progress or acts of kindness and organizing many volunteer opportunities. The Alliant Credit Union Foundation generously supported student school supplies and the Family Book Program annually for a decade. Other partnerships, with the Chicago Children's Choir and Conductor, Right at School, and DePaul University's science professor, fulfilled critical student learning needs.

In addition to building strong social capital among teachers, staff, and families, the school has also invested heavily in human capital. At Prescott's rebirth in 2008, the school invested \$100,000 to overhaul the math, science, and literacy curricula and to purchase corresponding professional development (PD). To embed into weekly teacher-learning sessions about instructional practices in literacy and classroom community, the school launched a three-year partnership with the Erikson Institute and an accompanying coach. Teachers attended Great Books Foundation PD on student-generated discussions featuring text analysis. This PD, as well as the new curriculum and a common system of reading assessments across grade levels, ensured coherent and consistent curriculum and instruction. For the first time, teachers also had regular student reading data from which they adjust their instruction and flexible student groups to meet students at their individual learning levels.

The coherent curriculum and consistent instruction practices, along with strong teacher instructional planning, allowed for the school to experiment with innovative after-school and before-school academic supports and enrichment. Teachers and parents shared their personal passions, such as ballroom dance and gardening so they started after-school clubs to which students flocked. Teachers and school administrators developed with teachers a Reading Tutoring Program to support student fluency and stamina, as well as Math Masters to get students to grade level in math computation according to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Teachers tapped classroom assistants to run the after-school programs by training them, so they could tutor small groups of students two times a week for five to six weeks. These extra doses of Guided Reading or targeted math instruction helped fill individual student gaps in content knowledge or skills.

With a strong learning culture and significant trust among teachers, the school established six years ago collegial visits, models of co-teaching, and Cognitive Coaching. Teachers in turn deepened their expertise in content pedagogy and classroom community, while they further tightened the consistency of instructional

practices across the school. Teacher teams also developed models and ongoing PD of co-teaching, so special education teachers, general education teachers, and special education classroom assistants could establish expectations of each other and coordinate instruction in the same classroom.

Since the school's rebirth in 2008, the school decided to focus on only two specials classes, art and physical education (PE). As a result, students have learned a great deal, not just due to the added days but also due to attending for consecutive days. Prescott students typically have their specials consecutive days for many weeks. They get deep into projects, internalize skills, and explore extensively content. The school earned the top two ratings for its art and PE programs for the past several years.

With a culture that expects constant improvement, collaboration, and learning among all children as well as adults, Prescott's renaissance continues.



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

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

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

To meet and exceed Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts (ELA), Prescott School adopted the Lucy Calkins Units of Study in both Reading and Writing, for their comprehensive content, for their structure that supports differentiated instruction to student levels, interests, and backgrounds, and for their alignment with the Common Core State Standards. The Units of Study include both fiction and nonfiction text analysis and writing. They structure lessons in both reading and writing into mini-lessons, partner and independent practice, small group instruction, and individual teacher-student conferences. Teachers differentiate instruction by meeting with small groups of students according to their current needs and then adjust group composition as student learning needs change. By conferencing with individual students, teachers also differentiate instruction and feedback on writing or reading analysis. Some Units of Study in Reading incorporate Book Clubs, which further differentiates students into areas of interests as well as reading levels.

Besides the Units of Study assessments, the school also uses the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) by Fountas and Pinnell and the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to gauge fluency and comprehension growth and attainment in ELA at the beginning, middle, and end of the year K-8. Additionally, the school assesses phonics and phonemic awareness in grades K-2 using the Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy (ISEL). Teachers analyze the Units of Study assessment data as well as the BAS, MAP, and ISEL data throughout the school year to look for patterns of learning across students and within individual students. They then adjust instruction accordingly, to re-teach to the whole class, part of the class, or individual students. Students with significant learning gaps receive additional supports before or after school to get them to grade level.

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

To meet and exceed Common Core State Standards in Mathematics, Prescott School adopted Math in Focus, which is based on Singapore's math. Math in Focus aligns well with the CCSS, provides helpful solution strategies, such as the bar model. It provides rich, challenging problems. Its assessments push students to show mastery by transferring their deep conceptual knowledge to new kinds of problems. Teachers supplement Math in Focus with Math Talks, extensive math games, and small group, differentiated instruction tailored to students with common learning needs. In small groups, students also create several math projects, such as Math Olympics, throughout the school year to learn standards through teamwork, persistence, and precision.

In addition to the assessments included in Math in Focus, the school also assesses student learning growth in math at the beginning, middle, and end of the year via the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to gauge student learning progress in several math strand data, such as Geometry, Algebraic expressions, operations, data, measurement, and number sense. Teachers analyze a triangulation of data from the MAP, Units of Study assessments, and IL Assessment of Readiness (formerly PARCC) to see patterns of learning across students and within individual students. They then adjust instruction accordingly to re-teach to the whole class, part of the class, or individual students. Students with significant learning gaps receive additional math supports before or after school to get them to grade level.

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

Just last year, Prescott School completed a three-year review and overhaul of its science curriculum, assessments, and instruction in order to align with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). At Prescott School, science learning encompasses the scientific method and engineering's cycle of iterations. Students write extensively as part of learning science. The school assesses student learning through daily formative assessments as well as end-of-unit assessments. Teachers use the assessment results to re-teach or

adjust instruction in content or skills that students have not yet mastered. For example, in first grade, students plan in writing an experiment with gas, liquids, or solids. Then they run their experiment and collect data. They analyze their data for patterns and then identify a variable they want to change in a subsequent experiment. They run the experiment again and record additional data. They repeat this cycle of data analysis and data collection at least one more time before writing their data-based conclusions. The first graders' packets contain so much writing and data that they typically are 10 pages and can be as many as 20 pages long. In grades K-2 and grades 6-8, teachers build science units from their past resources, including Mystery Science, and tightly aligned the units to the NGSS. The 3rd-5th grade teachers adopted Amplify, which uses experiments and extensive computer-based simulations.

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

The Social Studies curriculum at Prescott is teacher-designed and based on Illinois Social Studies standards from 2011. Through a grant from the Polk Brothers Foundation and in collaboration with the Erikson Institute, teachers used Understanding by Design's (UbD) backward design model to build curricular units in Kindergarten to eighth grade. From the standards follows scopes and sequence, the formative and summative assessments, and instructional practices. The units include Essential Questions and Big Ideas, as per UbD's structure. The curricular units encourage interactive, generative learning through project-based learning, reading primary sources, and learning to think as a sociologist, historian, ethnographer, and economist. Students present their projects to each other and parents for feedback. For example, 5th graders study the European Renaissance period by dressing up as a character in a living museum and then act their character as parents and students from other classes visit them. In Social Studies, students read and write extensively in order to make sense of the content, to connect the content to their existing schema, and to apply analytical skills in a variety of the social sciences, including history, economics, sociology, ethnography, etc.

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

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

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

Prescott School's other curricular areas include the visual arts and physical education (PE) during the school day as well as choir, ballroom dance, Art Club, and drama before and after school. The visual arts learning standards guide the curriculum as well as clear grade-level expectations and rubrics for specific visual arts learning techniques and content knowledge across grades Kindergarten through 8th grade. The art teacher sees all classes during the school year via a schedule that has her teach students sixty minutes daily (Monday through Friday) or at least two times per week. This concentrated, frequent instruction propels student learning much deeper and faster than the typical school's structure of only once per week across five or more other curriculum areas. The quality of student artwork and knowledge is high as a result. Ingenuity, a Chicago-based arts advocacy organization, independent of the school district, has annually rated Prescott's visual arts program in the highest two categories for its dedication of resources to the arts.

PE follows the IL Physical Education standards and backwards maps from there the scope and sequence of curricular units, assessments, and instructional practices across Kindergarten to 8th grades. PE teachers co-plan with general education and special education teachers to integrate some human body PE standards into PE and homeroom science units and lessons. PE units also include sexual health education at all grades. Teachers use the Fitnessgram assessments (pacer, sit-and-stretch, pull-ups, and sit-ups) to gauge student fitness progress. Like art instruction, students receive PE for sixty minutes daily Monday-Friday for two ten-week sessions throughout the school year. As a result, student fitness and content knowledge of wellness, sexual health education, and PE grows at much higher rates and deeper mastery than programs that provide PE for only one to two days per week. This past year, Prescott School earned the highest level of wellness

distinction among only 13 schools of over 700 in the district, for its PE practices and planning.

The after-school programs complement and enrich the school day arts and PE programs by extending the content learning in new areas and ways and, as importantly, nurturing a sense of belongingness among students. They have an all-inclusion practice of allowing all interested students to participate (aka, “no cuts”). The Chicago Children’s Choir conductor teaches a Jr. choir of 50 3-5th graders and an Advanced Choir of 25 6-8th graders each twice weekly for 45 minutes. The school’s choir performs annually downtown at Navy Pier and Millennium Park and has performed with the Blue Man Group on live TV for WGN. The Arts Club makes special projects, such as the winter wonderland props for the annual Fantasy Flight of severely handicapped children to the North Pole to visit Santa Claus, a partnership with United Airlines and Alliant Credit Union Foundation. Ballroom Dance teaches middle school girls and boys to dance the cha-cha, Foxtrot, waltz, and The Charleston, while also teaching them appropriate ways to physically interact and feel comfortable around students of the other gender. The Drama Club produces annually a play that includes 50-60 students in cast and crew and performs twice for the community.

The PE after-school programs include Girls on the Run, four basketball teams (girls and boys), boys soccer, and girls volleyball, and a basketball skills club for younger students.

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

To meet the learning needs of all students, including students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and English Learners, teachers and staff at Prescott School tailor instruction to the zone of proximal development of each student. In other words, teachers and staff get to know each student’s interests, background, culture, and content learning level and then plans instruction accordingly. Teachers analyze student learning data to flexibly group students to meet them at their current learning level. They conference individually with students in reading and writing to give feedback about specific learning concerns. With these many structures to differentiate instruction, students below and above grade-level can grow significantly.

During regular analysis of student learning growth data, teachers identify students who have not yet mastered content standards or struggle with social-emotional expectations. Teachers ascertain if the tailored instruction should continue or if they should create a plan with the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MtSS) team. They share their data with the MtSS team and together they decide whether to create a plan with an instructional intervention (called a Tier II or Tier III intervention) and a data-collection system matched to the intervention to gauge the effectiveness of the intervention. After approximately six weeks, the team reconvenes to examine the intervention’s data. If effective, the intervention may be continued indefinitely, because it has helped the student to grow. If ineffective, the team decides to try a different intervention or to refer the student for evaluation for a learning or behavior disability. In concert with the student’s family, the clinicians (psychologist, speech therapist, counselor, social worker, school nurse, and occupational therapist) and teachers meet to discuss the MtSS data and decide whether the data warrant an evaluation. If so, the clinicians complete the evaluation within 60 days and then report to each other and the parents. At that time, the evaluation’s comprehensive profile of the student provides the foundation by which to decide if the student’s learning requires an IEP. It details learning goals and describes in-depth instructional accommodations and assessment modifications.

Special Education teachers, the bilingual teacher and general education teachers co-plan instruction to meet the learning needs of English Learners (ELs) and students with and without IEPs. They make extensive plans to adjust teaching practices to make the conditions that help students with IEPs and ELs to master the same learning expectations of students without IEPs and non-ELs.

Currently, the school suffers from significant achievement gaps, according to the IL standardized assessment PARCC, among African-American, Hispanic, and white students, low-income and non-low-income, EL and non-ELs, and students with IEPs and students without IEPs. To eliminate these gaps, teacher teams intentionally plan small group instruction with students who are underperforming and provide them with their specific learning needs. Three times per year teachers report on their students’ learning growth and the progress toward eliminating the achievement gap. Extensive after-school and before-school tutoring also

strategically assists students. The communication between teachers and the school emphasizes growth and partnership with students who fall below learning expectations. These strategies have had a positive impact in that ELA growth among sub-groups has grown over three years. The percent of African-American students meeting (score of 4) or exceeding (score of 5) the CCSS via the PARCC from 47% in 2015 to 56% in 2018. Hispanics improved from 57% to 64%. Low-income improved from 49% to 60%, including doubling the number of exceeding proficiency (score of 5) from 8% to 16%. ELs have improved from 20% to 33%, and students with IEPs have improved from 16% to 21%. Nevertheless, the achievement gap persists, and the school has to double its efforts and be more strategic about resources to eliminate these gaps.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

To engage and motivate students, Prescott School employs the Responsive Classroom framework and its components, such as Morning Meeting, logical consequences, rules creation, and guided discovery. Responsive Classroom embodies many Social Emotional Learning (SEL) constructs, such as growth mindset and persistence, so teachers intentionally teach growth mindset and incorporate such beliefs directly into learning activities. Teachers and staff hold high expectations of students and their content and SEL learning, and the curriculum challenges student to show master at high levels. As a result, students then know that the school wants them to succeed.

To gauge student engagement and motivation, the school administers an SEL survey of 3rd-8th graders at the beginning and end of the school year as well as the 5 Essentials survey of 6th-8th graders. The former, normed survey gives teachers feedback about individual student SEL learning growth. The 5 Essentials survey, also normed, provides annual feedback to teachers and the Prescott community about student perception of safety, academic rigor, teacher care about their success, and other helpful indicators of student engagement and motivation. With these survey data and in-depth teacher knowledge about individual students, teacher and staff teams relentlessly analyze individual student sense of belongingness at the school. Then, the school strategically target for special interventions students who have not shown interest or motivation. Students are matched to interventions, such as Morning Reading Club, Morning HW Club, extensive content tutoring systems before and after school, and others. The school systematically builds positive relationships with families of students who feel disconnected with school in order to improve students' sense of belongingness at school. Extensive before and after-school extra-curricular activities, such as ballroom dance, sports teams, Drama Club, also motivate students for their specific activities as well as their positive social aspects.

To make teachers feel valued and supported, the school holds frequent, regular Grade Level Team (GLT) meetings that the principal and Assistant Principal attend to hear from teachers and staff about current student learning or logistical concerns. School administration uses the feedback from frequent, regular GLT meetings to fashion long-term strategic plan and then seeks the plan's endorsement from teacher teams and the Local School Council (LSC). The school stays focused on current main long-term strategic plan initiative, so teachers and staff can deepen their skills and see the impact of their feedback on student learning growth. School administration shares in weekly faculty bulletin kudos that acknowledge teachers and staff for extraordinary work or leadership with students or colleagues. At all meetings, school administration and teachers celebrate teacher, staff, and student accomplishments, so teachers and staff can be feel that their work is deeply valued by colleagues.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Family and community engagement has formed a critical foundation to Prescott School's improvement. Teachers and staff proactively cultivate strong, positive relationships with parents, especially families whose children struggle or had previously negative interactions with other schools.

At the beginning of the school year, parents attend Curriculum Night so teachers can orient them to the school year's expectations of learning for that grade and age level. A few weeks later, the school invites parents to Family Reading Night, which teachers design to encourage families and children to interact regarding story-making as well as nonfiction texts. In November, the middle school teachers host families of 6th-8th graders who will soon apply to the highly competitive and complicated Chicago high school scene. Parents come with their children to learn about the complex application process and 8th graders complete their multiple applications during an extended workshop. Within this setting, the school's 8th graders move on to quality, supportive high schools that put them on a track to matriculate to college. Annually in February, the school invites parents to attend Family Science and Engineering Night, which includes many interactive experiences. In early May, families enjoy Family Math Game Night. At each of the events, there are 250-300 attendees. Through workshops, teachers present to parents about

developmentally appropriate expectations of children and ways they can complement SEL and content learning at home. Prescott Parents, a 501c3 organization, leads significant fundraising efforts and advocates for the school among local elected representatives. The Local School Council, the entity legally charged with hiring and evaluating annually the principal and approving the annual budget, serves as both an ambassador and a voice for parents, teachers, staff, and community members. Family members volunteer at the school through daily classroom assistance, field trip chaperoning, tutoring, making photocopies, Service Days, leading tours for prospective families, and coaching four basketball teams. From data from the normed 5 Essentials survey, the school receives helpful feedback regarding family and community engagement and ways to help.

In partnership with a professor from nearby DePaul University, Prescott School hosts 15-25 undergraduate students from a science methods course weekly on Wednesdays for two trimesters. The students help set up and guide students in experiments and engineering iterations as they learn about building classroom community and science content pedagogy. With another university, the Erikson Institute, Prescott School partnered to study and implement Balanced Literacy for several years. With instructional practices now well established, Prescott School hosts several Erikson student-teachers each year.

Sponsored by the Alliant Credit Union Foundation, the Prescott Family Book Program is designed to get books into students' hands to encourage students and their families to discuss books. Teachers select the books to be at students' reading levels and areas of interest. Students receive books during the summer and spring breaks.

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

Continuous improvement through learning has catapulted Prescott School forward in student learning success. From the visual arts and math to social-emotional learning (SEL) and writing, Prescott teachers incessantly collaborate to improve assessments and instructional strategies in alignment with standards. Following regular, multi-year improvement plans, the school has targeted one or two curricular areas annually for improvement. For example, from early 2016 to June 2018, science teachers worked ceaselessly on alignment of Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) with science assessments and instructional strategies. Teacher teams evaluated commercially available curriculum for its alignment to NGSS. Teams piloted screened curriculum to gauge its feasibility and areas for professional development (PD). Teams then carefully ensured horizontal alignment within a grade and vertical alignment across grade levels. These processes empowered teachers to lead the search, adoption, and implementation of new science curriculum.

Additionally, the school frequently invests in human capital among faculty and staff to provide PD tailored to their skill set and knowledge. All staff new to the school receive multiple sessions of training in Responsive Classroom, an SEL framework that holistically guides student learning in social awareness, self-awareness, self-efficacy, growth mindset, and more. Primary teachers and classroom assistants attend Orton-Gillingham Multi-Sensory Phonics training, so all students in K-2 receive the same, quality phonics and phonemic awareness learning. All teachers and classroom assistants attend Jr. Great Books training in Shared Inquiry to establish strong student-to-student discussion about fiction and nonfiction texts across grades K-8. As needed, teachers and classroom assistants also attend PD on Units of Study in Reading and Units of Study in Writing. Recently, teachers held multiple trainings on Guided Reading via Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) for classroom assistants, so they could elevate their instruction to students in small groups.

Internally, the school creates many opportunities for professional growth. Teachers and classroom assistants analyze student learning data, present formally student learning data results to their colleagues, co-plan units and lessons based on student learning data results, and plan visits to each other's classrooms to observe or be observed and debrief. The collegial visits have focused on teaching strategies as diverse as raising powerful questions or prompts from students to ways to structure learning centers. Annually, teachers and staff organize book clubs that explore reading strategies, co-teaching, teacher language, and more. Teachers also trailblaze and pilot PD for new content, e.g., SEL after-school interventions, building capacity in Special Education Classroom Assistants Guided Reading and math prowess. Through open

dialog and brief, targeted meetings, teachers and staff identify and arrange for learning situations for themselves and others.

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

At Prescott School, leadership has articulated and described the pathways to a vision beyond a school's current capacity to see. School leaders at Prescott School, administrators and teachers alike, imagine the school based on the community's values. Then they blaze the trails to move the school to that vision. Administrators and teachers, therefore, have to be in constant touch with and communicate the values that the school community holds. They listen carefully to common values held by families, staff, and partners, while they also articulate worthy values to aspire to embody.

With a well-defined mission and vision based on these common values, Prescott school leaders have constructed a strategic plan, crafted by community input, to achieve the values-based vision. By listening sensitively to all constituencies, school leadership then aligned resources-- time, expertise, and funds-- to the strategic plan. They used logic models as a framework to define curricula and programs and ensure their alignment with the mission and vision. They identified clear milestones to gauge and report on progress toward goals.

This process allowed staff and parents to identify major goals for the school's strategic plan, aligning science, Social Studies, and social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum while continuing to improve school-day and after-school student ELA and math supports over five years. For the first three years of the plan, teacher teams and administration aligned science assessments and instructional practices to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Teacher-leaders and administrators organized teacher teams to research and evaluate science programs for alignment with NGSS. They sought external expertise as well from teacher-experts in science at other schools as well as the district. They identified the instructional materials that the school should purchase and dedicated the time for teacher teams to meet to evaluate and align science curricula.

Today, teachers and staff teach students challenging science and engineering concepts and skills as a result of this elaborate collaboration. In a similar, inclusive process, the school is currently in its first year of a two-year alignment of its well-established SEL instructional practices to assessments and state standards. SEL alignment further improves holistic student achievement beyond content areas to encompass their growth as humans. Moreover, teachers and staff grow professionally as they collaborate to embed intentionally SEL assessments and instructional practices in content areas.

In the science alignment, the SEL work, and eventually the Social Studies plan, teachers and staff have multiple opportunities to interject about the process itself, especially with the teacher-leaders. Each plan, like their math and English Language Arts (ELA) predecessors, has feedback loops of student learning data to provide constant input regarding student progress toward mastering standards. This feedback allows teacher teams to adjust instruction in real time even after completing the alignment plan.

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

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At the core of Prescott School's success has been high-quality teachers and staff, who care deeply about children and their success, who know content deeply, who know extensively ways to connect the content to children, and who continuously improve in these three areas. The school has recruited and hired staff who embody these traits. Through orientation, onboarding, and initial professional development, new staff learn quickly Prescott's high expectations, curriculum, assessments, instructional practices, and collaboration structures to quickly make a significant impact on student learning. Individualized professional development plans, collegial feedback systems, and a robust formal evaluation system based on Charlotte Danielson's model provide differentiated feedback for ongoing growth. As teacher and staff have continuously improved their knowledge of students and instructional practices, so students expand their holistic learning across content areas as well as SEL.

This focus on high-quality, collaborative staff has allowed the school to adjust nimbly as the school has more than doubled in population and Illinois has adopted additional learning standards. In the years that student backgrounds have become more diverse, teachers and staff get to know them and foster a sense of belongingness in each student and their families. Students have sensed the omnipresent staff and family interest in their holistic success and respond with ambition, friendship, persistence, and resilience. They know that teachers expect them to grow at high rates and will help them when they stumble or fall.

Caring, expert teachers and staff have also been at the core of building relationships with families and community partners. Teacher-leaders have designed family nights, curriculum night, Celebrations of Learning, Recognitions of Learning (aka, awards assembly), clear expectations about homework, and reached out proactively to each family to establish positive connections and share successes. To nurture positive relationships, teachers and staff practice Stephen Covey's habit of depositing into emotional bank accounts with families. They celebrate frequently student successes with families.