

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 9171 Freedom Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Sapulpa State OK Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 74066-2108

County Creek

Telephone (918) 227-7838 Fax (918) 227-7839

Web site/URL  
[https://www.sapulpaps.org/schools/freedom\\_elementary](https://www.sapulpaps.org/schools/freedom_elementary) E-mail aowens@sapulpaps.org

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. Rob Armstrong E-mail rarmstrong@sapulpaps.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Sapulpa Tel. (918) 224-3400

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. Larry Hoover  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

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

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 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	31	25	56
K	31	29	60
1	31	22	53
2	27	36	63
3	31	15	46
4	24	26	50
5	35	24	59
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
<b>Total Students</b>	210	177	387

\*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):
- 15 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0.5 % Asian
  - 4 % Black or African American
  - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.5 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 59 % White
  - 17 % 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: 12%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	25
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	23
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	48
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	387
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.12
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %  
16 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 50 %

Total number students who qualify: 194

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %

55 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>43</u> Developmental Delay    | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>2</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:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
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.	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.

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	94%	92%	93%	95%	94%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

Freedom Elementary partners with families to build lifelong learners through engagement, collaboration, and discovery, supporting and challenging students in their pursuit to Rise Above the Rest.

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**

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In 2000, the community of Sapulpa, Oklahoma went to the polls to vote on a bond which would replace one of their oldest elementary schools. Emotions were high since many of these voters had once attended the school that would be replaced. However, Sapulpa was united in their desire to move forward and provide an improved learning environment for their children. As a result, Freedom Elementary School opened its doors in 2002. The new school housed pre-kindergarten through 5th grade. Its success was a priority for the district since future bonds were needed to replace two other elementary schools and make improvements to secondary facilities. All eyes were on Freedom Elementary to respond to the changing landscape of education, encourage and inspire students through their curiosity and desire to learn, and most of all, have a positive impact on student and family engagement. Freedom Elementary chose the Oklahoma A+ (OKA+) Schools education model to provide the support for that success and nurture a positive school climate that echoes their motto, "Rise Above the Rest."

Prior to the 2002 opening, the faculty of Freedom Elementary participated in several weeks of professional development. The focus was to become an OKA+ Model School. OKA+ strengthens teachers' and principals' ability to think more creatively about how to present their curriculum in collaborative and hands-on ways. Teachers were thoroughly trained in multiple learning styles and explicitly taught how to incorporate lessons that addressed them. The major theory behind OKA+ is to incorporate the arts to establish an educational environment that builds students' excitement about learning and produces increased achievement. Examples of this integration include author and illustrator studies, inventors' showcases, student performances, art shows, and project-oriented assessments. To further support this collaboration, Freedom Elementary was the first school in the area to develop a common plan time where all teachers would meet and share practices and data, make cross-curricular connections, and build horizontal and vertical partnerships. This plan time still exists today and is known as Professional Learning Communities (PLC). PLC has now been adopted throughout the district.

In addition to becoming an OKA+ Model School, Freedom Elementary is also a Great Expectations (GE) Model School. GE is a teaching/training program which is guided by 17 classroom practices, such as modeling desired behaviors and attitudes, demonstrating mutual respect and common courtesy, providing an environment that is non-threatening and conducive to risk-taking, and setting high expectations for all learners. These classroom practices are explicitly taught to educators during GE methodology training and they are reinforced during elective courses, as well as annual follow-up training sessions. Through teachers' use of the GE classroom practices, students become self-directed learners, productive citizens, effective communicators, critical thinkers, and cooperative contributors in the classroom, as well as in society.

Teachers at Freedom Elementary are dedicated to improving their response to student needs. Enrichment opportunities and interventions are a constant conversation among Freedom educators. All students participate in a program called Power Half Hour (PHH) where they may travel to another classroom to receive targeted instruction based on their academic level. Teachers volunteer their time for before and after school tutoring, chess club, Lego league, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) class, and running club.

One thing that is unique to Freedom Elementary is the patriotic tone. Walking through the halls it is obvious the respect that is cultivated for all past and current service members. The main hall has a veterans' photo wall that showcases members of staff and students' families that have served this country. Community leaders and Freedom families helped plant seven trees on the campus in honor of the Space Shuttle Challenger. Veterans have visited the school to speak with students and answer questions to deepen their understanding of historical events. Freedom Elementary's greatest display of patriotism is the annual Veterans Day program. Veterans and their families come from all over the area to watch the students sing, rap, mime, play musical instruments, dance, and use sign language to show their respect and say thank you. Because the program is live streamed via social media, the school has even had military family members stationed overseas watch the program. It ends with the song "Taps" and a moment of silence is observed to remember those veterans who have passed. After the program, veterans and their families are invited to stay for lunch and be served by the school's staff and parent volunteers.

This year Freedom Elementary became one of only two elementary schools in northeast Oklahoma to earn an overall A grade on the state report card. Freedom's success on the state report card is the result of an increased emphasis on helping students who were narrowly underperforming on the state's grading measures. In addition, the school improved its English language proficiency scores, as well as its chronic absenteeism scores. The culture of high expectations and the drive of teachers to push their students to achieve continues to help Freedom Elementary "Rise Above the Rest."

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

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

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

Freedom focuses on individual student needs while maintaining high expectations through the utilization of the Oklahoma Academic Standards. These standards serve as the framework for curriculum and curricula continua chosen by the district. Teachers work consistently to create engaging lessons with research-based instructional strategies to provide every student an opportunity for mastery in language arts, reading, mathematics, science, social studies, and specialty areas of art, music, and physical education (PE). Lessons are differentiated to provide individualized instruction, teachers utilize interdisciplinary teaching strategies daily, and Gifted and Talented (GT), Special Education (SPED), Title I, and English Learner (EL) programs provide students with additional academic support. During weekly collaboration, teachers discuss student needs and design lessons that are scaffolded for success. Through this approach achievement has increased across all grades and achievement gaps continue to close.

A variety of assessments are used to measure achievement and drive instruction. In pre-k through 3rd grade, teachers administer Literacy First reading assessments three times a year. Students in 3rd through 5th grade are given common formative benchmark assessments every six weeks to analyze their performance on grade level standards and the STAR reading assessment is given to students in kindergarten through 5th grade three times a year. In order to address instructional needs, student assessments begin early. Students take Istation benchmark assessments in reading and math within the first three weeks of the school year. This computerized assessment places students into one of three Response to Intervention (RtI) groups. Tier I students receive core classroom support, Tier II students receive targeted, small group support, and Tier III students receive intensive, individual support. Freedom's Reading Specialist tutors Tier II and Tier III RtI small groups for 30 minutes each school day, in addition to their 90-minute classroom reading block. Progress monitoring occurs five times weekly using Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) instruction at all grade levels. These tiered groupings are re-evaluated each nine weeks based on monthly team meetings on classroom data. Furthermore, students are assessed monthly on Istation to check for growth in the areas where differentiated instruction has been implemented. Schoolwide PHH serves as daily RtI targeting skill mastery and enrichment.

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

The main focus of the language arts and reading program at Freedom is to provide students with 90 minutes of uninterrupted time each day to facilitate the essential components of reading: phonological awareness, phonics, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. During this time, students remain in their homeroom without pull-out services, recess, or specialty classes to interfere. In doing this, students can stay focused on their reading lessons while receiving all curriculum in one setting, as opposed to broken up throughout the day. The 90-minute reading block is a priority in every classroom each day.

During this time, teachers utilize a variety of teaching methods. Whole group teaching targets the overview of the standards being taught, while small groups are a staple at each grade level, offering differentiated, flexible learning. Intermediate grades use a combination of small group readers and novel studies. In the primary grades core skills are taught, including sight words and word patterns. These ability-based groups are reorganized throughout the year based upon data collected through assessments and routine benchmark analysis. Most grade levels employ some form of the Daily 5 structure to reinforce grammar, writing, and spelling, while also providing additional independent reading time during small group instruction. Students are assessed weekly to ensure skill mastery, as well as periodically throughout the school year.

Students' independent reading time is enhanced through the Accelerated Reader (AR) program to ensure students are reading books appropriate to their reading level. This data is gathered using the STAR assessment. Once students have their Lexile level, they may check out books from the school library, which is organized based on these levels. With this system in place, students can check out books and reach their

reading goals independently. After the book is read, students take computerized AR comprehension tests. As added incentives for reading, grade levels hold reward parties based on students' reading goals. This program has proven to be a positive approach to encouraging young readers.

With a 1:1 student to Chromebook ratio, students in second through fifth grade integrate technology into the reading block. Lower grade level classrooms house a handful of computers and tablets to meet the literacy needs using technology. Third, fourth, and fifth graders utilize digital curriculum exclusively, therefore reading lessons and assessments are primarily on Chromebooks.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) is the district-adopted reading curriculum utilized throughout the building. Journeys was selected by a district committee as part of the district's digital transformation partnership with HMH.

Outside the 90-minute reading block, students receive reading interventions and enrichments, as needed. Examples of outside reading time include Title 1 intervention reading groups, SPED services, reading tutors, and PHH, the schoolwide intervention and enrichment time.

Freedom's ultimate goal is to develop strategic, lifelong readers who successfully read for a variety of purposes and who think critically and communicate effectively through written, oral, and/or visual expression. Teachers use instruction to provide students with fiction and non-fiction to enhance learning in reading and writing. By using 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading time daily and utilizing a variety of learning applications, students are gaining literacy assets essential to their education.

### **1c. Mathematics**

Freedom Elementary uses the Saxon Math Program in grades kindergarten through second. Saxon Math is an integrated approach where concepts from every math strand are woven together and connected throughout the year. These explicit instructional methods, coupled with the gradual release model, provide students an opportunity to explore multiple strategies for solving real world problems. Students are taught to analyze the structure of a problem to determine which strategy is most effective for them.

Freedom students in third, fourth, and fifth grades utilize the HMH Go Math series for mathematical instruction. This program provides a wealth of differentiated instruction resources across interactive platforms. The Go Math program is designed to develop the important processes that students need to become lifelong problem solvers. Freedom teachers employ interactive HMH lessons designed around the 5E Model of Instruction: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate.

Teachers also use supplemental materials to add to the curriculum ensuring each standard is taught in depth and supporting all types of learners in creative ways. One of the supplemental additions in grades 3rd through 5th is IXL Math. The skills in IXL are aligned to the Oklahoma Academic Standards providing comprehensive coverage of math concepts and applications. This gives students unlimited practice questions that are specifically tailored to each required standard. Teachers use IXL Math as a differentiation tool, as well, assigning varying levels of difficulty to students based on their areas of need.

Fact fluency is taught at every grade level. Further, it's reinforced through math programs and initiatives, such as Number Master, Facts Master, and Rocket Math. Students in 1st through 5th grades are recognized quarterly during an assembly for their achievements on their grade-level math initiative. To reward effort, students attend a special celebration or field trip each quarter for achieving their personal math goals.

All teachers want student achievement levels to increase. Small group instruction and cooperative learning have a significant impact on achievement and are widely used at Freedom. Providing immediate feedback to students regarding their learning, being able to re-teach or pre-teach a concept or set of skills, and building confidence through collaboration are the key benefits of small group math instruction. Small group instruction is given two to three times a week allowing the teacher to monitor students' actions more closely and provide frequent feedback to improve specific math skills. While groups of students are working with the teacher during small groups, other students are completing differentiated math learning centers or

independent activities.

All students are given multiple formative and summative assessments in math. Application problems allow teachers an opportunity to determine which students need additional support. Formative assessments, such as exit tickets, provide teachers with data to inform future instruction. Summative assessments, such as end of unit tests and Istation benchmarks, yield relevant data regarding individual student needs, as well as students' strengths and areas for growth. All data sources are analyzed monthly to identify struggling learners and this practice has contributed greatly to the improvement of math scores across the school.

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

In 4th and 5th grade, students have access to an interactive, online curriculum that is aligned to Oklahoma standards. The focus of science for upper elementary students is to allow them a space to ask questions about the world around them and work together to discover answers. Early childhood students are provided opportunities to make observations, ask questions, and make predictions about what they think is happening. Many of the lessons are play-based, which allows students to explore ideas freely. All students, no matter the grade level, are learning how to think like a scientist, conduct experiments like they would in the real world, and are learning content that relates to their lives.

Last year was the first full year all Freedom students have had access to the MakerSpace Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) Lab, a place where they can create and build using their imagination. Teachers are also able to use MakerSpace to incorporate hands-on learning experiences that support what students are learning in the classroom. The Freedom MakerSpace Lab was primarily furnished by grants and donations, and includes robotics and coding equipment, iPads, building tools and manipulatives, a 3D printer, art supplies, Lego wall, and deconstruction station where students are free to take apart electronics to discover how they work. Students enjoy MakerSpace so much that they will often give up their recess to spend more time there!

One of the highlights of the year is the STEM Showcase, an all-district science fair. Students develop a STEM project concerning something they are excited to learn about, or an invention they have created, and present it at the site level. A judge then selects several students to move onto the district level STEM Showcase. Last year, Freedom had several students receive first, second, or third place. Student achievement like this reflects the high expectations for learning at Freedom Elementary.

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

In 5th grade, students prepare for weeks for an immersive social studies experience called Revolutionary Days. They learn extensively about the history and culture of the Colonial Era and culminate the unit with a day in full colonial garb, hearing from speakers such as Benjamin Franklin, and engaging in games and trades from that period. The event culminates with the Bill of Rights rap, a song that Freedom students help lead. This year, the Freedom fifth grade social studies teacher planned a free Revolutionary Day event for all fifth grade students in the district, which allowed many of the area schools to attend an event like this for the first time. Revolutionary Days will become a tradition for the district and Freedom is proud that it started with this school.

In addition to living history programs for fifth graders, all Freedom students are given opportunities to explore and learn about the world around them. Younger grades focus on basic United States history, including learning about the presidents, US symbols, and connecting major American holidays to historical events. In 3rd grade students begin to discover Oklahoma history, studying about Native Americans and their contributions to the state, as well as the Trail of Tears and how the state was settled through land runs. In 4th grade Freedom students begin memorizing US states and capitals using Globe Master, a cousin to Number Master and Facts Master. When students complete the Globe Master levels, they are rewarded with a class party. Geography is also part of the Oklahoma Academic Standards for social studies. Students learn about historical landmarks, as well as geographical features. Given Freedom's patriotic focus, it is not surprising that all students are also exposed to the history and symbology of the various military branches through the celebration of Veterans Day and the annual Veterans Day program.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

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

Oklahoma has funded four-year-old preschool for every child, regardless of family income, since 1998. In 2016, the state adopted new academic standards that are utilized beginning in pre-k and Freedom teachers use those standards to create a fully developed and balanced program. Freedom pre-k teaches important concepts, such as mathematics and early literacy through everyday experiences, thematic units, learning centers, and active curriculum. Preschoolers have fun learning through dramatic play and multi-sensory activities used to reach all learning styles. Fine and gross motor skills are also developed at this grade level through exploratory play. Teachers utilize the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt reading curriculum called *Splash Into Pre-K* to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. Pre-k students are often seen moving and dancing while learning letters, numbers, and words. Number sense is taught using numbers of the day, tally marks, ten frames, and manipulatives. Technology is woven throughout both whole and small group instructional settings. Teachers use the smart board as an interactive visual to assist in teaching new concepts. Students are often seen on Ipads during center time exploring reading and or math. Each class also has an allotted time in our computer lab each week to practice Pre-K Istation skills. Teachers regularly assess each child's progress and design differentiated small group activities accordingly. They document the emerging abilities of each child on their standards-based report cards. These growth results are communicated to parents quarterly.

Teaching students social development skills is another essential component of Freedom's successful pre-k program. This includes how to behave with friends, expectations in a school setting, and learning about emotions and how to manage them. As a result of pre-k instruction, these students are taught foundational skills and are better prepared for transitioning to the primary grades. Strong pre-k programs, such as Freedom's, produce broad gains in children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. Early print awareness and receptive vocabulary have been found to predict later reading abilities in the early grades.

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

All Freedom students experience an enriched curriculum by participating in art, PE, library, music and the MakerSpace STEAM Lab for 50 minutes or more daily. Specials teachers in art, music, and PE nurture talents that students possess, promoting balance and encouraging exploration of fine arts and athletics. Freedom is fortunate to have specialists who understand their role in fulfilling the school's vision.

Through visual arts education, students learn the meaning and value of creativity and innovation by demonstrating originality in work and responding to new and diverse perspectives. During art classes, students in each grade level focus on an artist and overarching themes that influence his or her art. Literature is always paired with art instruction and vocabulary is introduced and reiterated throughout each lesson. Student artwork is displayed in an entry case and throughout the halls. In addition, kindergarten and fifth grade artwork is showcased at the annual art show for kindergarten and fifth grade graduates in May.

The comprehensive PE program is designed to develop basic movement skills, sports skills, and physical fitness, as well as to enhance mental, social, and emotional awareness. Addressing the need for students to become more active in their daily lives, the PE teacher looks for a variety of avenues to pique student interests and promote lifelong skills. Students engage in a wide range of activities including volleyball, basketball, soccer, and archery. Students have opportunities to participate in running club after school two days a week, as well as competitive basketball teams, Junior Olympics – a track and field competition, Jump Rope for Heart, and the annual Freedom Fun Run. Students are given physical fitness skills pre and post tests, keeping them accountable and measuring their endurance growth twice a year during PE class.

Freedom's library media center promotes the enjoyment of reading while teaching literacy skills needed to become successful readers. Students are introduced to award winning literature over multiple genres. During library lessons, students learn research and technology skills, including digital citizenship. The school has a certified librarian and library assistant. The librarian is an essential part of the Freedom faculty, partnering with classroom teachers to connect 21st century learners with resources. She empowers students to be

critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, and ethical users of information. The library center is open for students to check out books before school, throughout the day, and during library specials classes. Freedom students demonstrated their love for the library by checking out 27,936 books last year!

Freedom provides 50 minutes of music instruction each week. Music class is taught by a highly qualified music teacher who utilizes the Oklahoma Academic Standards for music as a guide for instruction. She incorporates elements of literacy, science, geography, and history into music lessons. Students learn music theory, history, and appreciation and are taught using group learning, individual work, and small group instruction. Movement is incorporated into music, with emphasis on beat and rhythm, which is accomplished by learning and playing various instruments. Freedom's music teacher has used grants extensively to purchase a wide array of instruments for her students including ukuleles, recorders, many different types of drums and percussion instruments, resonator bells, and hand chimes. Students are also introduced to music from other countries and cultures to develop an overall appreciation of the art form. To demonstrate what they've learned in music class, Freedom students perform in three musical programs a year, as well as an annual Talent Show to showcase their abilities.

Freedom has been a GE Model School for twelve years. All certified teachers have attended at least one week-long summer institute on methodology. The GE Teaching Methodology is an eclectic approach to teaching that encompasses the very best of what is known about teaching today. Drawing from many learning theories, Freedom teachers do whatever it takes to teach students through an integrated, holistic method. Students become self-directed learners, productive citizens, effective communicators, critical thinkers, and cooperative contributors in the classroom, as well as in society. Character education is not only reinforced by teachers through GE tenets, but also through the school counselor who conducts monthly lessons with students teaching them how to recognize emotions, control their behavior, socialize and make friends, study and take tests without anxiety, use coping skills, and practice empathy and kindness towards others.

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

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

A priority at Freedom is ensuring the learning needs of every student are addressed. Those who have not been placed on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), but are reading below grade level on Istation assessments, are placed in Title I and receive 30 minutes of interventions daily in addition to the 90-minute reading block already occurring in their classroom. In Title I, small groups of students receive daily intensive support focusing on the essential components of reading. Various instructional strategies are used to reach each learning style. Progress is monitored throughout the year by the Title I Reading Specialist and adjustments to interventions are made accordingly. Inside the classroom during the 90-minute reading block and math lessons, Freedom teachers implement whole group learning, as well as small group instruction. During small groups, teachers differentiate lessons and focus specifically on the needs of the various levels of their students.

Beyond classroom differentiation, the entire student body participates in PHH each day, which is a schoolwide intervention and enrichment period. Using state standards and assessment data, teachers divide students into intervention and enrichment groups. Students travel across grade levels to receive appropriate support. The focus in PHH alternates between reading and math.

Students kindergarten through 5th grade who are reading below level are also placed on Academic Progress Plans (APP), in compliance with the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Teachers and parents review APPs together, creating student reading goals and interventions both at school and home.

For 4th and 5th graders, students may attend morning tutoring with classroom teachers 30 minutes before school. Students work through math and reading skills, reviewing current and past grade level materials in order to address gaps in learning. Freedom is also partnered with Creek County Literacy, facilitating the Caring Grand program that offers tutors for 1st and 2nd graders before school. These senior adults meet

with students each week with a focus on sight words, fluency, and comprehension. All interventions at Freedom are continuously adjusted and adapted by teachers as students' needs change and evolve.

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

Students who perform above grade level, as indicated on Istation and classroom assessments, receive enrichment in a variety of ways. Similarly to students who perform below grade level, students who perform above grade level receive specialty instruction during the classroom 90-minute reading block and math lessons. Teachers implement enrichment material into their small group lessons, challenging those students who have already mastered the grade level skill. Schoolwide PHH also serves as a time to receive advanced instruction. Students who are achieving beyond their grade level are moved to enrichment groups for 30 minutes daily in higher grade classrooms, allowing them to build on their skills and receive accelerated instruction in reading and math. The MakerSpace STEAM Lab also provides opportunities for student-led enrichment to all students at Freedom Elementary. MakerSpace provides an array of STEAM-based, hands-on activities and supplies that students are able to explore using their own interests while developing creativity and critical thinking skills. Freedom also offers optional after-school enrichment programs, including a science program called Mad Science, and an art program called Young Rembrandts.

Students who have been identified as GT by the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and/or individualized Intelligence Quotient (IQ) testing, attend enrichment services one half day per week with GT teachers. GT students focus on STEM-enriched lessons and research projects throughout the year, along with brain games, hands-on activities, and field trips.

While students performing above grade level receive enrichment in and out of their regular classroom, utilizing technology plays an additional role. Students who are on or above level in math and reading use Istation's web-based instruction between monthly assessments. Istation provides game-like educational technology in both reading and math, providing adaptive lessons for students who are ready to move beyond their grade level. Meeting the needs of all learners, at all levels, is a priority each and every day at Freedom Elementary.

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

Freedom has implemented services to meet the learning needs of students who qualify for an IEP. The process of IEP qualification begins by collecting a variety of assessment data and submitting it to the Collaboration Team. The team includes the principal, school counselor, Title I Reading Specialist, and classroom teacher. They meet periodically to set goals and interventions for the student. If the student does not show academic or behavioral gains, the data is sent to the district-level team where a decision is made regarding further testing and the need for SPED services.

Freedom's SPED program includes 14% of the student population. SPED services are provided in a wide variety of ways based on the student's academic, behavioral, and/or developmental needs. SPED services at Freedom include two SPED teachers and two paraprofessionals who serve students that spend most of the day in the regular education classroom. Pre-k through 2nd grade students are pulled out of their regular education classroom for small group instruction in the areas that are identified on the IEP. Third through fifth grade students are served in the regular education classroom with assistance from a SPED teacher and paraprofessional who are trained in a type of instruction called inclusion. These students complete the same work the regular education students are assigned with assistance from the SPED staff as needed. The SPED and classroom teachers work together at weekly PLC meetings to create the modifications necessary to accommodate the needs of each student.

Students with more severe disabilities are taught in a multi-age, self-contained classroom with a full-time SPED teacher and three paraprofessionals. Those students' academic needs are addressed based on their developmental level. Freedom also employs a full-time speech pathologist who serves students with speech and language delays. Students also have access to occupational and physical therapists as provided for in their IEPs. The staff at Freedom values the learning of students who need additional resources and assistance, helping each student reach their personal best.

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

The Freedom Elementary School community has seen a recent increase in the number of students who speak another language besides English. With four percent of the student body classified as EL, services have been implemented to meet their needs. Students' language needs are first identified at enrollment, when parents or guardians answer language-specific questions regarding the student. The data that is gathered includes information concerning the language spoken at home and the languages each student is exposed to regularly. This information is vital in identifying those students who need EL services. At the beginning of the school year, those students who have been identified as speaking another language themselves or another language besides English is spoken within their homes are assessed using the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) test. This language proficiency screener gives a picture of how students' language development needs to be facilitated by the school. After the screening process, students meet with Freedom's onsite EL tutor throughout the week. The amount of time spent in tutoring is based on each student's WIDA results and their subsequent Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP). The LIEP varies from one student to the next, much like an IEP, and addresses the student's language acquisition needs through tutoring, modifications, and accommodations at school. After a student qualifies for EL tutoring, students utilize computerized software called Ellevation. This software includes lessons on phonics, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. In addition to Ellevation, the EL tutor also provides hands-on materials and curriculum focusing on language acquisition skills. At the end of the school year, students are again assessed using the WIDA test. These test results indicate if further EL services are needed, if EL tutoring time needs to be increased or decreased, and it illustrates language growth. Creating an atmosphere where students are supported while they gain the language skills they need to be successful is of utmost importance at Freedom Elementary.

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

Students who qualify for Native American studies, through the federal Johnson-O'Malley Act or Title VI, must hold a Certificate Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) card or have a parent or grandparent that holds a CDIB or enrollment card of a federally recognized tribe. At Freedom Elementary, the Native American studies program encompasses around 80 students each school year or 21% of the school population, the second largest demographic in the building. The full-time School Cultural Liaison spends 85% of her time teaching cultural lessons with qualifying students, while the other 15% is spent tutoring Native American students who need academic support. Cultural lessons include Native American folk tale reading, art related to Native American history, and the exploration of Native American artifacts, musical instruments, language, and regalia. Time is also spent researching current events that affect the Native American population. Students who are below grade level academically receive small group or one-on-one tutoring in 30-minute increments weekly.

Outside of school hours, Native American students may participate in the annual academic bowl, the Creek County Challenge Bowl. The Challenge Bowl incorporates indigenous language, history, government, and legends into a unique competition that Freedom's Native American students truly enjoy. In addition to the academic aspect of the Challenge Bowl, students also learn good sportsmanship, teamwork, and collaboration. Native American studies can be found integrated into the school's PE classes during Native American Heritage month, as well. The School Cultural Liaison provides educational lessons along with the practice of Native American activities, such as stickball and archery. Fifth graders are led in cultural lessons and STEM projects focusing on wigwams and the Woodland people. Freedom's School Cultural Liaison also meets the needs of Native American staff and families by providing financial, behavioral health, enrollment, and academic referrals and resources. Native American studies are a vital piece of Freedom Elementary's indigenous community, school population, and the town of Sapulpa.

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

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

Students rally behind the school motto “Rise Above the Rest!” They are given many opportunities to show how they excel in academics, arts, athletics, character, and community service. By offering a myriad of activities, events, projects, and classes, students are engaged and involved in their own learning and growth.

Freedom has a culture of high expectations, as evidenced by the classification as a GE Model School for the last 12 years. Maintaining high expectations has been an essential component to cultivating student ambition and motivation. When the bar is set high and students receive support as they reach towards it, they are excited and amazed at what they can achieve.

Freedom teachers use a variety of strategies to engage students academically. Accelerated Reader (AR), Facts Master, and Globe Master programs are used to develop reading, math, and geography skills, and each student is given a personal goal to best. Teachers reward students with quarterly recognition, and fun outings and activities to encourage them as they reach their targeted objectives. To excite third graders about math, Freedom teachers created the Kings and Queens of Multiplication program. When third graders successfully memorize multiplication facts through 12, they are celebrated with a regal party complete with crowns, robes, and punch in goblets. Thanks to a generous grant, fifth graders are encouraged to read by paying them through the Books for Bucks program. They receive one dollar for every AR point they earn, which for some has meant making more than 500 dollars during their final year at Freedom! Science exploration and discovery is also encouraged in MakerSpace. Students can create, analyze, and investigate everything from physics to engineering, strengthening their problem-solving skills and building their confidence. They put that science grit to good use during the annual STEM Showcase where students prove just how inventive and analytical they can be in their pursuit of a first place trophy.

Not all student engagement is academic, however. Giving back is something that is very important to the staff and students at Freedom. Each year the school rallies behind an annual canned food drive, holiday gift drive, and Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Week, promoting thousands of acts of empathy, service, and kindness throughout the school and community over the years. Every other year during RAK Week, students, family members, and staff have donated 8 inches or more of their hair to charity, totaling more than 450 inches of donated hair to date. Freedom is intentional about developing all aspects of their students and understands the importance of using many methods to promote students’ engagement and desire to learn.

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

Freedom Elementary is fortunate to benefit from strong partnerships with families and the greater Sapulpa community. The support that is given has had a tremendous impact on the school’s ability to succeed and continue to make great gains with students.

In order to keep families and stakeholders informed, Freedom utilizes several forms of communication. Student academic progress is shared through progress reports in the middle of each quarter, quarterly report cards, and end-of-year awards ceremonies. Parent teacher conferences are held twice a year. Facebook and Instagram are used extensively to promote the exciting things happening at the school, as well as remind parents about upcoming events and important dates. Teachers use the district’s school messaging system, Class Dojo, newsletters, emails, and phone calls to communicate with parents in a variety of ways to meet each family’s needs.

Freedom has an active parent teacher organization called Teachers and Parents of Sapulpa (TAPS). TAPS organizes fundraisers to help finance field trips, classroom supplies, and activities. They also sponsor several annual family functions, such as Family Game Night, Family Movie Night, and Family Fun Night.

Freedom has several events that involve families and the community, the largest being the Veterans Day

program. Not only has the program brought in hundreds, if not thousands, of local veterans in order for the students and staff to celebrate and thank them for their contributions and sacrifices to this country, it also provides an opportunity for parents and community members to volunteer at the school by decorating, cooking meals, and serving food to the veterans and their families who attend. The Veterans Day festivities at Freedom are a shining example of bringing staff, students, parents, and stakeholders together for a common purpose – recognizing those that are often overlooked, but so important to this community and nation.

Freedom families and local community members are frequently invited to visit the school and participate in students' learning and achievement. Each Friday, parents and family members may attend Rise and Shine, the morning assembly, as a different class each week leads the school in pledges, recitations of the student creed, Patriots' Choices, and eight GE Expectations, and concludes with a class performance. Freedom has three annual musical programs, three family lunches, Grandparents Day festivities, a STEM Showcase, quarterly academic recognitions, a Fun Run, a Field Day, and end-of-year awards assemblies that are all well-attended by families and stakeholders. Freedom students' families are excited to experience all that is going on in the school and welcome any opportunity to visit and be involved in their children's school experience.

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

From the day the doors opened, Freedom Elementary has been a place where students, parents, and staff are valued. The culture, which places an emphasis on excellence through academics and social-emotional growth, creates opportunities for the diversely talented staff to pursue individual passions unlocking their potential in a safe, supportive environment. Innovation and readiness are critical parts of enhancing teaching and learning at Freedom and the leadership, as well as the staff, recognizes that quality professional development (PD), corporately and individually, is imperative to achieving the school's goal of rising above the rest.

District and site-level PD is an ongoing, multi-faceted, research/evidence-based process strategically planned to provide both individual and systemic changes to support continuous growth of teacher instructional practices and student performance. Several Freedom teachers, as well as members of the leadership team, serve on the district's professional development committee helping to ensure that meaningful opportunities for differentiated professional learning for Freedom teachers are available.

Critical to the success of students is what happens at the site level. The Freedom staff focuses professional learning on what matters most to their current student population. Monday mornings are set aside for teachers and leaders to participate in PLC. The staff has been trained in DuFour's Model for PLC and a collaborative system of accountability has been put in place to ensure that all participants are actively engaging in data review (academic and social-emotional), improvement planning, and the implementation process. A recent, highly successful initiative that emerged from PLC is the creation of the before-school tutoring program. GE and OKA+ are other programs for which the Freedom staff annually receive ongoing, job-embedded training. All teachers must attend a week-long introductory GE methodology institute, as well as trainings and coaching sessions every year. OKA+ instructors coach the Freedom staff through a creative process, helping them prepare innovative ways to get kids excited about learning through a hands-on approach.

While all of these PD resources help Freedom teachers rise above, research demonstrates that when instruction and programming are personalized, the level of effectiveness is greatly enhanced. In addition to participating in district and building level PD, Freedom teachers and administrators establish an annual professional learning focus (PLF). These PLF goals are developed by the teacher and shared with the administrator in collaboration with the teacher's evaluation. The goal of the PLF is to align the teacher's personalized learning with a specific area in the evaluation process. The teachers at Freedom work hand in hand with the principal to make sure PD opportunities are available to support the teacher's PLF.

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

Freedom Elementary believes in a shared leadership model. With this leadership approach, all adults are empowered to individually and collaboratively uphold the vision of the school. Sharing leadership responsibilities helps Freedom become more inclusive and self-reflective because more people are exchanging important information, ideas, and making decisions collaboratively.

The Building Leadership Team (BLT), a guiding partnership for Freedom's direction, consists of three classroom teachers (kindergarten, first, and fourth), a special education teacher, the reading specialist, the counselor, and the principal. Meeting several times throughout the year, the BLT works together to brainstorm ideas and solutions for the school, each member bringing their own expertise to the table. With high expectations and support, Freedom has built a leadership philosophy around data-driven decisions, and collaboration among all stakeholders.

Instruction and design take priority and are at the forefront of the principal's mind. She attends district curriculum, standards, and report card meetings, along with site teacher leaders, to advocate for the faculty and students at Freedom and ensure resources are aligned accordingly. The teacher leaders at Freedom not only lead and support the school, but can also be seen leading at the district level. Freedom teachers have pioneered and led the way with several initiatives, including the adoption and implementation of digital curriculum, vertical and horizontal curriculum alignments, standards-based report card rubrics, and the creation of an Oklahoma Academic Standards checklist to be utilized by district personnel. They are also often invited to present at district professional development workshops on the material that they have helped create.

Freedom's principal sets the tone for positive and effective communication by keeping the staff informed of district updates, issues, and visions. Using weekly staff newsletters and quarterly staff meetings, she regularly and succinctly communicates with staff, and provides resources for lessons, projects, and supplemental activities. She serves as a liaison between the district, building, and stakeholders, and makes it a point to be available to staff, students, and parents whenever possible. Her focused support of everyone involved with the school sets the tone and models what it means to be part of the Freedom family.

Shared leadership and supportive administration enable the school to draw on a larger pool of talent, wisdom, expertise, and experience beyond a single principal or small group of administrators. By letting individuals focus their attention, energy, and skills on what they do best, the whole organization, and the students in particular, will benefit.

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

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Through data analysis and strategic planning, Freedom administration became aware of subgroup achievement gaps that were significantly affecting the success of students. To target specific areas of concern, the RtI process was created. RtI is an organized system that quickly identifies and intervenes with students who are struggling in either literacy or math.

The process begins with monthly Istation benchmark testing starting in September. Students are placed into green, yellow, or red groups, red being those with the lowest scores. Teachers track this data in their classroom data folders and one large data wall is displayed in the teacher work room for accountability, as well. Based on their scores, students are placed into tiered interventions. Green students are placed into Tier I which consists of daily PHH with possible enrichment instead of intervention if warranted, and teacher-led small group instruction in math and reading. Yellow students are placed into Tier II. Tier II includes interventions from Tier I and adds Title I reading intervention, EL and Native American tutoring for those that qualify, and before-school tutoring. Red students are placed into Tier III. Tier III interventions include those in Tier I and Tier II and add targeted, research-based interventions that are decided in Collaboration Team meetings.

Students that are identified as red on Istation benchmarks are submitted by their classroom teachers to the Collaboration Team, a group consisting of the school psychologist, reading specialist, counselor, principal, and classroom teachers. Input from these professionals allows the team to look at all the possible needs of the individual child and create an intervention plan that addresses their academic, behavioral, emotional, physical, and/or relational concerns. The team meets twice weekly to analyze data and design individualized intervention plans. Every four to six weeks, the Collaboration Team adjusts those plans based on the student's scores. If the student is improving and meeting goals, other areas of need may be targeted or the student may be stepped back to Tier II. If the student continues to struggle, interventions may be increased or modified. Students not making adequate progress after completing all three tiers of the RtI process are referred to the district special services team for specialized testing.

Freedom's RtI process keeps faculty on the pulse of student performance levels and the scores from the bottom quartile of students show this method is working. Using this systematic and explicit process every student ultimately receives the individualized help they need to make them successful and reach their own potential. Freedom's team approach to intervention is key to growing students and creating lifelong learners.