

U.S. Department of Education
2020 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. Jody Cole
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Prairie Creek Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 17077 West 165th Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Olathe State KS Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 66062-9627

County Johnson County

Telephone (913) 592-7255 Fax (913) 393-4849

Web site/URL http://pces.usd230.org E-mail colej@usd230.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Wayne Burke E-mail burke@usd230.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Spring Hill Tel. (913) 592-7200

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Doug Updike
(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 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

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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 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	34	28	62
1	37	34	71
2	46	28	74
3	28	25	53
4	36	44	80
5	21	32	53
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	202	191	393

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.3 % Asian
 - 0.3 % Black or African American
 - 0.3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 94 % White
 - 4.9 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: ≤1%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	1
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	2
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	398
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

We have had ELL students in the past, but did not have any this past year.

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4 %

Total number students who qualify: 15

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %

62 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>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>16</u> Developmental Delay | <u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>27</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 15

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:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	17
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 19:1

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	94%	95%	97%	97%	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.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

It is the mission of Prairie Creek Elementary School to ensure high levels of learning and citizenship which will prepare all our students for a successful future. Our school community will be safe, positive, and will encourage creativity and innovation.

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

Prairie Creek Elementary School (PCES) is located in Olathe, KS within the boundaries of the Spring Hill School District. The district continues to grow approximately 8% each year and is projected to continue this projection for the next 10 years.

The Prairie Creek community is made up of many professional families, and is one of two elementary schools in the higher socio-economic area of the district, the area that is also showing the greatest growth. The second elementary school in this area was split off from Prairie Creek. Many of the parents are professionals in the medical and engineering fields, so STEM education is valued and has become expected. Parents of Prairie Creek students have very high expectations for their students, and their school, and are heavily involved.

With what can clearly be called, an explosion in growth in every direction around us at PCES, we understand that families have choices when it comes to picking their new address. We also realize that the question typically highest on their list when making that choice is, “How are the schools rated?” This suburban area has an abundance of schools, many of which are only a few blocks away from this one, giving parents numerous possibilities without having to sacrifice location. We believe we are the best choice.

A key strategy to Prairie Creek’s academic success has been the specialized way support staff is used in the classroom. During the reading block, students receive whole group instruction from the teacher. As they break into small groups for direct instruction, students needing additional support do not leave the room to work with support staff. Within their classroom, they meet with their teacher for fifteen minutes, with a SPED paraprofessional for fifteen minutes, and with an at-risk paraprofessional for fifteen minutes. This is all done within the classroom under the teacher’s supervision and observation. This approach is different from other schools, and a change from students meeting with the teacher and then working on stations independently. Student test data bears out the positive result this has had on learning.

Another key to Prairie Creek’s continued success is its personal investment in each and every child. This begins with its principal, Mrs. Cole. She is hands-on with every student’s data and works with the teachers to determine the best instructional pathway for each student.

In 2018, PCES was selected by the Kansas Department of Education as a Gemini School and from this innovative approach was born our Career Steam Investigation Studio (CSI). We recognize, now more than ever, a key pillar of student success depends on their ability to envision a number of possible futures for themselves. Given the increasingly rapid pace with which technology and our workforce change, early engagement and exploration of a wide variety of career interests is paramount.

By integrating the Kansas career clusters into the curricular experience at PCES, students experience the process of driving their own learning. They engage in projects that are influenced by their own personal interests in a way that allows them to integrate their individual academic goals as well as strengthen their social and emotional learning. Later, because students have gained a wider perspective of future career options, it creates a smooth transition to middle school where they implement the learned skill of choosing electives based on goals and interests.

Children are, as we all know, imaginative beings. As early as their toddler years, children make believe and role play the careers they’ve seen modeled for them. The CSI Studio allows our team to build on that natural curiosity and guide it into more constructive exercises as well as provide opportunities to our students for more real-world application of the skills they learn. By engaging so deeply with that natural curiosity, the studio helps them develop and practice the critical skills of resilience, creativity, adaptability, and communication. Well beyond their time at PCES, the ability to persevere, make difficult decisions, engage with the world and adjust to rapidly-changing professional landscapes will continue to enrich students and ensure greater success not only in school, but for their lifetime.

We know the work being done in the CSI Studio is transforming the way our students think about

themselves, how they collaborate with others, and it's deepening their understanding of what it means to make a positive impact in the world. We want students to realize that their future is wide open, and their unique interests, passions, and strengths can add value to a number of industries in a myriad of ways. The CSI studio allows them to do that and take their learning in the classroom to a much deeper level. It's hands on, investigative, and student driven.

When asked by a future employee, student or parent "How would you describe the climate at Prairie Creek?," our responses have always been about the feeling of family. We consider PCES a warm and welcoming atmosphere. We value our high expectations and hold each other up to meet these high expectations together. Our entire staff is dedicated to providing our students with many opportunities and ways to learn. We are all here for our students and that always comes first!

The reason parents choose our school is best summarized with the poem, "We are a box of crayons, each one of us unique. But when we get together...the picture is complete." In every way, our school embodies this poem. From the literal colors of our walls, to the diverse and welcoming community of teachers, staff, families, and students. At the heart of our work in each grade level and beyond is the belief that every child and every family brings their own unique passions, accomplishments, curiosities and talents. And although each one is unique, the families at Prairie Creek know that we're all better when we're together.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Daily, our goal is to ensure high levels of learning and citizenship for each student in our building. Central to our education is our commitment to building relationships with students, families, and the community. We embed this into instruction in many ways, including inviting family and community members to participate in and celebrate student success, incorporating activities that connect student learning to their daily life, and encouraging students through positive behavior intervention supports.

Regarding academic and social emotional success, we find certain practices are most beneficial. At the forefront is our work in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Here, we collaborate and take collective responsibility for the education and well-being of all students. The team mindset allows us to effectively use data, take risks, vertically align, and reflect on instruction. We strive to not only support our students in meeting end of year goals but also to stretch their learning above and beyond because we know each one of them is capable of so much more when given the right opportunities. Another vital approach for student success is differentiation through fluid small groups. Meeting the needs of our varied learners requires minimizing student work in whole group and instead catering to individual needs and interests through standards-aligned small group instruction. In addition, our team finds success in integration of real-world problems, high interest projects, student choice, partner and group collaboration, and student self-reflection.

One of our biggest assets is attention to innovation and the future. As a Gemini school, we have researched what our students will need in their future careers and designed our curriculum to engage students in experiences that build those skills. From speakers to field trips to cross-curricular STEAM projects, we work to ensure our students will leave our building with the tools necessary for middle school and beyond.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Our approach to reading instruction matches our desire to promote high levels of learning for all students. Teachers use the curriculum Wonders as a foundation for instruction. The word foundation is key because we know meeting all needs requires pulling from many resources and utilizing many instructional strategies. Wonders provides a great baseline as it is standards-aligned, incorporates rigorous grade level texts, has differentiated material built in, and appeals to student interests. Texts included are pacing appropriate, have questioning and modeling suited to different levels of learners, and are very engaging. The curriculum also provides challenging weekly assessments that inspire critical thinking. Building from our curriculum, teachers facilitate whole and small group instruction daily.

Whole group instruction often involves materials within the curriculum, though teachers use other resources as necessary. Strategies you may see in whole group include teacher facilitated discussions, genre studies, anchor charts, teacher think alouds, text annotation, turn and talks, hand up stand up pair ups, whiteboard check-ins, and the use of organizers. Walk in and hear students engaging in conversations using academic language and critical thinking, as modeled by classroom teachers. Standards chosen for whole group are based on learning necessary for all students in the grade.

Small group instruction is pivotal in meeting student needs. The teacher works daily with groups of three to six students at a time targeting skills necessary for success. The skills are chosen by the grade level Professional Learning Community (PLC) based on student data and standards. Instructional strategies and materials utilized include explicit modeling, text annotation, I Do, We Do, You Do, leveled readers and texts, game-based review, flashcards, and more. Materials are selected from the curriculum, built by the PLC team, or sought out via web-based platforms like Teachers Pay Teachers. Often, students say this time of the day is their favorite because “things just make sense here” and “it’s the most fun.”

While the teacher instructs a small group, the rest of the class rotates through a variety of other ELA, standards-aligned activities. These activities are supported by a Title or special education paraprofessional for students whose data shows extra guidance is necessary. Activities used in stations may include task card hunts, cooperative learning driven partner work, use of the curriculum practice journal, web-based work (on sites such as Lexia, ConnectEd, Readworks, etc.), fluency practice, learning through games, and more. Often, these activities are also differentiated to meet individual student needs. Sometimes, students make deeper connections to skills in stations because another student in their group is able to show them a new or different approach to a standard.

All of these instructional strategies are successful because teachers plan with authentic student engagement in mind. Delivery is also crucial, and because of our principal's high expectations and our team's passion and motivation, enthusiasm is evident in daily instruction. This enthusiasm spills over to the students, who can be witnessed buzzing with interest while working in stations.

1c. Mathematics

Our approach to math instruction stems from our commitment to facilitating high levels of learning and creating experiences to prepare students for the real world.

Teachers use the spiraled Everyday Math curriculum when planning daily math instruction which ensures students do not just practice a skill once but rather, return to skills frequently throughout the year. It is standards-aligned, includes two daily workbook pages to assess mastery and a home-link page and unit family letter. Additionally, Everyday Math comes with grade level appropriate manipulatives (fraction circles, base-10 and pattern blocks, etc.), provides differentiated games, and a unit test that requires students to not only solve mathematical problems but explain their thinking, too. Most notably, the number stories cater to students' daily life and interests, keeping them engaged and connected to the real world. Teachers use these resources as a baseline for providing students with meaningful whole and small group instruction.

Whole group instruction during math is mainly used for introducing or reviewing concepts needed by all students in the grade, including teacher questioning and think alouds, relating math concepts to the real world, mental math warm up, turn and talks, quiz quiz trade, and whiteboard check-ins. During this time, students can often be seen or heard using academic language to solve and explain problems.

Committed to high levels of learning for all students, we use data to determine if students need enrichment or tiered intervention while working with the math standards. When data suggests small group instruction is vital, teachers dedicate more time to small groups, working with three to six students at a time targeting skills that meet their needs. Our teachers have unpacked the math standards and vertically aligned, which has allowed PLC teams to make sound decisions when choosing standards to focus on after analyzing student data. Strategies teachers use in small groups include explicit step-by-step instruction, manipulatives, I Do, We Do, You Do, teacher think alouds and modeling, learning through games, and number story highlighting and annotation. Materials selected to drive these instructional strategies come from our curriculum, are built by the PLC team, or are sought out on web-based platforms like Teachers Pay Teachers. Students enjoy this time just as much as their small group reading time, often stating things like, "This is my favorite station," and "Is our time here really up already?"

During this time, the class rotates through various standards-aligned, differentiated activities supported by Title and SPED paraprofessionals as determined necessary, based on data. Activities here may include task card hunts, Everyday Math journal pages, cooperative learning partner work, project-based learning, interactive Google Classroom slides, web-based work (such as Prodigy and Khan Academy), fact fluency practice, and learning through games. As happens in reading, students are able to make new and deeper connections to math skills as they work under the direction of their peers.

Our teachers know the importance of student interest and are committed to providing lessons that fuel our students with authentic engagement and real world experiences.

1d. Science

Science is an avenue for exploration and discovery that impacts our daily lives. At PCES, we aim to provide engaging lessons which inspire students to understand the global connections of science and innovation. Across all grade levels, students participate in lessons that address the Next Generation Science Standards along with the Science and Engineering process.

Many projects are selected based on student choice and interest, which enhances their curiosity and motivation to learn. Collaboration and problem solving allows students to practice positive interactions and teaches students to look at issues or challenges from different perspectives. Our variety of student-chosen STEM tasks are perfect examples of their interests.

Mystery Science has been a powerful addition to the standards, providing intriguing experiments, interactions, and critical thinking that address real world problems. In one classroom, students created a working model of an eye, discovering why people may have vision concerns and how the parts of the eye work together. Teachers also pull in rigorous text for research and problem solving skills as new concepts are explored. The learning is enriched with content vocabulary, anchor charts, graphic organizers, cooperative learning, and technology.

Elsewhere, students explore animals, weather, earth's systems, and natural resources, while creating an understanding of how everything in our world is connected through science. Students can also be seen taking web-based interactive field trips to places such as The Cosmosphere, The Smithsonian, U.S. Zoos, The Mayflower and Mount Vernon.

Using the scientific process in a culminating experience, students are able to choose, plan, and implement their own experiment which can be entered into the Greater Kansas City Science Fair. Overall, students are learning how to discover and think for themselves through innovative and meaningful instruction which will be an asset for them in our ever-changing global community.

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

Social studies at PCES is an integral part of our curriculum, beginning in kindergarten with the most basic elements, progressing to more specific and detailed concepts as students move up. Our instruction provides relevant knowledge on history, geography, and economics aligned to state standards.

In order to make concepts come alive, teachers plan insightful units that build on prior knowledge using rigorous social studies texts, including primary and secondary sources. Instructional strategies include integration of technology, project-based learning, allowing for student choice, research, historical simulations, debates, and construction of models. Additionally, our Wonders curriculum often includes texts aligned with social studies standards for ease of cross-curricular learning, and our Kansas Read cards are aligned to our grade level standards.

Here are several strong examples of our creative instruction. Our fifth graders present a wax museum where they engage in research, writing, characterization, and public speaking. Once all is prepared, the students dress as their famous character, chosen from the ancient civilizations to the American Revolution, and then perform their speeches for other classes and family members. Fourth grade students engage in an Oregon Trail simulation during their westward expansion unit where they are placed in families, given careers and budgets, and travel the trail making decisions as if they were there. This unit involves research, reader's theater, critical thinking, and a final family video presentation over what they learned. Each grade level has its own high interest, standards-aligned projects, such as market days where students design and run their own businesses for school patrons, a designed and constructed mini-community complete with lessons over careers and community members, construction of models of Native American dwellings, and treasure hunts. Students particularly enjoy social studies because it provides a creative outlet and accentuates strengths not always prominent in other curricular areas.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Einstein said, “The only thing that you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library.” Ask any student at PCES to take you to the library, and they’ll lead you to the center of the school where you’ll find a hub of activity each and every school day. Our library plays a vital role in our students’ education through literacy skills instruction and current resources and support for teachers. Although our patrons participate in customary library practices, the remainder of what you’ll see is far from ordinary.

Stroll by, and you’ll see students reading in comfy chairs or engaged in Makerspace where choices are abundant. They’re playing board games, working puzzles, building with Legos, IO blocks and keva planks. Others are coding robots, making jewelry or designing clothing and constructing with recyclables. Some use the button press or create signs and labels with the electronic cutting machine.

Next door, our technology instructor introduces students to coding using Tynker, Kodable and Scratch. They’re exposed to stop motion animation, and graphic design and processing skills are reinforced using Windows and Google programs. Digital literacy instruction keeps our students computer savvy.

In addition to weekly Library, Makerspace and Technology classes, all students participate in Art, Music and Physical Education weekly. Fifth grade students additionally are offered Band and Orchestra. Our counselor offers monthly Character Education lessons and Social Emotional Learning instruction to all students. Each Specials instructor follows their respective learning standards while enriching the curriculum with real world experiences.

As he teaches units on sports, health and nutrition, our Physical Education instructor puts the fun in fitness. If he’s not in the dunk tank where students practice their throwing skills, he’s putting together a game-based laser light show in the gym. He’s known throughout the district for his Family Fun Nights and Field Day Festivals where inflatables, foot races and competitions of every sort fill the day. Adding STEM to his lessons keeps his students hopping with QR codes, building roller coasters and towers.

Our music instructor prepares students for grade level performances in which every student has the opportunity to feel special with a part in the show. She organizes the Fifth Grade District Band and Orchestra concerts to introduce them to Middle School and alleviate fears about moving to a bigger campus the following year. Her after school choir travels the community performing, and she works with many students preparing them for performances in our district’s high school musicals. Our PCES families also look forward to the annual, remarkable Veteran’s Day program she produces. Students invite family, friends and neighbors who are or have been in the military and honor them with songs, poems, and essays as a tribute for their service.

The art teacher offers students many avenues for creativity. Projects from crayon drawings to sculptures adorn the hallways here. Their masterpieces are also on display in our community, many of which are entered in local art competitions. She involves them in school-wide projects, building sets and props for our concerts and designing artwork for purchase at our silent auction fundraiser.

One of the most extraordinary things about our Specials Team is their readiness to work together. Each with their own specialty, each with a different degree, yet they form a uniquely blended group that provides students with inventive experiences they might not get elsewhere.

They’ve put together some grand events including: Five gallon bucket bands, March Madness teacher vs. student basketball games, Hour of Code, Kansas Day, Sock Hop and Square Dancing, Read Across America celebrations, March Book Madness tournaments and school-wide art shows.

Their latest endeavor includes collaborating to provide students with innovative experiences during their PLC learning block. Students rotate monthly through learning stations called Wednesday Workshop.

Some projects included a mouse unit accompanying Mouse and the Motorcycle in which students coded mouse robots, built garages from legos and keva planks, built racetracks and raced matchbox cars, built and raced wrestling mat motorcycles and sang mouse songs. They've turned story books into plays with props, music and stage direction and have used woodworking tools to learn carpentry and QR codes to study poetry.

This special group puts their creative heads together each week to provide a well-rounded assortment of activities that are not only standards-based and real world but are so far out of the box that anyone walking into the building will leave feeling like they've just seen the future of education.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

For students performing below grade level, we have several interventions in place. In the classroom, teachers use fluid small groups daily to meet student needs. These groups are determined by studying student data from formative and summative assessments, state assessment interims, and MAP during our Professional Learning Community time. Teams plan standards-aligned and data driven activities and find resources during this time to facilitate this fluid small group instruction. Using those resources as well as tiered materials and manipulatives, teachers explicitly instruct over standards students have yet to master. Teachers also use this time to pre-teach and review vocabulary. In addition to teacher instruction, during small group time, students rotate to another station where they are able to receive further targeted direct instruction from our at-risk paras. They are also engaged in personalized learning through web-based programs like Lexia and Khan Academy. Many grade level teams in the building also plan special flex days where students rotate to different classrooms to receive instruction based on need.

Another intervention we have in our school for students performing below grade level is our Student Intervention Team. Students who have already been receiving interventions within the classroom listed above without success can be recommended to our Student Intervention Team who will meet to discuss other strategies or accommodations that may help the student. The team is made up of the students' parents, the classroom teacher, the instructional coach, the grade level special education instructor, the principal, and other building specialists as needed. After the first meeting, follow-up meetings are conducted to check in on the student's progress after implementing those new strategy and accommodation suggestions. If progress is still not being made, the team may recommend that the student be evaluated for qualification of an Individualized Education Plan.

3b. Students performing above grade level

For students performing above grade level, we also have many instructional strategies and enrichment activities in place. As was mentioned in 3a, a primary way we meet the needs of students is through daily fluid small groups based on data studied and research done during our PLC time. To best serve these students, teams look for parallel standards in the grade levels above to know what students need to learn, and then, they seek resources that match the students' needs. Using above grade level curriculum resources as well as resources found during PLC time, teachers introduce and explicitly teach higher level skills to these students in their small group. When not at the teacher table, these students are practicing those higher level skills in many ways. Often, this includes completing project-based learning activities, strengthening their instruction through personalized web-based resources such as Khan Academy and Readworks, and completing critical thinking and problem solving resources like perplexors. The flex days mentioned in 3a are also helpful in meeting the needs of these students, as it allows them an extended period of instruction time to master standards.

In addition to fluid small group instruction, these students have other opportunities available. In fourth and fifth grade, students participate in a Continental Math League competition throughout the year, which involves solving higher level math problems that require critical thinking. Students in the building also receive an opportunity to visit the CSI studio where they have the opportunity to complete hands-on, real-world, and career-focused units based on their own interest. If students performing above grade level are

still not having their needs met, they can be referred to our Student Intervention Team for new strategies and may be recommended for evaluation for qualification of a High Performance Individualized Education Plan.

3c. Special education

Our goal for education with our special education students is to ensure they are identified as early and as accurately as possible. Early identification leads to early interventions which leads to student achievement success. Our special education students are general education students first with our general and special education providers working together for high quality instruction. The team believes that all students have unique learning needs and deserve access to the highest specialized instruction aligned to our state standards. Using our district curriculum, students receive specialized support, modifications, accommodations, and related services that provide them with the tools they need to succeed.

Our students with IEPs have goals written and individualized to meet their personal needs. The IEP team uses multiple sources of data and works together to provide our students with the best related services, whether that is 1:1 or a small group setting, indirect instruction (in-class) or direct instruction (pull out). When we ensure correct practice opportunities aligned to their core academic instruction, our students are given a better chance of success.

In addition teachers carefully plan and always uphold high expectations sharing the responsibility of a culture of achievement for every student. One of the most critical components for our special education students is the feeling and knowing they belong. We believe you must lead by example. We want our students to learn positive social skills and in order to do so our teachers establish and maintain a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere. Our teachers welcome their students with a positive attitude letting them know they are wanted and appreciated.

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

We understand ELL learners have a unique challenge, of learning a second language and learning curriculum content simultaneously. Teaching our ELL students is constantly changing as we learn about them, their culture, and their language. We have come to acknowledge and focus on how an ELL student's culture will greatly impact their learning in the classroom. In order to meet those needs our teachers identify what the ELL student does not know. With the "how" being our area of attention, we focus on how the students learn and how we need to teach the concept or skill. We enrich and scaffold their curriculum content using strategies that connect content to an ELL student's background knowledge. Our teachers often begin by pre-teaching an essential skill and then continue to teach the same skill with multiple exposures as the student works toward mastery. We use various types of visual and media representations, such as technology (iPads, Chromebooks), story maps, graphic organizers, graphs, maps, drawings and charts, to introduce new concepts and vocabulary.

Participating in small group instruction is beneficial in providing opportunities to introduce, reinforce, and review academic language. Having a peer to collaborate and ask questions allows the ELL student to build confidence, resulting in increased class participation. Our ELL students also learn by doing hands-on activities. When teaching math concepts, we use various manipulatives, while enriching the lessons through auditory, visual, and kinesthetic strategies. It is always our goal to ensure that ELL students are building confidence and are prepared for future academic and personal growth.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At PCES, we realize the importance of keeping our students engaged, motivated, and feeling safe, so we have focused on building an environment which centers around their interests and allows them to take risks.

One way we have done this is through our Career Steam Investigation (CSI) studio. The career explorations in the studio are aligned with college and career standards as well as Kansas career clusters. The culminating activities in the lab design learning around students' passions and interests which allows the students to have a greater role, and are therefore, more invested in their learning. Students work in collaborative groups, solve real world problems, and experience hands-on, field based activities. For example, students have built structures to withstand natural disasters, designed their own restaurant, and used knowledge of electrical circuits to illuminate a gnome house. Activities such as these inspire them to go above and beyond, expanding their social emotional skills and building unity within the grade levels and throughout the school. What they do in the studio also creates a smooth transition to middle school as they begin to choose electives. Overall, teachers have noticed a new level of excitement in students and an increase in student ability to collaborate, communicate, problem solve, and act as leaders. These skills will continue to enrich student success throughout their educational journey, giving them the necessary tools to complete projects in any academic discipline and also build the foundation for their success in the future.

In addition to the CSI studio, students look forward to many other activities in our building. In the classroom, students participate in class meetings, where they share about their personal lives, practice social emotional skills, and build relationships with each other and their teacher. Throughout the building, we have implemented Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, so students are recognized for specific positive behaviors they are displaying. They can earn tickets for these behaviors toward prizes and coupons and achieve Student of the Month status which is highly motivating for them in demonstrating citizenship. Students also have the opportunity to participate in project-based learning and STEM activities throughout the day, to become a part of the school's leadership council and to receive character education and social emotional lessons from the counselor. Some school-wide favorite activities include field trips, peer book buddies and engaging in Makerspace and workshop activities.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At PCES, we recognize the value of family and community involvement in student education and well-being. Our welcoming, interactive atmosphere has fostered positive relationships with students, families, staff, and community members.

Thanks to our Gemini program, we have organized many beneficial opportunities with those who live and work locally. For example, students partnered with businesses, parents, and community patrons on a restaurant design project. Visitors included the Spring Hill Economic Developer, DLR Consultants, a web and graphic designer, a marketing expert, and a Garmin engineer. Based on personalized interests, students also visited restaurants and spoke with owners. In addition, the K-12 program coordinator at K-State Olathe provided activities addressing animal, human and environmental health, and district FFA developed interactive demonstrations over animal care and agriculture-related careers. For community outreach, students manufactured blankets and dog toys for a local animal shelter. Further, in an electricity unit, students drafted and constructed a gnome house complete with working circuits. The final projects were displayed at family book fair night and voted upon by putting money in jars. The money was then donated to provide books for patients at Children's Mercy.

Outside of Gemini, many other community ties have been created. Our student leadership council inspires a sense of giving back through school-wide activities. Students participate in Lemonade for Cancer, warmth drives and food drives, and penny wars for local charities. Student council also attends an annual leadership conference and participates in lessons addressing leadership, community service, and team building. We aspire to not only lead students to academic and social emotional success but to be productive members of

society.

Another way our school engages the community is through an annual fundraiser supported by community and PCES family businesses. This school-wide favorite has brought together community members from insurance, painting, and IT companies, architectural firms, local restaurants, home-based small businesses, and more.

Additionally, we celebrate accomplishments big and small by giving students opportunities to share successes with family and community members. Examples include end of unit project displays, science fair projects presented at local competitions, and student-led conferences. Parents also receive classroom and school newsletters. Site council and school board meetings, too, have been excellent places for students to shine. Board members, families, and community members enjoy hearing from students themselves and seeing innovative projects designed.

As you can see, there is no shortage of family and community engagement in our building. Recognizing its priceless importance, we make sure to provide every avenue for this essential involvement.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The teachers at PCES will be the first to tell you we feel supported in our work and most importantly, valued. Our teachers collaborate and brainstorm, providing each other a voice to showcase successes and to discuss desired areas of growth. This helps determine our professional development in a proactive manner.

One of the best ways we have been able to grow as a staff has been through our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Our staff completed a book study over *Learning by Doing*, a PLC handbook. This book guided staff through a reflection of our school's mission, vision, values, and goals. Our entire staff collectively worked to ensure each of these aligned with our commitment to teacher growth and student success. Having all of us on the same page set a positive, collaborative tone for continuing to grow and develop as a building team. Additionally, our district's decision to embed PLC time into the school calendar demonstrates how valued each staff member's time and expertise truly is. Our staff is aware that they each have something important to offer. The collective responsibility that comes with being part of a PLC has increased teacher morale, allowed for more productive collaborative discussions, and expanded teachers' capacity to find resources and instructional strategies that will meet student needs.

In addition to PLC time, professional development is also incorporated throughout the school year. For extra professional development times, our building's Guiding Coalition Team, which represents all staff in our building, helps select professional development that will be relevant. Staff members often share feedback using a Google Form about what they want to learn and the effectiveness of past professional development sessions. Examples of past sessions include technology break-outs, social emotional games and activities, and content area specific workshops. In addition, whenever teachers in our building attend a conference, they share their new knowledge during a professional development staff meeting.

One incredibly helpful professional development method our district provides is an all-day workshop series in which district instructors lead 45 to 60 minute break-out sessions within their content area. On these days, teachers are able to make choices about which workshop to attend based on their personal professional development goals. Calling upon the collective talents of our staff has made our professional development time far more productive. When teachers are offered personalized support and learning options, they feel valued by our school community.

4. School Leadership:

One thing our students and staff at PCES can count on each day is a cheerful greeting from their steadfast leader. Kids know our principal is there for them and teachers count on her unwavering commitment and passion. She leads with clear goals and direction, and her focus is on the philosophy that we will always do what is best for students in every situation. She spends time in our classrooms weekly giving positive, constructive feedback and offers many opportunities for teacher growth. Her door is always open and

communication is key in her relationship with her staff. Her strong leadership is central to our building and our students' success.

Believing that every staff member plays an important role, our principal strives to give everyone a team responsibility where their voice is heard and opinion matters. One leadership opportunity available to staff is our Guiding Coalition team made up of one member from each grade level. This team guides staff through book studies, helps drive professional development choices, and facilitates PLCs, all crucial to continuing our students' success. Other opportunities available include our Gemini team which drives innovative instruction in our CSI studio, our Site Council which shares school successes with parents and board members, and our building Care Team which ensures social emotional well-being for our students. Teams such as these are given the shared responsibility of making sure that are setting goals, working towards them, and achieving our outcomes. Leadership tasks are also distributed to our instructional coach, who works closely with our new teachers to ensure that goals are being met.

We know our mission to prepare our students for a successful future is impacted by the high expectations our principal holds for her teachers. Sharing her vision of becoming a future-ready school, she inspired her staff to support an application to become one of the schools chosen for the Kansas redesign project. With full endorsement from her staff and the creative ideas of the building Gemini team, PCES became one of the Gemini schools chosen by KSDE. This project is a perfect example of how our principal's lead by example attitude has inspired the same vision of leadership and innovation for everyone from the top down, including the teachers on her team and the students who are now participating in the Gemini CSI studio.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our classrooms here at PCES are incredibly privileged to have an at-risk paraprofessional available during math and reading small group instruction. As mentioned throughout our application, our building team is devoted to ensuring high levels of learning for all students.

Being keenly aware of the significance of gathering and using data, we are allocated time for frequent analysis of student progress, and in turn are able to make informed adjustments to our instruction. The most impactful choice made as a result of this is assuredly the decision to provide support from at-risk paraprofessionals for all learners in our building.

These paraprofessionals collaborate with the classroom teachers daily to assist with differentiated instruction in areas targeted to individual student needs. Collaboration is key in ensuring the paraprofessionals are instructing students with clear and concise goals. Having the extra assistance in the classroom gives the advantage of further exposure for students to the content area of study. Additionally, it eliminates the loss of valuable class time it would normally take to change classrooms for one-on-one or small group instruction. Whether it be enrichment or intervention, students are able to receive the support that is best suited for them without ever leaving their classroom.

As a team, it is easy to see the impact this has made for our students' success here, but for an outsider, all that's needed to understand is an anecdotal story from our past. After providing our students with the opportunity to work with our at-risk paraprofessionals, teachers in the building began seeing MAP progress for students of 15 to 23 points or more. Our principal and teachers, having clear ideas of average academic progress, feared that these significant gains must be an error in the scoring of the test. Calling and expecting to hear bad news, it quickly became apparent that no mistake had been made. The person on the other end of the line confirmed that the scores were correct and begged to learn what we were doing in our building to make such an incredible difference for our students. Upon reflection and after sharing our model for reading and math instruction, we knew our at-risk paraprofessionals were central to this shift in progress, and we have continued this model of instruction since with a great deal of success.