

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 6205 Old Atlanta Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Suwanee State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 30024-1206

County Forsyth County

Telephone (678) 965-5041 Fax (678) 475-1725

Web site/URL https://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/johnscreek E-mail adegliumberto@forsyth.k12.ga.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Jeffrey Bearden E-mail jbearden@forsyth.k12.ga.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Forsyth County School District Tel. (770) 887-2461

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Ms. Kristin Morrissey
(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

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

Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

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

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
 - 22 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 10 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 8 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools

40 TOTAL

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

- 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

- 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	65	69	134
1	89	70	159
2	78	90	168
3	82	77	159
4	98	100	198
5	96	97	193
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
Total Students	508	503	1011

*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
 - 70 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 16 % White
 - 4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

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

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	35
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	53
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	1042
(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):

Urdu, Other Indian, Other Asian, Other European, Turkish, Vietnamese, Thai, Spanish, Korean, Portuguese, Hindi, Japanese, Gujarti, French, Farsi, Dari, Persian, Dutch, Arabic

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %

Total number students who qualify: 48

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

108 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>13</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>1</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>13</u> Developmental Delay | <u>27</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>86</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: 12

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.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	42
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	14
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

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 24:1

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

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	97%	97%	97%
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.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2015

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

Challenging and Engaging Learning for All: Our mission is to create a safe, vibrant, and supportive community where staff, students, and parents are actively engaged.

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.

We have a hybrid model. Our families had the choice of 100% face to face or 100% virtual. At the start of the year we had approximately 73% of our families choose virtual learning. They had the option to change learning environments at the start of Quarter 2 (October) and again Quarter 3 (Jan). Currently we have about 50% students remaining in a virtual learning environment.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Johns Creek Elementary prides itself in being a community where diversity is highlighted while we celebrate that we are all connected. The makeup of our student body has shifted dramatically in the years since JCE opened in 2007. In the beginning, most of our students were Caucasian English speakers. Currently, we are 70% Asian, 16% white, 5% Black, and 5% Hispanic or Latino. With the increase in immigrants and ethnicities, the number of English Learners has also increased. Our diversity has provided students with many opportunities to learn about other cultures. It is important to us to encourage and challenge our students to develop to their full potential academically, emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally.

An integral part of our school culture is incorporating social-emotional learning (SEL) throughout the day. We use the 7Mindsets Portal for lessons and additional resources to support our students' development through SEL. We address the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) competencies through morning meetings, specific lessons presented by our counselors, and mindfulness activities.

Counselors plan grade-specific lessons that integrate age-appropriate topics and encourage conversation with the class. They have been working with all classes, virtual and face-to-face, during the pandemic. Mindfulness is a designated time twice a week during which our counselors teach calming yoga sessions. Mindfulness has been impactful for students who have difficulty self-regulating and starting their day with positivity.

We are a Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) school. We have added this to our long-standing instruction of the 7 Mindsets. Each classroom has daily morning meetings where the teacher takes a pulse check of her class's emotional status. To continue to build our connected community, face-to-face and virtual students host the morning news broadcasts as anchors and special guests.

We love our cultural diversity at Johns Creek Elementary. Annually we hold a heritage night to celebrate our diversity. Families dress in traditional clothing, share food and fun facts about their native lands. We have increased our collection of diverse books in our Media Center, monthly diversity/cultural recognitions and learning opportunities. Our cafeteria has even added culturally diverse foods to our menu.

Some of the opportunities offered to students to extend their passion for learning include the National Spelling Bee, the Oratorical Competition with the Optimist Club, the Reflections Fine Arts Competition, the Tech Fair, Robotics Club and Competition, the Forsyth County Science & Social Studies Fair, multiple math competitions (Math League, Perennial Math, Pi Fight), and additional after-school enrichment activities.

In order to provide our students with an enriching and hands-on learning experience, we created a specials class called Synergy. This class was designed with team building and critical thinking at the core. Our Synergy Class is a place where students use problem-solving skills and demonstrate creativity in their learning of grade-level science standards. The focus is to teach the 4C's of the 21st Century; students apply critical thinking skills, collaborate with their peers, communicate their thoughts and ideas, and produce creative models of real-world problems. Students have fun while learning.

We know that being physically active is important to overall health and we are intentional about getting students moving throughout the day. Because of the pandemic this past year, we conducted a challenge in which students logged their exercise activity from home into the iChallenge online platform. We conduct the Jump Rope for Heart program annually with the American Heart Association. During this time, students learn to love exercise by jumping rope together. Our physical education teacher makes life fun through her dedicated health classes on Fridays. Teachers incorporate regular brain breaks throughout the day to allow for physical movement. During this time students dance, sing, and stretch. Our students also have 30 minutes of daily recess.

Since becoming a National Blue Ribbon School in 2015, we have had families from all over the world buy

homes in the Johns Creek Elementary area, which has significantly increased our school community's diversity. Our high commitment to excellence in academics and our social and emotional focus on the whole child is recognized and attractive to prospective parents.

We have had teachers from schools from around the state of Georgia visit us both in person and virtually to observe and work side by side with our teachers learning best instructional practices to share with their teachers. One of these unique relations is with the country of Korea. Teachers from Korea spend four to six weeks observing our teachers to learn how we support our students and families' social and emotional learning while maintaining academic rigor. Our staff and parents also open their homes to serve as host families for these teachers.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

At Johns Creek Elementary School, we use the Georgia Standards of Excellence. We utilize reading and math programs to enhance classroom instruction, but our instructional greatness is tied to our teachers' knowledge of the standards. Students receive strategic lessons planned to meet their specific goals. The English Language Arts (ELA) scope and sequence continually reviews language standards throughout the year. Reading instruction targets the literary, informational, and foundational standards repeatedly through conversations and application. During ELA, teachers marry the literature of science and social studies to augment the learning context for engagement. Math instruction is fun with hands-on activities to guide students through the concrete to the abstract.

Our job is to adapt to the needs of those we serve. With online learning, we have not changed the standards or curriculum but have adjusted instruction and have students show success in varied ways. We continue to hold the highest standard of learning for our teachers and students.

This year, parents chose for their children to attend face-to-face or virtually. At the start of the year we had 73% virtual and 27% face to face, currently it is 50% of each. We work to ensure students receive quality instruction regardless of their learning environment choice. Teachers provide synchronous instruction daily and also pre-recorded lessons for asynchronous learning supported by a home learning coach. We continue to hold small group instruction and individual conferences with students to aid in learning just as if they were in the classroom. Assessments and virtual management systems for instruction connect home and school through SchoolCity, Nearpod, Flipgrid, and itsLearning. Teachers schedule virtual students to pick-up resources such as textbooks, organizers, manipulatives, and books as needed. We use Microsoft Teams to hold student and parent conferences, attend and share in staff meetings, and support quarantined students. We have been able to hold PTO meetings and events for students and families through Microsoft Teams. Each day, teachers communicate through a messaging system to individual students or groups, post recordings of morning meetings and lessons, give feedback on work, and provide learning resources. Face-to-face teachers use this same platform to post resources and lessons so students can continue learning with the class when they are out due to quarantining. Our virtual and face-to-face teachers continually guide and support students, parents, and learning coaches.

Teams work with our instructional coaches to deconstruct state standards, create learning targets, and define students' success criteria. This process aligns assessments, instruction, activities, and goal setting for students. Teachers use the I do, we do, you do model of gradual release to support all students' success. Goal setting with students in individual and small group conferences is integral to our success. We strive for student ownership by having students goal set, articulate action steps, and reassess their understanding and growth towards their goals.

We participate in professional learning communities. Teams meet collaboratively to discuss the learning targets and success criteria of standards. Together, we review student performance data and create learning experiences. We address students' needs for instructional extensions or additional support to meet the unit's standards.

To meet all students' needs, we use multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS) to differentiate instruction and address students' needs. Time is built into the master schedule to meet all students individually for English Speakers of Other Languages, Early Intervention Program, Gifted Instruction, Special Education Resource Classes, and Speech. We use problem-based learning using 3-Act Tasks, content area document-based questioning, and hands-on explorations in our science lab to differentiate and enhance learning. We have many technology-based resources such as Dreambox, myOn, ARC Bookshelf, Epic Reading, Discovery Education, Wixie, Studies Weekly, Pearson Math, Galileo, and Destiny. Each of these resources helps virtual and face-to-face students in gaining better access to all learning this school year.

Our teachers consistently gather formative and summative data to analyze and improve differentiated instruction. Each grade level conducts common pre- and post-unit assessments in math and ELA. Our

administrators use data including Lexile levels, SchoolPace, and Milestone scores to build balanced classes. We meet in Instructional Support Teams monthly to discuss students' progress. Student Support Teams meet at least three times per year to discuss student progress with parents and to share strategies and data to support the student's academic needs. We give various benchmark assessments in grades K-5 several times a year. From this data, teachers measure the amount of academic progress students make from fall to spring. We monitor this data closely for student progress, small groups, and conversations with parents. Our instructional coaches meet with the administration weekly to discuss how teachers are meeting students' needs. JCE staff recognize the importance of communication with families regarding student progress. They utilize the ItsLearning platform, email, and our online Parent Portal systems to support this communication. Teachers are available and happy to conference with parents at any time.

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:

Our students all receive forty-minutes of instruction in music, physical education, or art. Our curriculum is based on the Fine Arts Georgia Performance Standards and our students create, perform, and sing. Students also research historical musicians and music styles and create their own compositions. Standards-based projects that extend students' classroom learning are showcased in the hallways. Students use different mediums to create art, such as paper, yarn, clay, and paint, as they bring people, places, and cultures alive. Our PE teacher plans engaging lessons where students are taught at their physical ability and challenged to build coordination and stamina. In addition to PE, students have 30 minutes of recess.

Along with our special areas of art, music, and physical education, Johns Creek Elementary created an inquiry-based class titled Synergy. Our Synergy teacher plans inquiry-based questions for the students to research and solve centered on the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Students use everyday materials to create prototypes of scenarios or engineer models to solve issues. Each student on the team has a different job, allowing them to work toward the same goal. At the end of the week, each group presents their project to the class, allowing other classmates to understand their projects by listening and seeing their solution to the problem presented.

Although our counselors are not a part of our formal specials rotation, they are in our classrooms daily. They teach our students lessons on topics such as personal safety, goal setting, student diversity, listening skills, regulating emotions, and handling stress. They also inspire conflict resolution through the Kelso's Choice Program, which empowers children to successfully resolve conflicts and know the appropriate time to ask adults for help. The counselors also focus on the seventeen Georgia Career Clusters to prepare all students for college and career. They often invite experts in those fields to visit and talk with students. Along with our Instructional Technology Specialist, our counselors provide lessons on cyberbullying and internet safety for all grade levels using a scope and sequence program developed by our school district.

Teachers bring their classes to the media center to check out books weekly. Our media staff provides engaging activities for the students such as breakout rooms, genre mysteries, book trailers, and movie posters for books to excite students about reading. She provides our virtual students the opportunity to check out books by reserving them through our media check-out system. Parents of the virtual students can come by the school during specific times for a drive-through service to pick up the requested books. Our goal is to keep books in the hands of our students.

3. Academic Supports:

To meet our students' needs, teachers give pre-assessments and use the data to tailor lessons and activities through differentiation. Our ESOL and EIP teachers help by pre-teaching vocabulary and technical concepts to build schema and background knowledge. Flipped classroom design allows students to preview the topics and learn information before the classroom lesson and discussion so they are prepared to participate. Furthermore, to support reading, we use Read Naturally, a personalized computer-based program to support reading fluency and comprehension. After instruction, a post-assessment is taken. If students are not successful on the post-test, teachers offer reteaching and retesting to help move students to academic success. Students who show mastery on pre-tests are offered instructional extensions through project-based learning or inquiry. Teachers of gifted students provide specialized instruction every day. Virtual students in need of remediation or enrichment have continued to receive instruction by teachers, either in 1-on-1 conferences or small groups.

For students with IEPs (Individualized Education Plans), their personalized accommodations are addressed in learning and assessments. We use alternative assessments or accommodated assessments based on student IEP goals. All students may use manipulatives or offer verbal responses to show mastery of standards.

Specialized instruction, such as the Orton-Gillingham Approach and the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM), are used to support our lowest-performing students in reading. The Orton-Gillingham Approach uses multi-sensory strategies to connect letters and sounds to build phonological awareness. SIM is an evidence-based program that we use to teach necessary sentence and paragraph writing skills. Students also work in small groups to address remedial skill instruction and exposure to grade-level standards.

Special education students who are learning from home also receive live instruction in either a supportive instruction or resource setting. Teachers conference throughout the week and set-up help sessions as needed for remediation, questions, and support.

To support our ELs (English Learners), we provide a variety of accommodations. These students receive the necessary accommodations for classroom and state testing, as determined by their WIDA levels (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) and ACCESS scores (collective English language proficiency assessments). Additional tutoring is provided for at-risk EL students. ESOL teachers pace their lessons to correspond to classroom content to preview and review academic vocabulary and content to set the students up for success. Teachers use SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) instructional strategies to design and deliver lessons that address ELs' academic and linguistic needs. Teacher training on WIDA descriptors takes place annually to "advance academic language development and academic achievement for children and youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse through high-quality standards, assessments, research and professional learning for educators." (<https://wida.wisc.edu/about/mission-history>) For students who are migrant or homeless, we have programs to provide assistance in many areas. Food, school supplies, clothing, transportation, and tutoring are provided to students when needed.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Engaging our students and creating a positive learning environment is essential to our school's culture, and it has only increased with the challenges presented by the pandemic. Supporting our students' academic, social, and emotional growth is at the forefront of what we do. All classes begin each day with a Morning Meeting to build a classroom community where voices are heard and valued. Teachers facilitate conversations with students to learn to communicate with their peers and build relationships.

We advocate for fun through dress-up days (holiday-themed, Red Ribbon Week, Read Across the World Week, etc.) Students and staff enjoy dressing in character to celebrate the culmination or kick-off of a new unit of study.

We continue our work as a PBIS school (Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports). Our students earn PAWsome tickets for positive behavior. We are the Jaguars, so "PAWS" reinforces our team culture. Students earn tickets for demonstrating: "We have a Positive Attitude and Act Responsibly. We are connected and Show Respect". When classes meet a ticket goal, a class reward is earned such as dance parties or PJ day. Our latest school reward was earned with a pie being thrown in our administrator's faces. The students loved it.

We work with students to set goals and help them self-monitor their strengths and areas for growth. Classroom goals and individual goals are worked on and monitored. Our counselors teach guidance lessons in large and small groups to address study skills, personal safety, and goal setting. They have lunch with students across different grade levels to practice social skills. They also work with individuals to help with self-regulation.

We have worked hard to maintain engagement and ensure virtual students feel a part of Johns Creek Elementary's daily life. Many of our virtual students record segments for our daily news broadcast. Our media center has online checkout and coordinated daily pick-ups. The teacher also allows for checkouts from classroom libraries for virtual students. Our teachers of virtual classes continue to maintain and build relationships with students and their families. Teachers schedule virtual lunch dates, show and tell, and classroom parties. They also make calls home when students begin to miss live sessions or classwork.

Each of these intentional moves is meant to create a positive environment where students want to be, feel that they are seen and known, and learn to their highest potential. This is success to Johns Creek Elementary.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We believe the social and emotional connection between home and school drives student achievement. Therefore, communication between our school and home is vital. Our administrators and teachers are service-oriented and available to speak with parents. Daily communication is sent home via our learning management system to keep parents aware of everything happening on campus, from COVID updates to upcoming dress-up days, to Milestone Assessment dates. We also utilize our school Facebook page to keep parents informed of inclement weather days, late bus dismissal, or any tidbit of information that needs to reach parents quickly.

Before COVID, we hosted several parent carousel nights during which parents could learn about various topics. Some topics included internet safety, tips for reading with your child at home, math strategies, the transition to middle/high, logical consequences, and many more. Parent carousels were adjusted annually based on parent feedback and our community's changing needs.

Since COVID we continue to communicate with parents but miss having them here on campus. They have proven to be great learning coaches for their children and share more responsibility than ever with us in their child's academic success. Once again, the school and home connection's success is keeping student

achievement strong.

We have a very active PTO (parent teacher organization) and LSC (local school council). Both of these parental groups provide invaluable feedback and support to our school. They also serve as a conduit for sharing information back out to our community on a variety of topics. This year we have worked as a team to brainstorm ideas and create plans for virtual learning, COVID safety procedures/protocols for face to face learning, family engagement opportunities that build community, while not being able to be present in person together, and much more. When children see their parents engaged and supporting their school, they are proud and work hard to make their teachers, our school and their parents proud.

We enjoy the connections we have with our local business partners who have helped grow our after-school programs. In return, many of our students are their continuous clients. Because many of our business partners are also relations of our students, we can strengthen our ties between home and school. Building and maintaining our Jaguar families' relationships support the foundation that helps our students face challenges and find success.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Johns Creek Elementary is a school where administration and parents work hard to make teachers feel supported and valued. This creates an environment where going through a pandemic and constant change may occur successfully. Staff is encouraged to visit administrators to share stressors, ideas, or personal celebrations at any time. The staff communicates with administrators via email or text messages at all hours of the day.

In preparation for virtual learning this past fall, professional learning sessions were offered to staff during pre-planning. We covered various topics to ensure staff felt prepared for the virtual and face-to-face format of education the school year's changes would bring. Training sessions shared digital resources to support communication, learning experiences, and project options that students could use to demonstrate their learning. We have three instructional coaches on staff this year to help teachers support their development by modeling and co-teaching using technology resources, reading and math strategies, and planning with each team to impact student achievement. Midway through the year, each grade level was given a substitute teacher for half of a day to plan with the instructional coaches for the second semester.

Following administrative observations, short notes are sent to teachers for instant positive feedback. Staff meetings are now held virtually, and email is often utilized to send information while valuing teachers' time. The administration has encouraged staff to follow their example and write notes of appreciation and encouragement to each other. Another perk administration offers staff is a car detailing services. Teachers can choose to have their car cleaned while they work. There are weekly opportunities to order lunch for delivery from local restaurants.

The administration has been intentional about providing little thank you's to staff, as they have worked many extra long hours, days, nights to care for face-to-face and virtual students. These items included a coffee/smoothie cart, inspirational stickers, a dessert cart, 12 days of staff treats before Winter Break, arriving late or leaving early passes, and more. Intentional thoughtfulness and action by the administration and staff to build strong relationships and collaboration have been essential in creating our building culture. The administration and teachers continue to demonstrate thoughtfulness and kindness as we believe this contributes to student learning and positive school culture.

4. School Leadership:

Functioning fully in distributive leadership, Johns Creek Elementary has several groups of leaders who drive the building's decision-making. Our principal and assistant principals serve as facilitators throughout the building, guiding discussions to lead and empower teachers to problem solve. We host and participate in regular meetings with our parent teacher organization and our local school council. We discuss school-wide and county initiatives with all groups and ask for feedback from parents and community members.

Our administrative team includes the principal, two assistant principals, two instructional lead teachers, and an instructional technology specialist. The administrative team meets weekly to collaborate on professional learning and student and teacher achievement. This year, it has been crucial to work diligently to utilize staff most efficiently as our in-person and virtual enrollment has shifted several times.

Our leadership team includes the administrative team, grade level representatives, and representatives from special areas and special education. The leadership team meets monthly to discuss school-wide goals, upcoming events, concerns, and resources departments may need for student success. School funds are allocated based on need after conversing with the leadership team. The leadership team works as the link between the administration and the teachers.

Our leadership team has been diligent in implementing safety procedures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have altered practices to ensure the safety of our students and staff. We have reduced in-person class sizes to allow students to social distance. An unfortunate byproduct of this practice is that our virtual class sizes are large. We have provided an instructional assistant to support virtual teachers daily in small group instruction and to monitor student work. We emphasize good hygiene, including mask-wearing, social distancing, and increased hand washing and sanitizing throughout the day. We created an alternating lunch schedule that allows classes to eat in the cafeteria every other day to ensure open seats between students. Our staff has strategically planned movement throughout the building to minimize classes coming in contact with one another. Recess play zones have been created to keep classes separated. With creative scheduling, we were able to make our specials classes week-long and half-sized, to reduce the number of students our specials teachers have contact with daily.

School leadership is a shared responsibility where everyone has a voice. Our philosophy is based on the idea that we are all leaders and work together to create a positive learning environment for all students.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

We have always been proud to host an annual Heritage Night. During this night, families highlight their culture and background by sharing food, dance, song, and informational displays. This event typically brings over 500 students and parents to the school to learn about the cultures and incredible diversity Johns Creek Elementary holds. Currently, our Johns Creek families speak over 19 different languages. We are not having any in-person events this year, yet we still wanted to do something special to celebrate our diversity. We asked families to send in their favorite cultural recipes and we have created a Johns Creek Cookbook from Around the World. We are so excited to share this book with our families this Spring.

ESOL Parent Nights ensure our families are supported at home. Our English Language teachers have make-and-take sessions during which the staff helps our parents create games for families to use at home with their children to support reading and math standards/goals. We have also had the local librarian visit to explain all of the resources available at the public library.

Through our 7 Mindsets lessons, we discuss how we are connected. We are unique and different in many ways, yet we are all Jaguars. We read various books on the dimensions of diversity to celebrate our uniqueness. We tackle tough conversations and topics occurring in our world in an age-appropriate manner. This year, our staff is participating in a diversity course, supported by our district and GLISI (Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement). In this course so far we have discussed awareness, bias (implicit and explicit), equity (does not always mean equal), creating a culture of belonging, and taking action to build inclusiveness just to name a few.

As a school, we celebrate heritage celebrations such as Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Women's History Month, and Exceptional Children's Week (celebrate and understand those who have differing abilities). We do this through book displays, informative social media

posts, morning news segments, and classroom discussions.

Because of COVID, we altered our annual Evening with Santa to be a virtual event this year. We were surprised by the popularity of the event. Students logged on to watch Santa read holiday stories from around the world. At Johns Creek Elementary we ensure a welcoming environment that is culturally sensitive and responsive.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Since school closures began in March 2020, we have emphasized relationship building with both face-to-face and virtual students. This has led to student success academically, socially, and emotionally during this pandemic. We have been diligent about ensuring all students have a sense of community and belonging and feel like valuable, critical members of our Johns Creek Elementary Family.

Each day begins with a live class meeting online and face-to-face where community building, problem-solving with a social-emotional connection focus, and engagement are our purpose. Live English language arts and math lessons are held daily for valuable interactions. Classroom teachers and support staff also meet weekly or bi-weekly with small groups or individuals to work on specific math and reading goals. Counselors meet with classes virtually to build and strengthen student social and emotional wellness. They also conduct one-on-one check-ins with students to make sure all is going well with their personal life and academics. The counselors hold small group lunch-bunches on various topics weekly.

As needs have repeatedly changed, we have continuously adapted our processes to meet our families' uncertain needs. As students switch from virtual to face-to-face or vice versa, our staff works diligently to make it as seamless a transition as possible for our students. Our technology specialist has played a critical part in supporting the families with these transitions in providing the technology needed and the support when technology challenges have risen. This support to families, teachers, and students has been critical to allow them to engage with their peers and teachers and to continue their learning. At times, students have needed to remain home due to quarantine. Teams have pulled together to support our students academically, socially, and emotionally so that they continue to feel connected to their class and to continue their learning until they can return to school.

The pandemic has presented us with some unique challenges, however Johns Creek Elementary has viewed the pandemic as a growth opportunity and it has prompted many positive changes too. We have improved our instructional technology use, small group conferencing, and collaboration (in both virtual and face to face learning environments) . Our face-to-face students have done so well following the social distancing procedures, hand washing/sanitizing, and wearing of masks. We continue to love our students and families, and support them above all, even while through a screen.