

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name John Rex Charter School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 500 W Sheridan Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Oklahoma City State OK Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 73102-5001

County Oklahoma

Telephone (405) 587-8100 Fax (405) 587-8105

Web site/URL http://www.johnrexschool.org E-mail lingram@johnrexschool.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. Dean Ketchum E-mail dean.ketchum@johnrexschool.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name John Rex Charter School Tel. (405) 587-8100

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. Nathaniel Harding
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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	21	30	51
K	40	36	76
1	44	40	84
2	34	51	85
3	44	41	85
4	35	44	79
5	28	31	59
6	28	31	59
7	36	29	65
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	310	333	643

*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):
- 3.9 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3.9 % Asian
 - 23 % Black or African American
 - 17.5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 39.5 % White
 - 12 % 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: 5%

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	12
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	27
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	591
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Spanish, Chinese, Hausa, Vietnamese, Telugu, French, Gujarati, Albanian, Arabic, Hindi, Farsi, Yoruba, Kiswahili, Greek, Filipino, Romanian, Indonesian, Swahili

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %
62 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 33 %

Total number students who qualify: 215

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %

75 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>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>52</u> Developmental Delay | <u>18</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

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

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	32
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.	3
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 20:1

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%	95%	95%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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.

The mission of John Rex Charter Elementary School is to offer quality educational opportunities to children in the heart of downtown Oklahoma City.

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

The School has designated attendance boundaries, and any child residing within those attendance boundaries shall, subject to any capacity and education program limitations, be entitled to attend the School.

Admission

The order of priority for admission and enrollment of students to the School will be based on the following two tiers:

Tier 1- Any child who resides within the Attendance Zone; and

Tier 2- A child who resides outside the Attendance Zone, but within the Oklahoma City Public Schools district’s attendance boundary;

If, at any time, the number of eligible students applying for admission exceeds the capacity of the School, the Board directs the Head of School to conduct a lottery, which shall be held within the priority level and/or grade level that is oversubscribed, to select the student(s) that may be admitted to the School.

PART III - SUMMARY

John Rex is a unique charter school in the heart of Oklahoma City providing daily exposure to the culturally rich amenities that are only available downtown. Our students and their families come to us from a local homeless shelter; from premium apartments and townhomes; and from diverse neighborhoods, creating a rich, inclusive school community. To be a John Rex Rocket, you simply attend our school. Eliminating financial status or ZIP code identity has allowed our students to form relationships that might not otherwise happen.

Key strategies include teaching children how to develop a growth mindset, set goals, create action plans, reflect, and refine. Our personalized approach encourages and challenges our students. Each teacher at John Rex uses goal-setting strategies to help students focus their attention on personal growth in academics; physical fitness and health; social skills; and talents. The goal-setting process consists of a pre-assessment; instruction and action planning with opportunities for reflection and refining; and post-assessment. Outcomes are discussed and tracked by both the teacher and the student in an age-appropriate manner. All student progress is tracked in personal portfolios, which are used to communicate student growth to parents as well as the next grade-level teacher. Students and teachers use the portfolios in parent-teacher conferences to discuss academic and social-emotional progress, goals, and what's important to them as a student of John Rex.

Within our core curricula, teachers use project-based learning to address state standards. Teachers facilitate inquiry-based questioning at the beginning of each new unit. Students are guided through a brainstorming process and generate questions. The questions are used to design and implement lessons including student interests as well as state standards and skills. Teachers provide students with choices and allow their voices to be present in the decision-making process of lesson design.

The project-based learning approach starts in team planning. The teachers meet weekly to design opportunities for cross-curricular projects. The grade-level plan is communicated to the students with built-in inquiry-based questioning. When our students know that their input is valued and used to facilitate learning, they strive to reach their fullest potential because they have ownership of the process and the end product.

Expanded learning opportunities that reach beyond the classroom sets John Rex apart. Our students take what is learned within the walls of the classroom and connect it to the outside world and everything our downtown community has to offer. Within walking distance, they find a public library, multiple performing arts venues, museums, a botanical garden, restaurants, city and county offices, corporate partners, urban parks, sports arenas, and our city's distinct districts that add culture and relevance to our students' learning experiences. Our teachers, students, and families explore and incorporate these amenities into the everyday life of a John Rex student. One of the very first things a student learns at John Rex is how to navigate and travel through downtown in a safe and aware manner while respecting the community.

John Rex uses a Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) that offers periodic short-term, interest-based sessions focused on students' specific talents or interests. This offers all children the opportunity to enrich their learning and experience by applying, deepening, and extending learning while utilizing their interests, talents, and learning or expression styles. These sessions, called clusters, take place for 10 weeks at a time for an hour a day. All 1st-5th grade students participate by selecting their top three choices from a list of 30-35 interest-based groups. Once the clusters are formed, students meet in small groups of 10-12 students to start planning the direction they want the cluster to go. These groups are facilitated by our teachers and community partners. Clusters consist of a variety of talents such as ballet, robotics, coding, creative writing, sewing, podcasting, hip-hop song and video production, designing a food-truck business, watercolors, and dog training, to name just a few. The mixed-age groups break down barriers between grade levels as students participate in an activity together because of similar talents and interests, not because of age.

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

John Rex offers an innovative curriculum that integrates project-based learning balanced with literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The focus of our curriculum is two-fold. The first component is the foundational academic knowledge emphasizing authentic, relevant educational experiences; this approach integrates problem-solving opportunities and hands-on experiences. The second component is social-emotional learning; this approach is guided by methodologies integrated from the Responsive Classroom and Conscious Discipline programs.

Personalized instruction is a core value at John Rex. When a student exhibits an academic weakness, instruction is targeted for intervention. Academic strengths are extended by offering personalized application through projects and activities. Assessments and grading practices focus on mastery of skills and standards. Progress reports and report cards track developmental milestones, current achievement, and mastery of standards.

Students are involved in learning activities that integrate state standards and require them to apply skills learned in all subject areas. In grades PreK-4th grade, projects include topics of student interest as well as STE[+a]M activities. We are committed to providing an educational program to meet the diverse needs of our students. Our teachers receive continuous professional development in special education, inclusion, personalization, social-emotional learning, and the student enrichment model. Their experiences in these areas allow them to motivate every student to participate fully in their own educational journey and achieve high standards.

In grades 5-7, students' ownership of learning increases greatly. They participate in an online platform that consists of self-directed learning; teacher-facilitated, project-based learning; and one-on-one weekly mentoring. Continuing the emphasis on building cognitive skills through the project-based approach in grades 5-7 increases a sense of motivation and ownership of accomplishments. Students are prepared for the rigor of college or a career equipped with the tools and resourcefulness necessary for success.

1b. Reading/English language arts

At John Rex, balanced literacy instruction addresses the needs of all learners. Teachers create a nurturing environment with high-quality and engaging literacy instruction for reading and writing individualized for each student. Students participate in read-aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, and word study. Students engage in modeled writing, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, and independent writing. Teachers model, guide, and coach before students work independently. During balanced literacy instruction, there is a gradual release of responsibility over time as the student becomes more independent.

Our framework provides teachers with the foundation for integrating instruction that supports personalized goals as students learn skills according to state standards. Teachers use the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System to identify each student's instructional reading level. Reading level, fluency, and comprehension data are gathered three times a year. Data from the Northwest Evaluation Association, Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP Growth) assessment drives instruction for each student. Data is used to identify at-risk students in need of extra time and support and to identify students needing an enriched curriculum. Growth Goals are set with each student, allowing the teachers to create skill groups. With instruction and activities personalized toward individual student needs, they are more engaged and successful in meeting goals. On a daily and weekly basis, teachers use running records; strategy assessments; pre- and post-tests; exit tickets; and unit tests to assess skills and further drive instruction.

Phonemic Awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency develop foundational reading skills. While the teacher conducts guided reading groups, other students are engaged in literacy activities. The younger grades engage in hands-on literacy activities in which students work cooperatively with peers on reading and writing skills. The older grades use Google Classroom to work through literacy activities, meet in book clubs, engage in readers' theater, create book projects or work on writing. Lexia, a computer-based reading program, furthers individualized instruction. The program charts student growth over time, and shows specific skills the students have mastered and where they need reinforcement.

Similar to guided reading, small guided writing groups are used to strengthen specific skills necessary to become proficient writers. The writing process is an integral part of our balanced literacy program. Writing is an integrated approach in which phonics instruction is systematic, rigorous, planned, and an essential part of the instructional program throughout the school day. Teachers use guided writing groups and conferencing to guide students. The writing process begins with Kid Writing in prekindergarten, continuing through first grade. As students progress in their writing skills, teachers introduce The Writing Workshop using mini-lessons and ample time for independent writing. During this time, students focus on writing in specific genres and using the writing process to publish and share written work. A balanced literacy approach provides students with opportunities to engage in a variety of reading and writing activities to become effective communicators.

1c. Mathematics

John Rex uses a comprehensive approach to teaching mathematics that builds a deep understanding of math concepts. Students learn through communication and writing about math and through observing, explaining, and asking questions. They are encouraged to work collaboratively, think differently, and find multiple ways to solve problems.

Our teachers start with the standard and then apply a conceptual understanding of mathematics to the lesson. Our students know more than isolated facts and algorithms. They understand why a mathematical idea is important and how to apply it in the real world. Teachers also have the autonomy to make research-based decisions on the curriculum they select to meet state standards and personalize for students. Teachers primarily use Bridges in Mathematics, OkMath Frameworks, or Summit Learning to teach math concepts through whole-group, work stations, and small guided math groups. The guided math groups are based on academic need for specific standards. They allow flexible use of classroom time while students rotate through work stations featuring activities that promote review of math skills through hands-on activities and online resources. Math journals are used for students to record their problem-solving skills, reflect on multiple strategies, and refer back to as math skills are continually applied to future problems and solutions.

Math in lower grades focuses on building a strong foundation in Number Sense. It is taught and integrated throughout the day. Math manipulatives are used for free exploration and to enforce specific math skills. Math concepts are introduced through discovery, and students participate in daily math talks to share what they notice during the whole group or guided math lessons. Workstations are used daily for practicing math concepts while the teacher works with guided math groups based on collected data through both informal and formal assessments.

The NWEA MAP Growth Assessment is used three times a year to measure skills the students know and skills they need to master. Teachers use this data to set growth goals with each student to drive the learning and instruction. This allows the teacher to meet the needs of high-achieving students and identify students needing intervention and support. Formative assessments are given daily by the teacher in the small group setting. After students have had time to learn, practice, and apply a new skill or standard, they are given a post-test to assess their learning as a summative assessment.

1d. Science

John Rex students engage in science instruction that is based on state standards which are aligned with Next Generation Science Standards. Concepts in each grade level focus on physical science; earth and space science; life science; and technology and engineering. The science units allow active participation in

scientific practices, investigations, and analyses. All lessons are hands-on and include a writing component to provide students with methods of recording their research. Units are integrated into all curriculum areas, allowing reading, writing, mathematics, and engineering to be an integral part of our science curriculum.

Science concepts are integrated into real-world experiences using inquiry-based learning. Students are presented with a topic, and the class collaborates to create a driving question. Teachers provide whole-group instruction, discussions, technology for research and hands-on activities to learn about grade-level appropriate topics. Teachers take students off campus to explore science concepts in our downtown setting. The school sits one block away from botanical gardens, so there are ample opportunities for students to explore science in the real world. Students in grades 6-7 partner with the botanical gardens' education and horticultural teams to learn about conservation, native plants, and local wildlife. The students explore the driving question in mind and track what they discover in science notebooks or through pictures and videos using iPads. When they return to school, students create a project or presentation to answer the driving question. This lends itself naturally to personalized and differentiated learning.

Students are assessed on science concepts through informal assessments, rubrics, checklists, reflections in science notebooks, results using the scientific process, and finished projects with presentations.

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

Social Studies is taught using the state standards through literacy-based lessons. Historical fiction novel studies and project-based units are used to explore world cultures and state history. Teachers collaborate, creating a timeline for teaching the standards and integrating them with holidays and community events. Visitors from the community are invited into the classroom during units of study. Students also take field trips to local businesses, museums, and memorials as it relates to the unit.

Younger grades work through units of study that are integrated into language arts and mathematics. The students are given a driving question and, as a class, they work through activities that lead to the discovery of the answers. The students read nonfiction books, work in related centers, research information, and create presentations.

Project-based units are chosen and designed by the students in the upper grades. They are given menus from which they select a project; they may also propose an original idea. Students create driving questions and design the project to answer the question. Little direct instruction is used during these units, allowing students to build their own understanding through research and explorations. Consultations are held with students or groups of students. They explain what they are designing or creating, and the teacher asks questions for clarification, direction, or to increase critical thinking.

To assess the students' understanding of the units taught, they create a presentation. It is an opportunity for the students to share what they have created and learned with their classmates. Classmates are given the opportunity to ask questions and comment on the presentations and projects. Other means of assessments include rubrics, checklists, and summative assessments.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

The prekindergarten program at John Rex is for 4-year-old students. It is an early childhood program that maintains developmentally appropriate practices, building on students learning through purposeful play, and social-emotional learning. The core subjects of reading, math, science, and social studies are integrated into everyday play.

Teaching social and emotional skills sets the foundation for success throughout school. It is our goal for every student to become an independent problem solver and be able to self-regulate emotions. Responsive Classroom and Conscious Discipline are frameworks for the teachers to provide support for our youngest learners. Students learn to self-regulate with breathing techniques and use safe places in the classroom

where they can take a break or calm themselves. Students learn how to solve peer conflicts through teachers modeling language for expression of feelings. Learning to effectively communicate helps students build relationships and take ownership of their choices.

Teachers create a classroom community that is play-based and prepares children for an engaging educational experience. Students encounter a literacy-rich classroom where they enjoy listening to quality literature and engage in interactive writing with the teacher. They learn to make choices when selecting centers. The centers are purposeful, focusing on refining fine motor skills, engaging dramatic play, exploring various art media, listening to music, working puzzles, building with blocks, reading books, or practicing writing. They are introduced to the world of literacy through books and introduced to letters and sounds to build foundational reading and writing skills.

Math is integrated throughout the day using whole group instruction and guided math groups. The instruction emphasis is on developing number concepts and math language as a foundation for skills needed as they prepare for relevant problem-solving in the elementary grades. Observation, problem-solving, spatial sense, number sense, geometry, and measurement are implemented in a play-based model.

Teachers develop an environment that is safe and respectful and allows all students to take risks. They monitor the students' progress through observations and informal assessments. Teachers use information from the assessments to set goals, drive instruction, create activities, and develop an environment for students to grow, learn, and communicate successfully.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All prekindergarten through 5th grade students receive instruction for 30-60 minutes weekly in visual arts, music, physical education, Spanish and STEM.

In collaboration with the Oklahoma Arts Council, John Rex has a full-time local artist who teaches visual arts. Students are encouraged to build confidence in their own unique voices, vision, and skills, as well as how to approach problems creatively and become true innovators. In our increasingly technology-driven society, teaching children how to engage in a tactile skill through material manipulation, mastery, and artistic inspiration builds hand-eye coordination, brain development, learning dexterity and self-esteem. It is also equally important for our students to see their school halls filled with their own artistic work in order to know they are seen and celebrated in their endeavors, and empowered to create their school and global culture.

In music, students are instructed in rhythm, songs, and games within grade-level music standards which build memory and improve motor skills. They learn eye-hand coordination while playing classroom instruments such as xylophones, shakers, drums, keyboards, and ukuleles on a weekly basis. Students have the opportunity to participate in a full-scale musical designed and written for elementary age kids. A three-year grant provides our school with yearly rights, scripts, and assistance from Oklahoma City's professional theater to perform a full Disney Kids musical. Honor choir is another opportunity for students to work on harmony, team building, and performing.

In Physical Education class, students are taught that active participation increases academic scores, improves their socio-emotional relationships, and reduces stress levels. There is an emphasis on the importance of physical activity so that their chances of continuing life-long physical activity increases, cardiovascular health strengthens, and chances for health issues decrease. Students also learn to work as a team; practice fair play, sportsmanship, and self-regulating behaviors; and cooperate with others. They set personal goals that they track in a portfolio, and they reflect at the end of the unit to determine strengths and opportunities for growth. Students have many opportunities to take part in physical activity outside the PE classroom, including Kids Jump Rope for Heart, Oklahoma City Memorial Kids Marathon, and Super Kids Field Day. The Oklahoma River Boathouse partners with John Rex to teach students about rowing, kayaking, and dragon boat racing, and the Oklahoma City Police Athletic League gives students the opportunity to participate in volleyball, basketball, flag football, cheerleading, and soccer.

The Spanish program at John Rex focuses on introducing students to a foreign language and world cultures in order to motivate them to pursue further language study beyond elementary school. We accomplish this by giving students a new set of skills, such as helping them connect with others, making them more open-minded to new cultures, and increasing their confidence. Visuals and manipulatives are a crucial part of our Spanish program, and lesson plans include songs, rhymes, and interactive games. Our Spanish program provides students the opportunity to explore other cultures, learn about and appreciate the values that keep the Hispanic culture alive as well as better understand their own.

Thanks to a cooperative partnership with a local oil and gas company, John Rex has a state of the art STE[+a]M classroom equipped with a full-time teacher and all the materials needed to engage our students in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. Students are guided in student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking via problem-based learning that tackles real-world issues. Our students are self-driven, self-directed, creative thinkers capable of reframing, imagining, and seeing a problem not as a barrier but an opportunity for growth and collaboration.

6th-7th grade students have the opportunity to attend six-week electives led by core teachers that are designed to match the teachers' passion with the students' interests. The electives are designed as an opportunity for students to apply their relevant knowledge, thinking skills, and interpersonal skills. Students are offered more than 30 elective classes to select from that are clustered in the areas of art, physical education, technology, music, literature, and critical thinking. Students share common interests in an environment safe for all levels of talent, skill, and knowledge, and they are challenged by the teacher to reach beyond their current knowledge, understanding and/or ability to attain a new level of knowledge and passion in an area they have identified as important to them.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

John Rex administers a state-approved benchmark assessment three times a year for students in kindergarten through 7th grade. If a student scores at or below the 20th percentile on the benchmark assessment, diagnostic assessments are administered to determine the student's specific instructional needs. Based on the results of the diagnostic assessments, students are placed in small intervention groups.

Our Reading Interventionists provide small-group instruction that targets the instructional needs of each student. This small-group instruction may include phonemic awareness, print concepts, reading comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and writing, depending on each student's needs. The goal of our reading intervention groups is to build skills and self-esteem. Students have the opportunity to read a variety of genres and have exposure to many kinds at each instructional reading level. The small groups meet four times a week for 45 minutes each session.

Progress is monitored bi-weekly to ensure intervention is effective and gains are being made. If a student is not making progress, the Reading Interventionist makes changes to the intervention plan, based on progress monitoring results, input from the general education teacher, and results from an informal reading inventory. Progress is also shared with parents through conferences, communication sent home, and progress reports. Parents, teachers, and interventionists work together to ensure student's needs are continuing to be met.

Each time the benchmark assessment is given during the school year, each student's score is evaluated by teachers, interventionists, and administrators. Based upon the scores, students may continue to need reading intervention, may no longer need intervention or new students may move into the groups. The data is always at the forefront of determining these groups and is being reevaluated often.

3b. Students performing above grade level

John Rex administers a state-approved non-verbal ability test to all first graders and new students each fall. Students who score at the 97th percentile or above automatically qualify for the gifted/talented program under the category of general intellectual ability. If a student qualifies in the 94th to 96th percentile, then the

school data team of teachers and administrators looks at another measure – such as an assessment, nomination, or interest application -- to qualify for the gifted/talented program. The student may then qualify under a category based upon scores. These categories include specific academic ability, leadership, visual/performing arts, or creativity. Each student receives a programming plan based upon their qualification.

John Rex utilizes the School Wide Enrichment Model, in which children have the opportunity to enrich their learning and experiences by applying, deepening, and extending learning while utilizing their interests, talents, and learning or expression styles. We charge our teachers to challenge students through interest surveys, curriculum compacting or flexible pacing, encouraging passion projects and independent studies, mentoring, school wide enrichment clusters, and more. This model is used for all students, but our identified gifted/talented students are given a deeper guided plan to ensure their needs are being met.

Project-based learning is also incorporated deeply within our classrooms. Our students learn to actively engage in real-world and personally meaningful projects. This allows our students performing above grade level to expand on their learning and go above and beyond their grade-level standards.

Students also have the opportunity in grades 5-7 to advance within the Summit Learning Program. Once they have mastered their grade level focus areas, they can move onto higher levels of learning within subject areas in which they excel and demonstrate passion.

3c. Special education

John Rex monitors student progress through school-wide benchmark assessments, diagnostic assessments, running records, and other forms of assessments based on needs. If a student continues to score low and is not making adequate progress, a team discusses testing for special education services. The school psychologist assesses students, and if a student qualifies, an individualized education program (IEP) is written for that student. The IEP is written based on the individual needs of that student and describes what services will help ensure that student's success.

John Rex serves students through a variety of programs and services as outlined in students' IEPs. The focus is on using different instructional strategies to meet these special needs and learning styles. Special education teachers provide small group and individual instruction in the areas of reading, written expression, math, adaptive behaviors, and social skills. These groups focus on research-based instructional strategies to provide intensive intervention. Student performance is tracked by the special education teacher to ensure progress toward goals and to modify individualized instruction if needed. Progress is communicated to classroom teachers and parents by the special education teacher to foster trust and ensure accountability. Accommodations and modifications are also outlined and set into motion in the classroom to ensure students' needs are being met.

John Rex also serves students with additional service areas, specifically speech/language therapy and occupational therapy. Staff members provide students with specific, research-based services to meet their needs and goals. All members of the special education department meet with classroom teachers often and provide support for students on IEPs. Our special education team also plans and facilitates professional development for teachers based on the needs of students in each grade level.

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

John Rex serves a population of English Language Learners. All students whose families indicate a language other than English as the primary language of the home are considered ELL students. All ELL students take the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) yearly. This assessment focuses on speaking, listening, reading, and writing domains and gives a proficiency level for each student. If the student needs support in any of these areas and their scores do not indicate mastery of language, an LIEP, or Language Instruction Educational Program, is developed. An LIEP focuses on the development of proficiency in the English language, including grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills. A certified ELL teacher provides explicit language instruction to students in a pull-out program and provides support

within the classroom. Additionally, our student enrichment clusters allow our ELL students to engage in a talent or interest with other students, which helps to build a bridge between non-English speaking students and English-speaking students as they experience talent development together.

Supplementary language instruction is given in a variety of methods at John Rex. Students work with an ELL teacher 2-3 days a week to receive reading and writing intervention. Intervention may include basic vocabulary development, reading text features, and writing concepts. Newcomers to the country work with an ELL teacher or reading interventionist on building vocabulary. Visuals around the school and in the classroom with labeled vocabulary in student's primary languages and in English help strengthen vocabulary.

Teachers at John Rex also receive training on how they can support ELLs in the classroom. They first learn who the ELL students are; read the LIEPs; collaborate with other teachers and the ELL teacher for ideas on meeting needs in the classroom, and learn best strategies for supporting students with limited English. John Rex also utilizes several online learning programs in which different languages can be activated as optional support. Language support is continued throughout the year as curriculum changes, needs change and new students enroll.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

John Rex encourages student engagement through building positive, nurturing, and trusting relationships between students, teachers, staff, and parents. Students are given daily opportunities to create and collaborate together. Each class conducts a morning meeting and closing circle. These are times when students share thoughts or reflect on the day. They practice being respectful classmates through listening and getting to know how their peers feel. Every staff member as well as local community partners, mentors at least one at-risk student. Mentors meet weekly with their mentees to build relationships, trust, and support. The outcome of this program has shown positive changes in behavior, academics, and increased social-emotional development for these students.

Students at John Rex are taught to be responsible for their academic growth through setting goals, making choices, and taking care of each other and the school. Students are taught to have ownership of their behavior. Their actions toward their academic success and behavior have a direct relationship to their success. A word of the week is featured to encourage a growth mindset, develop positive behavior, and deepen relationships.

Students learn they are part of a larger community and strive to become valued citizens through being an active part of the school community. Students learn to take care of their school; perform or participate in our monthly spirit assembly, and help set classroom expectations and procedures. Students have a sense of belonging in the downtown community through actively participating in events and representing the school.

A positive and safe environment is created through school-wide expectations and procedures. All students and staff use a common language for procedures. These procedures are modeled, practiced, and reinforced with rigor. Members of our Student Creed Crew help other students in the hallways, cafeteria, and entrances before and after school, at assemblies, or during special events.

Teachers guide students to find their talents and strive for excellence. They collaborate with students to set academic and behavior goals. Goal setting is a means to encourage reflection. During one-on-one goal-setting conferences, students envision how far they've come and areas in which they need to grow. Students strive to do their best when they are vested in their learning and, in turn, develop effective learning strategies.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The community and family members are an essential part of our students' success at the highest level. Our school board consists of equal parts of community leaders and parents to focus on student success and school improvement.

Our community partnerships with the downtown library, arts council, and local businesses enhance our students' learning opportunities. These expanded learning opportunities include walking field trips to local businesses, weekly trips to the downtown library, horticulture instruction from the educational team at the botanical gardens, art showings at local galleries, and art education from the Arts Council of Oklahoma.

One of our lead educational business partners supports our students' success directly through its employees mentoring our students who need additional academic and social support. Furthermore, this business partner has expanded its invaluable support of students and school improvement by funding a dedicated maker space for students of all ages to explore and learn through unique hands-on experiences. This partnership, along with numerous other community partnerships, shapes the academic and social success of our students on a daily basis.

Our PTA is also extremely dedicated to the success of the students. The PTA promotes the well-being of the students through coordinating a variety of collaborative programs and efforts between the school, families,

and community; these programs share a focus on inclusivity, advocacy, and academic enrichment. Our PTA's annual fundraising events support the salaries of both an art and a foreign language teacher. In addition, our PTA's focus on cultural diversity and inclusion for all students and families has expanded outside of the school through participation in local celebrations of national holidays including Martin Luther King Jr. and Fiestas De Las Américas parades.

Our parents' support of and engagement in school theater productions, school carnivals, and academic programs are overwhelming and impressive. Programs such as Odyssey of the Mind and Enrichment Clusters would not be nearly as successful, or even possible, without the tireless effort and support of our parents.

Our overall success and the support we receive are made possible through constant and open communication with our parents and community. Our goal is to connect and engage every parent and community partner through communication on numerous platforms. Through our use of social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, and through direct communication using ClassTag, email and newsletters, we keep our stakeholders informed of our students' developing academic and social successes and challenges.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

John Rex provides multiple opportunities to create and strengthen the professional culture of faculty and staff. First, the school calendar is set up to maximize time for collaboration and professional development. Students are released from school early every Wednesday to give teachers an additional 90 minutes for this development. The Wednesday training reflects the school's vision, goals for the year, and current needs of teachers and students. The school as a whole focuses on one area of growth and at least one Wednesday a month is dedicated to growing in that area. This current year has focused on writing. The professional development has included a book study, training from the Oklahoma Writing Project, and evaluating student writing samples. Other Wednesday afternoons include team planning time in which grade-level teams have time to lesson plan together, work on their pacing/curriculum guides, analyze data, and other areas of need.

Another area of focus of professional development has been trauma-informed training. Our teachers have been trained on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), engaged in book studies dealing with trauma, and attended statewide trauma training. John Rex also has a population of students who reside at the local homeless shelter. The faculty at John Rex has partnered with this shelter to learn more about what children are experiencing, toured the facility, and are learning ways in which the school can partner with the shelter to best support the children and their families. The staff is constantly learning and growing in this area of trauma.

At the beginning of the school year, each grade level team sets a SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) goal in areas of academic growth. The grade-level teams work together to create these goals based upon current academic data, and they meet often to talk about the progress toward these goals. Differentiated professional development is sought out as well, and provided by the administration to support these goals.

Finally, an important aspect of professional development is the focus on school culture. Once a month, the staff meets to build community, play games, and build camaraderie within the faculty. It has been an important part of the growth and well-being of the staff at John Rex. Often the games played by staff can be played within the classroom as well, so teachers can immediately learn new community building ideas for their students while having fun at work.

4. School Leadership:

The John Rex administrative team consists of a superintendent, a director of elementary, a director of secondary, a dean of students, and an instructional coach. Our administrative team offices are all on campus. Being present with the teachers and students is a critical component that contributes to successful communication, collaboration, and decision making. Our teachers, students, and parents see the administration team as part of the daily school community; therefore, they are seen as invested, present, and

trusted members of our school community.

In addition to our administrative team, each of our grade levels has a team leader. Those leaders make up our leadership team. The leadership team is responsible for meeting with the administrative team to provide input and participate in decision making. They disseminate information to their teammates and families and streamline effective messaging from the administrative team to their teams.

John Rex also has four design teams that are vertically aligned and run by teaching staff. The design teams consist of a Safe School team, Healthy, and Fit team, Gifted & Talented Team, and a CIA (curriculum, instruction, assessment) team who collectively work to share responsibilities, ideas, and input in the overall functioning of our school. Each team meets one Wednesday a month after students' early dismissal to design, communicate, and implement ideas that align with our school vision and mission.

A nine-member board governs and operates our school. It consists of four seats designated for John Rex parents and five seats designated for community members. Our board chair is a parent, a local business owner, and a downtown community member who invests his time to support and promote our school.

Our school administration team and staff have worked extensively with a local leadership organization to create a common language amongst our staff members to encourage and develop self-awareness and emotional security within the organization and has added value to each of the different voices represented in the room. When we know what voice we bring to the table, and the voices of others, we can communicate in a way that makes sense to everyone. Our teams function efficiently and effectively due to common language and acceptance of each other's voice.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Personalization and the innovative use of community partnerships are the key to success at John Rex. Our teachers use a layered method to meet diverse needs, and we trust them to adjust their practices for each class, each student, and each family. Teachers incorporate student input to guide lesson plans and answer the questions students care about. We involve students in goal setting, action plan creation, and reflection; a unique educational journey is created for and by each student. Personalization isn't just for our students; we promise teachers that their experiences will allow them to find harmony in their professional journey. When teachers and students feel empowered, we establish mutual trust, respect for the profession, and a drive to succeed.

Teachers also take advantage of museums, cultural amenities, and corporate partners within walking distance of our downtown campus to create specialized learning opportunities, expand students' horizons, and allow them to find their own answers. Along with our teachers, our community partners also provide customized talent development during our 10-week enrichment clusters, forming a key part of personalized learning experiences. Our school-wide mentoring program, in which teachers and community partners mentor at-risk students, adds another layer of personalization and relationship building.

In short, the key to our school's success is that every staff member starts with the question, "How can I personalize this experience for this student?" Planning is collaborative, and every teammate plays a role. We empower everyone at John Rex so they can feel secure in their relationships, discover their talents, and change the world.