

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Horseshoe Trails Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3210 W Sentinel Rock Road PO Box 426  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Cave Creek State AZ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 85327-0426

County Maricopa County

Telephone (480) 272-8500 Fax (480) 907-6643

Web site/URL https://www.ccusd93.org/htes E-mail aaron.pettinato@gmail.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\* Dr. Debbi Burdick E-mail dburdick@ccusd93.net  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Cave Creek Unified District Tel. (480) 575-2000

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

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 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 2014 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: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 TOTAL

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

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	41	39	80
1	48	38	86
2	46	42	88
3	47	37	84
4	49	42	91
5	60	40	100
6	42	44	86
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	333	282	615

\*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
  - 3 % Asian
  - 0 % Black or African American
  - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 80 % White
  - 6 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 6%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	35
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	609
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

Afrikaans, Burmese, Italian, Mandarin, Spanish, Thai

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %  
9 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %

Total number students who qualify: 33

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

79 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>3</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>20</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>6</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>28</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>25</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	26
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.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

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 24:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	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 2019.

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

It is the mission of Horseshoe Trails Elementary School to create a thinking and learning community in which individuals think, work and expect the best from themselves and others as global citizens.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Families living outside of Horseshoe Trails Elementary School boundaries are welcome to apply for open enrollment at any time. Applications are approved by the principal based on available classroom space.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Horseshoe Trails Elementary School is a K - 6 grades campus that resides in the Cave Creek Unified School District, just a few miles north of Phoenix. Our school is the newest in the district at just 15 years of age. We service students in Cave Creek, Carefree, Scottsdale, Phoenix, and Maricopa County. The majority of our students come from affluent homes with educated parents. Our families and community are supportive and involved, yet, at times, can be very demanding too. As a staff, we welcome the pressure and high expectations, taking great pride in providing our students with rigor, relationships, and relevance.

Although our school boasts many progressive programs, including Chinese Immersion and Horsemanship, it's our people that truly set us apart. For starters, in grades kindergarten through second, we have a total of twelve teachers who make up the three teams. Six of the twelve teachers have more than ten years of teaching experience at Horseshoe Trails! In addition, grade level team leaders in kindergarten through third grades are all Gifted Endorsed on their Arizona teaching certificate; and, team leaders in fourth through sixth grades all have a Master's Degree in Education. Our literacy specialist, who also serves as an instructional coach, has her Gifted Endorsement, Master's Degree in Education, and is National Board Certified. To put it simply, our teachers are talented, passionate, committed, and, most importantly, cohesive. And, as a staff, we commit ourselves to modeling our school wide expectation of having Strong Character, Strong Work Ethic, and Strong Relationships.

Strong character is something that public schools need to actively nurture and model. Students who recognize the importance of having strong character will often rise into leadership roles and choose to manifest their strong character traits into acts of service. Horseshoe Trails actively encourages and promotes many different opportunities for leadership and service in a conscious effort to build character in our students.

In November, all students, staff, and families are invited to join in a celebration of our Veterans. Students call their Veteran family members to our stage where they are honored in a school assembly. Veterans are proud and grateful as their elementary relation shares their name and years of service. The student body pays tribute by singing patriotic songs that are practiced and rehearsed in their Music classes for weeks leading up to the event. Moreover, our Horseshoe Trails Flag Corps posts the colors at the beginning of our Veterans Day Assembly.

Flag Corps, an extra curricular club, raises and lowers the flags at Horseshoe Trails every school day. Flag Corps members are knowledgeable about the flag code and have been adopted and honored by the local Daughters of the American Revolution chapter for their leadership and service. Flag Corps members are our 4th, 5th, and 6th grade leaders on campus. And in 6th grade, the culminating year at our school, students have the opportunity to be honored in our end of year Awards Assembly with the American Legion Award. The award signifies Courage, Honor, Patriotism, Leadership, and Service.

Another example of how we build leadership, in ways that are different from other schools, is our very own homegrown horsemanship program. Stallion Strides is an equine-based character building program that you will not find in any other public school in the country. Working with horses in our arena on campus, students are able to develop a healthy respect for these amazing animals and each other. Our Stallion Strides mission is to provide all students the opportunity to strengthen character through a hands-on equine experience by creating a positive and safe environment while promoting sensitivity, confidence, and independence.

In this unique and highly effective program, students complete three 30-minute lessons involving two students, one horse, and one professionally trained equine staff member. Safety is our number one priority and all work with horses is done on the ground; there is no riding in this program. Grooming, feeding, and handling a horse allows students to focus on something besides themselves. Caring for a horse teaches children how to appropriately care for others. Horses look to us for safety and leadership through nonverbal communication. Students learn body language and voice inflection can affect how a horse responds. Through these experiences, students are able to develop mindful attention, build positive relationships with

others, and, most importantly, instill a strong sense of self-confidence.

As a way to model our expectation of having Strong Character, Strong Work Ethic, and Strong Relationships, this past school year, we were grateful to help a neighboring school district by offering horsemanship sessions to emotionally disabled (ED) students from an impoverished area in Phoenix. Being labeled as emotionally disabled means these students have experienced trauma in their lives and struggle with appropriate relationships and socialization. They were transported to our arena for classes with the horses and received meaningful instruction, quality time with beautiful horses, and memories that will hopefully last a lifetime.

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

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

**1a.** Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

Our instructional focus at Horseshoe Trails Elementary School (HTES) is multifaceted. First and foremost, we aim to increase student engagement through cooperative learning and personalized instruction. Secondly, we integrate technology to enhance learning experiences and student outcomes. Lastly, all students on our campus learn Mandarin Chinese as a second language so they're prepared to be citizens in a global economy. Most importantly, however, our teaching staff believes that every student is unique and deserves the power to shape a personal path towards success.

Our teachers use best practices in the classroom through the implementation of personalized learning, flexible grouping of students, and differentiated instruction. During math and literacy blocks, students rotate through stations or have a menu of activities and/or tasks that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual learners. Our teachers practice natural reteaching of content to students who may struggle with the mastery of a concept. Authentic differentiation in instruction is key to accelerating the learning of students.

Teachers infuse classroom management and instruction with a wide variety of Kagan cooperative learning structures. For example, they use Kagan structures for team building, strengthening positive relationships, and increasing student engagement. Primary students learn to share with their partners and reinforce skills with structures, such as Quiz Quiz Trade, Take Off, Touch Down, and Rally Robin. Intermediate students continue to learn to work cooperatively with classmates and build self esteem through structures, such as Numbered Heads Together, Round Rally Robin, and Rally Coach. Our teachers use the Kagan heterogeneous seating groups to maximize learning opportunities throughout the school day. By increasing student engagement, the academic achievement gap closes and students become more successful academically and socially.

**1b.** Reading/English language arts

Our foundational curriculum for English Language Arts (ELA) is by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and called Into Reading. The curriculum is research-based and maximizes growth through data-driven differentiation and assessments. It is comprehensive, scaffolded and offers extensions and support for many different types of learners. Into Reading is rigorous and promotes critical thinking skills.

Our ELA learning standards are organized into thematic units. Each unit starts with an essential question, a graphic organizer to introduce the key concept, and an attention-grabbing anticipatory set to spark curiosity. Many teachers use anchor charts which are used to guide children as they prepare to learn. Anchor charts are an effective tool to set the stage and expectations for the role of the student.

Many new vocabulary words are introduced to students each week. Daily activities are provided to ensure that these words become part of the students' everyday language. Each day, students have opportunities to listen to the teacher instruct for a small portion of the lesson using vocabulary appropriately and naturally in a variety of contexts. Afterwards, students are provided with opportunities for guided practice using the vocabulary in small groups with visits from the teacher. Students conclude the vocabulary portion of the lesson with independent practice and an opportunity to show mastery or, at the very least, academic progress.

For primary grades, a strong phonics component is part of the daily instruction as well. Picture cards are available to share with students; and, on the back of the cards, there is an explanation and various activities suggested to use as a guide to instruct students to build phonemic awareness. The students are taught a spelling pattern and are required to use the spelling pattern in words that may not have been practiced that week. Spelling words are also spiraled and are brought back on future tests either as mystery words or in

sentence dictation.

The students' textbooks are consumable which allows for the students to annotate literary elements. Additional writing activities are included in the student edition to make meaningful connections between reading and writing and allow them to reflect on their thoughts while reading.

Also, each classroom is equipped with a leveled library. The library has multiple levels with class sets of 15 titles in each level to accommodate the needs of all learners. Along with each title is a lesson plan for the teacher to follow to guide their students in meaningful lessons to strengthen their skills as a reader. The instructor can use these books at their small group station. The books can also be assigned at a technology station offering a greater range of books from different grade levels. The teacher can then assign a comprehension test to check for understanding of the content.

The writing portion of our ELA curriculum provides focal texts to use as a springboard for new writing assignments. The lessons guide the students to work through the writing process slowly so that they see the process of good writers in a methodical way. Teachers offer many opportunities for students to work collaboratively, independently and in teacher-led small groups focusing on the Six Traits of Writing and the Writer's Process.

In order to promote data-driven decision making, kindergarten through 2nd grade classroom teachers implement formative assessments in ELA that are aligned with the curriculum to check for mastery of skills and identify students who need additional support. Students are then pulled to meet in small groups to receive lessons that focus on missed skills. Students in grades 3rd-6th are assessed three times a year in ELA using the program School City. These assessments are summative and align to pacing guides for each grade level. Upon completion of the assessment, teachers review the data and then meet with students in small groups to re-teach each standard and concepts that students were not proficient in. Data meetings are held with each grade level team to discuss classroom and grade level data. We focus on assessment alignment to pacing guides, what went well in instruction and discuss what areas the teacher may need further support on when teaching concepts. Teachers reflect on who is being successful in their classroom and then create goals for students that need additional support. Students who need support receive instruction in small groups. Additionally, classroom teachers routinely implement formative assessments in ELA after completion of units to guide instruction and evaluate students for mastery of skills.

### **1c. Mathematics**

We teach math in a variety of ways to meet the needs of our students. We use the curriculum, Go Math, as the base of our instruction. This program's scope and sequence provides us with a solid plan at the beginning of each year and it breaks down the larger standards into more manageable, teachable lessons. We use this resource, along with other supplemental resources, to plan our instruction.

Teachers use a variety of Personalized Learning strategies when teaching math. The most common are Station Rotation and Flex Playlists. Each strategy offers students with direct instruction at their level and opportunities for practice. Teachers will typically do a mini lesson with the whole group, where they introduce the daily objective and any vocabulary that students will need to know. After that, teachers break students into groups by ability level based on a pre-assessment. This ensures that students get the instruction they need in order to be successful. The groups change constantly depending on the standard being taught. While the teacher delivers direct instruction to each small group, the other groups are working on meaningful math tasks. We use the online learning platform, Imagine Math, because it meets students at their level, delivers instruction, and provides practice to fill any gaps that the students may have. Students could also be working on a spiral review assignment, playing a game, practicing math facts or working on a project.

Teachers plan ways to check for understanding throughout their small group lesson, as well as from the work that students produce that day. Based on student work, teachers plan to either reteach or enrich students. Go Math has a built-in reteach and enrich program that our teachers use to bring students to mastery and beyond. Furthermore, kindergarten through 2nd grade classroom teachers implement formative

assessments that are aligned with the curriculum to check for mastery of skills and identify students who need additional support. Students are then pulled to meet in small groups to receive lessons that focus on missed skills. Students in grades 3rd-6th are assessed three times a year in Mathematics using the program School City. These assessments are summative and align to pacing guides for each grade level. Upon completion of the assessment, teachers review the data and then meet with students in small groups to re-teach each standard and concepts that students were not proficient in. Data meetings are held with each grade level team to discuss classroom and grade level data. We focus on assessment alignment to pacing guides, what went well in instruction and discuss what areas the teacher may need further support on when teaching concepts. Teachers reflect on who is being successful in their classroom and then create goals for students that need additional support. Students who need support receive instruction in small groups. Additionally, classroom teachers routinely implement formative assessments in Math after completion of units to guide instruction and evaluate students for mastery of skills.

Teachers work tirelessly to find supplemental resources for meaningful learning. We find many activities for hands-on learning and try to relate math to real-world experiences as much as we can. We use manipulatives, everyday objects and situations that students can connect with to help teach our students different math concepts.

#### **1d. Science**

For science and social studies instruction, we apply the learning standards and objectives through a community approach, integrating paired and team learning as a part of daily lessons. Our focus with both science and social studies involves self-directed inquiry and authentic learning. Horseshoe Trails students, working through a variety of modalities, build knowledge and skills in an environment that is structured around project-based learning when possible. This approach lends itself to problem solving that can be individually driven, or centered around a community of learners.

Our elementary scholars work consistently with academic vocabulary and with graphic organizers that prompt students to assess content in relation to prior knowledge. Students are encouraged to evaluate new learning from a variety of perspectives. In science, we try to consistently engage in activities that apply either the scientific method or engineering process so that academic concepts become tangible. One of our primary tools in creating hands-on experiences for students to learn are FOSS (Full Option Science Systems) Kits. FOSS Kits are organized by theme and aligned to our Arizona Academic Standards, providing materials and resources that provide dynamic, engaging and meaningful learning opportunities for students.

Our school's Innovation Lab is a unique environment outside of their typical classroom experience where our students can explore and create with 3D printers, coding tools, models, electrical kits, simple machines, and other hands-on tools. All classroom teachers have the ability to schedule visits to the Innovation Lab to facilitate different STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) activities and challenges. Our students and staff love STEAM because it encourages and requires exploration and creativity that build autonomy in students. We believe these types of learning experiences encourage students to be problem solvers and independent thinkers.

Content integration is essential for students to acquire a deeper understanding of content. One way our teachers integrate science and social studies is by using the online learning platform, Achieve3000. This program allows teachers to create their own calendar and decide which articles to assign and when to assign them. Teachers match their quarterly science and social studies standards with relevant, nonfiction articles. The students take a Level Set Assessment at the beginning of the year to obtain a baseline for their lexile level which adjusts throughout the year based on their completion of the activities. The articles automatically adjust to the students' levels allowing them to learn the same information, but at their own level. This ensures that students are all getting the same science or social studies content. To keep students engaged, the program provides students with relevant videos and articles catered to their interests. Achieve3000 is a highly effective resource for cross curricular possibilities. Articles include comprehension questions and a written response where students write about what they read.

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

For social studies instruction, we apply the learning standards and objectives through a community approach, integrating paired and team learning as a part of daily lessons. Our focus with both science and social studies involves self-directed inquiry and authentic learning. Horseshoe Trails students, working through a variety of modalities, build knowledge and skills in an environment that is structured around project-based learning when possible. This approach lends itself to problem solving that can be individually driven, or centered around a community of learners.

Our elementary scholars work consistently with academic vocabulary and with graphic organizers that prompt students to assess content in relation to prior knowledge. Students are encouraged to evaluate new learning from a variety of perspectives. In social studies, as we build knowledge around various cultures, students are prompted to engage in discourse that will allow connections through peer communication.

Social Studies is also a critical content area and it's a priority that students have every opportunity to activate higher level thinking as they work with the content. Our learners also have opportunities for student choice and self-directed learning, whether it is through choice boards or a variety of extension activities. Providing student choice and fostering learner-centered environments, especially when teaching social studies, is an instructional focus at Horseshoe Trails in an effort to yield higher levels of engagement.

Content integration is essential for students to acquire a deeper understanding of content. One way our teachers integrate science and social studies is by using the online learning platform, Achieve3000. This program allows teachers to create their own calendar and decide which articles to assign and when to assign them. Teachers match their quarterly science and social studies standards with relevant, nonfiction articles. The students take a Level Set Assessment at the beginning of the year to obtain a baseline for their lexile level which adjusts throughout the year based on their completion of the activities. The articles automatically adjust to the students' levels allowing them to learn the same information, but at their own level. This ensures that students are all getting the same science or social studies content. To keep students engaged, the program provides students with relevant videos and articles catered to their interests. Achieve3000 is a highly effective resource for cross curricular possibilities. Articles include comprehension questions and a written response where students write about what they read.

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

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

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Horseshoe Trails is a Mandarin Chinese World Language School, with all students on campus learning Chinese from kindergarten to sixth grade. Our program is in its 10th year and is open to ALL students, regardless of ability, special education status, or age. We believe that learning another language and culture is a beneficial opportunity that all children moving into a global society should possess. As a result, we teach Chinese language and reinforce the Chinese culture in many different ways. We hold a schoolwide Chinese New Year Parade, a Kindergartener Naming Ceremony where students receive an official Chinese name, and even Dumpling making events to celebrate the Chinese holidays.

Based on student interest and parent choice, we organize our students into two different language learning environments. Many of our students choose the dual language immersion program. In this enriched educational model, 50% of daily instruction is conducted in Mandarin and the other 50% is in English. Thematic Units spiral throughout the academic content areas so that Math, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) are taught in both languages.

Research shows that dual language immersion students demonstrate more cognitive flexibility and exhibit expanded attention spans and problem solving skills which translate into higher academic achievement over the course of the program. This type of educational option allows students to reach the highest level of proficiency in another language than any other model offered in schools. Students who can enter the world

with high levels of proficiency in English and another language will have double the opportunities to succeed in a global economy.

The other elementary model for learning languages is a World Language class that students attend two to three times a week for 20-40 minutes. This class lays the foundation for students to love learning another language, helps them acquire a native-like accent while their brains are still open to new sounds, and is focused on real world communication. When students move up to middle school and high school, they can still attend Chinese classes so the language skills they gain at the elementary level will never be lost. With students starting their Chinese language and culture learning at HTES, they continue in the middle and high school with their final Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses securing college credit before they even step foot in a university

Lastly, we have a partnership with Chengdu Jiexiang Foreign Languages School; and, our students virtually connect with students in China through Skype Night once a year where they can communicate in Chinese and get to know more about the culture behind the language. In a kindergarten Skype Night, for example, the students play charades with each other through the screen. Each side will act out an animal while the other class tries to guess. Our students share their routines like the Pledge of Allegiance in English while the Chinese students share their National Anthem. This interaction starting in kindergarten helps both sets of students develop a strong sense of cross cultural competence that they will take with them as a life skill.

Although we're a Chinese World Language school, we still offer a strong foundation of arts and athletics that promote many different learning experiences. Each school day, students have a block of time called Encore designated to either Music, Art, Physical Education, Library, or Computer Lab. In music, students sing and learn how to play instruments. Once a semester, our Music teacher hosts grade level performances at the school for families and community members. Our art program focuses heavily on discovery, imagination, and expression while encouraging our children to find the unique beauty in their artwork. For physical education, we focus on skill development, sportsmanship, and teamwork. And in the computer lab, our upper elementary students learn Google applied skills, practice typing, research content for classroom projects, etc. They also have to complete Digital Citizenship modules throughout the school year so they can practice proper online etiquette as well as learn the potential pitfalls of social media and the internet.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

At Horseshoe Trails, for students performing below grade level, we implement a Response to Intervention (RTI) model. Students in grades kindergarten through fourth are given a standardized reading assessment three times a year to screen students for reading difficulties. Students' results are compared to national norms and are placed in the program. Students who comprise Tier 1 are reading at or above the 50th percentile and do not require intervention. Tier 2 offers students who fall between the 50th-25th percentile to receive additional support in the classroom. Intervention is offered through small group instruction or students may attend a before school 'Reach and Teach' session with their teacher. Common practice is to implement the F.I.T. Model (Fidelity, Intensity, and Time) to ensure the students gain the skills needed to improve in reading. Tier 3 students are those who fall below the 25th percentile. These students qualify for reading Intervention and are further assessed to determine their areas of deficit.

Intervention groups are facilitated by our literacy specialist and her teaching assistant. They are held five days a week for 30 minutes with ongoing progress monitoring and adjustment in the program to ensure growth. Students' results are evaluated every four weeks to determine if the program is meeting the students' needs or if the program needs to be adjusted. Students who are successful with interventions are moved to Tier 2 for continued monitoring and support.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

Horseshoe Trails tailors instruction to meet the needs of all learners. As a result, we offer many different learning experiences to our students that are performing above grade level in order for them to maximize

their potential. Our students identified as gifted in third through sixth grades are transported to our middle school for a three hour Creative Inquiry class. The goal of Creative Inquiry is for identified gifted students to improve problem-solving skills and develop creative thinking while working collaboratively with other gifted students on meaningful projects that are relevant and dictated by student interest. Furthermore, each grade level team leader in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades are Gifted Endorsed on their Arizona teaching certificate. Through collaboration amongst grade level teams, choice boards and different extension activities are offered to students who test out of certain learning tasks based on results from a pre-assessment. These types of project-based learning opportunities promote a deeper level of understanding as well as empowering and meaningful opportunities that give students the ability to create, publish, and potentially present their new learning in a variety of different platforms to peers, staff, family, and community members. Our teachers understand that students learn best when they're invested in their learning.

Another enrichment opportunity that we promote to all students in an effort to inspire a love for literature through independent reading is our HTES Millionaire Club. Horseshoe Trails provides students access to the Accelerated Reader (AR) program through Renaissance Learning. This program offers students comprehension-based quizzes to AR labeled books in all grade levels. The obvious result is teachers, parents, and students can monitor their students' test scores, but AR is much more than just a test score. When students are reading at their recommended reading level, regardless of their age or grade, they become stronger readers.

We also monitor the number of words read by our students through the Accelerated Reader's reporting system. When a student reads ONE million words, they are entered into the HTES Millionaire Club. They are awarded certificates of accomplishment, a Millionaire Club T-shirt, unique Millionaire personalized bookmarks, and various other incentives sponsored by our PTO. The entire school body sees our Millionaires recognized and awarded through weekly news announcements. As early as kindergarten, we hear students state that becoming an AR Millionaire is one of their academic goals.

### **3c. Special education**

The special education program at Horseshoe Trails follows the inclusion/resource model. We have two special education teachers on staff, one full time speech teacher, a half-time school psychologist, and an array of part-time related service providers (Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Vision Teachers, Adapted PE Teacher, and Counselor) who service our students. We also have three paraprofessionals who assist in supporting our students and teachers.

Whenever possible, our special education teachers believe in pushing into the classroom and supporting students' academic and behavioral needs in the least restrictive environment. For those students who need a higher level of support, our special education teachers pull out and provide services via small group instruction within the resource room. Related service staff also pulls students out to provide individual or small group instruction to advance student skills. Since Horseshoe Trails does not have a self-contained classroom on campus, we work hard to accommodate and modify before considering another placement.

Our staff uses evidence-based instruction and interventions and collects data often to inform our decision making to ensure the best outcomes for our students. Our special education staff is amazing and works hard to support not just the academic and behavioral needs of our students, but also their social emotional needs. Our special education teachers and counselors work hand in hand to teach social skills, coping strategies, self-regulation skills, etc., both individually and in small groups, depending on the need. Further, our special education teachers, occupational therapist, and physical therapist work closely together, along with the general education teachers, to provide sensory breaks and strategies to our students in need. Our general education teachers partner closely with our special education staff and view them as a valuable resource, not just with our special education students, but with all students on campus. Overall, the special education program at Horseshoe Trails Elementary School has a great reputation for supporting and providing positive results for our students.

**3d.** ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

Our literacy specialist services our English language learner (ELL) population. She bridges literacy through an online program, Imagine Literacy and Learning. The program levels the students and monitors growth. ELL students visit our Reading Lab daily for support and receive Tier 1 interventions as well and are progress monitored on a weekly basis.

**3e.** Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Strong Character, Strong Work Ethic, and Strong Relationships are the fundamental principles that we strive to maintain each and every day at Horseshoe Trails. All staff members are committed to creating and providing a safe, positive learning environment by teaching, modeling, and practicing school-wide behavioral expectations to all students through the implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a proactive philosophy that our school has adopted to provide our students with a positive environment that supports their academic, social and emotional growth.

Initially, we identified what our Stallion Strong behaviors are, bridging them to our school's mascot, the Stallion, and created an acronym with the word STRONG. Our students are explicitly taught the expected behaviors and positive behavior strategies just like we would teach any other content area, and we provide them opportunities to practice what they have learned. Classroom expectations are aligned with the school-wide expectations to provide common verbiage and consistent practices and procedures in every setting on campus.

The P for positive in PBIS is an essential component of our ideology at Horseshoe Trails. Our focus is on prevention, not punishment, and cultivating positive interactions that engage and motivate our school community is an essential part of who we are. We have a school-wide chant that reinforces the components and expected behaviors of our Stallion Strong mantra that is integrated into classroom routines, campus-wide morning announcements, and whole school assemblies. Our students earn Silver Spurs, a campus-created token, for displaying and practicing Stallion Strong behaviors. Silver Spurs can be awarded by any and all school personnel, including our bus drivers and volunteers, who have contact with our students. They are delivered using effort-based and behavior-specific praise; we are mindful to use precise, sincere approval at opportune moments. These tokens of success increase motivation and celebrate appropriate behaviors and decision making. In the classroom, they can become the currency for a classroom economy or they can be exchanged for lunch with the teacher or other predetermined privileges. Students are recognized on our daily announcements and at quarterly school-wide assemblies for their success within PBIS.

The climate and culture of our campus is closely cared for in organic ways at Horseshoe Trails. We collect classroom data weekly to evaluate the effectiveness of our practices and make targeted modifications based on the data collected. We make adjustments and reteach behavior expectations where and when it is needed. Our success is something that is never taken for granted and something we constantly strive to further improve.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Building strong relationships is at the core of our school philosophy. We pride ourselves on the strong partnerships we've cultivated with our staff, students, families, and community. We believe that our families play an instrumental role when it comes to our students' success. Horseshoe Trails is fortunate to have a highly involved and supportive Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The goal of our PTO is to support staff and enhance learning for all students on campus. Our PTO promotes, assists, and facilitates community events, such as Mother Son activities, Daddy Daughter Dance, our annual Spring HoeDown, holiday music events, a school garden that teaches our students the importance of a healthy diet, and a parent-led Mini Museum that brings art, artists, and opportunities for art appreciation into each classroom. Our PTO is truly invested in supporting our school and is evident in our ability to fundraise more than \$95,000 each school year to support people and programs.

Horseshoe Trails is excited to extend quarterly invitations to all fathers and guardians for our Strong Dads Breakfast. This event is led by parent volunteers and focuses on building strong relationships with the fathers and mentors of our students. Each breakfast has a message that reinforces what is being taught in the classroom. For example, lessons have included themes of character, work ethic, and kindness that mirror our fundamental principles of having Strong Character, Strong Work Ethic, and Strong Relationships.

Horseshoe Trails has developed and maintained continuous communication between our school, families, and the community. Families stay connected with our school through bi-monthly newsletters from the principal, weekly teacher newsletters, and our school and teacher websites. Our principal promotes open communication by calling the families of our Student of the Month recipients who display outstanding character and citizenship and inviting them to the school when the children are presented with their award certificates. Incoming students and parents are taken on guided school tours when they are enrolling their children and are introduced to staff offering a sense of belonging before starting the school year.

Teachers utilize our parent volunteers to help facilitate school events, such as our monthly Birthday Book Club, School Garden, Mini Museum, STEAM Fair, and Field Day. Also, homeroom parents organize celebrations on a handful of special days throughout the school year to strengthen our sense of community in the classroom.

Horseshoe Trails has also partnered with our local Kiwanis Club. The Kiwanis Club helps support our TRRFCC (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship) Student of the Month recognition, STEAM Club, and provides our school with technology.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Building social capital within Horseshoe Trails is a cornerstone of the success of our school. We use a plethora of strategies to ensure all teachers and staff members feel included, valued, and supported. The teachers and staff members began the school year on a retreat to Feed My Starving Children. Teachers and staff were able to connect in a context outside of school that laid a strong foundation of camaraderie and team building. We continued to foster these relationships amongst teachers by starting each staff meeting with an intentional warm up activity that encourages teachers to be vulnerable with their professional colleagues. Teachers and staff are consistently recognized and celebrated through Inspiration Citations, Employee of the Month awards, quarterly Carefree Cares recognition (community recognition from the Town Council of Carefree, Arizona), and in the principal's weekly staff email on Friday titled Fantastic Staff Friday.

Teachers feel valued at Horseshoe Trails and are motivated to maximize every professional development opportunity to improve their classroom instruction in order to positively impact student performance. Most of our professional development focuses on Personalized Learning. Using the personalized learning approach, teachers have opportunities to plan and direct their own learning during professional development. Teachers sign up for breakout sessions to work on specific learning targets facilitated by fellow teachers.

While the school does bring in outside experts to help familiarize teachers with the new curriculum, Horseshoe Trails relies heavily on the expertise of our own teachers to help facilitate professional development. Teachers are regularly sent to conferences and training and then return to the school to train others. We have a Tech Cadre composed of teachers and technology specialists who attend monthly meetings to support teachers as they support students to integrate and have access to the newest technology and educational practices. Our literacy specialist works closely with teachers providing them with new reading strategies, modeling lessons, observing the new teaching strategies, and providing constructive feedback. Teachers are given opportunities to observe their colleagues teaching and then work together to improve classroom instruction.

Horseshoe Trails provides half-day professional development once a month for all teachers. Students are released early from school so teachers have the much needed time to collaborate and plan together. Teachers have common planning time to provide additional time throughout the day to collaborate with one another. Administration, with the help of our literacy specialist, hosts Data Dig Meetings that offer an opportunity to look at classroom and school data to help guide our instruction.

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

Horseshoe Trails has adopted a distributive leadership philosophy under our new principal. School leadership has become more efficient and effective due to our teachers' involvement in multiple leadership roles. We share decision-making when it comes to the academic, social, and emotional needs of our students. Our school has a Leadership Team made up of a grade level team leader, a related arts team representative, the principal, and our office manager. The leadership team meets once a month to discuss and improve school culture, teaching strategies, and to provide opportunity for staff members to share input and feedback from teams. Additionally, our school has a Site Council made up of certified and classified staff members, parents, and community members who are tasked with assisting and improving our school in building curriculum, in valuing assessment and instruction, while maintaining the focus of student-centered support.

Cultivating a culture of student leaders is just as important to our school as teacher leaders. We have a variety of school clubs, led by teachers, that encourages our students to become more active in their learning experience both academically and socially. We are proud of the variety of clubs our school offers to the students: Newspaper, Student Council, National Honors Society, K-Kids (Key Club for Elementary aged students), Coding, Robotics, ROTC Flag Corps, Math Olympiad, Cross Country, Yearbook, Photography, Chess, and STEAM. These clubs are facilitated by teachers and allow students to grow their leadership potential.

There is also a team that consists of our school psychologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, resource teachers, literacy specialist, and classroom teachers who meet to offer support to teachers and all students. This team looks at data, classroom concerns, parent concerns, and student performance to help all students succeed in the classroom. Teachers can connect with this team to discuss the student's performance, behavior, and needs. This team will provide research-based strategies, action steps, and additional resources and support to help the teacher and the student.

Our school connects new teachers to Horseshoe Trails with mentor teachers to help foster a sense of community among professional peers and help assist new teachers to adapt to the school culture and norms. Mentor teachers provide a strong support system and help novice teachers face the many challenges of the profession. Horseshoe Trails is proud of our teacher retention and that some of our previous students have returned to our school to become teachers on staff.

Through both shared accountability and leadership roles, our school allows staff to take an active role in decision-making. This provides a unique sense of community; there's no distinction between grade levels, teachers, or programs. All staff and students are Horseshoe Trails Stallions.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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“If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.” This quote by Ignacio Estrada defines what separates Horseshoe Trails Elementary School from other academic institutions. Classrooms filled with students sitting at desks working on the same learning task in the same fashion are null and void at our school. The core of our educational environment pivots on doing what is best for students based on their data, goals, interests, and learning styles. Embracing the four core elements of Personalized Learning and providing an individualized approach to teaching and learning has been most instrumental to our school’s success.

Data driven decision-making is the first element of Personalized Learning (PL) and also the foundation of all other elements to follow. Student data is gathered frequently and informs everything we do at Horseshoe Trails. We get to know the personal interests and backgrounds of our students, as well as their academic strengths, and preferred approaches to learning. The data collected informs our instructional decisions and groupings.

Ensuring that the instruction provided is targeted and aligns to the individual needs of our most valued stakeholders, our students, is another element of PL. Small groups are formed purposefully and intentionally, driven by student data and student relationships. Groupings are flexible and are rearranged frequently. Small group instruction occurs daily to reteach or to provide extended learning in various content areas. Instructional interventions are also often delivered through one-to-one conferencing, individual check-ins, and ‘Reach and Teach.’

Another element of PL is delivering flexible content using a medley of instructional tools. Digital content is utilized in an innovative, student-centered system. Many of our classrooms implement the Station Rotation model using technology to deliver students with on-level instruction or guided practice allowing for a differentiated path and pace. In this model, digital resources may also be used to provide direct instruction that, in a traditional classroom, may be delivered in a large group setting. Other classrooms on our campus use flexible playlists and digital learning menus that allow their students to plan and work through content at their own pace. Instructional videos are used to deliver instruction in a traditional and in-class flipped manner. Learning Management Systems are used to house instructional material so that it can be accessed by our students anytime anywhere.

Student ownership of learning is the most critical element of our PL philosophy. Ongoing reflection through journaling, portfolios, and Student-Led Conferences provide our students with opportunities to assess their own learning. We are passionate about providing student choice to our students through flexible seating options and choice board activities.

Strong relationships lay the groundwork for ensuring a positive learning environment that promotes academic engagement and attendance, with fewer disruptive behaviors. The strong rapport that we foster daily enables our students to be happier and more productive at school.