

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 Mrs. Christy Spielman

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

Official School Name Meadowlark Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1410 DeSmet Avenue

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

Sheridan WY 82801-5517
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Sheridan County

Telephone (307) 672-3786

Fax (307) 464-3105

Web site/URL
https://scsd2.com/schools/meadowla
rk-elementary

E-mail christy.spielman@scsd2.com

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. Craig Dougherty

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail craig.dougherty@scsd2.com

District Name Sheridan County School District #2 Tel. (307) 674-7405

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Ms. Ann Perkins

(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):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 6 K-12 schools
- 10 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 | 24 | 29 | 53 |
| 1 | 25 | 13 | 38 |
| 2 | 22 | 29 | 51 |
| 3 | 23 | 33 | 56 |
| 4 | 34 | 33 | 67 |
| 5 | 28 | 29 | 57 |
| 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 | 156 | 166 | 322 |

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 90 % White
 - 4 % 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 economy in Sheridan, Wyoming is prone to fluctuation due to jobs impacted by the energy sector, especially coal. During the 2017-2018 school year, the energy sector was performing lower and resulted in lay offs and reduced hours. Also, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad closed its Sheridan stop, initiating the loss of jobs in the Sheridan area. Economics play a large role in the mobility rate of our students.

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 | 27 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year | 26 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 53 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017 | 331 |
| (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: 0%
0 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 31%
Total number students who qualify: 99

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
38 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>8</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>21</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 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 | 1 |
| Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 27 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc. | 8 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 11 |
| Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 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 12:1

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 | 96% | 96% | 96% | 96% | 96% |
| High school graduation rate | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

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

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

| 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. 2012

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

Every Child, Every Minute, Every Day. Meadowlark Elementary is committed to ensuring high levels of learning through collaboration, continuous improvement, and positive school community.

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

Meadowlark Elementary School is a K-5, middle-class neighborhood school with a yearly average enrollment of approximately 320 students. The school prides itself on valuing every student who walks through its doors. As a staff, we truly believe every child has the ability to learn every single day, and we provide multiple programs to ensure their academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs are met. The school is home to the district multi-handicapped classroom, and our staff and students have thrived in this diverse community of learners. Acceptance and tolerance are key components of our school climate, and our school community shows great pride in being Meadowlark Bobcats.

Thirteen years ago marked a significant change in the development of Meadowlark Elementary, a milestone that guided us to the learning success our students are experiencing today. Through positive leadership and the implementation of the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) philosophy and framework, our notion of education and what a school should look and sound like began to shift. Interactions within our community became respectful, and collaboration was an expectation for everyone. Teams began to set common goals and work together to achieve them. All children and adults were learning, and their growth was being celebrated. High expectations were established for everyone involved in an effort to work together to build a positive school community. Meadowlark not only could see its mission more clearly, it also became more committed to the fulfillment of its mission: "Every Child, Every Minute, Every Day." Our mission statement is clear and evident in all that we do and believe. We periodically compare our actions to our mission statement to ensure that our efforts correlate with what we believe.

Now, thirteen years and three principals later, PLC collaboration is still the foundation of Meadowlark Elementary and the key to our success. We continue to set yearly, schoolwide goals that revolve around literacy, writing, and mathematics. Each collaborative, third through fifth grade team sets a goal based on the state assessment, while our primary grades base their goals on local assessments. Every learning goal in the building is tied to a measurable data set. Cohesively, grade-level teams continue to analyze student data, use them to guide instruction, set maintainable academic goals, and celebrate when we meet those goals. This process is the strength of Meadowlark, because it gives us a framework to identify strengths and weaknesses at the school and individual student level. Once a student's unique abilities have been identified, we are able to provide intervention and enrichment to individual students. Essentially, we set our sights on where we want to go and take the necessary action to reach our destination. Consequently, many school districts have sent teams of teachers to observe our PLC process.

Meadowlark Elementary was previously recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School in 2012. This recognition was celebrated by the community and acknowledged by a state senator visiting our school. Receiving the Blue Ribbon confirmed that the PLC process was working for our students. Our school climate improved following the Blue Ribbon, mostly due to the validation that teachers, students, and families got from the recognition that we are a high achieving school.

Numerous factors make Meadowlark Elementary worthy of Blue Ribbon status. Due to our focus on student learning, our students consistently score high on state and district assessments in all areas. The climate in the school is outstanding, and along with our academic success, we have traditions that aid in building and maintaining a strong sense of school community. An example of a strong tradition at Meadowlark is our trimester celebration assemblies, where students and staff are recognized for achievement in all areas. Our annual activities also include a schoolwide chili supper and carnival where parents and staff work together to create a social bonding experience for all. We offer Muffins for Moms and Donuts for Dudes to provide time for parents to interact with their children in a fun, social manner at school. The Parent Teacher Organization is dynamic; they act as ambassadors for the school and raise money for learning tools, such as technology in the classroom, playground equipment, field trips, and assemblies. Meadowlark Elementary also has a strong tradition of parent involvement in the classroom. The success of the students is directly related to our implementation of the PLC model. Shared leadership has elevated our school to a level where all staff, students, and stakeholders are involved and committed to excellence. Meadowlark's community is very respectful and positive, motivating students to show pride in themselves and ownership in their learning.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Meadowlark Elementary believes that every student can reach high levels of literacy learning. If you walk into any classroom, you will see the Balanced Literacy framework in use to teach language arts. Within this framework, teachers apply strategies in whole group, small group, pairs, and individual settings to deliver explicit instruction. Balanced Literacy makes a strong connection between reading and writing, structure, and author's craft. Read alouds, shared reading, shared writing, independent reading, guided reading, and literature circles are implemented to meet the needs of learners. We use an intentional approach to draw connections between reading and writing, while growing students' skills in both areas. Our teachers believe that reading and writing cannot be taught in isolation and that thoughtful teachers make natural connections between the two.

Meadowlark Elementary addresses standards through proficiency scales, a tool developed by teachers to represent a progression of learning goals. To reach these vertically-aligned learning targets, Meadowlark does not utilize a published curriculum. Instead, instruction is based on an ongoing, teacher-developed Balanced Literacy framework. Research shows that this is the best means of reaching every learner at his or her level.

Each year, Meadowlark teachers enthusiastically work to meet the needs of individual students. Vertically-aligned assessments are continuously revised to better reach the standards and guide our instruction. These more formal assessments are implemented throughout the year, while running records, on-the-spot feedback, and common formative assessments are used ongoingly to determine classroom trends and move instruction forward.

Technology is an important literacy tool at Meadowlark. Classrooms have 1:1 devices, and students have access to apps and websites that provide a variety of texts at differentiated levels. Providing the opportunity for kids to learn and progress at their own level will ultimately help them enjoy reading and writing and become lifelong learners.

1b. Mathematics:

Meadowlark Elementary aims to create lifelong mathematicians who understand the conceptual properties of math instead of simply following a set of steps. We emphasize differentiated instruction, which includes whole-group lessons, small-group work, and one-on-one tutoring when necessary. Meadowlark's PLC philosophy means that every teacher is responsible for every child, and intervention and enrichment groups are used to better meet the needs of our students.

Teachers use a variety of assessment tools to diagnose student needs. The Everyday Math curriculum, which is used in grades K-5, provides a built-in platform to assess individual standards. Formative and summative assessment is used, as well as observational assessment. Within the last two years, the school has also used interim and modular The Wyoming Test of Proficiency and Progress (WY-TOPP) online to guide instruction.

When a student's needs fall outside of Everyday Math, supplementation of basic fact practice, number sense acquisition, and problem-solving enrichment are used on an individual and small-group basis. The Math Recovery program is another excellent intervention that uses unique methods to ensure struggling students have the best chance at achieving lifelong mathematical success.

Technology holds a large place in Meadowlark's math instruction, because it lends itself well to differentiation and 21st Century skill building. Classrooms have 1:1 technology, along with websites and apps, that provide individualized practice for students while teachers work with small groups. On top of

individual web programs, teachers use Smart and Google platforms to digitize instruction and model directions on screen. Students get visual and audio cues to better facilitate their math understanding.

1c. Science:

At Meadowlark, we believe that science stimulates curiosity, creativity, and problem solving. It is not simply taught in isolation; it is woven throughout the curriculum. This approach, employing the Next Generation Science Standards' Cross Cutting Concepts, allows us to include Disciplinary Core Ideas throughout our school day, including writing, literacy block, and intervention/enrichment. This creates curriculum that keeps students engaged, while studying applicable skills and issues that foster lifelong learning.

Science is the content area where project-based learning gets to shine. Building, hypothesizing, exploring, and answering student-generated questions are at the root of our instruction. In conjunction with the NGSS, students are learning engineering practices along with each science discipline. We focus on an inquiry-based approach, allowing students to take ownership of their learning through their self-generated questioning.

The students often generate wonderfully original projects that incorporate art, music, and technology. Projects to date have included ecosystem murals, natural disaster news reels, songs with science lyrics, Rube Goldberg machines, circuit boards, and more. This student-driven approach to learning requires Meadowlark students to stretch their problem-solving skills and apply the Engineering practices to any academic subject, life-skill, or future career interest.

Our scientific, project-based learning also allows us to employ authentic, performance-based assessments in several cross-curricular areas, including writing, reading, presentation, collaboration, and communication. The employing of these crucial, 21st century skills creates a differentiated program that allows students to take ownership of their own learning, choosing topics woven throughout the NGSS. We include formative assessments based on student projects to inform instruction and complete units with summative assessments centered around reading informational standards.

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

Our Wyoming State Social Studies Standards were developed to inspire civic competence among students, thus creating citizens prepared to participate in a culturally diverse, democratic society. Meadowlark teachers use social studies and civic learning as a framework to build our school climate and connect us to our local community and beyond. Similar to our approach in science, these standards are not taught in isolation but woven throughout our curriculum to enhance engagement and provide students with purpose and a personal connection to their learning.

Rich state history and community connections allow students to experience history and civics first hand. Local field trip experiences give students the opportunity to participate in mock trials in the courtroom, have a day in the life of a dude rancher, and undergo the day-to-day trials of trekking the Oregon Trail, to name a few. Meadowlark enhances these experiences and brings history to life using technological resources as well. Video clips, virtual tours, and historical photography build schema and a deeper understanding of historical events.

Assessment of these standards, once again, mimics that of our science approach. Shared experiences and project-based learning allow us to employ authentic, performance-based assessments in several cross-curricular areas. In these projects, students are encouraged to analyze their own and other people's opinions on important issues. Projects to date have included creating scripted trolley tours of our town, running a mock coal mining businesses, learning how to tan deer hide, trying to start a fire using flint and steel, building a Native American hoop and stick game using willow branches, and becoming historical figures during our Living Wax Museum.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Meadowlark Elementary School facilitates student growth of essential skills and knowledge in areas beyond the academics of literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies. The school offers students a plethora of opportunities to learn and grow in arts, physical education, health, nutrition, technology, library, media, character-building, and career and life skills.

Fine arts are supported through many different avenues within our school. All students receive general music twice a week, where they are learning an assortment of musical standards, including how to read music and play a variety of instruments. Once a week, student in grades 1-5 also have a choice of orchestra or piano instruction, and students in grades 4-5 can choose to participate in Meadowlark's school choir. Our school performs a winter and spring program that incorporates all grades, and other musical opportunities include a weekly student talent show every Friday morning and choir/orchestra/band performances several times throughout the year.

Students also receive general art once a week for an hour, which incorporates the study of influential artists and the cultures of the world. Art opportunities outside the classroom include after school art classes and visits to the local art museum, a permanent school gallery, and the opportunity for 5th-graders to show their work in our local art museum.

The health and physical education department delivers a comprehensive, sequential K-5 curriculum. This curriculum engages students in fitness-related activities for lifetime wellness and healthy decisions. Every student receives one hour of PE per week, and grades 1-5 receive a half hour of health each week. Students test their physical fitness with our Fitnessgram events, and we also promote healthy eating by providing a daily healthy snack.

Our school is geared towards teaching responsible use of library, technology, and media. All students have weekly access to the library, and half-hour class times include lessons on research skills, connections to classroom literacy standards, and cultural studies. Within the regular classroom, students receive instruction in keyboarding, research strategies, and technology use. Coding and robotics programs are carried out across grade levels. Classrooms have started using Scratch Jr., Scratch, and the BootUp PD curriculum to teach coding basics, and robotics programs are offered in and after school. We have a 1:1 device program, with K-2 utilizing iPads and grades 3-5 utilizing Chromebooks. Some of the programs used include Google Classroom, Edulastic, Seesaw, Lexia Core5, IXL, Chrome Music Labs, and Hapara.

To build career and life skills, our specialist teachers from art, music, and physical education, the librarian/media tech, our school counselor and literacy coordinator, and the principal have formed a specialists' PLC. This team has developed a citizenship program to implement a schoolwide character education curriculum based on needs we see within our student body, including the following characteristics: acceptance, creative problem solving, accountability, empathy, teamwork, and face-to-face time. Within this program, we have developed anchor charts to help identify and use common language to strengthen these traits. Each character trait is used as a theme for a month, and the trait theme is highlighted on the daily announcements. The principal gives an example and/or reminder of how to demonstrate that behavior, and teachers discuss these traits in the classroom. By collaborating schoolwide, we aim to make our expectations clearer and more consistent to students.

At Meadowlark, positivity is one of our main goals, and we recognize positive student behavior on a daily basis. Each year, we try something new and fresh to keep the students interested in demonstrating their exemplary behaviors. Currently, we are using a system we call Brag Tags. Each brag tag represents an expectation, and when a student is caught following the expectation or is consistently meeting the

expectation, they are given a tag they can wear on a lanyard or put on their backpacks. We also send kids down to the principal's office to be personally recognized for their excellent conduct. To help students understand the expectations, the school counselor put together a series of videos using a muppet named Milo. In the videos, Milo commentates as students act out safe, respectful, and responsible ways of behaving in school.

3. Special Populations:

Meadowlark has a multidisciplinary, highly-qualified staff with specialized instructional capabilities to create and maintain appropriate programming for all students.

At Meadowlark, highly-capable students are given opportunities to work with learners of similar abilities in a pull-out GATE program. These students work at an accelerated pace and greater depth in a project-based learning environment on topics related to the real world. The Independent Study program also provides teacher-nominated, highly-motivated students with the opportunity to research and present topics of their choice. In the regular classroom, highly-capable students are enriched through pre and post testing and extension menus designed to move individual students forward academically. When warranted, students are subject-grade skipped to further meet their needs.

Meadowlark's special education and at-risk teams use ongoing, appropriate, and functional assessments and universal screeners for identification and progress monitoring. Data is used to provide feedback and make improvements on students' individualized instruction and targeted skills, as well as document present levels of performance for the IEPs and determine placements. Meadowlark provides individualized instruction to all students who are eligible for services under IDEA. These include instruction and practice opportunities in the environment that is most appropriate and least restrictive for each individual.

Meadowlark is also a Reading and Math Recovery school, where teachers work with first grade students who are identified as at-risk after being assessed using the Observation Survey and Strength in Number assessment. These students work one-on-one or in small groups with highly-qualified and trained teachers for 30 minutes every day to accelerate growth. Additionally, students who do not qualify for special education services meet in flexible, ability groups to receive a boost with a reading or math specialist concentrating on the area of deficit.

Students who demonstrate behavioral struggles with peers and staff, students who struggle with social interactions, and students with skill deficits in the area of executive functioning are supported through a system of tiered interventions. Individualized programming designed to help students develop skills, identify self-regulation strategies, and teach replacement behaviors is done during small group and on-on-one instruction. Whole class instruction in social skills and expectations and accommodations to classroom environments help address the sensory needs and learning styles of all students and increase student's ability to be successful in the school environment.

Meadowlark prides itself on providing grade-level content to students with the most severe disabilities. This is done through regular attendance in general education classes with intense support and significant adaptations/modifications, as well as through the development of curriculum that is directly aligned to core content standards and Wyoming's extended content standards. Furthermore, Meadowlark designs complete individualized programming that imbeds important functional concepts such as communication, motor ability, adaptive behavior, self-care, self direction, mobility, life skills and social and emotional skills to help promote each student's independence.

In conclusion, Meadowlark celebrates the whole student and provides all diverse learners with complete programming and support to ensure quality educational access.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Every Child, Every Minute, Every Day: This statement exemplifies our core belief. The entire staff at Meadowlark Elementary has worked to create an engaging and motivating environment. When you walk through our school, you will see positive interactions between adults and students, not only in teaching, but in conversations everywhere.

First and foremost, we are here to teach. Our content delivery is specifically designed to draw kids in and keep them engaged. When teachers are excited about what they are teaching, kids are more eager to learn. Students' interests are at the forefront of what we teach, using a balance of resources to deliver information to students in engaging ways. They are given opportunities to learn with a diverse array of motivational technology tools for research, practice, communication, and publishing opportunities. Students are encouraged to be self-motivated in learning endeavors. We differentiate instruction and provide levels of scaffolding based on student needs to maximize independence, creativity, and success.

Our students are explicitly taught valuable social and emotional skills in the classroom by our school counselor, who also works with students one-on-one whenever there is a social or emotional need. Our specialists have implemented character-building lessons into their music, P.E., and art classes, which are built upon by classroom teachers and support staff. All staff members strive to make personal connections with as many students as possible, taking the time to understand who each child truly is. Our building is a safe place to make mistakes, and we want our students to trust that no one is going to give up on them. Every adult at Meadowlark collectively looks at all students as our students. We are all Meadowlark Bobcats, and we take a lot of pride in caring for each other.

Meadowlark's PLC effectively shows value to all members of our staff. Individual talents are utilized, and everyone has the opportunity to contribute to our positive school culture. Our school personnel are exceptional at sharing responsibilities. Everyone steps out of their professional role to assist where help is needed. We fill in the gaps, and we are all involved in decisions concerning the future of our students, our school, and its wellbeing. Meadowlark staff members are not just people who work together. We genuinely care about each other and make an effort to get to know each other beyond the work that we do with our students. We believe that showing kindness in our words and actions is vital to our positive sense of community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Meadowlark Elementary, our staff is committed to involving families and the entire community to ensure the academic and personal success of our students. Communication and collaboration with parents is a key component of our school environment.

Each year, families have the opportunity to attend our open house. This sets up students for success in the coming school year by establishing positive relationships with the faculty and school before the school year starts. Parent-teacher conferences are another opportunity for teachers, parents, and students to communicate academic progress and goals twice a year. These interactions, as well as the ongoing communication teachers have with parents, are essential to student achievement.

It is important for parents to feel welcome in our school, and we have an open-door policy at Meadowlark. Parents are invited to our school-wide assemblies, and these are an amazing way for students to be recognized and celebrated for their academic and personal accomplishments. Students are celebrated in several areas each trimester. Awards are given out for reading, math, and writing achievement. In addition, students are also recognized and celebrated for achieving personal goals in character traits. This helps motivate students to continue to grow and work for further achievement. The parent feedback that we receive is overwhelmingly positive. Parents, students, and school personnel feel appreciated and grateful to be a part of the Meadowlark community.

There is an abundance of community involvement at Meadowlark, providing authentic learning experiences and support for our children. The local banks help teach our students the importance of saving and spending responsibly. Field trips to local businesses and historic landmarks teach our students about their community and its history. The WYO Theater and Brinton Museum give opportunities for cultural art experiences. Several community members are also invited into the school to bring their expertise and experience to life in the classroom.

The community works alongside the school to fund extra resources to enhance learning. Some of these school and community resources are Dominoes, Box Top for Education, a 50-50 Raffle, our Annual Chili Supper, and the Scholastic Book Fair. Our community gives generously to the Food Group to make sure our students have healthy and nutritious food for families in need, and the Healthy Habits Healthy Kids program educates families about the important link between nutritious foods and academic achievement.

3. Professional Development:

Expanding teacher knowledge, creating deeper understanding of theory and research-based best practices, providing ample time for active learning, and purposeful reflection are the essence of Meadowlark's professional development philosophy.

At Meadowlark, professional development exists in a myriad of ways. Reading assigned professional text is a weekly expectation. Rich discussions are summarized and recorded on team agendas during weekly PLC meeting, and literature is selected based on student needs. In turn, professional capacity is developed and strengthened for all staff members. Currently, 3rd-5th-grade PLC teams are reading *Reading Non-fiction: Notice and Note*; K-2 Teams are reading *Every Young Child is a Reader*; paraprofessionals are reading about the running record process, and area specialists are focusing on behaviors and executive functioning.

Whole-staff sessions occur on a weekly basis and are guided by the principal, literacy coordinator, or staff members. The session format generally includes reflection, collective discussions, modeling classroom best practices, and differentiation for the various occupations within the school. Topics have included upholding our vision and mission, evaluating classroom behaviors and management, integrating up-to-date technology, analyzing recorded classroom lessons to enhance our literacy and math knowledge, aligning vertical instruction, thoroughly discussing CCSS Standards, and analyzing data.

Another mode of professional development is reflection through the facilitation of an instructional coach. Coaching cycles may include a pre- and post-observation, video analysis, visits about timely resources, and in-depth discussions on professional text. Furthermore, the coach provides opportunities for teachers to observe and/or model within our building and throughout the district. Visits require observation protocols, a facilitator, purpose-driven objectives, and a debriefing period. This framework allows for the review of student artifacts and the generation of instructional questions that create a possible shift in instruction or theory.

Equally important is Meadowlark's newest development approach this year, *Behind the Glass*. Guided by an instructional coach/leader, an educator will teach one student or a small group behind a large plate of glass, much like a one-sided investigation window. Observers (teachers, paraprofessionals, coaches, speech therapists, and the counselor) watch the learning as it is happening in the moment. Analysis and discussions address how to best serve the student(s) going forward in the classroom. Providing Meadowlark's staff with professional development opportunities to nudge their edge of learning and the chance to question and reflect has impacted student learning significantly. It also strongly upholds Meadowlark's core belief: "Every Child, Every Day, Every Minute."

4. School Leadership:

Meadowlark Elementary School operates under a shared leadership philosophy. The building structure consists of one principal, one educational facilitator, and roughly forty-five certified and classified staff. The educational facilitator spends most of her time modeling literacy and/or math lessons and facilitating

team meetings. Additionally, she works to support at-risk students in literacy. The school structure also consists of grade-level teams, which include both certified and classified staff and range from classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, student teachers, counselors, and the principal.

The primary focus of all team meetings is student learning. Minutes from each meeting, documentation of formative assessments and rubrics, and exemplars of student work are kept in a digital file for easy reference. This system allows the principal to monitor the implementation of policies and to support staff in their endeavor of meeting the expectations of our school community.

The school principal takes a very active role in the education of all students. She is an instructional leader that team-teaches and models lessons for staff. The principal is a member of all PLC teams and attends meetings to offer support and guidance. During Intervention/Enrichment (I/E) time, she also takes a small group of students and provides instruction based on the current outcome being taught in the classroom. When needed, instruction consists of intervention on a skill with which students are struggling or enrichment on a skill students have already mastered.

In a shared leadership environment, it is very important that staff view themselves as a team. Each staff member is asked to lead team meetings and share data and successful teaching strategies. Our staff constantly prides themselves on being a great team and becoming even more collaborative each year. Our definition is simple; a great team is a group of individuals who refuse to let each other down. The staff and community of Meadowlark School truly believe this. We take responsibility for our students' learning and hold each other accountable by sharing data and creating shared goals. At the opening of every year, the principal organizes staff development to help the faculty meet these school-wide goals. Motivational and team building activities are intertwined within the training. While operating under this leadership philosophy, Meadowlark Elementary School has continued to demonstrate high achievement in student learning as evidenced by state and local assessments.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Meadowlark Elementary School’s success has been significantly influenced through Professional Learning Communities. PLC teams meet weekly and are guided by an agenda based upon student need. Within the PLC meeting, students are placed into targeted Intervention and Enrichment (I/E) groups, and all staff members ensure I/E times are protected to support Meadowlark’s overarching philosophy, “Every Child, Every Minute, Every Day.” Without a doubt, this collaborative best practice has been instrumental in our school’s success since 2007.

At Meadowlark Elementary School, PLC spans kindergarten through fifth grade. Grade level teams include classroom teachers, principal, interventionists, literacy coach, area specialists, and paraprofessionals. Teams meet weekly to collaborate and focus on four foundational instructional questions: What do we expect our students to learn? How will we know when they have learned? How will we respond when they have not learned? How will we respond if they already know it?

Each grade-level team follows an established framework, and teams determine a specific outcome based upon student and content-specific needs revolving around Common Core State Standards. The framework is as follows: a pre-assessment is administered and scored utilizing a common rubric, results and data are analyzed and recorded in order to place students into I/E groups, and I/E groups are developed to allow differentiation and smaller-group instruction when needed.

At this point in the framework, a proficiency percentage goal is created for the entire grade level. An I/E Cycle begins, and groups typically meet for 30 minutes each day. Summative assessments are given at the end of an I/E Cycle, utilizing an assessment similar to the pre-assessment. Post I/E Cycle, data are recorded on the all-school Meadowlark Outcome Data sheet. This is an effective data tracking tool and is referred to throughout the year for all staff members.

Professional Learning Communities are a non-negotiable practice at Meadowlark, because they promote a culture of continuous improvement for all. They build a shared knowledge about best practice based on professional research and provide collaborators a common language. Members of the Meadowlark community are firm believers in PLC, because teams continually revisit the four guiding questions, create real-time assessments, and engage in professional dialogue with colleagues about what is critical and essential for every student’s success. It is a practice in which the outcomes may look different from year-to-year, because stakeholders practice reflection and refinement continually to invigorate the educational process. Meadowlark is decidedly committed to using PLC with fidelity, because students achieve high-levels of academic proficiency year after year, and teachers, paraprofessionals, interventionists and leadership continue to strengthen their professional capacity.