

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 12616 Shaw Road East  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Puyallup State WA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 98374-2927

County Pierce

Telephone (253) 841-8753 Fax (253) 840-8944

Web site/URL https://rid.puyallup.k12.wa.us/ E-mail foxmm@puyallup.k12.wa.us

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

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

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. John Polm Jr. E-mail PolmjJA@puyallup.k12.wa.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Puyallup Tel. (253) 841-1301

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 Ms. Kathy Yang  
(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):
- 22 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 7 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 4 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 33 TOTAL

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

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

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	30	24	54
1	36	37	73
2	38	26	64
3	33	32	65
4	40	30	70
5	45	44	89
6	33	39	72
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>	255	232	487

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2.9 % Asian
  - 3.7 % Black or African American
  - 16 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1.8 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 65.6 % White
  - 9.8 % 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: 14%

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	34
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	40
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	74
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	532
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.14
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Arabic, Kurdish, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, Dari, Ukrainian, Punjabi, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %  
25 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 41 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 199

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %

68 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>12</u> Autism                 | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>14</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>9</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>15</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>10</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>3</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: 4

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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	87%	90%	85%	84%	88%
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.

By providing a caring, positive, and supportive learning community, Ridgecrest staff challenges and inspires all students to do their best to realize their greatest potential.

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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Ridgecrest was opened in 1981 and currently has just under 500 students enrolled in grades K-6. Forty-three percent of the students come from low income homes, making Ridgecrest one of ten comprehensive Title I elementary schools in the district. Ridgecrest’s reader board depicts beautiful Mount Rainier and the Cascade Mountain range, an iconic representation of the natural beauty of the surrounding area. Tucked away from busy residential roadways, nestled among aged single-family homes, Ridgecrest has been referred to as a “hidden gem on the hill;” many locals are not even aware the school exists.

Ridgecrest faculty and staff know that relationships precede all learning. We work hard to put this belief into practice daily. A banner hangs at our entry—it is an acronym for the word WELCOME: When you Enter this Loving school Consider yourself One of the special Members of an Extraordinary family. It hangs alongside our “Stronger Together” banner—the motto that is symbolic of our unity. It is not uncommon to hear sounds of laughter, see smiles on faces, and genuinely feel the upbeat and positive culture that permeates our school. This amazing atmosphere is the real secret ingredient to our success. When our students and staff genuinely feel cared for and supported, they want to do their best, and that’s exactly what they do. We are proud to be Raiders because we know that this membership includes being in a trusting, authentic, inclusive relationship with one another where everyone feels “part of the family” and at home. Teachers and staff who come to Ridgecrest often do not leave; Ridgecrest becomes their “forever school.” An extraordinary committed, family-like staff culture not only lures new staff members but helps ensure high levels of staff retainment.

This is also true for our Ridgecrest students and families. A dedicated Parent/Teacher Association (PTA), WatchDOG (Dads of Great Students) program, and high levels of parent support help to safeguard student engagement and success.

It is no wonder why Ridgecrest students flourish, and there is plenty of evidence to show that. From 2011-2016, Ridgecrest received six consecutive Washington State Achievement Awards; was recognized in 2017-18 and 2018-19 for closing gaps in our special education subgroup; and received recognition for student growth in two additional subgroups. In 2018, Ridgecrest was also recognized by the Puget Sound Business Journal as one of the top 100 schools in Pierce County.

Ridgecrest staff members understand that relationships precede learning, and we work hard to create a strong, values-based, equity-minded student and staff culture within the context of a trusting and caring community. The Raiders are not only our mascot, they are an acronym for our core values: Respect, Achievement, Inclusion, Determination, Empathy, Responsibility, and Safety. These values help shape our decision-making and are the sails of our “ship.”

We focus on teaching the whole child by using trauma-informed, restorative teaching practices; community circles and morning meetings; and explicitly teach social-emotional curriculum including universal problem solving, self-regulation, and calming down strategies. We take time to get to know our students, make connections, and include their interests and cultures into our lessons. Lessons are engaging and incorporate high levels of discussion and collaboration.

Transformational school leaders create and maintain a positive, caring, and upbeat tone in the building; support staff needs both personally and professionally; maintain a sharp focus on teaching and learning; and use data in a powerful way to celebrate student success, identify problems and expose disproportionalities, examine effectiveness of interventions and plans, and address achievement or opportunity gaps.

The systems and structures we have in place at Ridgecrest serve to support teaching and learning in the classroom. Common instructional blocks ensure all students have uninterrupted on-grade level learning time for English Language Arts (ELA), math, science, social studies, social-emotional learning, and intervention/enrichment time.

Ridgecrest leaders and teachers work hard to develop and implement strong RTI and PBIS (Positive

Behavior Interventions and Supports) systems including a multi-level prevention system designed to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems. These systems include four essential components: (a) universal screening, (b) progress monitoring, (c) data-based decision-making, and (d) a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) for academics, behavior, social-emotional needs, and attendance/student engagement.

A robust data-driven culture permeates our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), professional development, and classrooms. Our staff engages routinely in the inquiry cycle as we study problems related to attendance, behavior, course-performance, and social/emotional learning. A growth mindset helps our staff look for solutions and see themselves as learners, continually striving to improve in their knowledge and professional practice for the common goal of not only helping each student meet or exceed grade level standards, but helping each reach their fullest potential.



## **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

Authentic learning takes place in a supportive, student-centered classroom. Using research based, district-adopted core curriculum, teachers design and deliver engaging lessons aligned to essential Common Core State Standards for ELA and math, the Next Generation Science Standards, and the Washington Social Studies Learning Standards. Teachers maintain a sharp emphasis on learning targets which are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of lessons, focused on throughout the lesson, and assessed at the end of the lesson. Students are encouraged to engage in self-reflection and goal setting regularly. Through the extensive use of formal and informal assessment strategies, teachers ensure students have successfully met lesson objectives. Students not acquiring the skills or learning are provided extra time and opportunity to learn during common RTI (Response to Intervention) or WIN (What I Need) time, where explicit targeted instruction is provided to students to ensure mastery of content.

Ridgecrest is a certified AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) elementary school, a program that focuses on closing achievement and opportunity gaps by creating a universal culture of high expectations, building relationships, utilizing best practices, and preparing students for college. In the classroom teachers integrate AVID's foundational strategies called WICOR (Writing to learn, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading to learn) to help our students succeed.

In addition to AVID, GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) strategies are also integrated across curriculum. The GLAD model provides an organizational structure for an integrated, balanced, literacy approach. The integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing into all content areas underscores research that language is acquired most effectively when the emphasis is on meaning and the message. By using these evidence-based practices, teachers ensure students are engaged and learning in authentic and rigorous ways.

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

Ridgecrest embraces a balanced literacy approach across all grade levels using research-based elements of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Students are instructed in whole group and flexible small groups in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The Common Core State Standards are embedded into our ELA curricula and Curriculum Based Assessments (CBAs) help to measure progress toward identified learning targets. Teachers look at student data frequently to ensure students are being challenged, not held back when they have already demonstrated skill mastery.

All students receive on-grade level instruction in reading and writing during the 60 minutes of whole group ELA instruction. In addition, each grade level also has 30 minutes of small group instruction. Using a modified whole school walk-to-read model, Title I, Learning Assistance Program (LAP), and Special Education teachers and paraeducators provide intensive instruction and intervention to small groups of students using research-based curriculum.

In grades K-1, the explicit phonics-based Read Well curriculum is used. With multiple entry points into the curriculum, each student is assessed and placed into the small group that matches his or her skill level. Ongoing assessment and progress monitoring inform instruction.

In grades 2-5, teachers use a research-based literacy program called Journeys during the core ELA instructional block. Using authentic texts, students read and reread text for a variety of purposes using various close reading skills. Comprehensive screening assessments, diagnostic assessments, benchmark tests, and unit tests allow teachers to monitor student progress and inform their instruction. Leveled readers are used with small groups for differentiation and focused instruction.

In grade 6, the SpringBoard English Language Arts curriculum is used to help our students develop and refine skills in critical thinking, close reading, writing in various genres, and doing research. Over the course of the program, they read and analyze a wide range of texts in genres including poetry, novels, plays, biographies, nonfiction narratives, speeches, and films. They also learn to write in varied genres, including essays, personal narratives, argumentative texts such as editorials, and research papers.

Ridgecrest also uses the Accelerated Reader (AR) program to motivate students and develop strong reading skills. Students read a variety of fiction and non-fiction books, taking short quizzes to check comprehension. Teachers set monthly reading goals and ensure 80% to 85% accuracy on quizzes. Classroom and whole school awards are provided as incentives for students achieving their AR goals.

Our schoolwide Title I plan centers around ensuring all students can read and comprehend by fourth grade. Teachers and support staff in our Title I and LAP programs focus primarily on reading interventions, providing students who do not meet standard with up to an hour of additional intervention in reading each day. As a result of our focused instruction and intervention efforts in reading, our students have shown consistent growth and achievement on district and state assessments. In 2019, Ridgecrest students had the highest overall scores in our district and were among the top 15% for ELA growth in the State of Washington, demonstrating growth in every subgroup.

### **1c. Mathematics**

We believe our students deserve mathematics instruction that is consistent, meaningful, and allows each learner to engage in authentic ways to develop mathematical language and learning skills. Using the Bridges in Mathematics (K-5) and Illustrative Mathematics (Grade 6) mathematics curriculum, teachers can implement the Common Core State Standards in a manner that is rigorous, coherent, engaging, and accessible to all learners. Using a problem-based approach with extensive use of visual models and representations, students learn by solving problems and constructing arguments using precise language.

Teachers provide daily opportunity for mathematical discussions with attention to accurate mathematical vocabulary and diverse sensemaking. GLAD and AVID WICOR strategies are regularly integrated into mathematics lessons, allowing students to deepen their understanding of mathematical language and provide for rich discussion, collaboration, inquiry, and writing opportunities.

Each grade level has a designated 75-minute instructional math block built into the schedule. An additional 30-minute intervention block (WIN-time) allows teachers time to provide targeted skill specific intervention to whole or small groups. Daily formative assessments, including student self-assessment, drives instruction and intervention efforts. Oftentimes in the form of an exit ticket, teachers use formative assessments to determine student strengths and areas of growth. Depending on the results of the formative measures, flexible groupings are formed to address skill deficits. This could look like whole class reteaching, small group instruction, or one-on-one support. Paraeducator support and parent volunteers are used regularly to support students with intervention or enrichment needs.

Teachers in grades 1-6 spend time mapping and aligning released assessment items from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) into the core math curriculum. Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) and Math Quick Checks are administered throughout the units of instruction, helping to inform teachers of the skills students have and have not mastered. Student performance on IABs and other common formative assessments show where intervention efforts are needed for small groups or individual students.

Through a grant provided by the Ellison Foundation, teachers use an adaptive, individualized online program called Reflex Math to help motivate and increase basic math fact fluency. By playing until they see a green light, students can meet their fluency goals. Class and individual competitions motivate student engagement and provide the opportunity to earn special rewards. A schoolwide data display in the hallway shows the collective progress of each class toward meeting their goals. A variety of math applications are also used to provide additional practice in a fun and motivating online environment.

As a result of ensuring all students have access to on-grade level instruction, skill specific intervention, and

a focus on ensuring mastery of essential standards, our students achieved the highest scores in our district and among the top 15% in the state of Washington for math growth based on the 2019 Smarter Balanced Assessment.

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

We believe that all students should have equitable access to learn and engage in science and engineering practices. Through the use of the district adopted science curriculum for grades K-6, Pearson's Interactive Science, teachers are able to engage students in science inquiry; STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) activities; and problem-based, hands-on learning.

Each year, all students are encouraged to enter a project in our STEAM Showcase; however, fifth grade students are required to participate to prepare them for the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS). Students can enter their projects in one of five categories: scientific practices, inventions or engineering, reverse engineering, art, and technology. Students selected for each category go on to compete at the district level competition held each spring at the Washington State Spring Fair.

Through a partnership with Washington State University and The Pacific Education Institute, Ridgecrest fifth and sixth grade students participate in field investigations as part of their science instruction. Fifth grade students discover how they can improve the health of a local wetland and sixth grade students also study life sciences by collecting and evaluating data to make determinations of the overall water quality for DeCoursey Pond. These findings are shared with the City of Puyallup to assist Civic Leaders in making decisions about the park's public usage. In addition, our sixth graders also learn about astronomy at Starry Hill Observatory.

Students in grades 4-6 can engage in our Lego Mindstorm EV3 Robotics program during their second recess. Students are taught coding, engineering, and technology skills by a trained Robotics Activity Coordinator.

Our focus on scientific inquiry has not only helped our students achieve the highest scores on the WCAS in our district, with over 70% proficiency, but has fostered and ignited a love for learning and scientific exploration.

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

We believe social studies provide an opportunity for students to make connections to important English Language Arts standards, such as citing textual evidence and evaluating a source for credible information. Our teachers purposefully integrate social studies into their ELA instruction using rich historical and social studies texts. Extensive GLAD strategies are integrated throughout the units of instruction, helping students not only engage in the content but enabling them to develop their academic vocabularies and make connections.

In our social studies curriculum, primary students learn about the basic concepts of fairness and respect, the different ways families choose to live and work together, and how communities work and organize themselves. Teachers integrate a variety of culturally diverse literature that validate and affirm the linguistics and cultures found in our classrooms.

Third grade students engage in a Native American Unit each year, culminating with a trip to the Karshner Cultural Center where students individually present a diorama that represents the coastal or plateau region. Fourth grade students study Washington State history. They research a historical site, present their findings to the class, and culminate the unit with a visit the Washington State History Museum.

Fifth graders start the school year with a heritage project. They learn about their own culture and interview relatives to gain appreciation for their ancestors. Afterwards, they study the development of the United States up to 1791 and culminate their learning by visiting the State Capitol Building.

Sixth grade students study a few ancient civilizations deeply. Their study culminates with students orally and visually presenting an ancient civilization they researched, adorned in cultural dress and regalia. Each year sixth grade students also interview a military veteran and prepare a visual and oral presentation. Several students are selected to honor their veteran at our annual Veterans Day assembly.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

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

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

**Library:** We believe our students need guidance living in a digital world. In the library we teach digital citizenship to students in grades K-6. We want students to recognize that their actions online have consequences, and they need to take ownership of their digital lives. Using the Commonsense Media curriculum and taught by our librarian, we dedicate a portion of our library lessons to the development of digital citizenship.

**Technology:** Technology is used to enhance the educational experience of students through transformative learning opportunities. Students in grades K-3 have access to technology as appropriate using shared computer carts at a ratio of one cart per four classrooms. Students in grades 4-6 are provided with their own laptop. Teachers increase student voice in the classroom using software applications that empower student access to learning. Schoology, our learning management system, is used to organize instructional materials and assess student learning.

**Music:** Students at Ridgecrest receive 60 minutes of music instruction per week. Our music program is based off an active music making approach using instruments, singing, movement, and listening as instructional tools. Students are given the opportunity for creative performance every year; assessments are based off the ability to make progress in meeting state music standards. Students in grades 4-6 can participate in choir or Marimba band ensembles. Fifth and sixth grade students can also participate in band and orchestra.

**Art Docent Program:** The Ridgecrest PTA supports our art docent program by providing extra funds to purchase art materials. One of our certificated teachers assembled a variety of culturally and artistically diverse art lessons using various mediums. Materials and lessons are highly organized so teachers or volunteer art docents can easily implement the lessons.

**Robotics:** We also provide two different robotics learning experiences at Ridgecrest. Ozobot is a robotic program that empowers coding and STEAM education for 2nd-6th graders at Ridgecrest. Ozobot makes STEAM simple with Two Ways to Code: online with OzoBlockly and screen-free with Color Codes. Ozobots inspire kids to create with technology while teaching them to code in a fun and engaging manner. Lego Mindstorm EV3 Robotics is an enrichment program for 4th-6th grade. Students are taught coding, engineering, and technology skills by a trained Robotics Activity Coordinator during students' second recess.

**Physical Education:** At Ridgecrest we believe that an understanding of good health and fitness concepts and practices is essential to all students. Students in grades 4-6 receive 60 minutes of Physical Education instruction a week from a PE teacher, and students in K-3 receive 30 minutes of PE instruction from their classroom teacher. Our program is designed to include all students, provide maximum activity, incorporate social skills, and emphasize health related fitness and skill development. Students are active while learning key concepts that align with national and state standards. We use fitness assessments as part of the ongoing process of helping students understand, enjoy, and improve their physical fitness well-being. Students are encouraged to use their results to set goals for personal improvement throughout the year. Ridgecrest also participates in the American Heart Association's Kids Heart Challenge. During this event, students learn about heart health while raising money for kids with special hearts. Physical education teaches our students that good health and safety principles can lead to a lifetime of healthy practices resulting in a more productive, active, and successful lives. The annual PTA sponsored Raider Run, 5th-6th grade Districtwide

Track and Field Meet, and walking club during recess provides additional opportunities for students to focus on cardiovascular health.

In response to the changing social-emotional needs of our student population, Ridgecrest has added several universal Social-Emotional student interventions. In 2015, Ridgecrest piloted the Second Step Social Emotional curriculum in grades K-6 by Committee for Children. This curriculum is taught by each classroom teacher during a designated social-emotional instructional block. Our counselor provides classrooms with additional instruction using the Second Steps Bully Prevention Curriculum in the fall and Second Steps Child Protection Unit in the spring. Students are taught how to recognize situations that are unsafe, how to refuse or act in the moment, and how to report to a trusted adult.

Using data information obtained during our bi-annual Teacher Release Data Days, the counselor formulates topics for small groups based on need. Data obtained from the Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS) also provides useful information for supporting students who may be socially or emotionally at risk.

Over the past few years, we have experienced a significant increase in the social emotional needs of students. The school staff work closely with families to ensure students who are at risk of and showing signs of mental health concerns are offered resources for help. The counselor is also available to support students on a 1:1 basis as needed. Many referrals for outside services are made to meet our students' needs.

To successfully prepare sixth grade students for transition to junior high, sixth grade students are provided transition lessons teaching them about credits, transcripts, GPA, graduation requirements, and other information relevant to helping them schedule their 7th grade courses. Students are also introduced to WOIS (Career Information System Website) where they can explore and research a variety of careers within Washington State.

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

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

Three times annually, all students are given screening assessments in reading and math to measure proficiency. After testing is finished, teachers meet to analyze the student assessment data, group students, and create intervention plans. Typically, students performing below grade level are provided reading intervention by the special education, LAP, and Title I staff.

Two 30-minute intervention blocks, called RTI and WIN time, ensure each student not meeting standard has opportunity to receive targeted or intensive instruction. The instructional block schedule is built so that each grade level's RTI and WIN times are staggered throughout the day so that Title I, LAP, special education, and English Language Learners (ELL) teachers can support the lowest performing students without pulling students out during core ELA and math instructional blocks.

After intervention plans are created, students are placed into flexible intervention and enrichment groups for RTI and WIN time. Teachers monitor progress weekly or bi-weekly depending on students' level of need. Intervention plans and student groupings are adjusted after each cycle of assessment.

A gap of more than ten percentage points exists in reading and math between all students and our special education and English Language Learner (ELL) groups. A gap of more than ten percentage points also exists among our low-income students in ELA. To address these gaps, students are provided with intense level of intervention during our RTI and WIN times. In addition, these students are supported through our Early Warning Intervention System (EWIS). Individual intervention plans are created for each at-risk student. Each month, teachers meet with the administrators, counselor, Title I and LAP teachers, special education teacher, and school psychologist to discuss each student's response to the various academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and attendance interventions assigned. Interventions are adjusted to ensure the student is making progress.

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

During our intervention blocks, students not receiving Title I, LAP, special education, or ELL services remain in the classroom for differentiated small group instruction. Students performing above grade level can be placed in an advanced reading or math group. During our RTI and WIN blocks, teachers utilize a variety of instructional programs designed to accelerate and enhance skills for advanced learners. Reading and writing workshops provide occasions for differentiated instruction. Reading response journals, novel studies, and writer's workshops allow opportunities for students to demonstrate their thinking strategies. Our math curriculum embeds enrichment opportunities by providing challenging problems to students. Additional enrichment through our extracurricular robotics, drama, art, and music programs allow students opportunity to become engaged in various activities both inside and outside the school day. Participation in our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) Showcase affords our highly capable learners with opportunities to enhance their learning.

Identified highly capable learners in grades K-2 can engage in a pull-out enrichment program called Young Scholars offered 30 minutes twice weekly. During this enrichment, students work with intellectual peers in a rigorous environment of discovery and exploration. The context of the enrichment is literature and science with an emphasis on vocabulary and the scientific process. This enrichment model allows for multi-age grouping and intellectual peer socialization. The activities help students develop a rich vocabulary, comprehend non-fiction text, and encourage them to think deeply. The multi-age grouping gives students a chance to work with other students who have similar learning needs. Students in grades 3-6 may test to qualify for a self-contained highly capable program called Quest. Identified students can attend a school in the district that has a Quest program.

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

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

Ridgecrest uses Sheltered Instruction as our primary means to support our English Language Learners. This means that our classroom teachers have the responsibility for the primary, direct instruction of English Language Learner eligible students. Many Ridgecrest teachers (75%) are certified in GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) and all have received targeted professional development in GLAD strategies. Through the use of researched-based, high leverage, engaging instructional strategies and a project-based, student-centered curriculum, our GLAD-trained classroom teachers are able to help all students develop strong vocabularies and conceptual maps.

In addition to the use of GLAD, ELL students also work with an ELL trained paraprofessional away from the regular classroom setting. During this time, ELL students receive extra support in English proficiency skills in four domains: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Our ELL program helps students build confidence in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Vocabulary is developed using picture cards, games, directed lessons, and speaking activities. Sentence frames and modeling helps students begin forming sentences or questions. A variety of research-based intervention programs are used to develop comprehension and build vocabulary.

Like our Title I, LAP, and special education students, ELL students are pulled out for this specialized instruction during the RTI and WIN times. This allows them to have access to on-grade level instruction in the general education classroom. Our district's ELL consulting teacher, in collaboration with the ELL instructional assistant, plans for the instruction. Our ELL instructional assistant works under the direction of the ELL consulting teacher and the general education classroom teachers. In 2019, our ELL students received a decile score of 9 out of 10 for English Language progress.

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

In response to the changing social-emotional needs of our student population, Ridgecrest has added several universal Social-Emotional student interventions. In 2015, Ridgecrest piloted the Second Step Social Emotional curriculum in grades K-6 by Committee for Children. This curriculum is taught by each

classroom teacher during a designated social-emotional instructional block. Our counselor provides classrooms with additional instruction using the Second Steps Bully Prevention Curriculum in the fall and Second Steps Child Protection Unit in the spring. Students are taught how to recognize situations that are unsafe, how to refuse or act in the moment, and how to report to a trusted adult.

Using data information obtained during our bi-annual Teacher Release Data Days, the counselor formulates topics for small groups based on need. Data obtained from the Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS) also provides useful information for supporting students who may be socially or emotionally at risk.

Over the past few years, we have experienced a significant increase in the social emotional needs of students. The school staff work closely with families to ensure students who are at risk of and showing signs of mental health concerns are offered resources for help. The counselor is also available to support students on a 1:1 basis as needed. Many referrals for outside services are made to meet our students' needs.

To successfully prepare sixth grade students for transition to junior high, sixth grade students are provided transition lessons teaching them about credits, transcripts, GPA, graduation requirements, and other information relevant to helping them schedule their 7th grade courses. Students are also introduced to WOIS (Career Information System Website) where they can explore and research a variety of careers within Washington State.

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

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

By focusing on relationships first, we strive to make each student feel valued, welcome, and supported. High levels of encouragement and praise help motivate students to succeed. This positive environment nourishes our students and makes everyone want to achieve their very best.

We have also put numerous schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) in place to further motivate students and help them understand expectations. Our PBIS matrix articulates expectations for being always safe, responsible, and respectful (ARR) in the various common areas. These behaviors are explicitly taught, reinforced and modeled by all staff.

Individual students and whole classrooms are recognized by staff and volunteers daily for displaying safe, responsible, and respectful behaviors with ARR Tickets. Classrooms can earn All Hands On-Deck (AHOD) awards for demonstrating ARR behaviors. Small token prizes are provided for classrooms; the prizes become more substantial with each passing level, helping to continue to motivate classrooms to continue to work as a team to reach the next level.

We tie our social-emotional curriculum into our PBIS systems. All teachers and staff can refer a student to our Reflection Room during first recess. A trained paraeducator discusses the student's behavior and reviews the Reflection Form with them, helping students develop empathy, take responsibility for their actions, and go through the Steps to Solving Problems. Restorative practices like community circles and restorative conferences are used by all staff to help students work through problems with their peers.

To engage students with poor attendance, school administrators meet with parents and students to identify and design plans to remove barriers, including the use of PBIS. Throughout the year the administration and school office staff work to build positive relationships with parents and frame interactions around attendance with care and concern.

Ridgecrest promotes a strong college-going culture on our AVID Elementary campus. College regalia and décor are displayed throughout the building. Each classroom adopts a college or university, and our teachers share their college experiences. At monthly student recognition assemblies, classrooms enthusiastically give their college cheer to the audience members, competing for the coveted Spirit Stick award.

Our ASB officers broadcast morning announcements three times weekly and help lead school assemblies. Our student council meets with the ASB Advisor on a monthly basis to discuss ways to improve the school by creating more student involvement. Students can demonstrate leadership through involvement in various school events, fundraisers, and activities.

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

Ridgecrest is more than a school; it is a cornerstone of our neighborhood community. Ridgecrest families are actively involved in supporting each other. This is evidenced by the generosity and kindnesses shown by our families. With the number of low-income families rising each year, the requests for practical support have also increased. We provide weekly food for families in need through the Backpack Kids programs, currently serving about 30 families on a weekly basis. This is possible largely by the support of parent and community volunteers who prepare the packages and provide donations. During the holidays, donations from families and staff help provide Thanksgiving meals, the PTA Giving Tree provides holiday gifts, and our food drive and local Elks Club ensure our families have food over winter break.

Each year we partner with our PTA during our Back-to-School Night. Families can come to school to enjoy a meal, meet their teachers, put away school supplies, and hear important information about curriculum, homework, routines, and expectations. Student volunteers from our feeder junior high and high schools volunteer to supervise students and serve meals.



Ridgecrest staff partner with our PTA to put on our annual Parent University and Winterfest. The PTA provides a fun filled make-it-and-take-it holiday workshop where students can make homemade holiday crafts and wrap them while parents attend a variety of informative sessions in classrooms with teachers. We work collaboratively with our PTA to create an inclusive, welcoming environment that supports our students and families. Our PTA is actively involved in our school and hosts a number of fun family events annually. Several Scholastic book fairs help raise funds to purchase library books. PTA fundraisers help to support their events and raise money for our school.

Each Spring we host a “Career Day” in which we invite many community members into our school to share about their career and vocation. It is our goal to introduce our students to the wide range of career options that exist. This fun day of interactive involvement with our community members helps inspire students to imagine life beyond high school. Similarly, through a partnership with Pierce College, Professor Ralph inspires students to explore the field of science in preparation for the STEAM Showcase.

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

Effective leaders empower others to do their best, be their best, and achieve their best. Whether it is a school culture that inspires staff or a classroom culture that motivates students, successful schools and classrooms begin and end with trusting and caring relationships. When teachers and staff members feel not only welcomed, but heard; not only valued, but wanted; not only trusted, but honored, they will not only succeed, but thrive.

Creating a professional culture is about investing in the capacity of individuals in order to build capacity in all. It is about treating all staff as professionals, supporting them with knowledge and skill-building learning opportunities; providing positive affirmation and constructive feedback and then trusting them to do their jobs to their best of their ability.

We embrace a distributed leadership approach through our school improvement planning processes. Under the direction of the principal, grade and department leaders solicit feedback from their teams to take back to the school leadership team. Our Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) focuses on three domains: (1) social justice, (2) college and career readiness, and (3) academic achievement. Multiple sources of perceptual and achievement data are collected, broken down by subgroups, and analyzed to paint a clear picture of our school.

Each year the school’s leadership team drafts the school improvement plan and goals for each of these three areas and determines the focus of professional learning for the year. Professional development plans are created to support the professional needs of the staff in alignment with our school improvement goals. Draft copies of the CSIP, school data, and professional development plans are reviewed by the whole staff in August.

We truly embrace an “all hands on-deck” mantra at Ridgecrest, where all staff share in the collective responsibility of our students. We examine data closely and take responsibility for areas we need to improve. For example, over the past two years our student achievement and discipline data revealed that there was a disproportionate number of low-income students not meeting standard and being referred to the office for discipline. We developed goals and action plans to address these gaps. As a result of targeted and focused professional learning in this area, our school recently was recognized for closing the gaps in our low-income students. It is because of the professional culture developed at Ridgecrest that we continue to achieve new levels of success with students.

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

Theodore Roosevelt once said, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” From hugs to high-fives, fist-bumps to finger-waves, genuine smiles, warm laughter, and personal connections--a common theme you will hear throughout the pages of this application is that caring, trusting, and supportive relationships are the real secret of our success.

These kinds of relationships start in the principal's office and extend out from there—every person is made to feel they are an essential, valuable member of the Ridgecrest crew. The relationships we have with one another, our students, and our community creates the warmth and ambiance that nurtures growth, ignites confidence, heals hurts, and restores hope. At Ridgecrest, we are “Ohana,” meaning family—where no one is left behind or left out.

Ridgecrest leaders value inclusion, equity, and high achievement and success for all students, creating necessary cultural conditions to support improved student outcomes for all students. We take and make time to regularly dig into the data, identify where the disparities exist, and come up with plans to address and remedy inequities, remove barriers, and close the gaps. It begins with the principals prioritizing the work, scheduling the meetings, training the staff—not only on how to view the data, but on practices that could cause us to look at the data in a subjective way. Principals train and collaborate with the grade and department level leadership team members, who in turn lead their teams in carrying out school improvement action plans, leading RTI and PLC meetings, planning for instruction and assessments, and carrying out the productive work of the team.

Ridgecrest principals lead by example, working alongside teachers and staff. They foster success by removing barriers, vetting incoming initiatives, and finding tools and resources for teachers to be successful. Our principals take the time to fully understand each new initiative and help them focus on the most impactful and important aspects of the work, keeping the plain things the main things.

Ridgecrest leaders are passionate and relentless, building, implementing, and executing systems and structures to support our students and address their needs. If their efforts fall flat and do not produce the kinds of results anticipated, they collectively go back to the drawing board and begin again. This dogged determination coupled with high expectations in a positive, caring, inclusive environment, inspires students and staff to succeed.

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

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If a caring, positive, supportive school culture represents the heart of Ridgecrest, then the data-driven school culture represents the brain of Ridgecrest, enabling our students and staff to grow and achieve at high levels. At Ridgecrest, a variety of data collection and analysis processes are used regularly to both inform and guide administrators and teachers. Under the direction of school leadership, student data is systematically analyzed and used to guide our teaching and intervention efforts.

**Early Warning Intervention System (EWIS):** Once a month, on a rotating schedule, the principal directs the work of each PLC by focusing on students who are most at risk for school failure. Ridgecrest has designed and piloted their EWIS for elementary using school risk indicators for attendance, behavior, and course performance that are correlated with disengagement and dropout. Students are ranked by the total number of at-risk indicators in descending order, with the most at-risk students at the top of the list. Under the direction of the principal, teams design individual EWIS plans for these students, ensuring students are provided with the interventions and supports needed to improve. Students of concern may also be referred to our Student Support Team, which meets weekly to help provide recommendations to support student success.

**Teacher Release Data Days:** Three times a year, teachers meet in grade level teams with members of the leadership team to analyze benchmark assessment data. In the fall, initial student intervention and enrichment plans are created for all students for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. PLCs meet weekly to engage in the inquiry cycle by examining and monitoring benchmark student data in the areas of English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics, adjusting intervention and enrichment plans accordingly.

**Weekly PLC Meetings:** After initial RTI plans for ELA and math are created in the fall, teams meet weekly to monitor and adjust the plans. Interventions and student grouping changes based on examination of common assessments and progress monitoring. Our teachers focus heavily on the use of SBA interim assessments and other common core aligned assessments, ensuring interventions and enrichment is targeted and specific.

Because of the intentional focus on using data to inform our decision-making, we can provide high levels of support to each student, close achievement gaps, and help each student achieve their greatest potential. This data-driven school culture ensures high levels of student growth and achievement.