

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 314 Highway 160 East P.O. Box 8  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Portland State AR Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 71663-0008

County Ashley

Telephone (870) 737-4333 Fax (870) 737-4334

Web site/URL https://pe.hsdliions.org/ E-mail cwest@hsdliions.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\* Mrs. Tracy Streeter E-mail tstreeter@hsdliions.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Hamburg School District Tel. (870) 853-9851

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. Jim Wells  
(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, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
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 current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

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, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	9	11	20
K	10	7	17
1	13	10	23
2	7	13	20
3	11	10	21
4	17	8	25
5	9	14	23
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	76	73	149

\*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 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 24 % Black or African American
  - 22 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 50 % White
  - 4 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 3%

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, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	4
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	132
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 9 %  
13 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 71 %

Total number students who qualify: 106

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

12 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. 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>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

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

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	7
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	1
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 21:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	100%	96%	96%	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 2020.

<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.

Our mission is to provide a safe structured environment, which will nurture, challenge, and guide all students to achieve their maximum academic and social capabilities.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Parents were allowed to choose remote or face-to-face instruction for their child at the beginning of the school year. Teachers created Google Classrooms for remote students and also have taught students on campus. We provided devices to all students and had a Google Classroom training day for parents at the beginning of the school year. We have had to go remote for all students, at times, due to COVID-19 quarantine of a large number of staff and again for a winter storm. Parents have gone back and forth with remote and face-to-face, but we have thankfully gotten most of our students back on campus. We started the year with Mondays being a virtual option for grades K-5 but have now gone to a virtual Monday option for grades 3-5 and grades K-2 are required to attend face-to-face on campus. We made this shift, because our data showed that virtual for grades K-2 was not an effective means of teaching them to read. We use Mondays to focus on literacy. If students in grades 3-5 want to do their Monday virtual learning on campus, they are allowed to come.

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

In Arkansas, parents can choose schools in another district as long as they follow the proper procedures and make the May 1st deadline. The choice application is provided by the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and we have it posted on our district website. Parents complete the application and turn it in to our central office. Once received, the form is date and time stamped. A copy of each choice

application is sent to the district where the child resides and would normally attend. After May 1st, all applications, that were received by the deadline, are reviewed in the order they were received. That is the order the students are accepted for school choice pending the school has a spot for them to stay within the mandated classroom numbers dictated by the state.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Portland Elementary School is located in Southeast Arkansas and is a part of Hamburg School District. The district is made up of four former districts that consolidated with Hamburg years ago and is the third largest district in Arkansas covering 775 square miles of farmland and forests. Most industry in Portland, Arkansas is related to agriculture - cotton gins, crop chemical companies, and farm implement sales. Seventy-one percent of our students are considered socially-economically disadvantaged and receive free-or-reduced price meals. In our state, students are allowed to choose to attend a school in a neighboring district, so many of our students have chosen to attend Portland Elementary School (PES). We are a singleton school, so our campus has a family atmosphere. We are fortunate to know all of our families well.

We loop in grades 3-5, which creates a classroom environment that is conducive to utilizing instructional time to its fullest. The teacher of each subject knows the students' interests, ability levels, and personalities when each new school year begins, so no time is wasted getting to know one another and classroom procedures.

We have used the same literacy program for the past twenty years and have had great student success for all races and genders. We serve some special education students indirectly in our regular classrooms, and some of our students receive Speech and Occupational Therapy (OT). We do not have a resource teacher. We use data to group our students for reading instruction grades K-5th.

We have a very high level of community support and an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Their support has provided our students many varied opportunities to experience cultural activities, including trips to live theatrical productions, educational field trips, author visits, and the ballet. Most of our students would not get the opportunity, if it were not provided through the school. Sadly, we have not been able to participate in those activities this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are also not allowing guest speakers into our building.

We are an Arkansas A+ School, which is a group of schools around the state of Arkansas who have applied and been accepted to go through extensive training to integrate the arts into instruction using eight essential elements, one of which is experiential learning. Experiential learning engages the students, which improves student achievement. Students have many opportunities to create, explore, and construct.

Our area of the state is very limited in cultural resources or opportunities, so we search out grants to help fund experiences for our students. For example, we travel an hour-and-a-half to attend a ballet each Christmas. Grants fund the price for tickets, the fee for a bus driver, and the cost of pizza for students' lunch at a restaurant on our way back to school.

We implement The Jessie Lewis Choose Love Movement curriculum for social emotional support, and we have school-based mental health through a local agency. We also have a school-based medical clinic service available when parents ask for their child to be seen.



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

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

Parents were allowed to choose remote learning or on-campus learning at the beginning of the school year. All students were provided a Chromebook. Hotspots were installed in communities on parked school buses for student use. Some individual hotspots were also provided. Teachers created Google Classrooms with recordings of their teaching. Textbooks were distributed to the remote students. Three on-line programs were purchased as learning resources for all students - iReady for math, iReady for reading, IXL language for grades 3rd-5th, and Amplify Reading for students identified as needing reading interventions. Each of the programs provides great achievement data for teachers. The iReady has a monthly growth progress monitoring assessment. It has varied reports that provide progress data and skills deficit data for each student, plus provides resources for reteaching skills. In addition to those programs, iStation Reading and Math were purchased for remote students. It also has monthly progress assessments and individual paths of instruction.

We have the remote students come on campus once a month to take assessments. Teachers use formative assessments in their classrooms using individual white boards, check-outs, discussions, Kahoot, etc. Our literacy programs include McGraw Hill Reading Mastery and Spelling Mastery, along with Novel Ideas Adventures in Language. Each has formative assessments built into each lesson, and summative assessments are given to students after every twenty lessons, including rate and accuracy reading check-outs. This data determines if a student is progressing at the expected rate. If not, students may be moved into a different instructional group. If several students in an instructional group do not show the expected progress, the group backs up and the previous twenty lessons are retaught. The program includes explicit teaching, and a strict protocol is used to deliver instruction, including the procedure for how a teacher corrects a student's mistake when the student is reading orally or responding to questions orally. We also use Renaissance Accelerated Reader (AR) for grades K-5. Students read books from our library and then complete comprehension assessments on-line to earn points to spend in our AR store.

Our literacy curriculum covers many of the science and social studies standards, and we also use Scholastic magazines. In grades K-2, many of the science and social studies standards are covered through daily story time sessions.

Our math program is also very explicit and scripted. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education suggested schools focus on priority standards identified in their School Playbook this 2020-2021 school year, so that is where we have placed our focus. We have not had summer school in years, but we are going to require data-identified students to attend summer school this summer during the month of June each Monday through Thursday.

#### **1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):**

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

We have an Arkansas Better Chance Preschool on campus. There is not a formal curriculum, but the students participate in many rich literacy and math activities. The teacher and paraprofessional model rich language. Students discuss the calendar, weather, who is not at school that day, etc. Each day, a different student is the helper and gets to lead the group and dictates a message of the day that the teacher writes on a white board. The students identify specified letters or sounds within the message. Children's literature and content-rich songs are shared every day. During center time for small groups, the teacher and paraprofessional facilitate the activity for art, science, literacy, or math. The students also participate in large centers, such as-housekeeping, writing, construction, puzzles, student library, etc. The pre-k teacher uses Conscious Discipline in the classroom and our pre-k program is monitored by the state for safety, and the ECERS (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale) is also used for Arkansas Better Chance Preschool site-monitoring. Heggerty Phonemic Awareness is one of the literacy programs used in our pre-k.

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

As mentioned earlier, we have not been able to have visitors on campus or to take field trips. We did a virtual USA-Z interactive performance before the presidential election about the three branches of government and the election process. In the past, the performance would have been live on our campus.

We are an AR A+ school and integrate the arts into our content, but that has been limited this year because of COVID19. Typically, we have the University of Arkansas' Department of Agriculture's County Extension come in monthly to facilitate SNAP-Ed nutrition activities. This year, we have not had them in the building to facilitate, but they are still providing materials and resources for the students. Our students have access to Accelerated Reader and Epic, so children's literature is available to all students, whether they are on-site or remote. On-site students participate in three fifteen-minute stretches and calisthenics breaks while classrooms are disinfected during class transitions, a 60-minute physical education (P.E.) session weekly with a district-shared coach, and a daily recess.

Art and music instruction is provided weekly for students in grades K-5 by district-shared teachers who are highly qualified. Our counselor teaches character education weekly. She uses The Jessie Lewis Choose Love Movement as one of her resources. Remote students have a Google Classroom for Character Education, P.E., Art, and Music. Our students are very fluent in using the technology used for virtual learning, including Google Classroom, Kami, Google slides, Google docs, etc.

## **3. Academic Supports:**

Our core literacy curriculum addresses the needs of most students, regardless of student populations or student subgroups. It has an explicit structure of instruction, built in formative assessments, rate and accuracy checks, and mastery assessments every twenty lessons.

When students are not at mastery, remediation is provided. Students are in instructional groups and are moved up or down, based on assessment data. We also use iReady for interim assessments for reading and math. It is a digital program that builds a learning pathway for students based on performance on the interims and diagnostic assessments. We have a dyslexia interventionist who works with students identified as having dyslexic traits. Paraprofessionals work with any student who is having difficulty during a remediation/intervention block built into our daily schedule. We also have a paraprofessional who speaks Spanish and helps with English Language Learners, when needed. Gifted and Talented (GT) is provided for those students who meet the requirements.

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

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

Considering the restrictions we are under with COVID-19, we still strive to celebrate and have fun. We post successes on our school Facebook page, display student highlight bulletin boards in the building, have competitions, show slideshows of photos of our students participating in activities, etc. The students on campus are motivated through activities of experiential learning, discussions, challenges, etc.

Grants have provided us an opportunity to purchase activity kits for students that are hands-on. For example, each class received Painted Lady butterfly caterpillars to observe through the stages of metamorphosis. Each student had a journal to record observations. They compared the characteristics of moths and butterflies and created butterfly art to show symmetry of the wings. The butterflies were released on our playground.

Students strive to reach their Accelerated Reader (AR) goal in order to have bragging rights, earn points to spend in our AR store, and be featured on our school Facebook page. Kahoot is used for on-line academic competitions to review content or practice skills.

One other thing we do to motivate students is to have them track their own progress on the monthly iReady growth assessments. Students who reach their growth goals are rewarded in various ways. Throughout the school year, we have had special activities to go along with Red Ribbon Week, Read Across America, Constitution Day, Celebrate Freedom Week, etc.

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

We have fantastic family and community support. Local churches, individuals, and businesses have made donations to help us with things that help us with COVID-19 restrictions or things we do for our students that are not funded through the public school. The mayor of our small town sent out a community message asking for donations of bottled water while we waited for our bottle-filling station to be installed. Seven months later, we still have bottled water available to students who forget their bottle from home. Our PTO purchased a personalized water bottle for every student in our school.

We have been able to provide twenty-three of our most needy families with food pantry deliveries through a grant. As mentioned in a section above, the University of Arkansas' Department of Agriculture's County Extension has provided great materials for our students that promote healthy food choices. With donations, the principal purchased paw print floor decals and have them every seven feet to mark social distancing for our students. Typically, our parents and community members are in our building volunteering, celebrating, etc., but cannot this year.

Our state requires each school have a Parent/Community Involvement Plan and a facilitator. In the past, we have had families come in for Test Taking Tips Bingo, Science Centers, Family Art Night, etc. We communicate with parents through an all call system, messaging apps, and a take home folder. Teachers and the principal communicate with individual parents through texts and phone calls. The school counselor calls each parent of an absent child to see why he/she is absent and to offer support, if needed.

Before COVID-19, we had parents on campus frequently to volunteer, attend assemblies and parties, and to attend our Parent Teacher Organization's monthly meetings. Several of our local businesses support our school with services or donations. One of our local organizations donates and cooks the meat for our yearly Christmas Dinner and Auction, which is our major fund raiser. We travel around to the local businesses at Halloween and treat them with goodies to show our appreciation. Community Members read to our students and participate in talent/job fairs to demonstrate their hobbies or trade. We have had hair stylists, bakers, agricultural pilots, firefighters, a seamstress, a photographer, etc. Our community is very active and engaged in our school.

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

We are a very small school, so we have many opportunities to have informal conversations and to collaborate. Faculty and staff members are encouraged to participate in conversations during our faculty/staff meetings, and input from everyone is welcomed. The principal writes notes, texts, and tells the teachers they are appreciated, and at times they find treats in their mailboxes.

If they need a resource, the principal finds a way to purchase it for them. If the school budget does not cover it, grants are written. Our PTO supports our teachers and shows them appreciation throughout the year. Before COVID-19, they cooked for us. This year, they arranged for the school cafeteria to prepare meals for us on certain occasions and gave everyone gift cards.

In Arkansas, it has been mandated that teachers show proficiency in the science of reading, so a large part of our professional development (PD) was already set. The principal made sure that any PD that was not mandated was devoted to training teachers on using the technology needed for blended or remote teaching, such as Google Classroom, Kami, Screencastify, etc.

During typical years, teachers complete professional development surveys. The survey results help determine the professional development that is provided. In many cases, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education mandates a four-year rotation of specific PD topics, such as child maltreatment, human trafficking, suicide prevention, Arkansas History, etc.

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

The principal is the only administrator in the building. The principal's philosophy is that the teachers are to be supported with needed resources, relevant professional development, and encouragement. Faculty/staff are included in making many decisions and the administrator provides support with elements of teaching through utilizing the Teacher Excellence and Support System used in Arkansas based on the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching.

The administrator's philosophy about students is that they are provided a safe and structured environment and are given the opportunity to access a strong curriculum with the help of highly trained teachers and paraprofessionals. The principal and teachers review several student performance data pieces, such as asiReady reports, Accelerated Reader reports, report cards, Reading Mastery rate and accuracy results, etc. Students are provided performance feedback from the teachers and from the principal. Plans are made for remediation when needed and celebrations occur when students grow. We have a Parent/community Engagement Facilitator. She provides leadership and facilitates the implementation of our plan. We have a classroom teacher who has a thirty-minute block to address technology issues, and a classroom teacher who helps teachers with the implementation of our literacy program. She is our building Direct Instruction Facilitator.

Faculty and staff share the philosophy that high expectations for all students is a must. We have learning expectations/benchmarks, building-wide, built into our curriculum. In literacy, we require an 85% on all student work to be considered mastery. If mastery is not demonstrated, then students make corrections, are remediated, and retested.

Our building-wide rule for adults and students is: Be safe, respectful, and responsible. To meet COVID-19 restrictions and maintain safety, we have a temperature kiosk at each entrance, two water-bottle filling stations, paw print decals every seven feet on the floor to mark social distancing, and free cloth and disposable masks for students. We do not share materials. We purchased school supplies for all of our students and had them separated out before school started, so each student has his/her own materials, manipulatives, etc. Teachers sanitize all desks before students who rotate for subjects enter the classroom. We have hand sanitizer available throughout the building.

We have high expectations for everyone in the school to treat others with respect and to take responsibility for our own actions. The principal, faculty, and staff model respectful behavior and polite social interactions. Students and staff are reminded of the rule and/or corrected in a respectful manner, in the event they fail to exhibit the expected behaviors for being safe, respectful, and responsible.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

One fourth of our student population is Hispanic, one fourth is Black, and one half is Caucasian. Before COVID-19 restrictions, we wrote a grant and provided a cultural experience by inviting parents to cook authentic Mexican dishes and to make cascarones (hollowed out eggshells filled with confetti) for a Mexican Fiesta we had for our students. We had a piñata for each class, and made paper flowers and Day of the Dead art. We had one of our Hispanic staff members and any students who wanted to participate sing Happy Birthday in Spanish.

One fourth of our student population is African American. We celebrate Black History Month with various activities, including having had a live production entitled The Underground Railroad performed by a traveling troupe.

We also wrote a grant and did an entire unit on Learning Around the World. The students tasted food from China, Africa, Mexico, Italy, and France. We chose Italy, because several of our students have great-grandparents who immigrated here to settle as farm laborers. The local church, where some of the students attend, still has a spaghetti dinner where the ladies and girls make hand-made noodles. We also had art projects and some guest speakers representing some of the countries/continents. We have had an African children's choir and dance group visit our school to perform and eat lunch with our students. We do not address social movements with our students in grades K-5. If a need arises, the counselor addresses those on an individual basis.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, we have tried to share information and put safety measures in place to help our parents feel safe in sending their children to campus this year. Our school-wide rule is to be safe, respectful, and responsible. Disrespectful behavior is addressed immediately and corrected. We have very few issues in that regard.

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

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Keeping the lines of communication open for students and parents has been the one practice that has been instrumental to our ability to successfully educate and support our families. Each teacher has Google Classrooms and Remind apps. The principal uses Blackboard Connect to send out school-wide messages. The students who attend classes on campus have communication folders that go home daily.

When students or teachers have had to quarantine or go to totally remote teaching/learning, communication has been a comfort and support to our parents and students. Communication has helped us keep working as a Portland Elementary team. Teachers have also conducted Google Meets with their students, so that the whole class has had an opportunity to see classmates, have discussions, and participate in learning activities. Communication has been key.

Offering experiential learning through the implementation of the eight essentials of Arkansas A+ has also contributed to our success before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing learning kits and hands-on materials for the students keeps them engaged and learning. It creates interest and promotes success.