

**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 Dr. Kelly Flax

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

Official School Name James Walker Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 201 S.E. Sunnyside School Road

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

Blue Springs MO 64014-2951  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Jackson County

Telephone (816) 874-3660

Fax (816) 224-1461

Web site/URL https://jwe.bssd.net/

E-mail kflax@bssd.net

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Dr. Paul Kinder

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

District Name Blue Springs R-IV School District Tel. (816) 365-2419

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. Dale Walkup

(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):
- 13 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 3 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 20 TOTAL

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

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban
  - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	51	32	83
1	46	38	84
2	33	37	70
3	31	38	69
4	41	41	82
5	37	49	86
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	239	235	474

\*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
  - 1 % Asian
  - 12 % Black or African American
  - 13 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 61 % White
  - 12 % 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: 15%

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	27
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	49
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	76
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	500
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.15
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 52%  
Total number students who qualify: 245

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %  
53 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>6</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>11</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>3</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>19</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
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.	24
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.	0
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 20:1

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	94%	96%	97%	97%	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.

To support all children academically, emotionally, and behaviorally by setting high expectations encouraging students to be safe, respectful, responsible, and to do their very best.

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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James Walker Elementary (JWE) is a full Title I school located in the Blue Springs R-IV School District (BSSD). JWE currently serves a diverse, capable population of 474 K-5 students. The BSSD is located in eastern Jackson County, and as a suburban Kansas City metropolitan public school system, provides quality academic programming to families residing in the communities of Blue Springs, Lee's Summit, Independence, and Grain Valley, Missouri. The principal community of Blue Springs has approximately 58,000 residents.

As one of 13 district elementary schools, JWE is child-focused, family-oriented, and community-supported. Because it is a neighborhood school, many students walk to and from or are dropped off and picked up by car each day. Of the student population, 52% of the students qualify for the federal free or reduced lunch program, and 39% are minority. JWE provides comprehensive K-5 services through its talented team of 32 certificated educators and 2 administrators.

Under the direction of the principal, JWE implemented a plan to help the staff develop closer, more positive relationships with students and parents. This plan included implementing best practices to meet student needs academically as well as socially and emotionally, and the result has been increased trust and respect, leading to the current positive school culture. JWE has a strong partnership with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that continues to host family events to further strengthen relationships. Some of these activities include Pathways to Reading (PTR), Memories with Mom, Dogs with Dads, and Math Nights for ALL; meanwhile, the PTA continues to find more avenues to reach and engage all students, parents, and staff.

JWE uses data teams to develop a vision of total stakeholder engagement, two-way communication, transparency, a proven effective instructional approach, and shared ownership in a commitment to school success. The result is high expectations of the students and a safe, respectful school environment. Teachers collaborate, confer, speak a common language, and embed professional development in their daily practice.

JWE is a Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) school that developed the motto "Win the Day" and has embedded it in the school's culture. When you enter the door, you see the motto is not only painted on the wall, but also threaded throughout the building. Parent involvement has been much higher in the past five years than before. At JWE, active parents have helped to embrace this theme.

Three years ago, JWE was involved in a two-year grant from the Kauffman Foundation, which allowed the school to further pursue the goal of addressing reading improvement. This grant provided for national presenters to work in classrooms with both teachers and students K-5. Additional resources and technology were purchased, along with bus transportation for an after-school program. This component was very successful and allowed teachers at each grade level to work individually with struggling students who need extra support to achieve academic success.

One other important key to the success of JWE is evidence-based practice. To further improve individual performance accountability, JWE focuses on Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely (SMART) goals and using data points such as achievement, behavior, attendance, and job performance to gauge progress over time. JWE has also enacted a self-monitoring process whereby students reflect on their own growth. Through a collaborative approach, all stakeholders, from students to cafeteria workers, know what constitutes school achievement and what is necessary to work towards continual improvement in attendance and behavior targets.

Based on a needs assessment, JWE staff members are provided with strength-based professional development (PD). The district core content instructional coaches provide assistance in delivering instruction, in-progress monitoring for the teachers, and in facilitating reflective conversations about needed improvements. Teachers collaborate to do long-term planning to accelerate the learning process and are provided with the tools to implement best instructional practices and to work together to achieve the school's instructional goals.

One initiative that continues to help address the emotional and academic needs of students is the Children Always Require Excellence (CARE) team program. This team meets regularly to identify students who have learning and/or social-emotional needs. The team determines the best interventions to address each student's needs. Often a staff person is provided as an advocate to help a student improve and succeed.

Together, the principal and staff members have worked to act on their belief that economically-challenged students can succeed. Parental support and an increasingly positive school environment also enable JWE to continue to grow and to enhance students' abilities to meet the economic and other challenges they face as well as to develop essential academic skills, including reading, writing, and mathematical literacy.

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

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

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

JWE is a data-driven school that uses vertical as well as horizontal approaches to assess student progress. The English language arts (ELA) curriculum is aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards. We build a solid foundation of early literacy skills through PTR. This systematic and explicit phonics and phonemic awareness program is implemented in K-2 classrooms. Students learn to recognize and manipulate the smallest sounds (phonemes) within words and gradually move to the word, sentence and whole text level. This progression is an effective approach for the acquisition of early literary skills.

JWE uses a comprehensive evaluation process which uses pre-assessments to establish a baseline for gauging the progress of our readers. Formative assessments such as PTR, Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), Dynamic Inventory of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Reading A-Z fluency passages provide in-process feedback and allow teachers to remediate and enrich their instruction accordingly. To assess writing, we use district and state-provided scoring guides to monitor and guide students through the writing process.

Reader's and Writer's Workshop models are used for core instruction. Mini-lessons are delivered by the teachers, followed by designated time for children to work independently to apply the strategies taught. During this independent work time, teachers confer with students to further differentiate instruction. The workshops conclude with a reflection session. This three-part approach allows for student choice, targeted interventions, and small-group instruction.

Ongoing PD by expert consultants, paired with on-site support from building and district coaches, aids in the implementation process. The building coach models best practices in classrooms and then pulls out a targeted population of students, who receive additional reading support.

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

The BSSD math curriculum is aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards, with an emphasis on the big ideas and skills necessary to master rigorous content. We focus on numeration, operations, relationships, and concrete and abstract representation. JWE teachers differentiate instruction by identifying student needs through a myriad of formative and summative assessments. The incorporation of learning centers, software programs (such as GoMath), and flexible grouping allows us to meet our learners where they are and move them forward. The teachers and staff focus on connecting prior learning to future learning by spiraling the concepts throughout each curriculum unit.

The math strands from the big ideas drive decisions about day-to-day lessons. Our teachers identify targets and analyze the work shown by the students to determine next steps. Pre- and post-assessments are used to determine specific skills to target and to review. Once these are identified, teachers create tiered experiences that address the needs of each student.

There are many approaches used to reach the needs of our growing mathematicians in the classrooms at JWE. Math Workshop, math stations, hands-on manipulatives, and instructional technology are all used in our classrooms. Off-hour tutoring is offered, as well as a Math Club, for students who need more individual instruction and practice. The implementation of Math Labs, district instructional coach support, and the direct collaboration with math content experts all enhance our math instruction.

In addition to all the in-class methodologies, we also offer community outreach events such as our Family Math Nights at JWE. These evenings offer an opportunity for parents to be better-informed on the math curriculum. The parents enjoy learning side-by-side with their student and appreciate taking home materials to support the learning.

## **1c. Science:**

At JWE, we believe foundational attitudes toward science are formed in the elementary grades, so we engage our students through our standards-based curriculum and inquiry-oriented strategies that emphasize conceptual understanding. JWE uses Project Lead the Way (PLTW), an engaging, hands-on curriculum that empowers students to develop in-demand knowledge and skills needed to thrive in today's society. The science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) modules help students think critically, investigate, research, problem-solve, and innovate. In our classrooms, science is integrated across the core subjects, and technology tools and applications are used to enhance classroom instruction. Both ZSpace (a virtual reality science program) and Gizmos (online, interactive simulations) power inquiry and understanding through engaging students in learning experiences. JWE teachers participate in PD seminars in person and virtually to collaborate with science content experts such as Mike Heithaus and Michael Dispezio. Teachers also work continually with district instructional coaches to better engage students in science. Lab journaling and digital assessments, such as EdCite, collect and track acquired knowledge and skills over time. The district-developed common assessments assure consistent and reliable appraisal, allow us to compare results across schools, and align formatting with annual state achievement testing.

JWE has been very involved with two federally funded grant programs. The Science Matters and Stuck on Science grants provided opportunities for our teachers to increase their science content knowledge by attending graduate-level science courses through a local university. Teachers also participate in community-based learning projects at the Kansas City Zoo. Additionally, we hosted national presenters to work directly with teachers in their classrooms. These grants provided many tangible resources to enhance the teachers' classrooms and advance their skills, which has, in turn, increased student achievement.

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

Social Studies curriculum is woven into meaningful project-based, student-centered lessons. Teachers help the learning come to life by incorporating speaking and listening standards. The ongoing training received from the nationally recognized Buck Institute has moved teacher learning forward at an exponential rate and has allowed teachers to compose engaging, multi-disciplinary units for our students. Concepts, skills, and content knowledge are interconnected and developed through a BSSD curriculum that addresses the four social studies disciplines: history, geography, civics, and economics.

Students also have the opportunity to visit and experience places such as the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the Truman Library, the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, The Negro League Museum and other civic institutions. These standards-aligned opportunities allow for a more in-depth understanding of social studies content. Additional off-site experiences our students receive include attending the local School of Economics, where students interact in a real-life supply-and-demand simulation. Students in fourth grade participate in a field trip to our state capitol, an experience that allows them to see our government in action and to interact with our local representatives.

We make a concerted effort as a staff to move away from memorizing dates and facts in isolation. The project-based approach allows us to assess students' learning through presentations and comprehensive scoring rubrics. In addition to monitoring student learning through projects, we also assess students in more traditional ways, using an online platform. As JWE became better-equipped with computers, tablets, and wireless Internet access, the proportion of online assessments increased. Students log in, take tests, and gain immediate feedback. These digital assessments enable teachers to personalize learning and modify educational experiences and instructional approaches to better address each student's distinct learning needs and interests.

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

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

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At JWE, a full-time music teacher provides engaging, creative and imaginative K-5 instruction in a room dedicated to music. The environment supports the learning by having appropriate equipment and technology to use our curriculum program, Quaver's Marvelous World of Music. Our music instructor attends PD, which includes workshops, conferences and conventions. JWE continues to focus on connecting music with core content learning. The music curriculum features singing, dancing, and playing instruments and games. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) monthly meetings feature a performance by each grade level in which students demonstrate their musical skills. In addition, JWE's 5th grade choir participates in the district's annual Singfest. The Arts Partners Program, financially sponsored by our PTA, allows all students to take a variety of meaningful field trips. All grade levels attend presentations and performances by Kansas City area elite performance groups such as KinderKonzert, The Nutcracker, Theater for Young America, and Mesner Puppets.

The K-5 visual arts program has a cross-curricular delivery model, receives PD and formal curriculum, and utilizes a technology support configuration that is similar to the one used in the music program. Students explore a wide variety of art materials and use technology equipment/applications throughout K-5. Teachers address art production, famous artists, book illustration techniques, and world culture. Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) have been implemented to help students broaden their knowledge base and express themselves creatively. Curriculum-related art is displayed in school classrooms and hallways, at local retail and business centers, community offices, and at City Hall. Student art is also used as decoration for special events such as the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast, the Board of Education Appreciation Day, the Teacher of the Year Recognition Event, and the PTA Reflections Showcase.

JWE employs a full-time physical education (PE) teacher to provide K-5 instruction in our gymnasium with the use of outdoor facilities. JWE students learn the fundamental skills, attitudes, and behaviors essential to fitness, health and nutritional wellness, which lead to participation in lifelong activities. Instruction emphasizes and facilitates efficient motion and movement patterns and promotes student-directed goal-setting and accomplishments at age-appropriate levels. All second grade students participate in swim lessons and water safety. Clubs, such as Girls on the Run, emphasize a healthy lifestyle. JWE students, parents, staff, and administrators also compete together in a schoolwide walkathon. PE instruction continues to promote lifelong health and personal activity. The curriculum also addresses the social competencies essential for good sportsmanship and fair play.

The Library Media Center (LMC), an essential component of our school, provides literacy and research quality programming that enables students to build core content skills. The curriculum is based on sequential standards, concepts, indicators, activities, and assessments. Students learn how to locate books, utilize reference materials and resources, cite sources, and conduct research for school work and personal interest, all of which are taught by a Library Media Specialist (LMS). Teachers and the LMS work together to plan for cross-curricular integration and completion of project-based assignments. Internet safety and digital citizenship are also integral parts of the media center curriculum. Our LMC houses a makerspace for student activities and clubs.

Our full-time counselor meets with students individually and in groups, makes classroom presentations, and serves as a family resource through the implementation of standards-based curriculum. The counselor focuses on family dynamics, making friends, stranger danger, body safety, study skills, resiliency, PBIS, and small-group student discussions about preventing bullying, using the Olweus Program as a resource for these discussions. She also facilitates student group discussions about future educational and career goals.

JWE works with community organizations to coordinate a backpack snack program for students needing food assistance. The counselor, with the help of the district social workers, partner with outside agencies, to provide needed dental, medical, and emotional supports to meet the needs of our students.

### 3. Special Populations:

JWE continues to study and address the needs of special populations to close the achievement gap. The areas that concern our building are special education - ELA and math; English Language Learners (ELL) - ELA and math; Hispanic - math; Multi-Race - ELA; Asian - math. To address achievement gaps, JWE reviews and evaluates performance data in ELA and math and takes a proactive approach to provide several resources and incorporate specific interventions to address needs indicated by the data.

JWE utilizes differentiated instruction tailored to individual needs of students performing both below and above grade level in a variety of subjects. Differentiation is accomplished through formative assessments; diverse materials (programs, leveled books based upon lexile, graphic organizers); student collaboration; small-group and whole class discussion; exploring big ideas and key concepts in curriculum; and student choice in tasks and projects. As part of our PD program, JWE has instructional experts working with teachers directly in the classroom, a strategy which has improved instruction and has thus helped students succeed. Our ELA subgroups of American Indian and Asian out-performed the overall achievement level for JWE.

The school's CARE Team reviews student data, monitors progress, and develops appropriate individual goals and interventions based on data analysis. For students performing below expectations as measured by reading and math state assessments, the JWE staff use varied interventions to help students improve their knowledge and skills.

JWE provides free tutoring before and after school, as well as during the school day. JWE teachers participate in PD on the stages of language acquisition to better meet the needs of students in both math and ELA. Rosetta Stone is provided in English for all ELL students to use not only at school but also at home.

For students with disabilities and all subgroups, JWE addresses math deficiencies by using math differentiation to make abstract math problems more concrete. Some of the specific strategies include math graphic organizers, math mats, and math manipulatives. Having students talk about the process they use to problem-solve has increased our scores with the following subgroups: Black, American Indian, Multi-Race, Free and Reduced Lunch. Free and Reduced Lunch and Black subgroups out-scored the overall achievement total, with proficient and advanced scores that are above those for the school as a whole.

ELA has been addressed through incorporating several strategies and programs into the instruction for students with language deficiencies and disabilities. JWE teachers use Goalbook Toolkit to determine baseline performance and progress for students with disabilities. The teachers then write standards-based Individual Education Plans (IEP) goals and use evidence-based strategies to assist students in meeting grade-level standards. Special education teachers also use reading interventions developed by Dr. Kilpatrick and PTR for students with dyslexia and learning disabilities.

For students with disabilities who struggle with executive functioning skills impacting academics, JWE focuses intervention on areas such as initiation of tasks, working memory strategies, brain breaks, and self-monitoring strategies.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

JWE staff realize that school climate and culture have a profound impact on achievement and work tirelessly to sustain an environment that is focused on academic success and free of bullying, discrimination, and harassment. PBIS is used K-5 at JWE to reduce problem behaviors and to increase pro-social behaviors. JWE takes pride in reducing the number of negative calls from parents because of this program. Staff also fully appreciate that the quality and character of school life are based on stakeholders' experiences and reflect norms, goals, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.

Climate and culture have been positively impacted in numerous ways, including achievement, health and wellness, and personal safety, using programs such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and Safe Crisis Management de-escalation techniques. The leadership team works on governance, and so does the Student Council. Ruby Payne training is a strong diversity program that JWE has embraced and followed for the past six years. In behavior management, the use of Response to Intervention (RtI) and PBIS have had an enormous positive impact on the building. Parents are welcomed to become involved either through PTA, through music performances, and/or through Art and Writing Fairs. The JWE staff also use notes, phone calls, conferences, and emails to maintain open, two-way communication between parents and school.

At JWE, morale, trust, and acceptance are high. Teachers are valued, empowered to actively contribute to school success, and recognized for their contributions to the learning community (Teacher of the Year Award). All staff are encouraged to voice their concerns and ideas, involved in collaborative teams (Vertical/Action, PD, CARE Team), and committed to improving the school's climate and culture.

Expectations are high for all stakeholders; positive results are commended; modeling, coaching, technical assistance are offered freely; and emphasis is placed on developing the skills, competencies, and the confidence necessary to succeed within and outside the classroom. Student learning styles are identified and immediately addressed (dyslexia), high performance is the norm, and students are encouraged to set and work towards personal educational goals. The positive school climate that continues to grow is helping us achieve our goals for continued success in our school community.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

JWE provides ongoing opportunities for family and community engagement, including the Title I plan. Our whole school community is sent a needs assessment to help us identify areas of strength and weaknesses. The survey results are then used by our Title I committee to write our plans for the school year. Our parents have an opportunity to review and comment to suggest changes to the plan before it is implemented. JWE values parents and the community for the support it gives to our students. We count on the community to support a number of events, including health fairs, career fairs, bike safety, and fire safety. These events serve to inform our students and their families. Families continue to participate in a number of ways, such as attending academic and enrichment activities, providing external expertise, and advocating on behalf of school change or improvement initiatives.

Staff realize that parental expectations and home dispositions--the foundational attitudes, habits, knowledge, and skills students acquire through the family's approach to school and learning--are powerful factors influencing our school's and students' success. Accordingly, through electronic and/or paper formats, teachers communicate frequently about covered concepts, assignments, completion timelines and scoring rubrics, and assessment results. PTA resource-supported events provide information on topics of interest in curriculum, instruction, and assessments. Our PTA is strong, and our parents annually contributing well over 1,000 volunteer hours.

We need these volunteers to help with Memories with Mom; Dogs with Dads; Grandparents'/Special

Persons' and Field Days; Greg Tang Math Nights; Literacy Nights; School Carnival; and School Book Fair. At JWE, parent and community involvement have encouraged higher student attendance rates, have reduced student disciplinary referral rates, have heightened academic achievement, and substantially improved our climate and culture.

Our community believes in advocacy. Stakeholders are educated about student, school, and district needs so they can take an active role in their students' education. Parents share in critical decisions affecting JWE, including those related to facility improvements and the adoption of enhancement/enrichment programs. Our school community has great support from students and parents volunteering with the Harvesters food drive, Community Services League, and a community garden.

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

JWE instructional staff continually share learning to enhance our instructional effectiveness. JWE data teams gather information on what is working most effectively in our curriculum and instructional practice so we can continue to build on and extend these strengths. The school leadership team identifies key strategies, including collaborative goal-setting, focused monitoring, and shared decision-making to improve our students' learning.

The school's administrators and teachers work collegially to provide leadership in professional development opportunities for all staff. Through questioning, investigating, and discussing in small and large groups what is needed for ongoing school improvement in curriculum, instruction, school climate, community-building, as well as through positive interactions with students, parents, and patrons, we continue to make gains in student learning, as demonstrated on state and national assessments.

Besides their collaborative inquiry, shared decision-making, and collegial problem solving, the data teams collaborate to develop and focus on a shared vision for JWE. This is possible because of the structured daily time provided for collaborative planning, the peer classroom observations, and the collegial feedback opportunities afforded to all JWE teachers.

BSSD delivers high quality, in-district PD that is research-based and conducted by experts. Top educational consultants provide direct, on-going professional development and support in the core content areas, as well as feedback to teachers on how well they are implementing the effective instructional methods they see modeled by educational experts. Presenters such as Matt Glover, Ellin Keene, Debbie Miller, and Greg Tang do not hesitate to co-teach, model or work individually with teachers, a practice that has created an embedded PD model which continues to show positive results.

All of the following are included in this comprehensive professional development program: opportunities for experienced teachers to learn new approaches and curriculum; a new teacher induction program; specific training in enhancing students' reading fluency and math skills; mentoring and coaching training; technology training; intruder safety training; topical studies/book reviews/workshops; and diversity training.

The numerous ongoing collaboration opportunities at JWE include monthly building staff meetings with an instructional focus, content cadre teams, horizontal and vertical teams, and lab classrooms. All of these opportunities are guided by the JWE Leadership Team, which monitors the overall professional development program to ensure that PD activities support the school's focus and provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to accomplish the school's goals and to support its vision.

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

At JWE, leadership focuses on providing a culture, climate, conditions and commitment necessary for student achievement and instructional improvement. Key strategies to achieve these goals include collaborative goal-setting, alignment of school and district targeted priorities, focused monitoring and reporting of pertinent data, and shared decision-making about available resources. JWE continues to value input from all stakeholders, and conducts regular needs assessments and evaluation of programs.

JWE staff meet in grade-level, content area and vertical teams to review data and set goals addressing individual and subgroup student population achievement, instructional practice, and overall school improvement. The district's comprehensive PD approach and instructional models are employed to provide a common framework for classroom instruction design and planning, consistent language and vocabulary, and uniform use of research-based strategies. At JWE, staff and administrators work together collaboratively to support, attain, communicate about, and celebrate accomplishments.

The administration, staff, and parents work to review the district Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP), identify the crucial targets for instruction, and initiate revisions of the JWE School Improvement Plan (SIP). At JWE pertinent information from needs assessments, student performance data, and program evaluations also help drive these revisions. Often in the SIP goals, multi-year, and school-specific grade-level goals are written so individual teachers can focus on targets that need improvement.

Monitoring of the school improvement goals, achievement, and instruction, ensure they remain the driving force behind stakeholders' actions. Data is regularly examined to determine the extent to which desired targets are met. Discrepancies between articulated and realized goals are determined and used as the basis for revisions to curriculum and instructional practice.

The JWE leadership team continually re-evaluates the resources, time, money, personnel, and materials allocated to accomplish school goals. This process ensures that PD supports the school focus and provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to meet our goals.

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

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JWE staff recognize that comprehensive, embedded PD has improved their instruction. Having national presenters come into their classrooms to develop and model effective teaching approaches has served both teachers and students well.

The staff also values professional development that provides them opportunities to collaborate and reflect on their practice so they can determine what is working well in their instruction, what needs to be modified, and how to make the necessary changes. JWE teachers continually visit each other's classrooms and then reflect with peers about their observations, particularly about strategies and approaches that engage the students and help the students continually improve essential skills in reading, math, reasoning, and critical thinking. The school has lab classrooms in all content areas and at all grade levels: fellow teachers throughout the district visit the labs and then reflect with the lab classroom teacher about various aspects of the lesson they observed.

Other collaboration opportunities for JWE teachers include participation in instructional cadres and on curriculum committees; work with the district's elementary instructional and literacy coaches; mentoring first-year teachers; and co-teaching. The instructional coaches, who are experts in teaching particular disciplines and skills, such as writing, researching, or math, offer summer courses for graduate credit in which teachers enroll and for which they pay a reduced tuition through the district's agreement with an area university. Some of the important topics and skills addressed in these summer course offerings include curriculum development, instructional strategies, classroom management, mental health, and writing instruction.

A major positive aspect of this extensive professional development program is that it is individualized: teachers at all stages of their professional careers, from beginning teachers to those who have taught fifteen years or more, can find PD opportunities that meet their needs and appeal to their interests. This fact helps explain why many of the teachers at JWE sustain long, viable careers here working with the ever-changing student population and curriculum. The availability of wide-ranging professional development opportunities gives support to new teachers as well as to experienced teachers who want to explore ways to become more effective in this ever-changing profession and continually changing educational environment.