

**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 Mrs. Jeannie Tynecki  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 3995 East Aurora Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Boulder State CO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 80303-2543

County Boulder

Telephone (720) 561-6500 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://hpe.bvsd.org/ E-mail christopher.basten@bvsd.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\* Ms. Margaret Crespo E-mail margaret.crespo@bvsd.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Boulder Valley School District Re-2 Tel. (303) 447-1010

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 Tina Marquis  
(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):
- 33 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 11 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 11 High schools
  - 1 K-12 schools
- 56 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	16	20	36
1	24	18	42
2	21	24	45
3	25	23	48
4	33	19	52
5	29	21	50
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>	148	125	273

\*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
  - 24.2 % Asian
  - 1.5 % Black or African American
  - 8.1 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 56.7 % White
  - 9.5 % 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: 6%

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	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	19
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	296
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, Japanese, Nepali, Farsi, Russian, French, Arabic, Turkish, Armenian, Greek, Slovenian, Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Hebrew, Mandarin, Cantonese, Dutch, Swahili.

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 15 %  
41 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6 %

Total number students who qualify: 17

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %  
29 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>1</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>5</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. 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.	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 26:1

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	97%	96%	96%	95%	95%
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. 2015

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

High peaks integrates essential skills and authentic content within the framework of the Core Knowledge Sequence to foster academic excellence and continued growth. In an atmosphere of respect and collaboration among all members of the High Peaks Community, students will build self-esteem and a lasting love of learning.

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.

For the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, each grade level K-5 taught on a strictly virtual platform due to COVID-19 safety protocols. Each classroom implemented an array of strategies to promote cohesion among all grade levels. Strategies included a morning and afternoon classroom meeting, movement and screen time breaks, school wide recess and lunch times, small group reading and math instruction, asynchronous and synchronous lessons and a Response to Intervention time for ELL, SpEd, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Counseling and Literacy Intervention specialists to meet with students. Learners in the primary grades (K-3) utilized Seesaw to access all classroom materials while the intermediate grades used Google Classroom. All weekly classroom schedules and communication were sent out on Friday afternoons. These implementations gave the community at High Peaks the ability to rely on a predictable and modified educational experience in a truly unprecedented time.

By November of 2020, students and teachers in Kindergarten, first and second grade were able to teach in-person. In respect for all COVID-19 concerns, teachers and families were given the choice between in-person and virtual learning. Due to the number of students who opted for virtual learning, Kindergarten, first and second grade each had one in-person cohort and one virtual cohort. During this time, if there was a COVID-19 exposure, each impacted cohort would transition to virtual learning for the two week quarantine period.

In late November, all K-2 classrooms, throughout the district, were required to transition to virtual learning due to the rise in COVID-19 numbers. All classrooms remained virtual until the beginning of January 2021. At this time, the district invited all Kindergarten thru fifth grade classrooms to conduct in-person learning. Due to the amount of students who opted for in-person learning, most grade levels were able to conduct one in-person cohort and one virtual cohort. Fifth grade had the majority of students opting for in person and was able to implement a HyFlex learning model between the two classrooms. This gave fifth-grade students the opportunity to participate in a hybrid learning model.

Safety continues to be on the forefront of every decision throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Ensuring safety protocols are efficient and effective allows students and teachers to begin learning in a timely manner. To execute this goal, the High Peaks community implements a variety of systems. This includes, at-home health checks and screeners, staggered start and end times, two different on-campus pick-up and drop-off locations, material distribution days, grade specific bathroom locations, weekly playground and lunch location rotations, outdoor learning opportunities and two week specials rotations (Art, Music, PE) to limit cohort exposure. These implementations provide the High Peaks community with a consistent routine that supports safety and learning in an efficient and orderly manner.

Whether students are in-person or virtual learners, continuing to build community is of great importance. For our annual Winter Celebration, we were able to create a virtual workshop model for all staff members and students. Each staff member led two virtual workshops throughout the day. Students were able to participate in a variety of workshops that fit their interests while working alongside with current, future and past teachers and students throughout each grade level. Additionally, the annual Fun Run continues to be an engaging school-wide activity with virtual and in-person students participating in the festivities of exercise while raising funds to ultimately purchase a student-led addition to our school. Grade level cumulative projects continue to be a part of the learning experience by utilizing and adapting technological resources.

Differentiated instruction is a priority at High Peaks whether students are engaging in virtual, in-person or hybrid instruction. Each interventionist and academic specialist continues to be given the opportunity to conduct instruction virtually, in-person or in a hybrid format to ensure safety and comfort for all. This provides students with the opportunity to continue in specialized instruction. Additionally, the compacted math program in fourth grade is able to proceed through a hyflex model to give each student differentiated math instruction. Differentiation has also been supported by the paraprofessionals provided in each grade level to support individualized and small group instruction.

Nurturing the social and emotional health is a practice that is at the forefront of the High Peaks community. The impacts of COVID-19 have put an enormous strain on families, students and the education system. Therefore, continuing to nurture each student's social and emotional learning and recognizing the whole child is essential. High Peaks was able to focus on providing a multitude of opportunities to discuss and process an array of emotions on a daily basis within the classroom. Our school counselor continues to provide grade level lessons from the Second Step curriculum on a weekly basis along with meeting with students individually or in a small group setting to provide additional social and emotional guidance. As the uncertainties of COVID-19 continue to impact our community, the students are able to come to school each day knowing High Peaks will always be there for them.

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

Within the Boulder Valley School District, families may choose to enroll their student in a school outside of their neighborhood as long as there is sufficient programming, staff and space at the school. Families residing outside the BVSD boundaries are also welcome to open enroll their children into the district. Since High Peaks is a choice school, the student population is fully acquired through the open enrollment process. Selection is based on a lottery process, not first-come first-served.



## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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High Peaks Elementary is a Core Knowledge focus school in Boulder Valley School District in Boulder, Colorado. The school was founded by parents and teachers in 1995; twenty years later, we are in a continuous improvement cycle and are reaching new heights both in our district and across the state. Our guiding mission statement reads as follows:

High Peaks integrates essential skills and substantive content within the framework of the Core Knowledge sequence to foster academic excellence and high achievement. Through challenge and accomplishment - and in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration among all members of the High Peaks community - students build self-esteem and lasting love of learning.

High Peaks stands out from our peer schools for several reasons. We complement the district and state curriculum with the Core Knowledge sequence. We maintain high expectations and support for all children, as we employ extraordinary educators, and foster a partnership with our parent community and local community resources. The Core Knowledge curriculum is rich in Literature, Science, History and Geography. Curriculum topics are sequences, coherent, integrated, and revisited in increasing depth over the six years of elementary school. Our staff integrates Reading, Writing, Math, Art, Physical Education and Music to deliver the curriculum in engaging and stimulating ways.

Teachers personalize teaching and learning for all students, and meet each student where they are, to support their growth academically, socially, and emotionally. Teachers work hard to continuously assess student progress, growth, and needs. We operate from a model of “high expectations and high support” by providing students with scaffolding, support, enrichment, and challenge as needed. We serve students with a variety of learning needs, from students who are developing English language skills, to students with Special Education needs, to students with affective, social, and emotional needs that impact their learning. Our achievement and growth scores reflect the quality and depth of our supportive work with students. Academically, High Peaks scores among the top schools in the state. The John Irwin School of Excellence Award, given to the top 8% of public schools in Colorado every year, has been awarded to our school since the award’s inception in 2001. Additionally, we are consistent recipients of the Governor’s Distinguished Improvement Award for outstanding academic growth. Recently, High Peaks was recognized as being ranked within the top 2% of elementary schools in the state of Colorado by Niche Schools (<https://k12.niche.com/>).

We strive to cultivate partnerships with parents in order to best support students. Families are actively involved in the school in many ways. Parents are significant members of our parent-teacher organization, which is called the ED Team (Educational Decisions Team). Additionally, parents help to organize and implement extra-curricular activities, school-wide challenge activities, and fundraising campaigns. They also volunteer in classrooms regularly and help facilitate many of our class tradition and end-of-unit culminating celebrations. With our history of collaboration and respect, High Peaks attracts a diverse student population from across Boulder Valley. Families from more than twenty-five different countries enrich our school community. As a 100% open enrollment school, our families come to us by word of mouth from alumni families who highly recommend our curriculum and our excellent teaching staff, based on their own experience.

We have many traditions at High Peaks including the annual school-wide Geography Bee, Spelling Bee, Fall Festival, Battle of the Books, and S.T.E.M Fair. We have a Welcome Back and New Family Ice Cream Social, International Festival, Fun Run, and a spring Sock Hop, along with monthly parent meetings. Other important traditions at our school are the culminating projects for each grade. These include, but are not limited to: kindergarten’s World Continent tour; first-grade’s Egyptian Museum and Solar System Tour; second grade’s simulation of immigration at Ellis Island and crawl through a large digestive system; third grade’s Rome Day and Viking Day; fourth grade’s Medieval Festival; and fifth grade’s annual Shakespeare play, Shark Tank simulation, and three days of outdoor education at Cal-Wood Education Center. We have several all-school traditions including popular before and after school challenge activities which are initiated and run collaboratively by parents and staff. We have a Chess Club, Lego Robotics League, Math

Olympiads and Battle of the Books which has been a very successful endeavor for 3rd, 4th and 5th-grade students.

High Peaks was the recipient of the National Blue Ribbon School award in 2009 and 2015. The recognition has been positioned in our school and community as a high bar towards which we continue to strive. Since being awarded the National Blue Ribbon award, the school has built its capacity towards pride and cohesion. Our school climate and culture has been invigorated, the mutual trust between staff and parents community has been enhanced, and school leadership has taken great efforts to empower the staff to demonstrate and share their expertise as teacher leaders.

We are proud of our strong, viable curriculum, our high academic expectations and the community commitment we have at High Peaks. We believe all these factors work together to create our success with student performance and growth. Of equal importance, we are invested in our students' social and emotional well-being and take strides to support children's affective needs. We prioritize regular community meetings in every classroom and the successful Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) program throughout our school. We infuse Zones of Regulation and Sources of Strength along with the Second Steps SEL program into our discussions and weekly social-emotional lessons with students. This comprehensive approach to student learning leads to strong academic performance and growth while ensuring that students feel happy, safe, and stimulated to learn and become lifelong learners.

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

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

Our school promotes academic excellence and high achievement using the Core Knowledge, Fountas & Pinnell, Foundations, and Math Expressions curricula. The goal of our Core Knowledge focus is to create a set of essential skills within a framework of integrated content knowledge that is rich, worldly, and meaningful. It provides a solid foundation of learning while offering the flexibility to meet individual student needs, community needs, and local and state requirements. Music, Art, and Media are integral components of the program with specialized teachers. Standard district programming in Physical Education is also provided.

Our Science curriculum is founded on the use of FOSS (Full Option Science System) at each grade level, plus additional Core Knowledge science curriculum. Our teachers deliver the inquiry-based science curriculum through hands-on experimentation and observation. This approach introduces students to the excitement and structure of science, the scientific method, the engineering method, and critical reasoning. Students learn scientific content from life cycles and systems to science biographies. We encourage students to ask questions, seek answers, analyze, measure, observe, organize, and discuss science concepts. We hold an annual STEM Fair, accessing scientists from local research labs, such as Lockheed Martin, NIST, NCAR, DMNS, LASP, Ball Aerospace, FISKE, and the University of Colorado, as guest speakers and judges of student projects.

Throughout each grade level, students are exposed to rich Social Studies content. Students begin studying the seven continents in kindergarten and study world and United States history beginning in first grade. The history and geography curriculum spirals upward throughout the grades and includes an integrated approach with listening, speaking, reading, writing, art, and music. Students are provided opportunities to sing, dance, listen to music, act, read and write poetry, draw, paint, and create realia related to the curriculum. When students graduate from fifth grade, they have covered the BVSD standards as well as the Core Knowledge curriculum. The Core Knowledge curriculum provides a more in-depth study of topics and subject matter than our district curriculum. As such, our students leave High Peaks well-prepared for middle school, high school, and beyond.

The delivery of instruction to our students changed radically in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 virus and the resulting worldwide pandemic. Students used Seesaw and Google Classroom to access their meetings, lessons, and assignments. Teachers began to conduct virtual meetings and lessons through the use of Google Meet. To record lessons, teachers used Loom, Screencastify, and WeVideo. Additional academic based online platforms that were in frequent use were Newsela, Storyworks, Kids Discover Online, Nearpod, Flipgrid, Padlet, Smart, Mystery Science, BrainPop, Epic Books, Think Central, Fountas & Pinnell online resources, Book Creator, Phet Simulations, Pear Deck, National Geographic for Kids Online, whiteboard.fi, Google Earth, PebbleGo, Wixie, EdPuzzle, CommonLit, IXL, Matific, Reading A-Z, Jamboard, Go Guardian, Classroom Screen, and i-Ready. In music, the 3rd - 5th grades have been using Ableton, Noteflight, and Ningenius. The variety of these academic online applications and resources have not only stimulated student participation and engagement, but also allowed students to explore and deepen their 21st-century skills on a daily basis. Beginning October 20th, 2020, approximately half of our student population returned to school for in-person learning. The remaining half have opted to remain online for daily instruction. Kindergarten through fourth grade have a teacher instructing a class of students online and a teacher with a class of students learning in-person. Fifth grade is using a hyflex model of simultaneously teaching both in-person and online students.

As a focus school under the auspices of BVSD, we are required to teach the BVSD adopted math program of Math Expressions. We work hard to personalize the learning for students by scheduling a math block during which time students can move into small groups for differentiated instruction, can join other grade levels if appropriate, or can participate in compacted curriculum or advanced curriculum. For example, we usually have a full class of students in fifth grade learning the district-wide sixth grade Connected Mathematics curriculum.

For curriculum planning, our faculty uses backward design with the Understanding by Design model (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005) which encourages an instructional design that engages students in the inquiry process. This model offers conceptual frameworks for helping students acquire discrete facts and skills while uncovering the “Big Idea” embedded within the curriculum. Our school has worked hard to establish a K-5 vertical alignment of “Big Ideas” which helps our students use their schema and background knowledge when learning new material at each grade level. We believe that this is a critical factor in our academic success. Our teaching faculty meets regularly for collaboration, during which time teachers discuss student data, progress-monitoring, and assessments and interventions to meet students’ needs. Our faculty is also utilizing the problem-based learning model in conjunction with our Core Knowledge units of study. This student-centered approach has been implemented into each grade level classroom and continues to be refined through whole staff professional development meetings.

Data-driven instruction and intervention constitute the foundation of our work with students at High Peaks. Some of the summative and formative assessments that teachers use to determine students’ needs are: i-Ready reading and progress monitoring, DRA2 (Developmental Reading Assessment), Benchmark Assessment System, TS Gold, Foundations, BVSD writing tasks, pre and post unit assessments, project and presentation rubrics, and formative assessments in the form of exit tickets, quizzes, running records, Nearpod, and whiteboard.fi. Our teachers also compile a body of evidence using classwork and observations to make decisions about student needs. The High Peaks staff participates in a data cycle meetings three times a year to discuss and evaluate student data to ultimately produce a plan of differentiated instruction. If students are not meeting progress benchmarks, teachers then transition to our Student Support Team (SST) process to implement Tier Two learning supports.

High Peaks embraces the Core Knowledge curriculum as it promotes excellence and preparation of education, fairness by providing for all students regardless of their socioeconomic status, and multiculturalism through respect for diversity. The richness and variety of our curriculum nurtures the self-esteem of our students while creating a lasting love of learning.

**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:**

The High Peaks Music, Art, and Physical Education programs provide comprehensive experiences for students and enable us to more effectively address the whole child. Our media specialist supports staff with literacy instruction and technological solutions in all subject areas.

Our Art teacher expands the student’s classroom, Core Knowledge curriculum as and Common Core Art standards. Students learn techniques and concepts to develop their artistic abilities and understanding. Additionally, students regularly participate in artist studies and create artistic expressions which synthesize their learning from the classroom. For example, fourth graders recently embarked on an in-depth study of Europe in the Middle Ages, made stained glass art in class, and learned a Medieval dance. Art extensions deepen the learning experience for students.

The High Peaks music program provides students with a complete music education that aligns with the national and district standards. Our curriculum has a strong base in the Orff Schulwerk Method which encourages 21st century creative and critical thinking. In addition to our Orff instrumentarium, our school is equipped with piano, ukulele, and guitar labs. Students explore interactive ways to learn about music and its powerful role in shaping our world. Students receive training in social justice by studying our nation’s history through the History of Rock’n Roll and the History of the Blues. Every 5th-grade student receives a full year of training in Orchestra or Band. Our High Peaks Composers host an annual “World Premiere

Night,” where professional musicians perform the student’s compositos. We prepare our students to be well-equipped musicians who know how to use their music training to affect positive change in our world.

Our Physical Education teacher emphasizes fitness, wellness, and lifelong healthy eating habits with our students. The teacher engages students and teaches standards through non-competitive games, obstacle courses, and cooperative skill-building. The Physical Education teacher integrates classroom curriculum into instruction. For instance, students using the rock climbing wall will “climb” a fourteener while learning about the 53 mountain peaks in Colorado that are over 14,000 feet. Students document in writing journals what they learned about these peaks and climbing.

In our Greek Olympics unit, students engage in experiential learning by participating in events from the Olympics Games in ancient Greece. Events such as the javelin and discuss throw and chariot races bring the unit to life. These examples demonstrate how our students are actively engaged in developing a lifelong appreciation of health and wellness, while also extending their learning.

The library media center focuses on literacy and technology skills in collaboration with the teaching staff. Classes work on digital or STEM projects to support the Core Knowledge curriculum using different tools such as Google Slides, Google Earth, Flipgrid, Book Creator, and Novel Engineering.

We implement Second Step, an evidence-based Social-Emotional Learning curriculum to develop skills for social and academic success. There are four components to this program: Skills for Learning (Listening, Focusing Attention, Self-Talk for Learning, and Assertiveness), Empathy, Emotion Management, and Problem Solving. In addition to this, we teach the Second Step Bully Prevention Unit to all students. Home Links enable students to practice the skills at home with a parent or guardian. This strengthens the school/home partnership.

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

The instructional practices in use at High Peaks help each child grow and develop to their individual potential in concert with developmental expectations and district standards. Throughout the grades, we set high expectations for all students, and we provide multi-tiered support. One of our key strategies in meeting the spectrum of students needs is differentiation for each learner, which personalizes the learning experience. We define differentiated instruction as a teaching approach in which educational content, processes and products are adapted according to student readiness, home language, background knowledge, and learning interests. This often necessitates providing interventions. We implement differentiation and interventions through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).

We teach through different modalities to reach varied learning styles. Teachers support learning by activating prior knowledge, using advanced organizers, rubrics, option menus, and a variety of visual aids and manipulatives. Instructional groupings vary with children working independently, with partners, in small groups, and even with cross grade-level “buddies.”

Teachers use assessment and progress-monitoring to discover each student’s baseline performance, areas of strengths and areas for growth. From there, the teacher sets goals for and with students to determine the level of instruction and intervention that may be needed. Students who benefit from additional instruction in a certain content area receive targeted instruction through one-on-one support or in small groups. Interventions may come in the form of a double dose of instruction in the classroom, re-teaching or pre-teaching, front loading vocabulary, evidence-based literacy interventions, strategy groups, and may be offered in the classroom or out, depending on what is best for the students.

Students who need additional challenges have a variety of opportunities for daily extensions and enrichment as well. Our Talented and Gifted program operates from a school-wide enrichment

model, which invites students who are identified as gifted to participate, and also invites students who may not be identified as gifted, but who are high potential learners, or who have specialized interests. Through these means, we maximize each student's learning potential and personalize learning, which promotes success in our diverse community of students.

The English Language Arts CMAS data reveals a gap of 11.7 percentage points between All Students and Students with Two or More Races. There is an additional gap of 10.7 percentage points between students with Two or More Races and Asian students. As we analyze the Math CMAS data, we celebrate the great achievement of our Asian student population where 100% met or exceeded expectations. With this great accomplishment, the data does reveal a gap of 17.3 percentage points between All Students and Asian students and a gap of 25.0 percentage points between students with Two or More Races and Asian students. This acquired data inspired our staff to revisit our Response to Intervention model. We are eager to discuss strategies that can strengthen our data cycles, MTSS process and response to intervention within general education classrooms. This spring BVSD announced a district wide initiative to close the academic achievement gap. Our staff discussions will be anchored by the recommendations from BVSD in regards to general guidelines, common assessments and intervention tools. Additionally, BVSD has announced a transition to a eight-hour school day for the 2021-2022 school year. High Peaks is excited to extend the school day from our previous 6.5 hours, as it will allow more time for students to receive intervention services. Reflecting on these data points provides an opportunity to collaborate and modify systems in hopes of providing each student with the appropriate interventions to reach their full potential while closing the education gap between student populations.

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

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

A point of pride for the High Peaks community is being able to engage and motivate students while providing a positive environment. First, we have a school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) with the acronym PAWS. PAWS stands for be Prepared, Act respectfully, Work hard, and be Safe. This acronym embodies the behavioral expectations that are foundational to our school community. Our PBIS system offers individual, class, and whole-school incentives that reinforce and encourage PAWS pride. Additionally, we utilize student climate data each year to identify successful initiatives and areas for improvement in terms of school climate and the social-emotional health of students. This data is utilized as teachers, along with our school counselor, reinforce social-emotional concepts with the Second Step Social-Emotional Learning and Bully Prevention programs. Teachers facilitate meaningful conversations and activities to guide and nurture social-emotional competence, develop foundational learning skills, and recognize, report, and refuse bullying to reinforce a positive learning environment.

In addition to our research-based social-emotional curriculum and PBIS system, our passionate teachers implement engaging units of study through the Core Knowledge curriculum. Teachers are able to take these units of study and create academic opportunities for students to build intrinsic motivation as lifelong learners. Such opportunities include project design, involvement in plays, and presentation development. Students use technological tools such as 3D printers, green screens, and innovative apps to make their learning truly come to life. This freedom of expression and exposure to innovative practice gives students ownership of their learning. This translates to continuous student investment, academic curiosity, and motivation. Students are encouraged to celebrate their diverse backgrounds and rich cultural representations at our school. Students make connections to their home cultures and bring their languages, habits, and customs to their academic experience. By inviting students to share and celebrate their own and other's history and see such histories represented in the worldly view of the Core Knowledge units of study, students are able to feel safe to grow intellectually, socially and emotionally.

These engaging social-emotional and academic practices continued during school closures and remote learning. Teachers continued to host class meetings online to address social and emotional needs. Teachers and the school counselor continued to teach Second Step lessons and reinforce PAWS behavior. Teachers and students worked together to create online norms, online safety practices, and strategies to bond virtually. Our rich curriculum continued with even more innovative practices and students were able to explore ways to discover and synthesize new concepts. Students shared their home cultures in a tangible way they never could before. Additionally, the community and student body showed extreme flexibility with the school opening and closing. Despite the range of changes during this period, student investment and engagement in learning continues to remain anchored and has shown the strength and perseverance of the High Peaks community as new challenges ultimately turn into new opportunities.

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

At High Peaks, we recognize that the school's partnership with families and the broader community is critical to the growth of our students. Specifically, when in our building, or in our virtual classrooms, you will see a variety of family members working with school staff to support all learners. Formally, our Ed Team and SAC (School Accountability Committee) organize all stakeholders to ensure that school improvement plans are consistently being implemented, assessed, and improved. One such development to come out of these committees was a greater focus on the social-emotional well-being of our students. As a school, we purchased a program, Second Step, and we conduct weekly lessons to help students navigate the world inside and outside the walls of our classrooms. This program and the common language have particularly been emphasized during the added struggles due to COVID-19.

In our school community, one will see joint efforts in our approaches to teaching the whole-child. When walking around the school, you will see parents volunteering in the classrooms or facilitating our community garden. If you come to our fall carnival, you will witness former students, middle school kids,

partnering with staff and families to create a community-building event. Other activities, such as a “Shark Tank” involve local businesses. The kickoff to this entrepreneurship and design-thinking project usually involves a field trip, or a visit from some of our local businesses. Over the last 3 years, High Peaks has worked with PopSockets, Google, and IBM. It is particularly exciting for the kids when these local community members serve as judges at the culminating event. Additionally, we hold an annual STEM fair, accessing scientists from local research labs, such as Lockheed Martin, NIST, NCAR, DMNS, LASP, Ball Aerospace, FISKE, and the University of Colorado, as guest speakers and judges of student projects. This opportunity inspires students as they witness STEM related professions in our community.

Over this last year, COVID-19 has created new challenges related to communication, participation and engagement. One way we have enhanced such community connections is through weekly virtual “coffee talks” hosted by our principal. These gatherings provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to engage in school decision making or understand the different mitigation efforts being applied. Additionally, teachers send weekly updates to their homeroom classes.

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

As a small elementary school, High Peaks has always maintained a positive professional environment and culture that starts with an unusually dedicated staff. Each staff meeting begins with an opportunity to share thoughts on a personal and professional level. Everyone has the chance to feel connected as a team. These moments build the foundation for a capable professional group who is dedicated to our mission.

Core Knowledge has been the common background as we set goals each year, but at the heart of our professional development is always the academic and social-emotional needs of our students. Our staff works together as a team at the start of each year to analyze the academic and school climate data during our annual professional development time before the students return. We meet together to brainstorm strategies that will support the diverse needs of students in our schools and make a plan to differentiate. We collaborate in grade level and vertical teams to share information and strategies that worked well for students in the past incorporating the knowledge of specialists. We regularly revisit the Core Knowledge sequence in our school to ensure it is aligned with district and state expectations.

For example, in the 2017-2018 school year, we decided to focus on implementation of Project Based Learning (PBL). After district training that was designed for our school, each grade level picked one of our Core Knowledge topics to transform into a PBL unit. For example, the fourth-grade team chose their studies of the circulatory and respiratory systems and was able to connect with our P.E. teacher as well as professionals within our community. Their unit culminated in a trip to the Museum of Nature and Science where they dissected a cow lung. The incorporation of PBL enriched our Core Knowledge topics while providing opportunities for students to practice their skills of critical collaboration while connecting their learning to the bigger world.

To prepare for the pandemic this year, the Boulder Valley School District gave teachers the opportunity to participate in an extra week of remote and hybrid learning teacher preparation workshops in August. Teachers took multiple remote courses each day to improve their practice with an emphasis on preparing for a unique year. Some of the courses fell under the categories of Learning Management Systems and Tech Tools, Instructional Design and Unit Development, and Designing Instruction to Foster Strengths of All Students. The district has also purchased new equipment called the REVAS system that allows students to view the classroom live while still being at home. Our teachers have become masters at creating flexible lessons that can be utilized for students in person and at home.

The bonds and professionalism of our staff is an important factor in what makes High Peaks such a unique and special school.

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

“She stood in the storm, and when the wind did not blow her way, she adjusted her sails.”



This quote represents the work our community strives towards each day to best meet the needs of all students. We believe that nurturing relationships with staff, students, and parents is crucial to creating successful and engaging learning environments. Attaining a growth mindset and embracing failure is a catalyst to how our students rise above, and yet continue to reach higher each day.

We use a shared decision making model. Consensus is accomplished through collaborative collegial conversations. Our weekly staff meetings include guided discussions around school-based issues and professional development opportunities from teacher leaders and our principal. Collective efficacy and learning from each other is a guiding principle. Together we are stronger. Having a growth mindset and building on our craft as teachers through a collaborative learning community helps us continue to grow.

We work closely with our parent community through the School Accountability Committee, Parent ED Team, parent newsletters, weekly virtual parent coffees, and an open door policy to work together for what is best for our students and families. We practice flexibility, patience, and grace. We start every virtual staff meeting with time to mindfully connect, and each parent coffee begins with a quote that will ground us in the challenging work we are doing to meet the needs of our students.

Our outstanding teacher leaders continually use a body of evidence to support all learners. Our principal, specialist, classroom teachers, and counselor all participate in Data Cycles three times a year, using data to drive instruction and form differentiated learning opportunities. These groups review data from our CMAS Benchmark Assessment, iReady Assessment, BVSD Math Assessment, and our SEL student survey. By purposefully analyzing our data and discussing both academic and social and emotional needs of students, we provide the best targeted interventions and differentiated instruction that will meet the needs of all students. Differentiation is the backbone of our work at High Peaks.

The social and emotional health of our community is at the forefront of our work. Our principal is determined to keep students and staff safe while still providing rigorous and engaging opportunities for students.

Systems created during the pandemic include: Class cohorts, a staggered drop off and arrival procedure, state and district mandated safety protocols, implementation of technology to support remote learning, daily morning announcements by the principal for all learners, the collaborative creation of Online Learning Norms, weekly virtual Parent Coffee, new schedules to limit cohort exposure but maintain specials and intervention instruction, additional personnel to help support social distancing, Positive Phone Calls and PAWS tickets to celebrate all learners, and the little things, like birthday ribbons that were mailed to students, so they still get to feel special on their birthdays.

We are so proud of our whole community for rising to this occasion.

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

At High Peaks, we value our biggest asset - our community. Community to us is staff, students, parents, and any member working to engage and improve our school experience for kids. We are proud of our diverse community; students and staff come from all over the world, and from many different academic backgrounds.

High Peaks holds our collegial relationships and collaboration to a high standard, recognizing that our relationships are an essential part of a thriving school community. We have a Social Committee that lends support and celebration for life events such as weddings, babies, sickness, and graduations.

Our classroom teachers and school counselor deliver lessons celebrating and addressing differences amongst classmates. We believe students should learn and celebrate what makes each of them unique. Daily, classroom teachers recognize and discuss the needs of their students during

their Morning Meetings, a time where classes share feelings, wishes, and concerns. Carving out this time leads to strong bonds and mutual respect.

We strive to honor cultural differences by sharing family photos, holidays, traditions, and foods. Annually, parent volunteers host an International Festival. This event consists of families setting up booths to share their culture, food, and stories. This moving event brings together the global school community into one happy room! We also celebrate diversity through our read-alouds, Black History Month, and connecting kids with global projects like writing letters to refugees and senators.

Academically, staff support learning differences daily with culturally responsive teaching that provides targeted differentiation. We recognize that meeting the needs of each student is critical to growth and learning. Teachers provide connections to student passions and perspectives. Many different cultures are represented at High Peaks and we value these differences and weave them into academic life. Emerging bilingual students work with a skilled ELD teacher to strengthen their understanding of English, while celebrating their home culture and language. Students are welcomed each day with the word “welcome” written in the native languages represented at the school.

Through the hardships of Covid-19, we have also worked tirelessly to support the diverse needs of families with technology support while learners are at home. We provide support through interpreters for families needing assistance with newly adopted home learning technologies. High Peaks also identifies families in need and works to deliver technology, books, and/or food when possible. As Core Knowledge focuses on a vast array of worldly topics, ethnicities, and deep conversations about race, religion, and culture are ingrained into the day to day conversations in class, supporting students and enriching our community.

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

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Though we have innumerable strategies for our success, our Core Knowledge Curriculum is our strongest practice for achievement. High Peaks began with the intent to have Core Knowledge as its focus; adoption of the curriculum began many years ago at the school's inception. So while this practice is not new to our school, teachers, or students, it has been and continues to be the most beneficial, engaging, inclusive, and inspirational strategy in place.

Core Knowledge is ever evolving with students' interests and needs to differentiate for each child. It is an incredibly rich cross-curricular educational program involving project based learning, plays, group work, cultural events, debates, and connections to the real world. For example, students go on Social Studies adventures like exploring dynasties from Ancient China, debating whether or not the Loyalists have a say in America, traveling through a life size digestive system, and making Egyptian headdresses. Additionally, students explore science topics like chemistry, space, Earth's materials, habitats, and dissecting owl pellets. These additional units, on top of state standards, really bring out excitement in learning and keep students motivated and interested in school.

During these units, students are often leaders in their learning by researching, planning, organizing, and developing outcomes. These opportunities to be innovative, explorative, and creative reflect in our high academic scores. Knowledge is built upon through their elementary careers due to the structure of the Core Knowledge curriculum - lessons and units spiral, allowing students to further their understanding of topics as they see them over the years. Parts of history are revisited in chronological order throughout the grades. For example, kindergarteners study why the pilgrims came to America, in first grade they learn how settlers came to America, and then in fourth grade students continue their learning of how the Colonists gained freedom. Through these ongoing projects, plays, and group work, traditions have been developed and continue even online. Young students look forward to certain units as they get older because they have heard about them for years!

Beginning in March 2020 during remote learning, High Peaks staff and students developed and explored new ways to carry on with our incredible Core Knowledge material. Staff created creative ways to use technology in their lessons and students explored new online platforms to learn and show evidence of learning. Staff and students interacted with material through Nearpod, Pear Deck, Kahoot, Seesaw, Google Classroom, Flipgrid, Wixie, and many more. Many of these practices allowed for students to work collaboratively even while at home, keeping human connection while exchanging ideas and excitement regarding the interesting Core Knowledge units. Teachers observed that students most looked forward to Core Knowledge units in the day. Students in third grade dissect owl pellets, but during spring of 2020 our amazing third grade teacher delivered materials to student homes so they could still carry out the laboratory experiment while following directions online in small groups.

Out of all the educational models we use, Core Knowledge continues to be the most successful approach. This curriculum naturally engages learners, connects to real world scenarios, and supports relevant learning. Hence, throughout Covid-19, Core Knowledge has proved to be the most instrumental, driving force to strengthen learning and community.