

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. Kip Motta Motta

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

Official School Name North Rich Elementary

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 54 East 100 South P. O. BOX 129

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

Laketown UT 84038-0129
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Rich

Telephone (435) 946-3359

Fax (435) 946-3366

Web site/URL

<https://www.richschool.org/District/>

Department/6-North-Rich-Elementary

E-mail kmotta@richschool.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*Mr Dale Lamborn

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

District Name Rich School District Tel. (435) 793-2234

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. Scott Sabey

(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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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	9	10	19
1	12	12	24
2	12	6	18
3	7	13	20
4	7	8	15
5	15	9	24
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	62	58	120

*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
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 89 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 7%

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

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

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	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	120
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
5 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: 38 %
Total number students who qualify: 46

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
17 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>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 19
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.	5
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.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	92%	93%	94%	94%	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.

Provide opportunities for students to achieve their personal best, become responsible and productive citizens, and embrace lifelong learning in a safe and positive environment.

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

North Rich Elementary (NRE) School is one of two elementary schools serving the communities comprising Rich County, Utah. The school district is located in the northeast corner of Utah with the NRE Lakers housed in the municipality of Laketown, Utah. The school caters to students who live as close as one block and as far as 15 miles from the school. We are a Necessary Existing Small School (NESS) with a student population of 124 students occupying grades kindergarten through fifth grade, and one teacher per grade level.

The occupations of our patrons fall into four main categories. There are a large number of ranchers and agricultural professionals. We have some community members who work for the county and the city entities, and we have some who travel to work outside the county. One of the towns, located on Bear Lake, allows for a large number of occupations catering to recreation, tourism, and construction. The single largest employer in our county is the school district. Another factor influencing the culture and values of our school is the fact 90% of our community is predominantly members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Originally, North Rich Elementary was housed in a two story, four room building with some grades combined and taught by a single teacher. Our community passed a general obligation bond 15 years ago which allowed us to build a new single floor elementary wing with seven classrooms, a computer lab, special education (SPED) suite, teacher workroom, and bathrooms. One of the classrooms is a kindergarten suite with self-contained bathrooms, and an exit to the playground area. Because the NRE wing is part of the building housing the middle school, we make every attempt to keep the elementary children separated from the middle school students.

Our student demographics are homogenous with 88% white and 8% Hispanic. Our diversity comes in the form of social-economic status with 38% of our students qualifying for free and/or reduced lunch. With the advent of government low-income housing being built in our county, we have seen a significant increase in single parent and low income families. This change in our demographics and diversity has taken place in the past 12 years. We have a full time SPED teacher with five paraprofessionals serving a population comprising 14% of our student body.

For the past 16 years, our district has operated on a four-day school week. With this schedule, our students are in school with breakfast service starting at 7:45 until the buses depart at 3:30. Due to the shortened number of school days, we try very hard to protect the academic time. We limit our field trips to two per year, and we limit our class parties to one before winter break. Our students travel to and from school on the bus shared with middle school students. This is the only time the two groups of students are together. Each teacher is required to instruct the students in the four academic areas of mathematics, English language arts, science, and history (social studies). In addition, we have our classroom teachers in grades three through five teach keyboarding and elementary computer skills. We share a Physical Education teacher with the middle school which allows our students the opportunity to learn athletic/physical skills at appropriate levels. As we do not have a dedicated instructor for the arts, we bring in community members to teach painting, drawing, and we have a dance and music program each year. The limited number of school days puts a great deal of pressure on our teaching staff to cover the essential standards required for ensuring student learning.

As our demographics have changed in the past several years, our academic team identified a downward trend in the reading levels of our students. Through the funds available via the Utah State Trust Lands Program, we have added a reading intervention specialist and a classroom paraprofessional who divides time among the students with the highest needs. These two positions have made a significant difference with increasing our overall student reading.

Our academic team has also identified a need to address the level of stress and the increasing number of students within our purview dealing with increasing exposure to trauma. Three years ago we started a small experiment with Mindfulness instruction with grades four and five. We found this to be successful and had very positive feedback from our parents. The second year we attempted to increase Mindful practices to include grade three. Due to a lack of systematic instruction, we experienced only a bit of the success from

the prior year. This school year the district procured funds from a grant, and we have implemented Mindfulness throughout the district including grades kindergarten through twelfth. With curriculum from Mindful School and staff professional learning, we are now explicitly instructing students with Mindful practice. We have seen a decrease in office referrals, and an increase in students' ability to self-regulate behavior and reaction to stress.

In order to address the increasing number of students' exposure to trauma, we are embarking upon professional learning centered about Trauma Informed Instruction. This training will commence the middle of March, 2019.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

North Rich Elementary utilizes Journeys Common Core 2012 edition for our basal core instruction, which aligns with the Utah Core Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and offers our scope and sequence for grades kindergarten to fifth. Instruction time for ELA is a minimum of two hours per day covering the ELA standards for reading, writing, listening and speaking, and language. During this time, we give Tier 1 (whole class) and Tier 2 (small group) instruction to every student in all grades. Tier 3 instruction is special education (SPED) driven and administered outside the dedicated Tier 1 instruction.

We employ several assessment and data collection devices to identify individual student and group strengths and areas of need. We then use this data to differentiate and adjust instruction. This data is collected from DIBELS testing, assessments on the SchoolCity platform, STAR testing, classroom unit testing, and formative classroom assessment. Benchmark data is collected beginning (BOY), middle (MOY), and end of year (EOY) to measure ELA growth. In addition, we progress monitor students with DIBELS with the frequency being dictated by student performance on the benchmark and by collaboration between the classroom teacher and the reading intervention specialist. The SchoolCity platform allows teachers to customize formative assessments to measure instructional effectiveness and to drive Tier 2 small group differentiated instruction. This platform is also employed to give a common interim assessment twice during the school year, which is utilized for standard and item analysis and longitudinal data for the entire district.

Our Tier 2 or small group differentiated instruction is facilitated with a variety of educational tools available to all teaching staff. These instructional products include Imagine Learning, IXL, Heggerty, Foundations, Spelling City, and the tools available within Journeys. These ELA utensils are available to every teacher for intervention and extension instruction, along with providing data for Tier 3 intervention and IEP consultations.

The teachers also meet a minimum of twice a month within grade teams. Kindergarten through second grade form one team and third through fifth grade form another team. This model is used because we have one teacher per grade level. These team meetings are dedicated to analyzing data and reporting on interventions, student concerns, and to celebrate instructional and student successes.

1b. Mathematics:

Our mathematics instruction is centered around the Utah Common State Core, which reflects the National Common Core. We employ the GoMath curriculum from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt to provide core instruction and our scope and sequence for grades kindergarten through fifth. We are deliberate and explicit with connecting the eight standards for mathematical practice (<http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Practice/>) with the Utah Core Standards for mathematics at each grade level.

Our Tier 1 (whole group) instruction is given to all students following the GoMath scope and sequence throughout the academic year. We utilize our SchoolCity platform as a tool for collecting benchmark data at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year. Add+VantageMathRecovery (AVMR) is utilized for a mathematical screener. The information gleaned from our benchmark and screener data is utilized to differentiate instruction during our Tier 2 or small group instruction. SchoolCity is also used to collect formative assessment data. SchoolCity provides assessments aligned with the GoMath units. This offers teachers efficient and reliable information to monitor student progress and adjust instruction as needed. The data garnered from these various data points offer valuable information for the Tier 3 (SPED) referrals and instruction.

The instruction throughout all grade levels stress the importance of number sense. Our professional learning opportunities have improved our understanding of the importance of number sense and have provided the teaching staff with pedagogical tools to improve number sense instruction. Starting in kindergarten, we stress number identification along with counting and cardinality to ensure the greatest possibility of a strong foundation with number sense. The value of number sense is stressed in subsequent grades. As students advance through the grade levels, we have found this strong foundation and understanding of number sense is essential for student understanding of the increasing complexity of the mathematical standards. Our teachers also discuss the mathematical progress of their students and the interventions deployed when they meet in their grade level team.

1c. Science:

The science curricula and scope and sequence for North Rich Elementary is derived from the resources available via the Utah Education Network (UEN) (<https://www.uen.org/core/>). We also utilize outside resources to compliment the UEN curriculum. These resources are offered through the Utah Board of Education STEM initiative, and programs offered by various museums including the Planetarium, Natural History, Aquarium, etc. Some of these resources are traveling educational programs brought directly to our rural area, and some are accessed via educational field excursions.

In grades kindergarten through third grade, the science standards are explored and taught in conjunction with the language arts and mathematics curricula. Kindergarten, first grade, and second grade science standards focus on the scientific process, earth and space, physical science, and life science. The third grade standards explore earth, sun, moon, planets, relationship of organisms in their environments, and force as applied to objects.

Beginning in grade four, the State of Utah assesses science via the end of grade level evaluation; therefore, in grades four and five, the science curriculum is taught in a more explicit approach. Continuing to utilize the resources from UEN, the fourth grade standards taught focus on earth cycles, weather, properties of rocks and fossils, and the characteristics of Utah's ecology. Fifth grade standards include chemical and physical changes, earth's seismic activities, heredity, and electricity including magnetism.

The assessments for the lower grade levels are formative in nature and we do not have specific science summative or benchmark assessments. Grades four and five utilize SchoolCity along with experiments and group projects for formative evaluations. The fifth grade students also participate in a school wide science fair demonstrating at least one aspect of the science standards. The state end of level test is given and utilized as the summative evaluation for grades four and five.

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

For all grade levels North Rich Elementary incorporates most of the Utah Social Studies Core into the language arts and mathematics curricula. The core standards and resource materials are available to the staff through the Utah Education Network (UEN) (<https://www.uen.org/core/>).

The standards for kindergarten through second grade are focused around culture, citizenship, geography, and financial literacy. The reading, writing, and mathematics activities supporting these standards vary as students progress through grade levels. The standards for the upper grade levels focus on the same central themes as the lower grade, but expand to examine how the factors of geography, culture, and civics influence the classroom, community and country. Activities and examples are gleaned from reading materials and understanding of the standards are measured through class discussions and writing projects. In all grade levels, the standards for social studies is not explicitly assessed. This is due to the time restraints inherent with a four-day school week and the fact the State does not include social studies with the end of year summative tests.

In an effort to be more explicit with our civics and character instruction and to improve our overall school culture, three years ago we implemented the Prevention Dimension program. The curriculum and professional development is provided by the Utah State Board of Education and emphasizes the Three NBRS 2019

“C’s:” Care about self, Care about others, Care about community. When we started this program, we explicitly taught the lessons the first of each week and supported the lesson throughout the week. At the beginning of the second year, we incorporated monthly mindfulness practices with the fourth and fifth grade students. This was an extension of a program we implemented in the middle school and we had such positive feedback from parents, we expanded the program to include all grade levels. We employed mindfulness curriculum from Mindful Schools via a grant for professional development and pedagogical techniques. The Prevention Dimension curriculum melds seamlessly with the mindfulness curriculum. We explicitly teach a lesson each week and have mindful moments infused throughout the day. Over the past three years, this combination of civics and citizenship instruction has reduced the number of referrals by 80 percent.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Arts:

The fine arts curriculum is taught by the individual teachers within their classrooms. This consists of art projects usually centered about major holidays. There have been times we have utilized State Trust Land Funds to hire an art specialist to teach a variety of artistic techniques to each of our six classes. We have also used the same funding resource to have specialized assemblies come to our school. These have included the Utah Opera, the Utah Symphony, the Utah Ballet Company, and the local play company. These entities have performed for the whole school and then conducted breakout sessions for individual grade level groups. Every year our school puts on a spring performance. These programs are produced by our teaching staff and teach the students songs and dances which are performed for the community.

Physical Education/Health/Nutrition:

North Rich Elementary shares our physical education teacher with Rich Middle School. All students in grades kindergarten through fifth participate in a physical education class taught by this certified instructor. Each grade (class) is given one and a half hours of physical education each week. The Utah Core Standards for Physical Education are explicitly taught at each grade level.

In addition to the regular physical education class, all students participate in a yearly health fair where they are exposed to possible health careers and to healthy living choices. Our school health council organizes this program with a focus on community involvement and the intent to expose the student to positive choices relative to nutrition, exercise, reduced screen-time, and mental and emotional health. Our classroom teachers and our Nutritional Director explicitly instruct our students on the importance of daily nutrition and the minimum requirements for healthy meals at our breakfast and lunch programs.

Technology/Library/Media:

Our school has implemented technology at a level comparable to any school in the State of Utah and possibly the nation. As of this point in time, we are approaching a ration of one-to-one technology devices in our school, and by the beginning of the 2019-20 school year we will be one-to-one with individual classroom devices. In addition, we have a state of the art computer lab with thirty computers for use by the entire student body. We teach keyboarding skills beginning with the third grade. The technology available to the students is utilized for small group instruction including extension and intervention activities. Every classroom is equipped with SMART Board technology, and we have a two-year plan to transition to touch panels. Teachers also have access to take laptops to their homes. These laptops interface with our school network and allow planning to be completed remotely. All of this technology is used to access software and web-based instructional materials relative to all academic areas.

Our media center is overflowing with books. We employ the Accelerated Reader as a supplemental reading program which is facilitated by our Media Specialist. We have dedicated \$4,000.00 each year for the past fifteen years from our Utah Trust Lands Program to purchase level readers for all students. Our Media Specialist organizes and implements several reading incentive activities per year, which include a pizza and movie party, sledding party, and a bowling and movie party. In conjunction with their classroom teachers, the students set individual goals for supplemental reading and reaching their goal allows them to participate in the reading incentive. Our Media Specialist also organizes grade level read-a-thons and buddy reads where our upper grade students read with and to our lower grade students.

3. Special Populations:

Due to the homogeneous makeup of our school, we have a low number of students defined as subgroups of the general population. In fact, the State Board of Education only reports our economically disadvantaged and our Special Education (SPED) students.

We teach our English Language Learners (ELL) within the regular classroom setting utilizing the same interventions highlighted in the ELA section of this narrative. According to our World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) results, we have demonstrated our ability to elevate our ELL students to levels three (Developing) and/or level four (Expanding). The level of achievement is directly related to the number of years the ELL students are in our school. The longer we have them, the better their achievement.

Students who measure above grade level are served within the regular classroom with extension activities. Most of these activities are delivered via technology and the IXL and the Imagine Learning programs. Due to our limited number of staff, we are unable to offer a formal accelerated or advanced placement curriculum.

We do have a subgroup of economically disadvantaged students, but their performance on our State Summative test is in line with our overall student population.

Our largest sub group is our SPED students. We are an inclusion school and all of our SPED students receive Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction with the regular education teacher and with their regular education peers. Some of the Tier 1 and 2 instruction is accomplished with the help of a classroom paraprofessional. Depending upon the specifics of a student's IEP, there is also pull out service for Tier 3 instruction which takes place in the SPED classroom under the direction of our SPED director.

Referrals for SPED services are made through a Response To Intervention (RTI) process. At the request of a classroom teacher or of a parent, we form a Student Study Team (SST) consisting of the SPED director, the classroom teacher, the parents, and the Local Educational Agency's (LEA) administrator. This team gathers data relative to the student's academic, behavioral, and social performances, and utilizes this information to formulate interventions for the classroom teacher to employ. We engage the student with these interventions for a six to eight-week period of time, then the team reconvenes to assess the RTI effectiveness. At this time there could be one of three decisions made: 1) the interventions are working and we will continue the prescribed RTI, 2) the interventions are somewhat effective and are adjusted for a smaller period of time, or 3) the RTI was not effective and the student is then tested for learning disabilities and/or behavioral issues. At the conclusion of the testing, the team meets again to determine eligibility for SPED services.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

We open our school year by teaching the students our learning cheer. The principal asks the student body, “What is it your teachers want to hear?” They respond in unison and loudly, “Teach me, I want to learn!” We carry this theme throughout the entire school year. We believe all children can learn, and we celebrate these successes.

A healthy school climate begins when the student gets on the bus to come to school. During our pre-service professional development with the transportation personnel, we stress the importance of building a relationship with every student they drive to school. We firmly believe every district employee has the opportunity every day to make a positive impact upon a child. This philosophy is evident with our food service personnel, and the positive environment they have created for all students. Our kids start their day with a bus driver telling them they look good, then at breakfast the students feel welcome and important. Now when the little people enter the classroom, they are greeted with a smile and first name hello. We have built a positive and inviting climate.

The first part of the classroom day starts with the pledge of allegiance and then two to three minutes of mindfulness. Throughout the day, our students are exposed to Prevention Dimension and the Three “C’s” of: Caring for Self, Caring for Others, and Caring for Community. We also explicitly instruct students weekly with a specific mindfulness lesson and convey this lesson throughout every day of the week. The principal has a philosophy of including all staff members in decisions relative to the culture and climate. In addition, the staff is integral in developing school improvement and directing professional development opportunities. The principal also believes it is imperative to hire expert professional teachers, give them the framework of the curriculum, the resources needed to implement the curriculum, and the autonomy to teach within their own personalities and styles. The principal then treats all staff members as professionals which has built a culture of ownership, pride, and excellence.

One other aspect the Principal employs to build this culture is to recognize staff when they excel. There are hand written thank you notes given to staff members explicitly describing an action of excellence. These notes are accompanied with a donated gift card to one of the local community eating establishments. There is nothing like recognizing a paraprofessional for helping a student overcome a difficult problem. Everyone feels valued and like they are an integral part of educating the whole child.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We are a very small community. The population of the municipalities making up our school population is about 1,500 people. By the very nature of this size of community there is a great deal of pride and involvement with the school. Every classroom teacher requests and has several volunteer parents who will help with small group centers while the teacher is involved with small group, Tier 2 instruction. In a classroom with twenty to twenty-two students, there will be as many as five parent volunteers or 22%.

We also engage parents through the Utah State Trust Lands Community Council. The council is comprised of elected parents, elected teachers, and the principal. The composition must be such to ensure there are at least two more parents than staff members. Our school has decided to have five parents, two staff members, and the principal. This community council meets several times throughout the school year and are charged with several tasks. Through a collaborative endeavor, the committee examines school performance data, and gives input for the yearly school improvement plan, staff development, and digital citizenship. Once all data has been inspected, the committee determines how to spend the Trust Land funds. Over the past twenty-two years the school’s Trust Lands distribution has grown from \$2,000.00 to \$54,000.00.

North Rich Elementary also has a very strong Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). This organization consists of a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. These members work closely with the

principal to help support the needs of the children and staff. Through a large number of parent volunteers, the PTO sponsors the school's spring program, student field day, the fifth grade science fair, classroom celebrations, field trips, and teacher recognitions.

The school has also reached out to the community for specialized instruction for dance, music, art, and various classroom presentations. We also invite all parents, especially the dads to come and eat breakfast or lunch with their children.

Our small school is the center of the community and the focus of fantastic and welcomed community involvement.

3. Professional Development:

Professional Development (PD) at North Rich Elementary comes in three forms: district sponsored, school sponsored, and tailored for the individual needs of a particular staff member.

District PD is delivered from the district office and is centered about initiatives for the overall direction of the district. For example, our entire district has moved toward standards based instruction, mindful practice in the schools, and digital learning. The district has sponsored PD sessions with Tom Schimmer, the author of *Grading From The Inside Out*. This laid the foundation for all staff and administrators to successfully lead our students and community from a philosophy of chasing points and percentages to chasing learning. Additionally, the district with input from the school administrators saw a need for helping students and staff to build the capacity to improve the mental health of all. This led to the district securing grant funds to implement a district-wide Mindfulness Initiative with the goal of giving all stakeholders tools to aid in increased self-awareness and self-regulation.

Utilizing school performance data, the staff and administration collaboratively ventures on PD with the goal of improving our mathematics performance. Although our students were performing at or slightly above the State average, together we felt there was a need to improve mathematical practice. With local funds, North Rich Elementary teachers participated in PD which built capacity relative to diagnosing and formulating intervention to improve the knowledge and understanding of number. This PD has built mathematical confidence within the students and the staff. We have improved, and now have our students performing above the State average.

One of the inherent issues with a rural district and a school of our size is the extreme level of instructional isolation for the staff. This isolation was identified as a major issue affecting teacher retention, burnout, and confidence. At the direction and leadership of all district administration, the Rich County School Board allowed each teacher to be contracted for four additional days for the use of outside self-guided PD. This allows staff to get paid to attend conferences outside our regular school day. This fits very well with our four-day school week. The principal and the instructional coach have found classrooms of exceptional teachers outside of our district for our staff to observe and collaborate with. Not only do our staff members draw their regular salary for this out of school time PD, the district will pay for travel, meals, accommodations, and conference registrations. This program has given teachers a feeling of worth and of being valued. It has also allowed us to combat the level of isolation our rural district experiences.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership for North Rich Elementary starts with the effective and efficient leadership of the superintendent. Over the 30 plus years the Rich County Superintendent has been in the district he has served as the principal of the high school, both elementary schools, and the middle school. Every decision he makes is for the betterment of student learning. The superintendent has built a culture of inclusiveness and comradery which allows for collaboration on all decisions relative to not only school level issues, but matters concerning the whole district.

The principal of North Rich Elementary has been in this position for the past nineteen years. Throughout this time, and under the guidance of the superintendent, the principal has been allowed to develop and

mature as an administrator. The philosophy of the principal is simple: hire professional teachers, give them the tools and resources to perform at their optimum level, offer guidance and professional development for improvement, then treat them as professional educators. This means listening to their ideas, suggestions, and concerns, then involving them with all aspects of school and instructional improvement.

During the interim of a new teacher's provisional years, the principal supplies guidance, evaluations, and critiques in a manner conducive to collective improvement. For instance, a new hire, after many discussions and collaborative efforts geared toward progressing their reading instruction, was given out of class time to observe a more experienced teacher deliver reading instruction. The principal also assigned the two teachers to meet weekly to collaboratively discuss and evaluate the progress being made with this instruction. Time was also given to the mentor teacher to perform peer-to-peer observation. Although the principal gives a large amount of autonomy for the teachers to teach within their own personalities, he is also able to, and has made the tough decision to release or reassign staff when needed.

One of the strongest traits of the principal is to give all credit for successes to the staff. When staff perform special acts of professionalism, he will write personal notes of gratitude and often will reward outstanding performance with a gift card. The notable factor with this technique is he gives equal credit and recognition to transportation personnel, food service personnel, custodial, maintenance, and paraprofessionals. He attempts to make all school employees feel valued as an integral part of the educational process.

The size of the school does not allow for an assistant principal. However, the principal assigns a head teacher to take on this responsibility when he is out of the district or attending to his duties as a member of the National Principals' Association. The principal also attends many administrative professional development opportunities which allows the head teacher to experience a bit of the principal-ship.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

North Rich Elementary School has become a model school for reading instruction. Five years ago, we were included in an UP START grant which allowed us to employ a paraprofessional to recruit pre-kindergarten and first grade students to participate as the study for the UP START grant. This grant gave participating students free, home internet access and technology designed to permit students to take basic reading lessons and instruction at home. This program was a summer program only with the goal of preparing students for reading success as they progressed from kindergarten on through the third grade. As this original cohort finished third grade, we found a significant improvement in our students' school preparedness and reading skills as assessed with our kindergarten KEEP and first and second grade SchoolCity assessments.

During this same period of time, the State made it mandatory to report the number of students in grades kindergarten through third, which were deemed to be reading below grade level. The grade level mark was set and determined with the DIBELS bench mark testing. At the beginning of this mandate, we had the individual classroom teachers administer the DIBELS benchmark and the progress monitoring assessments. We found this to be a time burden and an enormous task that encroached on our classroom Tier 1 instruction, and limiting the number of students we were able to progress monitor. As we were discovering these issues, the UP START grant had completed, and the staff, in conjunction with administration and the Utah Trust Lands Community Council, decided to fund the existing paraprofessional to implement the DIBELS assessment program.

This funding gave the students and staff a consistent person to implement the required reading assessments. We found this to be so beneficial we offered training so as to move from a facilitator of reading assessment to a vital and instrumental component of our reading intervention endeavor. This paraprofessional has grown from administering benchmarks and progress monitoring for the lower grade to implementing consistent reading interventions kindergarten through fifth grade.

We have discovered having a single person to consistently interact with students during the testing process has allowed the development of trusting relationships for students and staff. This consistency has produced a single contact for data collection and analysis, which has improved our intervention practices, our individual Tier 2 classroom instruction, and our data diving efforts. We have grown from a shotgun approach to reading intervention and instruction to a succinct, focused, data driven system which has improved our students learning through improved teacher instruction.