

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Amanda McWilliams

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

Official School Name Hunter Lake Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 909 Hunter Lake Drive

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

Reno NV 89509-2404
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Washoe County

Telephone (775) 333-5040

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Web site/URL
https://www.washoeschools.net/hunterlake

E-mail amcwilliams@washoeschools.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*Ms. Kristen McNeill

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

District Name Washoe County School District Tel. (775) 348-0200

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 Ms. Katy Simon-Holland

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
 - 62 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 14 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 14 High schools
 - 4 K-12 schools

94 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	25	31	56
1	31	20	51
2	25	21	46
3	35	19	54
4	20	26	46
5	25	29	54
6	26	31	57
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	187	177	364

*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
 - 4 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 28 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 54 % White
 - 9 % 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: 29%

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

At Hunter Lake, we have a high mobility rate because of the nature of our school zone. Our zone has a number of motels, weeklies, and motor lodge-type housing that lower income families utilize because they are able to pay on a weekly basis instead of all at once, like other apartments require. Many of our Children in Transition and their families do not have permanent housing and live with other families, at the shelter, or even in their cars if they are unable to afford the housing cost of the weekly motels along the Fourth Street corridor. Hunter Lake has the second-highest number of motels in Washoe County School District and therefore families are constantly trying to move to more stable housing options and move out of our area whenever they are able to do so.

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	59
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	64
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	123
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	417
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.29
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	29

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 9%
31 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 52%
Total number students who qualify: 189

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
48 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>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay | <u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>20</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>6</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</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: 7
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	2
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 22:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	94%	94%	94%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2018.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Hunter Lake Elementary School strives for academic excellence through collaboration and a shared vision of student success. Learning is a joint effort between students, teachers, and parents.

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

Hunter Lake Elementary School was established in 1958 and is located in southwest Reno, a historically affluent area. We are part of Washoe County School District which serves over 64,000 students. Our school spans from kindergarten through sixth grade. Additionally, we house the PASS Program (School within a School) for student with severe emotional/behavioral challenges. Over several years, Hunter Lake has seen drastic change in school demographics and poverty. Our school has over 54% Free and Reduced Lunch, and is currently named as Title I status without funding by the Federal Government. Hunter Lake serves the surrounding neighborhood around our school as well as many motels and weekly-pay motels or motor lodges. We currently have 45 students in transition, increasing for the third year in a row. These student do not have a permanent residence and are often paired up with other families.

Hunter Lake Elementary School strives for academic excellence through collaboration and a shared vision of student success. Learning is a joint effort between students, teachers, and parents. “It Takes Teamwork to Make the Dream Work,” is our guiding principle and the foundational key to our instructional model. Every staff member at this school has a deep and abiding belief that all students can and will succeed regardless of their socio-economic status or what challenges they may present at school. We strive to make students a part of the team and to help them to set goals around their academic and socio-emotional growth.

More than half of our staff hold a Master’s Degree or other advanced degree. Many of the teachers at our school have been trained in Title I strategies and advanced reading programs. Our progress and growth are due to our unwavering belief in our students and our Whole Brain Teaching strategies, which are used by the majority of the staff.

All of the instructional focus in our school is centered on engagement and rigorous instruction. Students are expected to participate, to make meaningful contributions, and to be reading and responding in every subject area, every day. At Hunter Lake we whole-heartedly believe that the secret to our success is a hyper-focus on engagement and rigorous instruction. We are here to learn and to reap the enormous rewards that are available to use as learners, every day. Our staff believes deeply in students and that building lasting relationships with students can be an enormous motivator that makes them want to come to school. Hunter Lake has maintained high performance and growth scores for the past five years. We have worked diligently to close achievement gaps of all subgroups and to assure that every child who comes to school here receives the quality education that they deserve. Hunter Lake received the Silver Star Recognition Award from Washoe County School District for achievement in Reading and Math in 2011.

As a school community, we feel that we have done a commendable job with regard to maintaining high academic achievement and growth over the course of the past five years. For example, we are the highest achieving school in our district under the Challenge School category. Additionally, last year, the Nevada Department of Education came to study our school to learn how we have achieved such high distinction with no extra funding from Title I or any other source. We are committed to our children and we are committed to being the best elementary school for our district and our state.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

The Nevada Academics Content Standards is the cornerstone of our ELA instruction at Hunter Lake. In ELA, teachers use Core Knowledge K-3rd grades in order to address the speaking and listening standards. Teachers are using Lucy Caulkins, Daily 5, and integrating multiple instructional tools to make sure that all of the standards are addressed. In upper grades, teachers are focused on Basal Alignment Project lessons, using Practice ACE (Answer, Cite, Expand) for constructed response, promoting 21st Century skills for student-led research presentations and PowerPoint, and we also utilize accountable talk throughout the school. Throughout the school, we are constantly using data to make our instructional decisions and inform our day-to-day teaching. We are looking at each individual learner and assessing if they are comprehending the concepts that are being presented. Every teacher in our school does a pull-out lesson for students who are struggling to grasp Tier I instruction, in every subject, each day. During this time, students will sit with the teacher and relearn the concepts that they might have missed the first time. Students are able to get one-on-one instruction and to make immediate changes to their work with teacher support.

Hunter Lake teachers are implementing the shifts within Language Arts during our 90 block each day. Students in all grade levels are writing from sources and citing their work as a means of compiling critical information. Teachers are working with academic vocabulary in every classroom and teaching students complex words from both fiction and non-fiction text. Students are working with text-based answers and making personal and inferential connections during their reading and writing time. They are working to understand the text and its application to the world. Classes are conducting Socratic Methodologies to their questioning techniques and constantly asking students to apply their knowledge to written and oral prompts that promote their metacognitive skills in the classroom.

For Reading and English Language Arts assessments, teachers are using a number of measures to test mastery and understanding in our students. We utilize the overarching MAPS-Measures of Academic Progress tests quarterly, and place students into focus groups based on outcomes and scores. Additionally, we use the QSI-Qualitative Spelling Inventory, several times a year in grades K-3. Grade levels create weekly common assessments in all grades and collect data in order to make instructional decisions. These assessments include essay questions, short answer, and multiple choice selections. SLOs-Student Learning Objectives are created by each grade level targeting the pivotal standards and teacher provide a pre/post test format to garner information about instructional practices and student comprehension. Students in all grade levels are being given close-reads and utilizing their skills to make connections to text. Running records are used primarily in grades K-3 to place students into reading groups and also as a means of intervention. All grade levels are given writing assessments and practice to develop the drafting/writing/revision skills in our students. Finally, students in all grade levels are doing fluency drills and AIMSweb probes to track their growth and progress.

1b. Mathematics:

At Hunter Lake, the Nevada Academic Content Standards guide all of our instruction in Mathematics and we move students along a very structured developmental program so that they are able to perform not only mathematical concepts, but more importantly to understand the foundational skills that support number sense and number concept, which will serve our students as they matriculate. We use the district-adopted math materials including Bridges and Envision 2.0, as well as GoMath. However, we do augment these programs with many different programs to support the standards, particularly in areas that are not well developed or lack continuity. Teachers work together in their teams to support the learners and often to teach or reteach concepts that might not be mastered by our learners.

Throughout the school, we are constantly using data to make our instructional decisions and inform our day-to-day teaching. We are looking at each individual learner and assessing if they are comprehending the

concepts that are being presented. Teachers at Hunter Lake understand that the critical component for all mathematics instruction is supporting our students as they work to gain a conceptual understanding of numeracy and number concept and much of our time is dedicated to mastering these skills. Our Number Corners and Number Talks all revolve around assisting our students in understanding that there are multiple ways to solve a problem, explaining the concepts and the ways that you got those answers, and being able to use examples and writing to discuss these ideas with peers. Through the concerted use of the Mathematical Practices and finely tuned curriculum mapping, we are offering quality Tier I instruction while simultaneously creating a system of safety nets to help students find success in understanding the rigors and requirements of our mathematical program.

Teachers are using the following measures of mastery and comprehension with regards to mathematics instruction: Topics Assessment (end of unit exams,) weekly constructed response in grades 3rd-6th targeting Performance Task-type problems, weekly review and common assessments, poster use and gallery walks, group discussion to solve problems working together, exit tickets, use of Kahn Academy assessments, daily review of homework and checking/correcting errors. Throughout the school, students are trained to develop and use a growth mindset and to constantly work to improve their progress, understanding, and use of mathematical concepts.

1c. Science:

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) guide our science instruction and for the past three years we have used Foss (Full Option Science System) Kits to provide hands-on experiences for students with much success. Our teachers are engaged in planning all science lessons together as a grade level and backward planning what needs to be taught and why. Students are exposed to an inquiry-based system of learning in every classroom. Students in science are required to make connections and to discuss ideas and findings with their peers through writing, journaling, presenting and discussion. Teachers in fifth grade bring in engineering students from University of Nevada-Reno to discuss earthquake science and how to build lasting structures. Likewise, we utilize the many field trips that are available to use through the Redfield Foundation which funds low socio-economic schools with learning opportunities within the community. Finally, our second grade teachers bring medical students and engineering students from the University of Nevada to help explain real world science applications for our students. Inclusion is also an enormous part of our instructional model at Hunter Lake with 98 percent of our special education student receiving push-in support from our resource teachers. This was done in an effort to keep students in the classroom, learning the grade-level content and exposed to the same information and learning opportunities as their peers.

When students are working on science in the classroom, they are making predictions, reading text, doing experiments and trying out various ideas that they have developed to decide if they can perform the complex tasks that are set before them. They are measuring, weighing, comparing, and connecting the vocabulary to key concepts. Students are deeply engaged in the curriculum and are graphing their findings, or presenting their solutions to the class. In every classroom, you will see Essential Questions and goals for learning that revolve around science. Students are able to understand what the goal is for their learning and what mastery looks like for that particular lesson. They understand that their outcomes and results are what drive instruction.

Science assessments aide the teachers in deciding small group instruction and which students need intervention or enrichment. Since our school uses the FOSS (Full Option Science System) students take the pre/post test that are included. Likewise, they are using the Investigative Checks for FOSS to check for understanding. Students in all grade levels are taking teacher-created weekly assessments, and multiple source essay exams. For grades K-3, students are completing comprehension checks found in the activity guide which asks students to recall and synthesize information.

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

For Social Studies teachers are using the district-mandated curriculum, while also augmenting with DBQ (Documents Based Questions) and accessing several different sources to write essays and constructed responses with our students. In fourth grade, teachers are using Project Tahoe which are project-based

learning opportunities. Students in fifth grade learn about the judicial system and their unit culminates in them going to Kids Court to learn about restorative justice and how our government works with regard to the court system and the penal system. Our third grade teachers bring in experts from the Public Broadcasting Channel KNPB to discuss animal classification and how we identify animals in the wild. In fifth grade, students perform a Chautauqua where they embody a famous American and spend the morning talking to community members and families about the person that they have researched while explaining their historical contributions.

Throughout the use of all of these programs, we are using GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) to help students compile information and understand how to present information they have learned in a way that is logical and maximizes their understanding. Core Knowledge in kindergarten through third grades helps to support the listening and speaking standards in Social Studies. Students in kindergarten through third grade are learning about various wars and how they impact us socially, financially, environmentally and politically. In third grade students are learning economics and how to use resources that are available to them in a sustainable way. They are creating a business model and negotiating currency for their selected company.

In everything that we do, we are asking students to make connections, to discuss ideas from the readings, and to talk to each other about concepts or ideas that are recurring in the literature and instruction. Teachers are working to make the instruction rigorous and to set the bar high for our students to assure that they will continue to show growth and progress as they move from elementary to middle school, and beyond.

Social Studies assessment across all grade levels are used to measure mastery and to make instructional decisions that provide students with the necessary skills to perform academically. Students in all grade levels are using close-reads and text-based questions specifically for Social Studies. Students in 3rd-6th grades are making presentations using a number of mediums for Project-Based Learning. DBQ-Document Based Questions are given for Social Studies asking students answer essential questions and to answer short essays each week regarding the instruction that has been delivered. PowerPoint and technology assignments are given to upper grade students where they provide a write-up, photos and research about an area of study that they must present to their peers. Students in K-3 are learning to use multiple sources and write short Social Studies essays, citing their sources and referencing them appropriately.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Due the generosity of our Parent Faculty Association, students receive physical education for four months each year from a certified teacher and also weekly by our classroom teachers. Every student in Washoe County School District receives music instruction twice weekly for thirty minutes each week. Students learn a variety of instructional mediums using the Nevada Academic Content Standards for music. Each grade level performs at least once yearly and all students are a part of these performances. Students in upper grades also get Bands and Strings instruction where they learn to play a musical instrument and they perform for parents and the community several times per year.

Students at Hunter Lake all get two computer times for thirty minutes per week in either our computer lab or on our laptop computers/iPads. As a school, we have written several grants and have been fortunate to receive two iPad carts that help give our students access to the technological world. Since only 39 percent of our families report having computer access at home, it is critical that our students receive hands-on instruction in keyboarding, typing, drag/drop, and writing on our computers. Our classrooms have been renovated and have access to an active board which is utilized by teachers and students alike. We have a

certified librarian that teaches students research skills during their weekly 30 minutes in library. Students learn library skills and how to access information that will support their research projects or reading contests depending on the grade level.

Throughout the school, we have a dedicated SEL (Social Emotional Learning) curriculum that is used in every classroom. Each morning, the principal discusses the focus for the week and how students can improve their communication skills, their interactive skills, or interpersonal skills with peers. Then throughout the week, teachers teach mini-lessons dedicated to that week's theme. The SEL committee creates these lessons and they are promoted throughout the school in addition to our Responsibility, Respect and Safety lessons that are taught each day during social/emotional instruction time.

Hunter Lake has several after school programs that students can enjoy including: Lego Robotics, Sierra Kids, Girls STEM activities, and Nevada Arts classes. Often we find scholarships or monies donated from the community in order to give equal access to our students who might not otherwise be able to afford these programs. For example, the Soroptimists of Reno bring us the Girls STEM activities at no charge so that our female students can learn coding, programming, and robotics in the classroom. Finally, our sixth grade teachers dedicate one hour each week after school to support students who might be struggling with concepts in homework or Tier I instruction. They invite local high school students to come help as well. There is no charge for the students to come to these remediation sessions and students from all grade levels are welcome.

3. Special Populations:

Teachers at Hunter Lake are especially adept at using data information and assessment results to inform their daily instruction in the classroom. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) sit together and look at data as well as ascertain how students are comprehending the instruction they are receiving. In every classroom, every day, in every subject area, students are given extra support and remediation for concepts that they may have not understood or are struggling with in class. Teachers pull these students into small groups and they are given another round of instruction. Additionally, students in third through sixth grades have data books where they track their own progress and set goals for the week. Every student in the school sets Measures of Academic Progress (MAPs) goals and know what they need to achieve in order to show growth and progress overall. There are posted data boards for both Reading and Math in the multi-purpose room where parents can check on their student progress longitudinally over the course of the year. Teachers and parents have a unique identification number for the students and they can see how they are learning and progressing over time for their grade level. Additionally, our school has a remediation program for students who are struggling with Tier I instruction in both mathematics and reading. This program addresses student needs and helps students to meet proficiency and growth goals for the SBAC (Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium) exams. There is no cost with this program and students receive instruction for 1.5 hours twice a week for six weeks in each subject area taught by ten of our own Hunter Lake teachers.

Engagement is the major focus of our school and we try to maximize the learning time that we have available with lessons that keep students talking, sharing, and supporting each other's efforts in the classroom. Students will often be asked to share their thinking or explain how they got that answer. Differentiation strategies are used in every classroom and by every teacher in the school. Using differentiation strategies we challenge those students above grade level in order to build their capacity and help them increase their knowledge base, while simultaneously working with students below grade level to increase their understanding and equalize their access to the general curriculum. Our teachers spend 2 hours per week in common planning time and each teacher is committed to presenting the same content to all learners so that students are exposed to the same information regardless of which teacher they are assigned to. During common planning time, teachers use data and assessment results to inform academic decisions. Also, they PLC during this time and share strategies and ideas for maximizing student results and backward plan all lessons as a team.

Since we do have an achievement gap in both reading and mathematics with regard to our students with an IEP, inclusion is one of the major cornerstones of our instructional delivery model at Hunter Lake School. Ninety-eight percent of our students are in the classroom receiving Tier I instruction on a daily basis. The
NBRS 2019

reason for this approach is we fundamentally understand that students who are exposed to the content and curriculum will be better able to handle the assessments when they comprehend the material. Resource teachers are working with all students and co-teaching classes in every grade. Their schedules are centered on making sure that we are giving ample instruction so that students understand the content and curriculum that they are receiving and are able to meet their goals and demonstrate growth over time. We do not allow any of our students to opt-out or not participate in the learning. We are right there with them helping them to make meaningful connections and understand how to apply the information that is being presented in the classroom.

Likewise, our Hispanic students show an achievement gap in Mathematics. This year we are giving thirty extra minutes of instruction in the area of math focused specifically on the fundamental skills where students demonstrate an overall lack of understanding. Teachers are pulling small groups or working one-on-one with students to help shore up their foundational skills and help them with numeracy. Each teacher in our school worked with their grade level to develop a specific plan of how to improve their math scores and to especially target Hispanic students who might be missing key concepts that are keeping them from achieving on the same level as their peers.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Students are encouraged to participate in the self-manager program where they support other students in the school and are rewarded for their self-control and outstanding behavior. Quarterly, students are invited to a Principal Party and being a self-manager earns them a badge and a mention on our SEL Board. Self-Managers often work in the Dragon Dollar Reward Store and will be allowed to have extra recess or privileges that their behavior earns them. We have Dragon Dollars that students throughout the school can earn and use to buy things at the Dragon Dollar Reward Store. Staff is constantly seeking out students who are on-task, paying attention, focused on learning, and demonstrating our core values of Respect, Responsibility, and Safety with their outstanding behavior.

The past three years, our school has been fortunate enough to have a full-time partner in education, Circus Circus, The Row. This partnership helps to provide our school with prizes for our Dragon Dollar Store, food for our Dinner, Data, and Dessert Night/Field Day and much needed support with materials for our teaching staff. Since our families often do not have the funds for events, we supplement with scholarships or free tickets to events that are hosted at our school so that all families are a part of what is happening in school. Our counselor and principal have a clothes closet where they provide warm coats, socks, shoes, and clothing for our families that do not have funding, as well as backpacks and school supplies. Every year neighboring schools in the more affluent areas of town help us to get snacks for our after-school program as well as paper, pencils, and school supplies for our students and teachers to utilize. The counselor sends home food bags to more than 30 families weekly, who would not otherwise have enough food for the weekend. Our school works to provide lice kits, bus passes, scholarships for after school programs, grants for eye glasses, and bed bug treatment for our students who would not be able to afford these items otherwise.

With regard to teachers and staff within our school, we strive to have activities outside of school that support and encourage everyone to build relationships and bonds with one another. Each month, the principal hosts an outing for teachers throughout the community where they come together and decompress after a long day of teaching/learning. Our school has a yearly retirement party where current and former staff members celebrate the contributions that are made. Our PFA, principal, and Partner in Education -The Eldorado, host a week-long event for Teacher Appreciation week where teachers get food, awards, prizes, and gift certificates each day in celebration of their incredible work at our school. Students decorate the doors and parents/administration cook for the teachers. At Christmas time, the staff has a party each year as well as the end of the year in which members of the PFA, Partners in Education, and staff get together to commemorate the incredible growth and team work that has been demonstrated all year. Finally, we also have a Sunshine Committee who are constantly giving teachers/staff small incentives and rewards in honor of their effort and dedication to our students and school. Teachers are recognized in many ways throughout the school year and are honored for their work.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

In working with families within our community, we have found that parents are very engaged and excited about attending and participating when their children are highlighted, or when there is a family event that includes food or fun for the whole family. For example, if our children are singing or performing, the event will be standing room only. The same is true for events that are tied to eating or enjoying food/dessert. Our Dinner, Data, and Dessert Night is one of the best attended events of the year because we offer food and dessert in addition to talking about student progress/growth/SEL outreach. Likewise, events such as End of School Barbeque and Fall Festival encourage families to spend time playing and enjoying various events/activities with their children and we have between 800-1000 attendees during these events. Parents at this school strive to be a part of their child's learning. We have a number of community and family volunteers who help students/teachers in the classrooms. During our School Performance Plan meeting, we always have between two to four parents who help us to set goals and outcomes for the coming year.

Our PFA is dedicated to this school and they use their monies that are raised to promote literacy and also to get technology in the hands of our students who might not otherwise have access to this at home. As a school we have written 40,000.00 in grants over the course of the past six years and many of these grants have been matched-in-kind by our PFA. The PFA is deeply involved in helping us to buy coats, socks and supplies for our Children in Transition and other students who do not have monies for items they need for school. Likewise, they have created a scholarship fund to help students who do have money for fieldtrips or outings so that every student can attend. Each year our PFA together with our students make Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for families who might not have food for the long holiday weekends. Students are encouraged to be good citizens and to support families at our school with turkeys, fixings, milk, potatoes, cereal and pies. More affluent schools within our zone also help our school with donations as does Intuit, another Partner in Education who often pays for the turkeys or hams that go home.

Communication is generated from our school in the form of Weekly Teacher Home Notes that go home with students in all grade levels. Also, our PFA/Principal have a Quarterly Letter that informs parents of upcoming events and outreach programs. Our school has a reader board that is updated each week with information and happenings around our school. Every classroom teacher communicates directly with families through Class DoJo and uses this system to update parents about achievement and behaviors on a daily basis. Our school has a Facebook page where families can communicate directly with the principal or can peruse upcoming events for families. Our principal sends out a weekly Connect Ed message for all parents and families, updating them about upcoming activities or events in and around our school. Students throughout the school have daily home notes or notification from parents to help parents and teachers communicate about students who require special support or supervision so that there is a seamless connection between home and school.

3. Professional Development:

Hunter Lake has worked to create both vertical and horizontal alignment over the course of several years. We have worked to assure that every student in our school is receiving the same quality education, with the same standards being addressed in each grade level and that our overall system is cohesive with regard to matriculation year over year. Teachers have worked to identify standards and goals that they will be responsible for teaching in each grade level in the areas of mathematics, science, social studies, and ELA. Moreover, teachers have also identified critical academic vocabulary and which grade level is responsible for introducing it and/or expanding the student understanding of it overall.

Much of our professional development is centered around PLCs and using this time effectively for the benefit of our students. The entire specials schedule is generated to maximize teacher planning time and to give our teachers the time and space to discuss instruction while learning from each other. They analyze data and discuss student progress by name and face. For two years, our school did a book study and professional development around DuFour's PLC guide, Learning by Doing. Likewise, our staff is committed to working together on creating a cohesive School Performance Plan, Student Learning Objectives and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support that deeply address the needs and necessary safety nets required by our students.

Teachers at Hunter Lake have had professional development from the district-level with regard to FOSS Training, DBQ, Core Knowledge, mathematics for our newly adopted math series in K-6th, and Nevada Kids training where teachers have learned how to track student progress using AIMSweb and utilizing instructional strategies that can be used in the classroom with all students. The administration has had OATs Training for how to utilize the evaluation system to generate meaningful results in schools, as well as diversity training for the past year using Opening Doors and A Framework for Understanding Poverty as a platform for making schools more equitable and accessible for all students. During the past few years the principal has worked with district-led training on implementing the use of SEL practices throughout the school.

All of our professional development is geared at supporting our students and creating a group of citizens who are well-educated, who believe in their innate talents, and who understand that through concerted

effort as well as perseverance, they are able to achieve anything they set their sights on. Collectively we want our students to know that they create change in the world around them.

4. School Leadership:

At Hunter Lake, our leadership philosophy really goes back to our motto. “It Takes Teamwork to Make the Dream Work.” Everything we undertake, we do as a cohesive team. We do not have a huge staff and so every person contributes their ideas and suggestions collectively and with a great investment of time and energy. For example, each month we have a leadership meeting where teachers discuss issues or problems that arise in our school with procedures or practices. Additionally, we introduce new ideas to support our students or on how to improve our overall school climate. Almost every staff member attends these meetings each month and together we decide on how to proceed. The same strategy is used for how we utilize and spend our resources. Teachers sit on multiple committees throughout the school and they lend their talent and ideas to those teams. For example, our SLO team is made up of teachers who all support the rest of the school on how to set up and implement their SLOs to support the greatest results and outcomes for our students. Likewise, five teachers from across all grade levels also sit on the MTSS Team, the School Performance Team and Leadership Team. Because teachers/staff are involved in every major decision and because they have voice with regards to our goals and vision, they are deeply bought into the work that is going on throughout the school. They are able to explain our "why" to parents, students, and stakeholders alike.

Another area of great focus is our hiring practices that are also run by committee. We have grade-level representatives, parents, students, and/or a core team who helps to interview each year. Every applicant is rigorously screened, and we require at least two staff members to visit their classroom and watch their instruction before they are ever offered an interview. During the interview process, we follow a set of carefully crafted interview questions that solicit the inner-workings and ideologies of each applicant.

Teachers and staff are allowed to ask follow-up questions and we really look for a growth mentality, understanding relationships with children equals outstanding management, and a deep and broad understanding of how to utilize engagement and rigorous instruction in the classroom. The hiring practices as Hunter Lake are one of the cornerstones of our school and a way to build a team that is successful and invested in our students. We are results-oriented, and we only hire teachers who share this vision.

Teachers at Hunter Lake have a voice and are able to support each other and administration in a real way in all areas of the school. All of us share an open-door policy and everyone works together to create a climate that is open and supportive of our goals. We work hard together, we have fun together, we create success together, and we are “in this” together every day. The synergism created by this team of professionals is what has made our school consistently improve over time. Everyone is responsible for our growth and progress. We are here for our kids and we know the greatness they are all capable of as learners.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Identifying one practice that makes our school a success overall is a challenging undertaking. However, in interviewing staff, parents, and families, we collectively agree that our “secret sauce” as a school can be most easily attributed to the quality of instruction that our teachers provide. Every day, teachers are creating lessons that ask students to reach further and to engage more fully. They are asking rigorous and well-defined questions that challenge their learners’ thinking and that require students to make metacognitive connections individually and with their peers. Teachers are differentiating the instruction and working to make sure that no child misses out on the critical learning opportunities that are being presented. They are setting objectives and goals for our learners with each lesson. Teachers are using the assessment information to inform their instruction and they are talking with students constantly to determine what they know and how deeply they understand the content. Students are being asked to engage on a whole different level, at this school. Students do not generally raise hands at Hunter Lake, instead we ask them to turn and talk to our neighbor so that we have the opportunity to engage using the academic language. Teachers use Whole Brain strategies and call on students to chant, sing, repeat, rephrase, reiterate, and recall things that are said by the teacher, by their peers, and in the textbooks. They are using hands-on learning every day in every subject area. Students are not primarily using worksheets in our classrooms, but are mostly writing and responding on white boards, posters, gallery walks, iPads, consensograms, or verbally.

Teachers are flexible and responsive to the needs of our students. They are on their feet and they are interacting with the students all day long. Students are grouped in ways that push them to discuss ideas and to interact with their peers. In the classroom you will see a variety of explanatory devices being used to match the curriculum: mental imagery, analogies, graphic organizers, models, hands-on experiments, and charts. Likewise, teachers are using many of the most recognized principles of teaching during their instruction, including: the say-do principle with many modes for practice opportunities, motivation and energizing activities that “hook” the learner and get them interested in the subject, and revisiting the goals and objectives at the start and culmination of each lesson. This climate of instructional rigor and academic focus, together with the strong bonds and relationships that are created with our students, are at the heart of all we do collectively as a school.