

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

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

School Mailing Address 3131 North 122nd Street 3131 North 122nd Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Kansas City State KS Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 66109-4827

County Kansas

Telephone (913) 721-1243 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://www.piperschools.com/Page/327 E-mail bgrable@piperschools.us

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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Blane McCann E-mail BMcCann@piperschools.com
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Piper-Kansas City Tel. (913) 721-2088

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Jeb Vader
(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.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. 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	89	103	192
1	90	88	178
2	96	93	189
3	63	62	125
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
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	338	346	684

*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
 - 4 % Asian
 - 14 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 72 % White
 - 4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 8%

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	29
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	25
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	54
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	661
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

Nepali, Burmese, Zotung, Spanish, Lautu Chin, Hakha Chin, Myanmar, Lao

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %
14 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 17 %

Total number students who qualify: 116

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %

45 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>20</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>19</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6

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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	29
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 23:1

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	96%	96%	97%	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.

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.

Our mission is "to provide each student with quality instruction, learning opportunities, and a safe educational environment which inspires academic success, personal excellence, and responsible citizenship".

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

Situated in Kansas City, Kansas in western Wyandotte County, Piper Elementary School serves approximately 680 students annually attending grades K-3. Since it opened ten years ago, Piper Elementary's membership has grown increasingly diverse, consistent with changes in its wider community.

Given the proximity of several local attractions, the Piper community is comprised of a diverse mix of customer service and retail workers employed at the nearby Legends Shopping Mall and other venues as well as utilities workers, firefighters, law enforcement officers, and military personnel seeking a community with a small-town feel. Within this diverse working-class community is a collective pride in its schools and, by extension, in the future of its youth. In a world that has become increasingly impersonal given the proliferation of technology, Piper has effectively cultivated an environment where interpersonal relationships between residents and civic agencies support a truly collaborative approach to addressing the issues facing our community and our world. Nowhere is this esprit de corps more prominent than in our schools.

Academically, Piper Elementary students regularly achieve standardized test scores that well exceed those at the state and national levels. We are more than just a test score, however. Amidst rapid growth and increasing diversity, we strive to create a learning environment that is highly individualized, recognizing each student's unique interests, strengths, and needs.

Piper Elementary maintains clear academic and behavior expectations for its students through a curriculum that promotes the whole child. Committees have been established in math and reading to align the curriculum vertically and to continually assess student data in order to support data-driven decision making around professional development, academic supports, resources and curricula. To ensure systematic delivery of supports for students, we administer a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

One foundational piece we attribute to our success is built upon the Kindergarteners who enter our doors from the District's PreK school. Serving children ages 3-4, this program features a research-based curriculum, taught by certified teachers and aligned vertically with the district's academic and social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. The program employs various instructional strategies to support student success. Heterogenous grouping is used in small group instruction. Learning Box times provide the opportunity to work on individual skills, based on Kansas early learning standards and available student data. To reinforce whole child development, we employ various strategies including a garden in the play-based area.

At Piper Elementary, we are especially proud to provide students with unique opportunities and supports not found in other schools to expand learning beyond those available within our four walls and offer opportunities for hands-on learning. Our STEM Greenhouse, for instance, is one of only four in Kansas registered in the National Farm to School Program. The greenhouse, which was conceived by students and supported through fundraising, provides our students with exposure to horticulture, aquaponics, and solar energy through the growing and selling of produce.

To promote good behaviors, Piper Elementary has implemented the Piper Gold program. Through this program, Piper Elementary has established a goal of providing students with four positive "praises" for every corrective comment. Praise is provided around our three building expectations which are to be responsible, respectful and safe. By providing behavior-specific praise during assemblies, at recess and in the hallway, we reinforce these behaviors, especially to those who need it most. Piper "gold" is used to "purchase" gift cards, experiences and other items of value.

Piper Elementary has initiated various strategies to celebrate diversity in its membership. Foremost among these is its annual "Diversity Night." Held in April annually, the event invites families of various ethnic origins to create a "booth" where they can share native food, customs, performances, and attire with other families in our community. This event has been a resounding success. Not only has it engaged families that may not attend other school/district events, but it has also attracted significant numbers of other families

who enjoy learning about their new neighbors. Diversity Night is entirely coordinated by the School's Inclusion Council (including parents, school Principal and teachers), and to ensure maximum participation, a small stipend is available to assist families with expenses incurred with the event. In addition, Piper proudly displays a wall of flags within the school representing 36 nations consistent with the ethnicities of its students.

Piper Elementary's focus on cultural competence extends beyond diversity. It is an intentional approach to recognize the unique qualities of each student. Individualized strategies are firmly embedded throughout Piper Elementary's educational model and codified in its Building Goals and Action Plans, which include highly individualized student goals that span from academic performance to social and emotional measures.

Additionally, Piper Elementary's success is driven by a highly committed and talented staff of administrators, teachers, counselors and support personnel. Retention among staff is very high within the district which has helped to create a sense of family and a consistency that extends into the greater Piper community.

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

Piper Elementary prides itself on providing a highly individualized education that addresses the needs of the whole child. This overarching approach recognizes that all students possess unique skills, talents and knowledge. These values are stated explicitly within the District’s mission “to provide each student with quality instruction, learning opportunities, and a safe educational environment which inspires academic success, personal excellence, and responsible citizenship,” and are built upon our core beliefs of the 5 Rs: Rigor, Relevance, Relationships, Responsive Culture, and Results.

Piper Elementary’s instructional approach is shaped by several intersecting influences, most notably John Hattie’s work around effect size and the Gradual Release of Responsibility model (as based around the work of Lev Vygotsky). Within Piper Elementary School’s MTSS model, universal instructional strategies (shaped by Hattie’s effect size) are delivered to all students as a Tier 1 strategy, including but not limited to the following: reading strategies toolkit, comprehension anchor charts, balanced literacy framework, eight mathematical practices, differentiated instruction for diverse learners, behavior-specific praise and instructional feedback, five productive talk moves, close reading, and PAWS (problem, approach, work, solution) problem-solving model.

Piper Elementary has made it an intentional focus to emphasize instruction in its core and measures the effectiveness of its universal instruction by the percent of students at/or above grade level with a minimum benchmark of no less than 80% at/or above grade level. Teaching expectations are made clear to teachers and supports are regularly provided including professional development, coaching, observations and feedback, ongoing assessment, as well as other supports.

Consistent with a gradual release of responsibility approach, students’ academic growth in core areas is continually assessed using NWEA MAP testing data and the FastBridge Screener. As students’ zone approximal development is defined, opportunities to individualize their learning are identified. Differentiation within the core is regularly employed to maximize learning and to every extent possible Piper Elementary provides students the opportunity and remediate consistent with their needs.

To support a whole-child approach, Piper Elementary administers a universal screener to determine students’ social and emotional functioning levels. We believe that extreme SEL needs must be addressed in order to provide a foundation that supports academic growth. Second Step curriculum is delivered once per week for a total of 20 minutes in every classroom, and a common social emotional vocabulary is used throughout the building to ensure consistency in student expectations.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Literacy is at the center of learning, and Piper Elementary provides its students with a comprehensive reading program and balanced literacy approach. Piper has adopted the Reading Street curriculum, offering benefits specifically suited to the needs of our students. Literacy curriculum features online resources as well as an array of common formative and summative assessments which have generated meaningful student data to support Piper Elementary’s focus on individualized learning.

Within the curriculum, students are provided rich experiences to deepen their interest and mastery of reading/English language arts (ELA). Differentiation within the core ensures all students are provided instruction to strengthen subject knowledge. These include guided reading, Fountas & Pinnell running records, flexible groupings, as well as the implementation of the “Daily 5.” In addition, within select classrooms, students have access to Lucy Calkins Writers Workshop.

For students who are struggling within the reading/ELA curriculum, we implement targeted reading

interventions. Classrooms with Title 1 and special education students have access to a Title 1 teacher, Special Education teacher, a classroom teacher and a paraprofessional when additional supports are needed. Our Title 1 and Special Education teachers work with students on the verge of progress in small groups during core time to help reinforce concepts and help them attain proficiency. Through our MTSS, push-in services are delivered as a Tier 2 intervention to prevent students from needing more intensive academic supports. For students struggling with phonics and other critical reading skills, Foundations is offered as a Tier 2 and 3 support, and we also subscribe to Study Island, an online program featuring self-paced instruction.

Student Achievement Plans of Action help our teachers to map differentiated instruction in each grade based on identified core concepts and subject matter. Teachers and staff analyze local assessment data to help identify students' achievement levels and address tiered supports. Achievement gaps are also addressed through the work of our PLC teams which conduct data-informed meetings following each testing window (fall, winter and spring). Using data, PLC teams develop Teacher Action Plans that are designed to specifically address student needs in different tiers and to maximize coordination of services and supports.

Additionally, we provide teachers with supplemental development opportunities including a book study each summer. Most recently these included Jan Richardson's Next Steps to Guided Reading and Lucy Calkins' Readers Workshop. Teachers also continually study the various stages of reading development and align their instruction accordingly.

1c. Mathematics

Piper Elementary understands its important role in providing students with a strong foundation in math to support the future attainment of higher-level math concepts, including those in algebra. Similar to its approach in reading/English language arts, Piper Elementary maintains an academic framework that combines a strong curriculum, Number Worlds for supplemental instruction, data-driven decision-making, and a variety of math learning opportunities for students.

To drive learning in math, Piper Elementary uses Eureka Math curriculum accompanied by end-of-module assessment. Among Eureka Math's many benefits is its strong alignment to Common Core State Standards and across PK-12. In this sense, Eureka Math supports vertical alignment across grade levels and buildings within the district.

Piper Elementary's math instruction is geared toward the established common core standards in order to develop independent mathematicians utilizing mathematical practices, including making sense of problems and persevering in solving them; reasoning abstractly and quantitatively; constructing viable arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others; modeling with mathematics; using appropriate tools strategically; and attending to precision.

Within the core, teachers use differentiation strategies through flexible math groupings. The curriculum is complemented through our use of the Number Talks Program to help students bridge the gap between conceptual understanding and mental math. Delivery of the math curriculum also provides ample opportunity to incorporate the PAWS (Problem-Approach-Work it Out-Solve) problem-solving model into math learning, which contextualizes these sometimes difficult-to-learn concepts while developing students' problem-solving skills.

Within math (as we do in all core subject areas), Piper Elementary utilizes testing data to inform instruction and deploy support programs and services. Data are reviewed three times per year using local assessments. Teachers analyze the data to identify student needs and adapt instruction based on these needs. Additionally, PLC teams meet following grading windows to analyze math assessment data to develop Student Action Plans and coordinate supports. This also includes FastBridge Learning's automaticity assessments which test student computational fluency three times per year.

While our teachers regularly remediate and accelerate within the Tier 1 math core, when students need more intensive support, we use a "Number Worlds" math curriculum as a tiered intervention. Number Worlds is

highly individualized and allows teachers to address specific gaps and help students to overcome these challenges so they do not struggle later.

1d. Science

To foster student learning in science, Piper Elementary has adopted Project Lead the Way's (PLTW) Launch science curriculum, which is specifically designed to promote students' natural curiosity in their environment through problem-based learning. Science instruction is guided by two sets of science standards including those established by the state of Kansas and those by Project Lead the Way.

Piper Elementary has used various strategies to heighten students' engagement and understanding of science. The school intentionally selected literacy curriculum that supports national science standards. Cross-curricular planning has helped to integrate science into other subject areas, reinforcing and contextualizing science content. Additionally, Piper continues to bring a variety of community members (with a connection to science) into our classrooms. These guests help to incite students' interest in science and expose them to the wide variety of careers in science, with particular interest on jobs that students may not even know exist.

As is the case with other curricular areas, continuous improvement is a driving force in our work. This includes continual monitoring of student performance using a combination of participation-based and performance-based assessments. Curriculum and instruction continue to evolve based on needs presented through data. Assessment data is reviewed regularly to determine which standards are not being met in order to address gaps in the curriculum. Teachers are supported through professional development and we are fortunate to have a STEM teacher who works with other teachers to help model instructional strategies that incorporate STEM. She is a Project Lead the Way Master teacher and trainer and serves as a tremendous resource locally in deepening our implementation of the PLTW curriculum and utilizing other instructional strategies to engage students in STEM.

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

Similar to its approach in science, Piper Elementary uses a variety of integrated approaches to promote student learning in the areas of social studies, history, and civics. In addition to a curriculum that is more formalized beginning in grade 3, Piper Elementary supports student learning in social studies, history, and civics through cross curricular planning to embed these concepts into other disciplines. Further, the Reading Street program includes a social studies component. Citizenship is taught through the School Resource Officer, and to heighten interest and student knowledge, Piper Elementary invites guest speakers into the classroom who conduct presentations on relevant topics in the areas of social studies, history, and civics. Further, in recognition of local history and the rural aspects of Western Wyandotte County, students participate in an annual field trip to the National Agricultural Center and Hall of Fame, located in nearby Bonner Springs.

As is the case with other subject areas, participation-based and performance-based assessments are used to measure student learning. To ensure adequate levels of progress, relevant reading assessment data are reviewed regularly to determine student performance, administer interventions, and adapt curriculum and resources based on student needs.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Art: Piper Elementary offers a rich curriculum in the arts in order to encourage exploration, cultural awareness, visual storytelling, critical thinking, creativity, and self-expression. Through projects, students have the opportunity to explore a variety of art materials, allowing them to develop new skills, learn various techniques, and strengthen their fine motor skills. After project completion, students reflect and showcase

their understanding of vocabulary and the state standards through exit slips and discussion. All art created throughout the school year is published in an online art gallery and shared with the community. Through this gallery, students are able to see their growth, receive compliments from the community, and look at the work of their peers.

Music: Our Music Education Program is designed to enhance learning skills, communication skills, creativity, teamwork, discipline, cultural awareness, respect for others, and self-esteem through personal accomplishment. By studying and experiencing music, students learn its connection with other disciplines such as math, language, history, reading, and science. Music is a powerful means of communication, and through music education, our students learn how to express themselves through song, dance, and movement. Music is also a powerful way to explore and learn about other cultures. Students learn how to sing in a variety of languages and draw connections between themes of songs and stories within the music. Through music education we seek to have a profound and lasting effect on all students and produce well-rounded learners.

Physical Education: Piper Elementary's PE curriculum is based on the Kansas model grade level outcomes for Physical Education. Emphasis on motor skills and movement patterns are practiced through a variety of activities. Personal and social behavior is developed through participation in team and partner games. Students are encouraged to engage in physical fitness outside of the school day to establish healthy patterns and enjoyment that can be carried into adulthood. Making healthy food choices are presented through health lessons and participation in the Body Venture KSDE exhibit. Through our PE Program we also provide a classroom for "Brain Breaks." Comprised of 3-5 minute videos, Brain Breaks provide students with opportunities to view stimulating videos throughout the school day. Brain Breaks are associated with improved behaviors, reduction of stress and other benefits. All students receive a minimum of at least two Brain Breaks daily.

Technology: Through Technology curriculum, Piper Elementary embraces the following aspects of 21st century learning: being creative/innovative, communication/collaboration, research/information fluency, critical thinking, problem-solving, and becoming decision makers. We also compel students to be good Digital Citizens and make clear how that transfers into our everyday life. Students also learn about technology operations and concepts of technology. The students learn how to type using the correct form. They complete a variety of projects throughout the year using Chromebooks and various online programs such as Google Docs and Slides, and various apps on the iPad such as Popplet, Chatterpix, PicEdu, and other apps in the technology lab. Students publish their work to their class Seesaw accounts that are shared in their classrooms and with parents, where students can reflect and discuss their work daily in class or at home.

Library: Guided by the Kansas Library/Information and Technology Standards, lessons are designed to give students in grades k-3 with opportunities to explore the library, expand their knowledge of resources available to them, and gain practice with reading strategies, book relations, and communication. Students are provided 15 minutes weekly to choose books to check out and then encouraged to apply the weekly library lessons to their reading.

STEM: STEM empowers students to discover and explore interests, imagine and design solutions to real-world challenges, and develop into independent, confident problem solvers. Students use the engineering design and scientific inquiry processes during open-ended STEM challenges and science experiments. To document their progress, students use an online digital portfolio called Seesaw where activities, projects, and problems are recorded. iPad apps such as Pic Kids, Show Me, and Popplet Jr. are also used. This compelling, real-world approach empowers students to learn essential, in-demand skills validated by leading companies, while also establishing an invaluable connection between what students are learning in the classroom today and how it will apply to them in the future.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Title 1 Reading & Math: Through Title I, we provide intensive instruction to students who are struggling in the subject areas of reading and math. This includes individualized instruction using such approaches as working in small groups with peers who are at or near their same instructional level. In reading, Title 1 services compel students to attack words with a variety of decoding skills while utilizing their toolkit and reading strategies to assist in comprehension of the text. In Title I math, students are provided with an array of supplies and resources to support problem solving. Among the resources used are various manipulatives, which help the child to visualize the problem and what needs to be done to solve it. Students are given the opportunity to learn a battery of strategies that they can take with them to be self-sufficient readers and mathematicians. The Title I program provides students with an environment that fosters positive attitudes toward reading and math, improves student achievement in these subjects, and builds students' self-esteem and confidence. It also enables parents to be math and reading partners with their child at home.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Gifted: Gifted students require different learning modalities to both enhance and enrich their education. Our gifted class features an array of studies and activities to meet these students' needs. These include SAT vocabulary, typing practice weekly to support the writing of five (5) paragraph papers and independent projects. We have also used "Makey Makey," which is an invention kit for the 21st century. Each student has designed and built a marble run, and are currently building LEGO Boosts, a programable Robot that uses drag-and-drop programming. Students also design a popup book for Vertebrates, which includes each of the five major groups of vertebrates and contains a minimum of three different popups.

3c. Special education

Special Education: Piper Elementary, its teachers, staff and community all hold fast to the belief that every student can learn at a high level. Students identified as "special needs learners" require specialized, individualized instruction to achieve educational gains that are commensurate to their typical peers. Through our PLCs, we are guided by DuFour's basic instructional questions of 1) What do we want children to learn? Essential learning outcomes are identified within each content area to guide instruction. 2) How do we know if they've learned it? We use a variety of common formative assessments that measures each student's strengths. And 3) What do we do if they haven't learned it? We task-analyze to pinpoint the student's struggles and implement accommodations and/or interventions to remove any barriers to learning.

Accommodations might entail altering the length, time or level of support for assignments. It may require changes in the presentation of material, difficulty level, or the presentation of outcome knowledge. Interventions like Explode the Code, Primary Phonics, Foundations, Read Naturally and Great Leaps are used to support the learning. Our work in the Student Learning Center is designed to foster learning in the general education setting.

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

ELL: Piper School District has an ESOL Coordinator who works with small groups of English learners (ELs) and designs lessons that target their language goals. The ESOL Coordinator also works with the classroom teachers to strengthen EL students' academic skills when additional assistance is needed. This position also assists teachers in adapting coursework, assessments, and lesson plans to better fit the needs of our EL learners. She assists and trains the ESOL-endorsed teachers with writing ILPs (Individualized Language Plans,) which offer students with appropriate modifications/accommodations while providing teachers with a measure of accountability around their EL language goals.

Various other approaches are also used to support the achievement of EL learners. For instance, a brief in-service has been conducted for teachers around writing and the ILP, with specific time set aside for the teachers to work on writing an ILP with the ESOL Coordinator present to provide technical assistance and answer any questions. Our emphasis on individualized learning extends across the curriculum and our ELL services are no exception. The ESOL Coordinator for instance works closely with classroom teachers to provide interventions for the EL learners and deliver instruction that best suits our students. English language resources are provided to teachers to support their lessons. This may include furnishing software

(i.e., Rosetta Stone), workbooks, and resources to the students and families in order to supplement instruction and eliminate barriers to learning.

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

SEL/Counseling: Classroom character lessons complement the classroom topics covered through our social emotional learning curriculum, Second Step. Topics include self-esteem, resiliency, and grit, as well as attitudes about self, peers, family, their social groups, and school. Additionally, the school counselor meets with students individually and in small groups to work on social skills, problem-solving, family life changes, and other pertinent topics. This role also is also essential in providing short-term interventions for students with personal, social, emotional, and academic needs.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Piper, we have implemented several intentional and targeted measures to provide our students with a positive, stimulating environment that deepens their engagement in school – academically, socially and behaviorally.

Student engagement is deeply embedded into the Tier 1 core where it manifests through differentiated instruction for students. This universal strategy meets Piper students where they are at academically, providing instruction that is targeted to each student’s instructional level. Piper is committed to creating a foundation of academic success for its students who are beginning their educational journeys. It is important therefore that our students experience success (according to their academic level), develop confidence, and have an opportunity to build upon their strengths rather than to focus on their weaknesses.

In keeping with research, we seek to provide students with four positive “praises” for every one negative critique or recommendation for improvement.

Central to our work around student engagement is fostering behaviors and attitudes that create a welcoming and positive environment for all students. Each day, students, staff and teachers recite a “Piper Pledge” that reinforces students’ commitment to being responsible, respectful and safe. Through our Piper Gold program we recognize good behaviors that align with these common values. A weekly message is delivered every Monday that outlines behavior expectations for the upcoming week, and these behaviors are reinforced by Second Step lessons. It should be noted that our 3rd grade students develop this weekly message, which serves to engage not only the students who develop the messages but also the broader audience who receives them. “Expectation stations” are held at the outset of the school year and following the Christmas break to establish behavior expectations within the cafeteria and bus stop, and quarterly assemblies are used to recognize students who have earned Piper Gold.

Incorporated throughout our work around student engagement– and perhaps most critical to our success – has been an overwhelming emphasis on relationships. These relationships are accounted for in our work around SEL, positive reinforcement, and differentiated instruction. As a result of this approach, our teachers and staff have created a uniquely collaborative culture that extends well beyond the walls of Piper Elementary. For instance, we have developed “buddy” systems and teachers have befriended students to provide the students with a much-needed sense of belonging when they are feeling isolated or need acceptance.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Creating a culture of collaboration involves relationships that extend well beyond the walls of Piper Elementary. Families, particularly, play an important role in our success. When we establish a trusting relationship with our families, this creates a partnership that has proven time and again to be the most important contributor to our student success. Leveraging these relationships, teachers and staff work with families and use creative means, when necessary, to ensure students feel welcomed within the school and succeed. For instance, when students experience anxiety upon first entering the school, we set up – working with the family – a safe classroom exclusively for the student, to ease them into the school.

Piper Elementary has developed a variety of mechanisms to help cultivate relationships with its families and its community. We host a Meet-a-Teacher night which gives parents an opportunity to meet their children’s teachers. Various opportunities are offered throughout the year that effectively bring parents to school, such as picture day and “Fun Day” at the end of each school year. Parents also serve on the School’s Site Council, Inclusion Council (which coordinates our Diversity Festival), and families serve a variety of roles in supporting Piper’s Building Action Plan. Perhaps most indicative of Piper’s success in its engagement of parents is the 99% attendance rate among parents during parent-teacher conferences.

Through engagement of the broader community, Piper Elementary seeks to extend the educational and enrichment opportunities available within its four walls. We bring in firemen and police officers to speak with students about safety. Elderly residents from local assisted living facilities serve as “foster grandparents,” volunteering their time to work with students through a unique and mutually beneficial program. Local churches will donate bookbags (with supplies) and coats for needy students as well as provide gifts for teachers. Through our WATCH D.O.G.S. Program, we engage fathers, grandfathers and other males within the community to volunteer for one day per year at the school. Their presence provides students with positive male role models and helps to emphasize the importance of education. In addition, a partnership with the University of Kansas’ Education Department provides future teachers with direct field experience while providing Piper Elementary with classroom support.

It should also be noted here that our Diversity Night engages students, families and the greater community in an event that has made significant progress in ensuring all our families feel welcomed and engaged.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Piper Elementary provides a collaborative, supportive environment where teachers and staff are given regular feedback, and are provided training and other opportunities to strengthen their roles in the school. Just as we strive to individualize the education of our students, we also recognize each staff and teacher is unique and therefore each staff member’s professional development must account for school, department and individual needs. Regular feedback is essential in this process and ensures teachers have input that supports their effectiveness in the classroom.

Piper Elementary has created various systems of support that help teachers to “build a future one student at a time.” These include multitiered systems of supports (MTSS) for students and the use of professional learning communities (PLCs). To provide support to our teachers, we strive to create a culture of trust and vulnerability, which is especially important when facing struggles. MTSS and PLC fidelity checks help us identify professional development and technical assistance needs, and they facilitate productive conversations between teachers and administration. While Piper prides itself on supporting teachers when they struggle, it also maintains a level of accountability for all staff to standards of performance.

A key focus of Piper Elementary’s professional development strategy is providing teachers with opportunities for leadership. In professional development, we utilize a train-the-trainer approach. This not only creates cost efficiencies, it also provides teachers the opportunity to serve as a valuable resource for their peers. Teachers are also appointed to serve as the heads of committees, and all hiring decisions are made based on building needs.

A testament to the quality of Piper Elementary’s professional development plan is its high retention rate. When staff do leave, it is typically due to retirement or advancement opportunities within and outside the district.

4. School Leadership:

Piper Elementary’s culture of collaboration, shared sense of community, and collective commitment to student achievement rely on strong leadership, both at the very highest levels of the school to the work of teams operating at the grade and departmental level. Within Piper Elementary, we institute an array of related strategies to create an environment that supports leadership and the ongoing development of strong leaders.

At the outset of each school year, we engage in important conversations that identify our shared beliefs, values, capacity, identity, and the behaviors necessary to make our school successful.

While the Building Principal is typically considered the primary leader within a school, at Piper Elementary, the Principal’s role is a leader at times, but at others, it is that of a follower or a coach based on the

needs of the building.

Piper Elementary utilizes a READ (Reinforce, Encourage Enhancement, Assist the Adrift, and Direct the Unacceptable) Process to provide its teachers with meaningful feedback that maximizes our school improvement efforts and the implementation of our School Action Plan. Every teacher within the Building is subject to at least two informal observations or one formal observation per year using the READ Process, which assesses teachers' effectiveness utilizing research-based criteria. These observations are conducted by the Principal and Assistant Principal, who serve as coaches in this process, working with the teachers to share feedback and develop strategies to support teachers' effectiveness based on READ data.

An essential component of our leadership structure is the use of data, which inform both our performance as well as our improvement planning. Assessment data are available three times per year and teachers use these data to develop Student Achievement Plans of Action. In this process, data are reviewed through tiered levels and strategies are developed to promote achievement through individualized and group learning.

In addition, Piper Elementary maintains systems of communication within its building in order to support the work of its leaders and provide opportunities for leadership. Through our Double Feedback Loop, information is filtered from the District's Leadership Team to the Building's Leadership Team, to PLC teams, and back through these channels. This breaks down the silos which typically exist between departments and buildings and provides a mechanism for soliciting feedback to help shape policy, protocol and strategies for responding to the myriad of challenges we face as educators.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Piper Elementary is extremely proud of the many reforms, strategies, and systems it has developed in recent years in order to create an environment that has consistently promoted success for all its students, regardless of their background, ethnicity, economic status, learning style or academic performance. While these efforts entail various components, across these strategies is a shared focus on individualization.

This focus is not driven solely by evidence-based research, though there is a mounting collection of data to confirm the relationship between individualization and academic performance. Piper Elementary recognizes that the school is an extension of its community, and our teachers and staff take a vested and deep interest in the success of our students. As a school, we promote individualization through our systems, policies, professional development and other structures in order to meet students where they are at – academically, behaviorally and emotionally. Individualization understands that our students are different, and in a positive manner, we single them out for their differences, celebrating these as potentially unique contributions to our school, community and world, rather than flaws or deficiencies.

Individualization is reflected in our Diversity Festival. This unique event emerged as a response to racial tensions in our community, and now it is a hallmark event which has strengthened community ties immensely and created a more welcoming environment for families who may have felt marginalized. Through our Piper Gold initiative we provide encouragement and rewards around specific behaviors. This allows us to work with individual students who are struggling with behavior issues and encourage improvements. Our refocus on Social Emotional Learning promotes development of the whole child but also accounts for children's differences.

Nowhere, however, is our focus on individualization more important or prominent than in the classroom. Differentiation within our core provides an assurance to each one of our students that their learning is not delivered in mass but is instead based on their specific academic needs. This is embedded throughout all levels of our instructional delivery framework. It is represented in flexible groupings within the classroom, our continued use of data to inform the development of plans of action and professional development, systems of communication and planning to facilitate necessary collaboration between teachers and staff, and a collective commitment to provide our youth with the opportunity to achieve their potential as individuals and workers for the 21st Century.