

**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) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet[X] Choice

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

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

School Mailing Address 1753 E. Eighth Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Mesa State AZ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 85204-3617

County AZ

Telephone (480) 472-6500 Fax (480) 472-6488

Web site/URL http://www.mpsaz.org/franklineast E-mail ksbaxter@mpsaz.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\* Dr. Andi Fourlis E-mail alfourlis@mpsaz.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Mesa Public Schools Tel. (480) 472-0000

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 Mrs Jenny Richardson  
(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):
- 55 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 10 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 9 High schools
  - 7 K-12 schools
- 81 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	0	0	0
K	43	43	86
1	45	56	101
2	41	41	82
3	46	46	92
4	33	50	83
5	39	55	94
6	51	41	92
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>	298	332	630

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0.2 % Asian
  - 2.4 % Black or African American
  - 47.6 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1.3 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 44.2 % White
  - 3 % 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: 5%

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

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

<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	29
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	38
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	694
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Arabic, Japanese, Other Non-Indian, Russian, Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %

3 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 46 %

Total number students who qualify: 290

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %  
69 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>10</u> Multiple Disabilities                |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                 | <u>7</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness           | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>3</u> Developmental Delay      | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance    | <u>30</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment       | <u>3</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>20</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>7</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. 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.	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
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 22:1

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	96%	97%	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. 2011

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

Franklin East Elementary is committed to educating students in a positive learning environment with high expectations and an accelerated curriculum.

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.

Franklin East Elementary started the year in a remote learning model for the first six weeks of school to ensure the safety of all students and staff members. It was the decision of the Mesa Public school board that we would return to five day a week in-person instruction for those families who were interested on September 14, 2020 which was our seventh week of instruction. To support the families who were still concerned about the spread of the COVID-19 virus, we also offered one remote section at every grade level so those students could remain enrolled in our school and as a part of our school family.

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

The process for entering a child in the Franklin Program is designed to help parents understand and be as fully informed as possible regarding the nature of the educational choice they are making for their family. It is also designed to be fair and consistent. It is important to the individual parent, the school, the district, and the community that integrity be at the heart of the process when giving parents the opportunity to choose an educational option for their child. Parents who express interest in our school are provided with a digital link to a Google form. Parents are asked to provide basic information, and to watch a brief video explaining the history of the school, the instructional methodology of the school, and the expectations of being a member of our school community. Once the video is completed and the parent submits their basic information they are then scheduled for a meeting with the principal. During the meeting with the principal the school handbook, expectations, and curriculum are reviewed. This is also a great opportunity to answer any

questions the parent might have about their child or unique situations. Following the meeting, if the parent makes the decision that Franklin East is the best fit for their student and family, then they complete district registration paperwork and are enrolled.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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At Franklin East Elementary School, our families often comment that they feel welcome from the moment they step foot onto campus. They feel valued as partners when they walk into classrooms to help teachers and to volunteer on committees in areas of the campus. Teachers and staff create a warm, loving environment for students while upholding high academic standards and maintaining instructional rigor.

Franklin East was Mesa's first parent-choice school, open to all students on a first-come, first-served basis. Our back-to-basics traditional school for kindergarten through sixth grade students is one of four like it in the Mesa Unified School District in Mesa, Arizona. Our philosophy is built on a strong academic foundation which includes character development, conflict resolution, and intrinsic motivation supported by a knowledgeable and highly qualified staff. There are several other tried-and-true components including: the precise teaching of handwriting and phonics, a modified grading scale, accelerated curriculum, protected instructional time, a modest conservative dress code, direct instruction, and a strong relationship with our parent community. The Franklin curricula incorporates The Spalding Method which holds a strong emphasis on a phonics-based approach to English/language arts (ELA) including explicit, integrated instruction and spelling, writing, listening, and reading.

In addition to explicit instruction through the Spalding program, students are exposed to numerous pieces of literature participating in both oral and silent literature studies. These literature studies expose our students to quality literature, classic stories, prize-winning texts, and historically influential pieces of writing, while also instilling a deep love of reading in our learners.

The Franklin accelerated math program assists students in reaching mastery level on mathematical concepts. Each lesson includes core components of numeration, math facts, mental math, and word problems. Lessons are spiraled (throughout the year and multiple grade levels) to hit previously taught standards, ensuring that content is cemented in students' thought processes. When students achieve math facts mastery, they are celebrated in a variety of ways including in-class recognition, positive phone calls home, being greeted by the principal at lunch with a Firebird high-five, and receiving a special personalized achievement card to be displayed prominently.

Franklin Parents are an integral part of how our school operates and excels. By working closely with our parents, we are ensuring our student success by emphasizing a positive team approach to meeting students' needs, providing challenging opportunities that extend beyond the school hours, and ensuring the at-home resources are available to help students be successful both academically and socially. Our school community includes the Franklin Parent Organization, which consists of numerous parents who help to organize school events. This allows our teachers to focus on instruction and learning. Parents are provided with various volunteer opportunities from working in a classroom to support instruction, to volunteering at our school festival, book fair, Grandparent's Day Celebration, or any number of other activities outside of the classroom.

Franklin East's character development program equips students to become decision-makers and problem-solvers. It serves to instill pride and respect for self, others and the community, and creates an environment of acceptance for all students. Families also choose Franklin East because it coordinates the home-school effort and provides a solid educational foundation, as well as instilling the love of learning in students. Students feel successful every day, families are treated as important members of the school community, and, with the dedication of our outstanding educators, Franklin East Elementary School is truly an exceptional school.

While the COVID-19 pandemic spread this past year, all schools had to continuously evaluate options for providing education. The main goal at Franklin East was to maintain our safe, academically-rigorous environment while structuring our teaching staff to provide both in-person and remote options. Our desire was to offer options to meet the needs of each family. This monumental task required our flexibility and creative problem-solving but showed parents that we were committed to serving students in multiple ways. Many families choose Franklin East because of our expectations and success in student achievement. These

families care about their child's education and understand the importance of their role in choosing a top-notch school. Our previous award has attracted more education-minded families to our campus, regardless of income or other demographic factors. Our diversity has grown since our last award, and our students are still successful and have positive growth. We start every morning at Franklin East with a passionate focus on meeting the needs of each individual student. It's our commitment at every grade level and from all staff members. It is why we are here, it is what we do, and we are proud of how well we do it!

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

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

Franklin East curricula include mathematics, reading/ELA, science, and history/geography. Each subject's learning objectives are outlined in curriculum overviews aligned to Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards. The scope and sequence of learning objectives are designed to ensure all concepts are taught during the school year. The overviews spiral to include exposure, mastery, and review of concepts throughout grade levels. Instructional minutes are allocated weekly by subject.

Mathematics is taught daily from select textbooks and supplemental materials aligned to specific grade levels. The program uses oral drill and written practice and stresses memorization of math facts. Teachers ensure daily instructional time for the four components of the Franklin mathematics program: foundational practice, systematic review, numeration skills, and standards-based skill development. Teachers use a curriculum overview that outlines instructional concept expectations to deliver systematic, explicit, and spiraled instruction. The overview provides continuity and consistency vertically, creating a learning progression that benefits all. In sixth grade, students are placed into leveled math classes, including a virtual pre-algebra class, to accommodate the range of student abilities, and ensure that high-performing students are prepared for an advanced learning track. The rigorous content and pacing keeps the above-average student challenged, while the spiraled review and tutorial component supports students in need of intervention.

Spalding's Writing Road to Reading, a language arts program, integrates research-based components, an educational philosophy, and a methodology consisting of time-tested principles of learning and instruction. The Spalding Method is the primary language arts program at Franklin East. Franklin's teachers receive Spalding training for three years when they begin at our campus. Students are taught 70 phonograms and the application of the spelling rules governing the use of the phonograms, penmanship, and high-frequency vocabulary.

Reading is taught primarily using rich children's literature with varying content and vocabulary. The program exposes children to different genres of writing and assists in leading students to become proficient, creative writers. Opportunities to develop fluency come from the daily reading of literature sets and classical selections found in the Open Court texts. Using rich literature increases student vocabulary, comprehension, and desire to read. Students in fourth through sixth grades build comprehension skills while completing summarizations of significant events from a reading selection, together with character identification profiles. Over the course of their elementary education, students are exposed to over 375 different children's literature selections and many diverse authors.

Spelling, reading, and writing lessons are taught explicitly using the Spalding Method, as well as using the Six Traits Writing process. Beginning in kindergarten, all students develop a writing portfolio that shows their individual growth. The Spalding handwriting program is taught in grades K-6, with cursive writing introduced by third grade. Neatness, precision, and legibility in penmanship are stressed through daily practice.

In composition, each student is expected to develop skills to express oneself in a grammatically correct manner that emphasizes clarity of thought and preciseness in spelling and penmanship. A variety of writing experiences are provided at each grade level, including participation in writing competitions. One type of writing that is a focus for Franklin's students would be that of poetry. Students may enter annual poetry writing contests to showcase their skills and talents.

Earth, chemical, biological, and physical science concepts are taught to students using a textbook, science journals, and online resources. Teachers use science kits and experiments to enhance learning including independent research, as done in sixth grade for the science fair. Field trips each year are scheduled to focus specifically on areas of science, including going to the Arizona Science Center and a local flight center. These allow application of classroom knowledge to real-life experiences and professions.

Throughout history and geography, students learn about our country's history, famous figures, events, documents, the structure of our government, and the geography of the United States and the world. Teachers use primary and secondary sources building upon the prior year's knowledge. The use of writing prompts, close-reading, document-based questions, and other best practices are used by teachers to further the students' content knowledge. Students apply their foundational knowledge of history in different opportunities throughout the year including: Martin Luther King, Jr. Contests and the National Geographic Geography Bee.

To provide the best instruction for students, it is imperative to understand what knowledge they already possess. In addition to the weekly summative assessments, every six weeks students are given progress monitoring assessments, enabling teachers to note progress in the areas of math facts, oral reading, spelling, and reading comprehension. Teachers use this data in professional learning communities to analyze strengths and weaknesses and determine the direction that instruction must take to meet the needs of all learners. Teachers communicate student performance with parents and share ways they can support academic growth. Progress reporting is completed every three weeks and report cards every six weeks.

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

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

With the focus of Franklin East being to model the highest academic standards, it is our belief that integrating sequential skills in art and music can improve performance in reading and math. We have thoughtfully-designed instruction in the areas of fine arts, performing arts, physical education, and technology.

Students receive weekly art instruction on a variety of projects that incorporate various mediums and techniques, such as paint, sculpture, sketch, and crafts. Teachers plan art instruction to complement areas of study including weather projects, patriotic themes, geography, and literature. Franklin East supports the fine arts curriculum by teaching Art Masterpiece lessons focusing on famous and influential artists. We also host an Arts and Letters event celebrating students' artistic and creative talents.

All students receive music instruction which provides essential musical experiences and activities in six conceptual areas: rhythm, pitch, texture/harmony, form, expressive elements, and style. A schoolwide performance showcases students' hard work and talent. Music Masterpiece lessons are also taught regularly focusing on influential composers. Orchestra and Band are offered to students beginning in fourth grade providing students with exposure to various instruments and types of music. These musical opportunities culminate with concerts, assemblies, and community performances.

Physical education (PE) programs are as essential as academic programs especially for students who are working diligently all day long. The P.E. curriculum is child-centered and provides over 25 different units of instruction throughout the school year. Students become confident and competent participants of physical activities and find fun ways to stay active. Each thirty-minute lesson is composed of four parts: introductory activity, fitness activity, lesson focus, and a game. This lesson format provides a well-rounded experience and allows for higher rates of student engagement regardless of personal strengths or limitations.

Library classes are taught by media specialists with the goals of helping students become efficient users of information and research skill development. The lessons promote literacy skills across different genres. Students have the opportunities to check out books of their choice to instill a love of literature. Students may participate in 'Battle of the Books', which is a reading competition designed for fifth-sixth graders.

As a result of the pandemic, our district was gifted with one-to-one technology which dramatically improved remote learning. We also have a campus computer lab with a curriculum emphasizing the utilization of technology applications to enhance knowledge and conduct research. Students learn computer skills, program selection, accessory use, and digital citizenship. For example, sixth grade students practice using Google Slides when researching and creating reports producing an integrated result of library/internet research, computer skills, and core content objectives.

Extra-curricular activities are available for students in fourth-sixth grades, including flag football, soccer, basketball, and volleyball. Our site-based athletic program takes place after school and provides exposure to skills necessary to play various sports. Sessions begin with basic rules for the sport, skill instruction, strategy determination, and implementation. Using this model, students are exposed to a variety of skills and use them in a supportive yet competitive manner.

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

Franklin East has an accelerated, fast-paced, rigorous curriculum. The grading scale is modified to reflect high expectations of student achievement and academic effort. The curriculum overviews ensure that the instruction of each identified concept is given adequate time and that the number of instructional repetitions is appropriate for student growth.

The overall instructional plan at Franklin East utilizes a pre-teach/teach/re-teach strategy. Direct whole-group instruction is delivered through The Seven Steps of Instruction model, which is an enhanced version based on the Essential Elements of Instruction. These seven steps include: Teacher Introduction, Teacher Explanation, Teacher Demonstration, Student Explanation with Teacher Demonstration, Student Explanation with other Student Demonstration, Student Independent Practice with Teacher Check, and Homework. Teachers effectively determine if students understand the objective before they begin independent practice.

To provide the highest level of instruction for all students at Franklin East, teachers work to support individual students while remaining in alignment with our accelerated model. To accomplish this, teachers employ the following strategies: breaking assignments into smaller chunks, using instructional aids/manipulatives, selecting literature based on student ability, modifying spelling list/assignments and, in kindergarten, assigning students to specific groups for rotations based on identified needs. Students who still require additional instruction receive tutorial and small group assistance during recesses and lunch. Teachers also offer after-school tutoring for students in further need of additional support. Teachers make appropriate accommodations and modifications as outlined to meet the needs of a student who has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 accommodation plan.

Assessment data is vital to the success of Franklin East. In addition to AzM2 (statewide achievement test) and AzSCI (statewide science test), the Arizona state achievement assessments, a variety of formative and summative assessments are embedded within our program. Teachers assess student learning every lesson to measure understanding and guide instruction.

Students in first through sixth grades are assessed every six weeks to evaluate mastery of phonograms, spelling, reading comprehension, and math facts. A 70 phoneme assessment and the Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale are used to evaluate student application of the rules that govern the use of the phonograms. McCall-Crabbs Test Lessons in Reading are utilized to develop comprehension through analysis of selections that focus on main idea, detail, cause-effect, author's purpose, sequencing, and inference skills. Additionally, students are evaluated on their fluency and accuracy of addition, subtraction, and multiplication facts.

With the exception of our kindergarten students, all students take online diagnostic benchmark tests

in reading and math three times per year. This data is analyzed by teachers and administrators to determine each student's strengths and areas of struggle. The online resource then allows teachers to differentiate assignments and lessons, so lower-performing students receive appropriate interventions, while above-level students are assigned higher-level questions requiring a deeper understanding and critical thinking.

To maintain high levels of achievement, Franklin East is committed to individual student growth by implementing our accelerated model with fidelity. Teachers consistently evaluate formal and informal data to pinpoint each student's strengths and weaknesses to help them achieve their highest potential.

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

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

Franklin East embodies a strong focus on academic instruction, demonstrating the value of a job well done, modeling personal effort to reflect one's knowledge, and exhibiting the joy that intrinsic motivation produces. Learning for personal growth and sense of accomplishment and behaving to demonstrate respect for self and others is often motivation enough for most students. As learning occurs and students become proficient in a skill, there is a natural tendency to use that skill more. Teacher enthusiasm and instructional style are also significant motivating factors.

Students are held in the highest regard and treated accordingly. Every interaction with a student is to be polite and respectful, and behavioral corrections should be made with specific feedback. Students are given the opportunity to identify errors and generate appropriate consequences. Students, who feel respected, safe, and valued will often put forth effort to be a positively-contributing member of the school community and will hold their peers to the same high standard.

In some circumstances, there is a need for teachers to employ student motivational practices to alter student behavior. While grades are a great motivator, often it is the genuine attention and feedback from an adult that carries the most weight.

Students have the potential to earn '15 Firebirds' or a 'Happy Gram' from teachers for engaging in practices for the betterment of our classrooms, their peers, and/or our school community. When a student engages in a civic-minded activity or goes above and beyond, they can be awarded with aforementioned recognitions. Students receiving awards have the opportunities to meet with the principal to share their achievements, select a school supply prize, and be recognized on the weekly announcements.

Teachers also focus on student recognition beyond the classroom. Many teachers send students personalized mail which may be a note of appreciation, recognition of success, or a birthday card to acknowledge a student's special day. Teachers facilitate a classroom party four times a year. Franklin classroom parties allow all students to interact through planned games, arts and crafts, and the enjoyment of snacks.

Finally, in a show of support for our school community and to display our competitive spirit, each Friday students are encouraged to wear a school shirt. Classes submit a participation count, and the winning class is recognized in the announcements and with a traveling trophy.

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

As a parent choice school from its creation, Franklin East has a history of incorporating parents in our daily activities, major events, and for feedback on suggested program-wide changes. Being that every dimension of the Franklin program was originally suggested and defined by parents, parental involvement was literally at the heart of the beginning of Franklin East Elementary School and remains there still.

The Franklin Parent Organization (FPO) is a parental participation group who work alongside the principal to plan and organize activities for the school. The FPO board is composed of 12 parent volunteers who lead the parental involvement on campus. Once a student enrolls at Franklin East their parents automatically become members in the FPO. Parents are required to serve on two committees during each school year as a way to contribute to the school. The FPO hosts a multitude of events for students, staff, and families including: the Franklin Festival, Ben Franklin's birthday celebration, Grandparents Day, book fairs, track and field day, field trips, Art Masterpiece, Music Masterpiece, Thanksgiving food drive, and so many more. In addition to planning activities for our students, the FPO board serves as an advisory group to the principal providing input on issues pertaining to the administration of the school. Our parent organization also hosts a Facebook page exclusively for parents to provide a commonly accessible avenue for the exchange of information and to allow parents to be able to support each other in a social media format.

Beyond serving on committees, parent engagement can also be seen in reviewing student homework nightly, attending parent-teacher conferences, ensuring students have transportation to tutoring, and by maintaining open communication with the school.

Franklin East works alongside several community organizations to bring resources and support to our school and local neighborhoods. We partner with Arizona Brainfood, a non-profit organization that provides a backpack of food to feed hungry school children on the weekends. We team up with a local church to provide additional toys and clothing for families during the holiday seasons. And this year specifically, as a way to show our appreciation to frontline workers, students wrote notes of appreciation to our local firefighters for their hard work fighting against COVID-19.

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

Being a high-performing school produces the desire to continue to achieve at the top level. Creating a culture that honors the dedication to serving students and families takes a concerted effort. It has been said that a school's culture is a reflection of the leadership and their confidence in the ability of their staff. Franklin East ensures that team members are valued and supported through personal and professional support, including targeted learning and good old-fashioned fun.

Working in partnership with the principal, teachers are set up to perform at the highest level providing support for students and each other. Teachers facilitate meetings to ensure consistent communication and alignment with the curriculum. The principal attends Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings to understand teachers' challenges/obstacles, address concerns, and to be knowledgeable for parent questions. These interactions allow members' voices to be heard, ensures consistency, and serves as a proactive measure to guarantee delivery of the best possible instruction.

Every February teachers respond to a survey regarding six areas. These areas include leadership, instruction, time management, curriculum, conditions, climate and culture, and family/community engagement. By participating, teachers have a voice in choosing their professional training. Focusing on identified needs, the principal creates the professional development plan for the following year.

Creating a school culture that reflects the way teachers and staff members interact with each other in an effort to build shared beliefs and values is a tall order. Franklin East believes it to be essential. In the last two years, the new principal has incorporated collaborative opportunities and team-building activities for all staff members. One event is the '15 Lap Challenge.' Staff members are encouraged to walk 15 courtyard laps daily between Thanksgiving break and winter break. Once completed, participants submit their name into a prize drawing held at the staff luncheon just prior to winter break. While created to help staff to maintain good health, another important outcome is that different grade levels started walking together. People who never formally met on campus started to interact, share ideas, and create friendships. By creating these connections, our school culture was positively impacted, and new traditions were created.

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

Franklin East is served by one principal who is responsible for the school's vision, mission, school climate, culture of learning, and general campus management. The vision of being "known nationally as the premier school in academic excellence" and the mission of "educating students in a positive learning environment with high expectations and an accelerated curriculum" is at the center of all decision making. The principal strives to ensure academic and behavioral excellence so that all Franklin students, parents, faculty, and staff receive the same outstanding educational experience.

As the leader on campus, the principal models the values, beliefs, and behaviors that influence others to strive for excellence, while also ensuring that everyone is treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. Building genuine relationships with students, parents, and staff guarantees that every member of the school community is welcomed, valued, and an important part of the success we strive for each and every day. Working together as a true team for the betterment of our students is a defining characteristic of Franklin East.

In addition to the principal, there are other leadership roles that contribute to the success of the school. The curriculum and instructional specialist guides new teachers in their orientation process, conducts informal observations for instructional feedback, designs and delivers professional development in conjunction with the principal, and supports classroom teachers with materials, resources, and instructional feedback. Teacher leadership is also prevalent on our campus with grade level leaders, primary and intermediate chairpeople, a Faculty Curriculum Committee, Teacher Council representatives, and a parent board. This shared leadership model allows planning, problem-solving, communicating, and implementing curriculum at the highest level.

In this year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the greatest factor in our continued success is the interpersonal relationships that have been developed and fostered between the members of the community. The principal has worked diligently to keep two-way communication flowing, listening to school and academic concerns and also fears which students, families, and teachers are feeling in their daily lives as a result of the pandemic. Working together we have implemented numerous mitigating measures to keep students and staff safe, conducting surveys of family's needs, and allowing families to transition between learning models (in person versus on-line) as their home situations have changed. These are just a few examples of the excellence displayed by the Franklin East staff and leadership during this unprecedented time.

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

Franklin East takes pride in building quality relationships with our students, families, and each other. The deep connections we have not only creates a gateway for the sharing of information but also serves as a bridge to build understanding. To provide the best possible educational experiences for students and their families, we strive to be reflective in our practices and continually meet each student and family where they are.

In order to create and maintain quality relationships with our students and families, we need to have an understanding of who they are and where they come from. To facilitate these relationships, we have looked for different ways to communicate with parents including using Google Translate and the school district's Language Line. We offer the use of interpreters at our parent-teacher conferences and use translation services to ensure that materials we send home are in the primary home language.

With the recent events of 2020, there is a heightened awareness of race and ethnicity and the role they play in providing an equitable education. The staff of Franklin East has taken a strong stance to not sit by and watch this opportunity pass, but rather to use the opportunity to reflect on our practices, values, and beliefs. This year, as a foundation for our growth, we have worked on learning a variety of vocabulary related to equity because like the old adage says, 'you don't know, what you don't know.' Through this journey, we have also participated in equity listening sessions, read several articles regarding equity in the classroom, and have held deep conversations that have been spurred by several thought-provoking videos. Our work is still in progress and has resulted in us evaluating portions of our curriculum and making modifications that are more inclusive and best reflect the students we serve.

Teachers continue to look for authentic opportunities to connect modern-day equity themes within their instruction as a way to reflect the diversity of our students. Each Franklin East staff member has made a personal commitment to equity that we have posted in our teachers' lounge. These commitments are a daily reminder of the equity work we need to continue to do as contributing members of our community. We have also made an instructional commitment to evaluate the stories, materials, and resources that we use in our instruction to ensure they align with our beliefs and values as a staff.



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

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Franklin East has a strong academic foundation based on high standards and a positive learning environment. While the implementation of these expectations and practices required flexibility during the school closures, we have nonetheless continued to keep the bar high for our students' academic performance while maintaining our positive outlook and attitude.

The academic rigor of schooling was initially challenged when we were thrust into remote instruction. In March of 2020, our school went on Spring Break with the expectation of returning the following week. Two days before our planned return, we all received the news that we were not returning to in-person instruction. The faculty and staff immediately started brainstorming ways to communicate with students and parents, planning for the delivery of content, work completion and submission, and for creating a consistent expectation across our graded K-6 campus.

Within days, the faculty had self-trained and implemented Google Classroom, creating their classrooms and coursework. It was important to our students, families, and staff that students continue to receive access to our unique academic program, although the modality was new. As the principal it seemed important to keep communication open so parents could stay informed of changes, challenges, and opportunities. It also felt important for students to stay connected with our staff on an emotional level, so the principal started creating weekly videos. Each video offered a familiar face, reassurance, and hope for when we could all be together on our campus.

Educating during the pandemic, Franklin East made it a priority to maintain our high expectations, while also offering a range of support to ensure not only the academic success of our students; but also working as partners with parents, to ensure that students' social emotional needs are met. Many hours have been devoted to supporting children and families with academic challenges, physical needs, and emotional support for trauma induced by the pandemic. It has been our priority this year to provide emotional support and resources for students and families to better equip students with the practices needed to better focus on their learning.

Franklin East has a stellar reputation for the highest academic standards, the most qualified teaching staff, and amazing relationships with our students and families. These areas did not wane during the pandemic, but instead they flourished, as our community has come together with love, support, and a commitment to our students and each other.