

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Manuel Escalante

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

Official School Name Joseph C. Martin Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1600 Monterrey Avenue

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

Laredo City TX State 78040-4536 Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Texas

Telephone (956) 273-4100

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Web site/URL http://jcmartines.elisd.org/

E-mail mcruz1111@laredoisd.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Sylvia Rios

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

District Name Laredo Independent School District Tel. (956) 273-1401

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. Hector Garcia

(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):
 - 20 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools

30 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	60	50	110
K	42	38	80
1	52	51	103
2	34	32	66
3	39	39	78
4	40	42	82
5	42	45	87
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
Total Students	309	297	606

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 100 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 0 % White
 - 0 % 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: 16%

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

The mobility rate is above fifteen percent because J.C. Martin Elementary resides within a border city where students migrate to the United States. Nevertheless, JCMES provides strong support systems including tutorials, pull-outs, a co-teaching model, and a highly qualified staff that assists students when they arrive demonstrating learning gaps.

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	50
(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)]	99
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	601
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.16
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	16

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 78%
474 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 85%
Total number students who qualify: 516

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
58 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <u>4</u> Autism | <u>26</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>26</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>27</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>11</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>3</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	30
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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.

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
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.

The professional learning community creates problem-solvers, critical thinkers, and decision-makers. JCMES firmly believes that learning, rather than teaching, is the fundamental purpose of our school.

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

Joseph Claude Martin Jr. Elementary School (JCMES), in the border city of Laredo, Texas, is one of twenty elementary schools in the Laredo Independent School District (LISD). JCMES has undergone several name and location changes during its rich history. Previously known as Central School, JCMES has been in service to the community since the 1970s honoring former Laredo Mayor J.C. Martin Jr. The school was originally located approximately half a mile north of the border to Mexico and later moved to its current site. Thirteen years ago, JCMES underwent a structural update to accommodate the district's increasing diverse population. It has since been updated with state of the art equipment, such as computers and interactive projectors in every classroom, two computer labs, a spacious library, new cafeteria, and science lab. These improvements have contributed to enhanced learning opportunities and a safe environment for all students.

The school serves approximately 615 students, ranging from pre-kindergarten to 5th grade, from mostly low socio-economic backgrounds. JCMES' challenges are many: 99% of students are Economically Disadvantaged (ED), 78% are identified as English Learners (EL), and 10% as Special Education (SPED). JCMES has broken barriers to achieve continuous improvement. Every morning, JCMES students are welcomed with a smile and a hot breakfast. During the day, they are offered a healthy lunch and after school, a light dinner. JCMES ensures student success by satisfying the basic student needs to learn and promote the joy of learning. JCMES also houses two self-contained classrooms to render services to students with special needs. To address the challenges posed by the campus demographics, teachers and staff at JCMES adhere to the school's philosophy that every child can learn with the vision of "learning rather than teaching." It serves as a constant reminder to focus on providing rigorous and relevant learning experiences. With the use of visuals and a focus on daily academic vocabulary, JCMES teachers have been able to close instructional gaps.

JCMES strives to develop lifelong learners and contributors to society. Highly qualified teachers and staff provide students with a rigorous curriculum enriched with embedded support systems. Power Hour, a designated time for prescriptive interventions, addresses students' individual academic needs. During this time, all teachers and staff work with small groups of students on targeted interventions for both the struggling and the high achieving learner. Teachers and support staff analyze student data and prepare prescriptive lessons which address students' challenges and expand the lessons for those receiving accelerated instruction. In addition, students partake in after school and Saturday tutorials in their core areas of instruction. JCMES is a dynamic place where students become problem-solvers and critical thinkers.

In the past eight years, there have been steady improvements in the school's academic performance on state assessments. With targeted instruction and data driven interventions, JCMES went from being a low performing and state monitored campus to one of the top rated in the district. JCMES improvement can be attributed to the joint efforts of students, teachers, and parents. Through purposeful planning and data driven decisions, JCMES has been able to improve student achievement steadily throughout the last five years. In 2018, it was recognized with all six possible Distinction Designations which include: Academic Achievement in Reading/ELA, Science, Mathematics, Top 25 Percent Student Progress, Top 25 Percent Closing Performance Gaps, and Post secondary Readiness. Additionally, the school has maintained a rate of 98% attendance for the past five years.

The school has established traditions and customs that impact student achievement. From the minute the bell rings in the morning, the school counselor and student helpers greet the parents and peers as they walk into the campus. An energetic "Good Morning, JCMES!" resonates through the school's loud speakers as the day starts with morning announcements. Students are welcomed and a motivational tone is set at the beginning of the day. The entire day's schedule is carefully planned and every minute is maximized for student instruction. Students who excel or improve academically are invited to sign their name in the "Principal's Book of Excellence". This practice helps foster a sense of belonging, and the belief that they can accomplish excellence no matter the challenge.

JCMES builds leadership qualities, social development, school spirit, and teamwork through sports teams and other organizations such as Student Council and the University Interscholastic League (UIL). JCMES

Parental involvement is another element that contributes to student success. With parents volunteering over 3,200 hours to school functions, JCMES exemplifies the value of parental involvement. Furthermore, JCMES maintains close relationships with community and business partners such as the Masonic Lodge, Rodeo Dental, Women's City Club, which provides vouchers for shoes and glasses, and Border Patrol Agency, which sponsors the Bulldog of the Month Program. The implementation of these academic, athletic, social, and cultural initiatives and activities have contributed to JCMES' standing as one of the most accomplished schools in the city.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

The JCMES core curriculum is aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). These are the state standards for Texas public schools from kindergarten to 12th grade. Teachers implement the district’s Learning Educational Alignment Document (LEAD), a scope and sequence manual that guides them as they develop lessons based on the state standards, the CCRS, and the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), which are linguistic accommodations for English learners.

The LEAD provides a framework with resources and materials that teachers use to create rigorous daily lessons. It supports teachers as they take students from the concrete to the more abstract concepts. Exemplary sample lessons, higher order thinking question stems, vocabulary lists, and differentiation activities allow teachers to address the various needs of students. Progress monitoring is an integral component of the LEAD and teachers have access to multiple tools to develop assessments and instructional resources to deliver prescriptive instruction. JCMES teachers’ ability to utilize the LEAD effectively has contributed to close the achievement gap and provide accelerated instruction for those who demonstrate high academic achievement. JCMES practices the Response to Intervention (RTI) model, which incorporates intense tiered intervention to provide support and resources to struggling students.

JCMES English Language Arts (ELA) and Reading curriculum is aligned to the TEKS, CCRS, and based on the fundamental principles of balanced literacy. It takes students from a guided reading approach to shared and independent reading. Pre-kindergarten to 1st grade students receive instruction in self-contained classrooms for 120 minutes daily, in addition to 60 minutes of designated intervention/enrichment literacy activities. Teachers provide whole group instruction where they model thinking processes and engage in multiple reading strategies such as choral and echo reading. They transition to small group learning in the form of guided reading and literacy centers that support the five components of literacy. During guided reading, teachers scaffold and provide support to ensure that students apply reading strategies independently. In 2nd through 5th grade classrooms, JCMES provides both an ELA and a Reading teacher. The ELA teacher addresses all elements of writing and grammar, while the second teacher focuses on Reading. They work closely together to accelerate a seamless instruction in literacy. Teachers in grades 3rd through 5th follow a content block system consisting of 95 minutes, while 2nd grade has a block consisting of 120 minutes. Teachers provide data driven instruction that meets both, whole group and small group requirements. Whole group instruction consists of phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills delivered through high yield instructional strategies utilizing anchor charts and different sources of media. Small group prescriptive instruction provides flexible and differentiated remediation and extensions. A blended learning environment allows groups of students to work on computers/tablets using research-based programs to individualize instruction and assess skills. Results guide the next stage of instruction and help teachers plan for individualized areas of needed improvement. Teachers strategically use the last five to ten minutes of the block to close their lesson as prescribed by research-based practices. For example, teachers follow a weekly schedule that requires them to close the lesson by engaging students in either turn and talk activities or writing critically in daily journals to increase rigor and relevance and reflect on what they have learned.

1b. Mathematics:

JCMES follows the TEKS and CCRS aligned curriculum for Mathematics by using the LEAD. Teachers ensure a smooth sequence as they teach through concrete hands-on activities and transition into more abstract concepts, allowing students to become problem-solvers and analytical thinkers who can apply what they learn in real life situations. During the 90 minutes daily block of Math instruction, teachers use problem-solving routines such as “Problem of the Day,” open ended questioning, didactic games, and tasks to develop critical thinking skills. They also spiral the curriculum by reviewing skills throughout the school

year as warm-up activities, small group instruction, and centers. Teachers support student learning through anchor charts, visual aids, and other accessibility features. Different tools and instruments assist in the transition from concrete to abstract and to real-life applications. Math tools include manipulatives, such as counting blocks, play money, base-ten models, calculators, and geoboards. In order to address the students' instructional needs, they receive support in the form of the one hundred and multiplication charts, number lines, grid paper, ten frames, and place value mats. A local community bank also collaborates with JCMES by providing lessons on financial literacy and using Math in the real world. Teachers deliver rigorous interventions to effectively reinforce readiness and supporting standards, and process skills in conjunction with differentiation activities. Technology integration includes the usage of various software programs aligned to the grade level TEKS and geared towards the students' functional level. For example, a computer program provides self-paced interventions. The program begins with a diagnostic assessment which creates individualized lessons for each student and provides a tutorial plan. It also creates an array of reports that help teachers monitor performance, plan small group interventions, and drive targeted skills tutorials. Critical writing is integrated through interactive journals.

1c. Science:

JCMES Science curriculum is aligned to the TEKS, CCRS, and the district's LEAD. During an 85 minute block of daily instruction, teachers engage students in hands-on activities that allow for experimentation and the scientific process. Students make observations and test hypotheses in a science laboratory that supports discovery and investigation. Students experience instruction in a classroom setting through well-developed lesson plans supported by textbooks, didactic videos, programs, applications, and games. Critical writing is integrated through interactive journals in which students write and reflect about the lessons. They are encouraged to participate in science fairs, science lab activities, and other opportunities that require them to demonstrate their learning. Every class visits the laboratory at least once a week, but 3rd through 5th grade students visit up to three times per week. Students are able to fully explore and recreate science experiments that advance their understanding of Life, Earth, and Physical Sciences. The science lab allows students the opportunity to transfer knowledge from the concrete to the abstract, through microscopes, balances, various types of magnets, hand-lens, eye droppers, and flasks. A science lab manager supports the teachers by facilitating accessibility to materials and the proper use of equipment such as goggles, aprons, and gloves. Business partners like Home Depot and the East Foundation, present real-life applications of the lessons. Students also participate in an annual didactic field trip to the Texas State Aquarium, providing them a first-hand experience of ecosystems and adaptations. Students apply what they learn. It is not uncommon to hear students using vocabulary words such as "condensation," when observing tiny droplets form on their cold water bottles. By embedding hands-on activities with a fully equipped science lab and real-life experiences, JCMES science scores improved from a 56% passing rate six years ago, to 98% on the state assessment for the 2017-2018 school year.

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

JCMES' Social Studies LEAD is aligned to the TEKS and CCRS with a focus on History, Geography, Economics, Government, Citizenship, Communities and culture. With 45 minutes of daily Social Studies instruction, JCMES ensures that students from Kinder to 5th grade acquire the knowledge, concepts, and skills related to all the mentioned areas in order for them to become outstanding citizens. Students receive instruction about home, community, community engagement, and Texas and U.S. History. Teachers reinforce Social Studies foundational skills through reading and critical writing activities focused on past and current events. In order to enhance instruction and student comprehension, map outlines, instructional videos, graphic organizers, foldables, and research activities are integrated during class. In addition, JCMES teachers guide students to apply what they learn through diverse and interactive activities. For example, students engage in the democratic process by participating in school wide elections for Student Council officers, who serve as advisors to the administration. "Classroom in the Courtroom," a partnership with the state senator's office, allows students to experience the judicial system. They visit a local courtroom and play roles such as junior court officers, jurors, and the court of public opinion. Students become familiar with the legal system's role in our community, its importance, and the consequences of breaking the law. These experiences allow students to cultivate the concepts of diversity, respect, dignity, and good citizenship. Teachers host and organize events such as Career Day to help students become aware of the city

agencies and the services they provide to the community, giving them insight about careers they might pursue in the future.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

JCMES offers a full day pre-kindergarten program to three and four-year-old students including a Head Start integration model. A high quality, research-based core curriculum is utilized within the program to target the development of social and emotional skills, language and communication, emergent literacy, Math, Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Physical Education, and technology applications. JCMES promotes school readiness through each of these core areas within whole group, flexible small groups, and one-to-one instruction which includes playful, purposeful hands-on, thematic activities that are aligned to the Texas Pre-K Guidelines and the TEKS. The curriculum focuses on providing the foundation for success in the upper grade levels. JCMES has shown significant successes within the primary grades due to the use of preschool progress monitoring assessments, which trained teachers utilize to provide differentiated instruction in order to foster and develop lifelong learners.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

JCMES believes in the success and development of the whole child. The teachers and staff understand that students have cultural, physical, academic, and emotional needs that require development. To address these needs, JCMES provides a diversified program consisting of Fine Arts, Physical Education, Technology, and Library. Furthermore, students are encouraged to participate in at least one extra-curricular activity.

The Fine Arts curriculum adheres to the TEKS and it includes Music, Drama, and Visual Arts. Students in pre-K through 5th grade are provided with opportunities to express their talents. JCMES has a choir that participates in school and district events throughout the school year. Clubs engage students in drama productions and UIL contests that encourage parent and community participation with other elementary schools in the district. Students compete in art contests and their work is displayed in the school's library. This approach is utilized to support cognitive development and improved academic achievement. Aligned to the TEKS, JCMES' Music curriculum is structured on the four basic strands of music and is offered 1 day per week for 45 minutes. Music literacy helps students identify musical elements such as beat, dynamics, melody, rhythm, and tempo. Students also learn to sing and play musical instruments. JCMES engages in critical evaluation and response by conducting aural exercises, whereby students develop listening skills through hearing various pitches, intervals, and chords. Songs and activities are integrated to enhance historical and cultural relevance. Student awareness of different genres of music and its correlation across other disciplines are promoted to teach the interrelated nature of music.

The JCMES Physical Education/Wellness Program is aligned to the TEKS and the CCRS. The curriculum integrates academic, nutrition and wellness activities through structured and sequenced lessons that provide age appropriate scholastic and motor skill development. It imparts health-enhancing education for students to promote a physically active lifestyle. Students in grades kinder through 5th receive instruction 45 minutes per day, 3 times per week, utilizing various methods of physical activity that appeal and engage diverse students. JCMES also participates in the district's elementary sports program, promoting involvement and development in sports, such as cross country and basketball. Additionally, JCMES has 19 athletic teams participating in community based sporting leagues. These activities enhance socialization and the value of teamwork, cultivating well-rounded students. Aside from physical activity, the JCMES wellness program also reinforces sound health and nutrition. Teachers deliver one health lesson weekly in their classrooms. Furthermore, the campus participates in the United States Department of Education's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, allowing students to enjoy all types of fruits and vegetables. JCMES values fitness and healthy eating habits.

who utilize the latest technological tools to become college and career ready in the 21st century digital learning environment. Students in grades kinder through 5th receive 45 minutes, 1 day per week, of technology applications which target the 4 pillars of digital literacy: coding, business applications, digital citizenship, and keyboarding. Students create a technology-infused project applying what they learn and present it at the district's annual Technology Expo. In addition, a second technology lab provides intervention programs that foster literacy, RTI, and real-life applications. Classrooms are equipped with touchpads, desktops or laptops, interactive whiteboards, and document cameras to tap into students' higher levels of cognition. Teachers utilize the district LEAD to assist in the integration of technology to ensure students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge, and they are supported by a Digital Learning Specialist who models, plans, and prepares technology-driven activities. Second through 5th grade students are given the opportunity to join the after school technology club which meets twice a week to further achieve the IT program goal.

JCMES' library adheres to the School Library Programs Standards and Guidelines for Texas, and to the TEKS. Through collaboration with teachers, the library lessons support learning for students in Kinder through 5th grade for 45 minutes one day per week. The librarian uses books, e-books, and other resources to deliver lessons incorporating comprehension, vocabulary development, and other literacy components. The school library program offers learning opportunities to families through activities such as: Reading with a Loved One, Family Reading Night, and book fairs. JCMES provides extended after-school hours and Saturday sessions in which parents read with their children. JCMES provides materials in a variety of formats to foster the development of independent learners and readers.

3. Special Populations:

JCMES ensures a strong correlation between curriculum, instruction, and assessments to meet the diverse and individual needs of all students. Teachers follow the LEAD with fidelity and meet regularly to monitor instruction practices. The State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) are used to collect data and drive instruction, interventions, and other systems of support for students. The goal is to ensure that students acquire the academic standards and English proficiency during the instructional day and to minimize the number of students requiring prescriptive interventions. JCMES students receive instruction in blended learning environments where differentiation, software programs, and strategic pullouts contribute to closing gaps and providing extension opportunities.

At the beginning of the school year, JCMES reviews all students' STAAR and TELPAS scores to tailor instruction for students identified as English Learners (ELs), Special Education (SPED), and Gifted and Talented (G.T.). This system of embedded support ensured that no sub-group performed at lower than 10% from the "all" students' STAAR category during the 2017-2018 school year. Teachers meet twice a month to review new data such as local assessments and failure reports to adjust accommodations and instructional methodologies to address students' learning gaps.

Students in 2nd through 5th grade are immersed into a co-teaching model that allows for a reduced teacher to student ratio and an inclusive setting for EL, SPED, as well as other struggling learners. Two certified professional teachers share the responsibility for a group of students at each grade level with mutual ownership of the instruction, pooled resources, and accountability. JCMES follows the one teach, one assist co-teaching model where one teacher has the primary instructional responsibility while the other assists with guided and independent practice, monitoring of behaviors, correcting assignments, small groups, and ensuring that students are focused during the lesson. Furthermore, the co-teacher also becomes the "voice" for ELs and other students when they need additional support. In addition, teachers are highly trained to implement the ELPS, ensuring that ELs needs are addressed and English acquisition is accelerated.

"Power Hour" takes place daily from 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. Based on data, students are assigned to support groups that focus on the core area academic gaps in ELA/Reading, Math, and Science. During this designated time, students receive intense accelerated instruction based on individual needs in a small group setting. All teachers and staff members are assigned a group to target specific skills. The strongest teachers instruct struggling students, while other staff members work with advanced groups on computer programs

and activities designed to challenge high achievers and G.T. students. Low performing sub-populations, including Special Education and ELs, are served in small groups by specialized staff. G.T. students take part in small group instruction, projects based lessons such as the Campus Winter Keynote speaking series and the Texas Performance Standards Presentations. Students work through research processes and rigorous high-yielding activities specifically geared to challenge them. During this time, a designated staff member assists these students and provides discovery learning activities and tasks.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

JCMES faculty and staff enjoy a culture of collegiality and collaboration through planning and sharing of ideas and support systems. They participate in collaborative planning sessions to analyze data, weekly team meetings with administrators, classroom guidance activities with the counselor, and parent conferences. The faculty and staff also organize family events, sponsor clubs and teams, attend training sessions, participate in safety audits, and serve on committees. For their part, students feel safe and included in the decision-making process. They engage in advisory councils to the administration, the Elementary Menu Advisory Committee for the Child Nutrition Program, participate in clubs, sports teams, and other extracurricular activities. Students also get involved in guidance lessons which target the pillars of character, instilling a positive climate in the school and learning the importance of being kind.

Teachers collaborate vertically and horizontally to develop effective plans for instruction and interventions. They review curriculum guides, timelines, conduct data disaggregation, plan, and design common assessments. JCMES administration and the campus instructional specialist provide support and guidance throughout the process. The culture entails embedded support with coaching opportunities, professional development, recognition and reinforcement, contests, and challenges. Team leaders are empowered to make decisions for team activities and master schedules. They elect peers to leadership roles for decision-making committees, such as the Campus Education Improvement Committee (CEIC). A social committee is responsible for arranging morale boosting activities and celebrations where teachers earn “wear jeans days,” extra classroom supplies, and materials. Also, teachers attend workshops and conferences to learn about topics such as: autism awareness, mental health first aid, first aid/CPR, and classroom management. In addition, JCMES holds an Educator of the Month contest which honors one individual from the faculty/staff. The honoree receives a special parking space at the front of the school, an award certificate, a free meal from a business partner, and a shout-out during morning announcements.

JCMES is comprised of 75% at-risk students, some of whom need social and emotional support. The students’ academic performance is a direct result of their relationships with the faculty and staff. Teachers build rapport by donating supplies, uniforms, and other items. The counselor provides individual and small group counseling, as well as classroom guidance lessons designed to address students’ social and emotional needs and provide lessons on topics such as study habits, drug prevention and personal care. Teachers spearhead clubs such as Student Council, Library, Technology, Chess, Choir, Robotics, and National Junior Honor Society to instill values and enrich talents that in turn build self-esteem.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parents and community partners enrich the learning experience at JCMES. Both parents and community partners are included in decision-making activities as well as programs, festivals, shows, and personal development activities. A festive atmosphere resonates throughout the school as visitors are seen impacting the school in multiple ways. JCMES’ parental involvement has increased by 150% over the last three years and the 90 active volunteers have accumulated over 3,200 hours. This strong presence has contributed to a culture of learning and collaboration that has helped the district achieve state recognition. In fact, JCMES’ parental involvement increase has been a direct contributor to student success.

Every month JCMES parents participate in “coffee chats” with the principal to discuss an array of topics such as campus improvement and home/school connections. A school website, weekly newsletters, calendars, and social platforms inform and remind parents of upcoming events in both English and Spanish. Meetings initiate with students performances, celebrations, special recognitions, and awards. This serves to encourage and inform parents about the impact that their participation has in the performance of their children. “Meet the Teacher” night, progress and report card nights, open house, family reading night, and book fairs, are avenues that JCMES provides to support communication between teachers and parents. Parents are active members and they support the school through volunteerism and coaching of team sports. They also serve on committees, such CEIC and the Language Proficiency and Assessment Committee

(LPAC). These events are provided at different times during the day and are used to promote involvement and collaboration.

Community partners such as Border Patrol, Laredo PD, and Texas A&M International University collaborate during events such as Career Day, Student of the Month celebrations, and health fairs. They assist with class presentations on mental health, drug and substance awareness in schools, and the prevention of bullying. Teachers and community partners collaborate as they lead classes that focus on topics such as assisting with homework, discipline, and developing healthy eating habits. Community partners are encouraged to engage in the decision-making process by participating in the CEIC. This allows them to build strong partnerships between the community and the school. Families and community members are crucial components for the overall success of JCMES as it strives to maintain high standards for all staff, teachers, and students.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development (PD) opportunities are afforded to teachers and administrators throughout the year. Beginning in the summer, Math, Reading, Science, Writing and Social Studies workshops ensure the curriculum is aligned to the TEKS and provide support throughout the school year. Administrators and teachers attend professional development offered by the school district, the region education service center, as well as workshops available online and on weekends. They also participate in weekly grade-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in which timelines, student expectations, support systems, and intervention/extension plans are reviewed. A professional development plan is maintained within the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) to monitor training and to address professional development goals and needs for the administration and staff. Additionally, teachers participate in grade level and content area meetings for team planning and ensuring vertical alignment which lead to improved student performance.

During the school year, JCMES administrators and teachers attend several training sessions to improve the delivery of lessons. These sessions cover topics on curriculum, RTI, data analysis, technology integration, mentorship, co-teaching models, classroom management, and leadership. The administration also conducts regular staff inventories and audits which drive personalized professional development for every teacher. The administration obtains feedback through teacher surveys, and classroom observations, to develop individualized training designed to improve student achievement. During PLCs, the principal leads weekly workshops on the Fundamental Five framework: framing the lesson, work in the power zone, frequent small group purposeful talk, recognize and reinforce, and write critically. These practices are at the core of highly effective instruction.

The school philosophy takes life in the JCMES PD plan as it focuses on learning for all faculty and staff. Mentors assist and support novice teachers by modeling sound instructional practices and classroom management techniques which emphasize well-planned lessons to keep students engaged. JCMES develops leadership skills through activities such as coordination of school-improvement initiatives, planning sessions, staff development, and other strategies. Administrators, teachers, and staff learn through tailored development, feedback, and coaching as they re-visit successful practices to develop expertise. Data analysis, effective instructional practices, and best practices have been instrumental to JCMES' success.

Administration attends an annual leadership summit centered on professional growth and collaboration. It focuses on updates to the TEKS, district initiatives, campus improvement, and assessment data. Monthly district administrative PLCs focus on assessment and accountability, curriculum and instruction, business, and operations, among others. JCMES PD approach builds the competitiveness of teachers and administrators by targeting student needs and increasing student achievement. The PD plan is reviewed and updated yearly and is a valuable tool from which teachers and administrators learn and grow in an atmosphere of collegiality.

4. School Leadership:

The servant leadership philosophy, derived from the school mission, proposes that professional growth is most important for teachers and staff. The campus is a learning community in which the principal and

assistant principal view themselves as instructional co-leaders of the PLC. Collaboration drives the campus to grow professionally and share learning between the administration, teachers, and staff. Teachers are encouraged to provide constructive criticism in the form of surveys that the administration uses to set improvement goals.

JCMES leadership team includes the principal, assistant principal, instructional specialist, school counselor, librarian, and grade level team-leaders. The administration encourages teachers to become problem-solvers, critical thinkers, and decision-makers by assigning them to leadership positions at different times. The JCMES administration sets clear goals and expectations for communication and performance by modeling and exhibiting desired behaviors. Educators are empowered to share their learning, develop leadership skills, and bring value to the campus by partaking in the decision-making process. Administrators work collaboratively to promote the instructional focus and support teachers through positive and constructive feedback. JCMES leadership team acts as facilitator during PLCs. Its members assist teachers to disaggregate and analyze data to create intervention plans focused on identified areas of students' needs. The administration team works in union to ensure successful implementation of policies and systems. They take a team approach to discipline, school safety, attendance, master schedules, staffing, assessments, and logistics. They also share leadership of committees such as RTI, Section 504, dyslexia, and LPAC.

The instructional specialist and counselor work with teachers to support student learning. They perform an array of duties that include the implementation of the curriculum, instruction objectives, professional development, behaviors, and conduct data dig to improve instruction by creating intervention plans and assigning resources. Teachers collaborate regularly and some serve as campus leaders during meetings. Grade level team leaders receive guidance as they communicate with the administration during weekly leadership meetings. Agendas are designed to ensure that staff members remain focused and productive during grade level meetings. During meetings, team members bring student samples, anchor charts, and personal artifacts to document the attainment of personal and team goals. Hence, the leadership philosophy includes building and maintaining dynamic relationships with all staff focused on personal growth and student improvement.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Apart from having short weekly meetings (45 minutes), JCMES diligently follows a PLC educational process model based on the teachings of Richard DuFour. In a “Power PLC” model, planning is essential for the school to be successful in meeting the educational and emotional needs of students. In fact, JCMES enjoys a designated classroom for the sole purpose of planning and learning for staff members. Teachers and staff know that they must be ready and prepared with their assessment reports as soon as they walk into the PLC room. Teachers, instructional specialists, administrators, nurses, and/or counselors can arrange and take part in PLC meetings as needed, but are meticulously held after every local and state assessment. These meetings are approximately three hours long and allow for rigorous and systematic curriculum planning between teachers, instructional specialists, and administrators. Depending on the campus needs during the year, district level personnel and consultants are invited to present updates on state assessments, staff development, instructional materials, teaching strategies, and to review data. During the PLC process, teachers plan vertically or horizontally to create and update class rotations, interventions, and after school and Saturday tutorials. At JCMES, the Assessment Data Protocol document provides a framework for data analysis and helps to identify needs for teacher refinement and reinforcement. The data protocol document, created by JCMES administration and utilized by the staff, allows teachers to prepare for the Power PLC process. The teachers then meet to assist each other as they discuss their findings, while support staff is able to address needs and assign resources. The result is a solid campus plan that communicates clear expectations and support systems based on the data. The plan is a working document that is re-visited regularly and serves as a springboard for the next planning session. CBA’s, benchmarks, TELPAS, and STAAR data is itemized to provide focus and to drive the next phase of instruction. The PLC process also allows for training and modeling of new instructional strategies. Teachers share successful practices with each other in an environment conducive to learning and collaboration. These processes are essential in meeting the high standards that the district and TEKS require in order to prepare lifelong independent learners. When teachers leave the PLC room, they are empowered to help students meet their highest potential.