

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

Official School Name Anchorage Public School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 11400 Ridge Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Anchorage State KY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 40223-2444

County Jefferson

Telephone (502) 245-2121 Fax (502) 245-6249

Web site/URL https://anchorage-school.org/ E-mail andrew.terry@anchorage.kyschools.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. Kelley Ransdell E-mail kelley.ransdell@anchorage.kyschools.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Anchorage Independent School District Tel. (502) 245-8927

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 Dr. Hannah Barnes  
(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.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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	20	24	44
1	17	18	35
2	18	21	39
3	26	24	50
4	19	19	38
5	24	25	49
6	24	21	45
7	25	21	46
8	22	13	35
9	0	0	0
10	0	1	1
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	195	187	382

\*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
  - 5 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 88 % White
  - 3 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 2%

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	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	389
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

Spanish, Portuguese, Danish, Japanese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %  
4 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3 %

Total number students who qualify: 13

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %  
42 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>6</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>10</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	26
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.	13
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 15:1

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%	97%	97%	97%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.  
 Yes  No

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

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

The mission of Anchorage Public School is to unite with the Anchorage community to equip all students with the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and mindset that will inspire and empower them to make a positive impact on their community and world.

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.

The 2020-2021 school year began following Governor Beshear’s recommendation for Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) using online synchronous learning from August 25 through September 25. From September 28 until November 6 our students were able to attend school in person Mondays through Fridays. Starting November 9 our students attended school in person four days a week with NTI on Fridays. Following the Governor of Kentucky’s executive order, APS returned to NTI from November 23 through January 8. In-person instruction (Mondays through Thursdays) with NTI on Fridays resumed from January 11 to March 5. Beginning March 8, students attended school in person Monday through Friday (with Friday as a half day). Beginning April 5, in-person instruction will take place on all five school days each week through the end of the school year. APS families have the option of enrolling their child(ren) in “Virtual APS” should they be unable to attend school in person (for short-term or long-term needs). As a part of “Virtual APS” students in grades 3-8 join their regular classes as a digital participant (via Google Meet) and students in grades K-2 have synchronous remote instruction provided by a classroom teacher. Google Classroom is the platform used to provide the necessary assignments/materials for virtual students.

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**

---

Anchorage Public School (APS), nestled in the east end of Louisville, KY, has a long-standing tradition of being a community school within the city of Louisville. Since 1911, APS has built and sustained high academic standards while also nurturing a well-rounded student by educating the whole child. APS is the only school in a small independent district operating in the most densely populated Kentucky county.

APS is the heart of the city of Anchorage. From school sporting events, holiday parades, to a popular artisan craft market, there are traditions that draw residents to the school on a regular basis. It is commonplace for multiple generations of families to attend the school, with parents moving back to Anchorage so their children can share a similar educational experience in this unique community. School concerts and sporting events often draw grandparent spectators who enjoy recounting stories of past generations of Anchorage students.

The geographic boundaries of the school district are such that buses are not required. This makes walking and biking on the many Anchorage city trails a preferred mode of transportation to and from school, evidenced by overflowing racks of bikes in the fall and spring. In the afternoon, parents socialize on the front lawn as they wait for their students to be dismissed.

Through core class instruction along with Music, Art, Technology, Physical Education, and Foreign Language essential arts, APS students are engaged in learning through a variety of modes. Our extra-curricular programs help to support the whole child with activities such as Robotics, Academic Team, and Chess Club to non-competitive programs such as Anchorage Children's Theatre and the STEAM/Lego Club. Our students are also afforded the opportunity to participate in many competitive and non-competitive sports.

Teacher collaboration in curricular decisions (such as textbook adoption and grade-level scope and sequence development) allows for teacher ownership as well as consistency across grade levels. Teachers are provided opportunities through the Superintendent Advisory Council, School Council, committee work, and the schoolwide strategic planning process to engage in decision making regarding educational practices, tools, and systems. Through our collaborative process, multiple initiatives have been implemented. For example, the Eureka Math curriculum is in place for elementary students and was selected through a collaborative process that included analysis of related data, visits to other school districts, and consideration of our students' learning needs. Other examples include the creation of a dyslexia toolkit, revision of our grading scale, addition of a Communication Coordinator position, and implementation of new visitor management and emergency communications safety systems.

Each week on early release Friday, students are released seventy minutes early. We are able to realize excellent student attendance rates as families typically schedule appointments during this time instead of signing students out during the instructional day. This time, which is utilized by our faculty for professional learning, is also evidence of our Board's investment in our staff and is critical to supporting our school's improvement initiatives.

APS classrooms use the physical environment to promote student learning through varied space and seating options. APS is fortunate to have several outdoor classroom spaces, both formal with white boards and seating, as well as park-like areas for student instruction. When walking the grounds it is commonplace to see classes representing a broad range of ages and subject areas meeting outdoors. Indoor classrooms offer seating options ranging from stand-up desks equipped with fidget bars to wobble seats and floor cushions.

APS teachers and therapists provide special education support to students with disabilities, both in and outside of the general education classroom through the use of special education support, sensory room, and inclusive playground equipment. These supports include a sensory room which is a therapeutic space with diverse equipment that provides special-needs students with personalized sensory input. This helps children calm and focus themselves so they can be better prepared for learning and interacting with others. The APS playground is inclusive for all students, featuring a smooth surface and inclusive equipment that allows



students with physical challenges to play alongside their peers.

Through the use of the Middle School Leadership Series, Students identified as gifted and talented in leadership are responsible for all aspects of planning the assembly-type events for their peers, including inviting community leaders and developing and moderating questions.

Our school community rose to the challenge to meet the needs of our students throughout the pandemic. We sought guidance from our local health department, which advised that it would require a community-wide commitment of prioritizing education and adhering to safety precautions to minimize community spread for our school to be open for in-person instruction. While COVID-19 has been challenging, our students will forever remember the extraordinary efforts of staff, parents, and peers to support one another and to carry on with excellence in the face of adversity. We believe our students' experience will prove to be a tremendous life lesson that will positively impact their attitudes and approaches to challenges they will face in the future.

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

---

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

The core curriculum in place at APS is guided by the Kentucky Academic Standards.

As a single school district, teachers at APS develop the curriculum which comes to life in their classrooms. Students engage in our dynamic and relevant curriculum that is differentiated to meet individual needs and ensure student progress.

Teachers know the “what” that is to be taught on a deep metacognitive level and develop common practices and strategies to deliver instruction, helping teachers and students transfer skills within and between grade levels. The beliefs and practices underlying the instruction are grounded in research and best practices and align with the mission of APS.

Textbooks are an integral part of the core instruction but teachers also have the autonomy to augment the curriculum with additional resources. It is not unusual to see teachers using diverse course books, workbooks, or a wide variety of periodicals.

Multiple instructional delivery models are practiced by APS teachers. Gradual release and workshop models, Thinking Strategies, Socratic Seminars, and a wide use of technology tools are woven throughout all classrooms.

Teachers are committed to collaboration through membership in grade-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Instructional design occurs in a PLC - with teachers doing the work, they develop the deep and common understandings that result from such work. Participation in PLCs and vertical alignment communities, allows teachers to establish common learning targets and assessments regardless of the delivery mode in place. A balanced approach to assessment is used including both formative and summative assessments in multiple formats not only to guide instruction but also to identify student mastery of content.

Literacy instruction is grounded in the Five Pillars of Reading: Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. The three modes of Writing: Argument/Opinion, Informative/Explanatory, and Narrative are key in the writing process for our students with the goal being writing to learn, writing to demonstrate learning, and writing for publication. Literacy at APS connects reading and writing as reciprocal processes making it balanced, structured, and systematic. By fostering independence, ensuring students read and write daily and integrating all content areas through writing, our teachers are making writing applicable to real life and growing our students' appreciation of and celebration of diversity, differences and creativity.

In 2019, we adopted Eureka Math as our elementary (K-5) core materials for Tier 1 mathematics instruction. In the same year, our middle school (6-8) adopted Glencoe Math for Tier 1 mathematics instruction. Across grades K-8, Tier 1 mathematics program students are provided learning experiences that promote thinking and solving problems in a variety of situations they will encounter in life and that integrates experiences and new knowledge from other subject matter fields. By the time our students reach 8th grade, many are enrolled in high school level mathematics classes. An example of content delivery in the first grade involves planning and building an arcade as a solution to a class problem. To give our first graders a better understanding of how we use math and math strategies in the real world our students create arcade games using recycled materials to solve the problem of what to do during inside recess. First, students collect and analyze data to determine types of arcade games that would be most desired. Students use their knowledge of shapes to create a supply list of needed materials and a plan for building their game. Students are then supplied with their needed materials to build their arcade game. This allows them the opportunity to problem solve issues as they arise and adjust their original plan. The project culminates with students presenting their project and students trying out the games. Students earn tickets from the arcade game (given out by the designer/builder of the arcade) based on how well they play the game. Those tickets can then be turned in for prizes.

Our 5th grade students combine the study of measurement, area, perimeter, volume, and fraction operation standards through a design and build project. Past examples include lemonade stands and gaga pits. Their projects are sold at an annual APTA sponsored auction which raises funds to support our school. After the auction, the students analyze the net profit made by each project.

Students receiving Tier II and III services receive additional time and supports to build understanding. Instruction is supported at home through IXL Math, which helps students master essential skills through fun online lessons.

The APS science curriculum, grades K-8, is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards based on the Framework for K-12 Science Education developed by the National Research Council. Newly adopted science materials have provided both teachers and students with a variety of materials for instruction and learning. These include Science Probes to check for student misunderstandings, simulations, labs, inquiry activities, interactive notebooks, open and closed reading passages, leveled readers, online videos, virtual field trips, Learn Smart Reading Tool (middle school review resource), and assessments. It is important that students not only work like scientists but that they can write like scientists. Students are taught to write about their observations, support them with evidence, and explain their thinking by using CERs (claim-evidence-reasoning) in all grade levels. Grades K-1 learn how to work like engineers by completing simple STEM challenges. Grades 3-8 complete STEM challenges directly tied to their science curriculum. STEM challenges focus on teaching students to work through the Engineering Design Process, problem solving, working with others, learning to never give up if something doesn't work the first time and that there is always room for improvement.

The primary purpose of our social studies program, built upon the National Council for the Social Studies definition of social studies, is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions as citizens of a diverse democratic society in an interdependent world. Our teachers' goals include making social studies both relevant and engaging through hands-on activities as well as the use of Socratic Circles. In a 3rd grade economics unit students have examined how the global economy works with imports and exports, supply and demand, and global interactions; and they are currently working on a project creating a good or service as a producer. Students will later sell their products to consumers (classmates), earning classroom reward money. Students will adjust prices for their products as the market day progresses to make a connection to supply and demand. Afterward, students will reflect as a class on connections from their market day to how the global economy works.

Fifth grade students involved in these activities learned about the balance of power in our national government, how debates on conflicts and collaborations led to the founding of America, and about the struggles and accomplishments of the colonists. In one of our 8th grade units of study, students learned about the warnings of George Washington in his Farewell Address. Each warning was dissected on how the nation initially handled his warning and how we view his warnings today. The students researched topics including the national debt, size of the military, political parties, and economic philosophies, and then led Socratic Seminars on their topics. Engaging the students in lessons that encourage them to ask questions, display their learning, research, collaborate, and create are foundational to every class in social studies at APS.

**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:**

A robust Essential Arts curriculum is offered to all students. Each student enjoys classes in physical education, health, art, music, technology, and foreign language. Student opportunities to learn in these areas

come to life through events that bring the broader community together such as our annual Art Show, Veteran's Day Program, and Talent Show. While some schools, for a multitude of reasons, have selected to drop related arts classes, APS is committed to creating a student environment that provides a well-rounded academic experience. Each Essential Arts class follows specific state standards in their particular area per grade level.

In Anchorage, we consider our students' K-8 physical and health education to be one of their flagship experiences as an Anchor. Our full school community appreciates the many positive health, emotional and academic benefits of being active and fit. The APS PE/Health program is aimed at providing students the knowledge and skills needed to establish and maintain physically healthy lifestyles. From Zumba to yoga, to the integration of math problems into lively crossfit stations, one cannot help but want to jump in to participate upon entering the classes, which are held both within the gymnasiums and outdoors.

Technology use has become a vital component of all aspects of life, thus related learning experiences are integrated across all classrooms and are also provided within our K-8 technology program. The Technology Kentucky Academic Standards provides a framework for our technology classes, which expands our students' learning in technology through exploration that includes videography, coding, robots, 2D & 3D design, Google Apps, and more.

Our art and music program at APS, which serves all students in grades K-8, begins with providing students a grounding in the arts and at the middle school level moves students toward proficiency. Our program exposes students to a variety of performing and visual arts through engaging hands-on experiences and through lessons focused on developing further understanding and appreciation of the historical and cultural significance of the arts. In addition to our formal program, our parent teacher association provides Art Discovery experiences for our students. Volunteers design the curriculum and provide the Art Discovery lessons for our elementary students four times per school year. While we were not able to operate the program due to the pandemic this year, we will be reinstating the program in the upcoming school year. The program is designed to supplement the students' core instruction in the visual arts. Our students enjoy parents coming into the school on Art Discovery days to provide fun hands-on learning experiences. Most recent artists studied by students include Yayoi Kusama, Pablo Picasso and local Anchorage artist Beverly Erschell. Each lesson culminates with students creating their own art, imitating the style of the featured artists. Through Art Discovery lessons students also learned about the important uses of leather through history while using leather stamps to decorate their own bracelets that they assembled.

The APS Music Curriculum, grades K-8 is aligned with the National Association for Music Education Standards, and based on the KMEA Standard Guidelines. Students use a variety of materials in order to expand their music education, including sheet music, instruments, interactive notebooks, music manipulatives, and assessments. All students are taught the music language and how to read and write music. Kindergarten through 2nd grade students focus on the basics of music such as instrument families, dynamics, tempo, beat, and rhythm. Students in 3rd through 6th grades continue to expand their knowledge by interpreting, improvising, and reading sheet music. Our seventh and eighth grade students focus on making music connections to the world around them. It is important for students to be able to explore and create their own music, not just music that is already created. In the music program, we focus on interpretation and creativity. Kindergarten students working on Music Standard 8.1 (with guidance demonstrate awareness of expressive qualities such as dynamics and tempo), may listen to a piece of music and interpret the tempo through the use of a large parachute. Students raise and lower the parachute by speeding up and slowing down their movement based on the tempo of the song. The same standard for 7th grade progresses to describe a personal interpretation of contrasting works and explain how creators' and performers' application of the elements of music and expressive qualities within genres, cultures and historical periods convey expressive intent. This is demonstrated through the use of technology and creating sounds to match a selected cartoon video providing dynamics and tempo to the video. Students have the freedom to select the video and then interpret the video through the use of different sounds. These are just a few examples demonstrating the progression of content over multiple grade levels.

Spanish is offered as part of the Essential Arts rotation to students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. Starting in 6th grade, Spanish becomes part of the core content rotation; students receive Spanish every day

throughout their middle school experience. APS is committed to a strong foreign language program where students not only engage in conversational Spanish and grammar instruction but also look to grow in cultural competencies specific to Spanish-speaking countries.

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

We are committed to providing high quality instruction and support to all students through the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) model. This multi-tiered system utilizes a framework that assists educators in identifying students in need of additional support (behavioral and/or academic) through universal screeners and anecdotal teacher feedback. The MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) assessment is used as the universal screener and is given three times per year to identify academic needs and the SRSS-IE (Student Risk Screening Scale-Internalizing and Externalizing) is used to identify behavioral needs. This data, combined with teacher feedback, is presented to a Student/Teacher Assistance Team (STAT) that meets every six weeks. This team uses a two-pronged approach to place students in tiers - data analysis and teacher feedback. Once tiering decisions have been made, STAT utilizes “If - Then” charts to determine what intervention tool/enrichment type would best meet the needs of individual students and who is best suited to deliver that intervention or enrichment.

In order to capitalize on every opportunity to expand our students' minds and move them toward becoming lifelong learners, which is at the heart of our school's vision, there are multiple layers of interventions in place. Several support services address the needs of our student population, including our intervention and enrichment delivered through LEAPS (Learning Enrichment at Anchorage Public School). Student progress is monitored through all three tiers of Response to Intervention (RtI). Every student at APS has either a 30-minute intervention or enrichment block of time daily or a one-hour block two days a week. We recognize the importance and necessary impact of this service as we collaboratively work to differentiate classrooms for both the struggling student as well as the gifted learner.

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

---

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

During the 2019-2020 school year, APS adopted the social and emotional learning (SEL) programs Core Essentials (Elementary) and Re:co (Middle School). The K-5 curriculum is based on a monthly value word and designed to equip students, staff, and families alike to SAY IT, KNOW IT, SEE IT and BE IT each month. Through the use of videos, lesson plans, announcements and booklists, staff and students engage in regular meetings as well as activities that focus on the word of the month. We have also built our schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports around “The Big Three ” derived from Core Essentials: Make Smart Decisions, Treat Others Right, and Maximize Your Potential. Our counselors provide classroom counseling lessons to support every student. Core Essentials programming resources are shared with parents monthly so that our families and school can be united in supporting our students’ social and emotional growth. Every month we recognize students via a program called Anchors in Action. These students are selected by homeroom teachers as those who have exemplified the word of the month.

During the summer of 2019, teachers received in-person training and resources to deliver the Core Essentials programming. There is on-going online support for the school if we have any specific questions and we have a representative who will come and present when a follow up is needed for Core Essentials delivery. The Counseling Team and Administration also look to support staff by communicating with teachers regularly to see what is working and what needs improvement. This happens through surveys as well as Advisory Committees with a representative for every level and staff member.

APS staff and students connect in a variety of ways. Classroom culture and community are built during morning meetings. Many of our extracurricular activities are sponsored and coached by staff members, such as Academic Teams, YMCA Student Programming, literature studies, and Lego/Robotics Clubs. Every opportunity that allows staff to connect with students enhances the positive environment that our school desires. To minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission we implemented changes within our extracurricular program. When incidence rates were high in our local area, clubs met via video teleconference. As incidence rates declined, our students began meeting again in person, however, to reduce the number of daily contacts, students remained within their grade-level groups unless the activity lent itself to students meeting in a large space with grade levels separated by ten or more feet. Despite the pandemic, students were still afforded opportunities to attend club-related conferences and competitions virtually.

During NTI in the spring and fall of 2020, teachers continued to incorporate the CORE and Reco lessons into their virtual class meetings, as well as during all in-person instruction during the 2020-2021 school year. Starting in September of 2020, students created a monthly spirit day to dress up for school, centered around the monthly value. Whether students were learning from home or at school, they took joy in creating, advertising, and participating in these spirit days.

To support all students during the pandemic, the School Counselor and the School Mental Health Specialist (together called the Student Support Team) provided virtual counseling lessons for grades K-8, continued individual and small group counseling during NTI via google meet and created a variety of virtual supports. At the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, the Student Support Team sought information from families and students through a Needs Assessment. This drove the services provided for students and families at the beginning of the school year. Our Student Support Team also created a “bitmoji” virtual counseling office. This site provides information about the counselors, services offered, how to refer a student for services, and offers activities for students to do from home or school for mindfulness and relaxation.

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

APS and the Anchorage community are very intertwined, engaging children, families, residents, and businesses with many opportunities.

The Anchorage Parent Teacher Association (APTA) plays a large role in the connection and success of our

students. The APTA provides funding and volunteers for programs such as Junior Great Books and Junior Achievement. The APTA fundraises to help support academic endeavors for the school, professional development for staff, parent academies, and book studies related to school initiatives.

The School Council is a standing committee of the Board of Education, providing feedback and stakeholder voice to the board. Parent and teacher council representatives work together for the betterment of our school. Many school decisions from textbook selection to class offerings are vetted through this group.

Improvement efforts are largely driven by the school's Strategic Plan, which was developed with input from the school community through surveys and focus group sessions. This plan includes measurable improvement goals. Members of the school community have an important role in the implementation of this plan through committee work and annual reporting to our Board.

Throughout the school year, numerous functions allow our school families and residents of Anchorage to remain connected to the school and community. Our Halloween Parade and Carnival, Thanksgiving Luncheon, and K - 1 Derby provide a glimpse of the school culture and climate. During the first week of school each fall, the Back-to-School Carnival brings families to the school to eat, socialize and have fun playing carnival games. In October, the school hosts a Halloween Parade and Carnival with dinner, games, and a haunted house. The traditional Thanksgiving luncheon brings parents, siblings, and grandparents into the building to enjoy a fantastic meal; alumni frequently come back from all over the country for this luncheon and stay connected to the school through this event. Christmas in Anchorage features student musical performances, breakfast and storytime with Santa and Mrs. Claus, home tours, and a craft fair all aimed at providing opportunities for connection and enjoying the holiday season. For newcomers to APS, there are APTA-sponsored events (one for families and one for parents only) allowing new families to meet other new families and make connections before the start of the school year. At this event, new families are introduced to their mentor family who will serve as a connection to all things Anchorage. Additionally, a Newcomers Family Night allows new students to tour the campus with their family before the start of the new academic year.

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

The school Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) along with the district's Strategic Plan guides all professional development and learning. The CSIP has a strong overall focus in the areas of math and writing. As our elementary and middle school are both using new math resources this year (Eureka in elementary and Glencoe in middle school) we have provided professional development in these programs as we continue learning about them. Before implementation, our teams of teachers spent the summer training with both companies. The training is ongoing for those trained over the summer and initial training is also available for any new teachers. In the area of writing, we have transitioned our middle school writing teacher into a part-time instructional coach with a focus on writing. We have embedded writing training and professional learning by utilizing early-release Fridays to have vertical professional development (PD) meetings in writing along with Anchor Academy Days, which were created to give teachers time during the workday to collaborate in preparing and analyzing writing.

The next area that guides professional development and learning for APS is the district's Strategic Plan. There are three main areas in the plan that guide teacher learning: Academic Excellence, Social and Emotional Learning, and Systems. One of the goals in the Academic Excellence area pertains to the addition of Thinking Strategies into our reading and comprehension for elementary students specifically and Project Based Learning (PBL) as an emphasis in middle school. Several teachers did an initial training in the areas of Thinking Strategies and PBL and we then began to use those teachers to train small groups of teachers on site. As the school world begins to get back to normal we will continue with PD and learning related to these two focus areas. Due to the impacts of COVID, several of the Strategic Plan goals were either put on hold or tempered, with our focus shifting to supporting our teachers and families in virtual and hybrid instruction. Strategic Plan initiatives that were slowed, include Thinking Strategies and Project Based Learning training, and expanded implementation. While we didn't host schoolwide training, teachers continued group book studies in one of the selected areas.

Finally, teachers have the opportunity to select PD that is personalized to each individual but is connected to the goals of the school. Teachers may apply for an additional 12 hours of flexible PD that supports either the CSIP or the Strategic Plan allowing them the flexibility to match their development with an interest specific to their growth goals. Survey data informs professional learning that is provided to teachers. With an early release on Fridays, APS is able to capture the end of the day to provide monthly breakout sessions where teachers choose a session from a list of options or professional learning that supports schoolwide focus topics like thinking strategies or project based learning.

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

APS's leadership philosophy could be best described as giving value to the voice of all members of the school community. We believe stakeholder's voice is a crucial component in promoting student success. We believe that collaboration between the school and community leads to better decisions, better programs, better curriculum, and ultimately, better learning experiences for students.

Anchorage Independent is a one-school district with a superintendent, one principal, and one assistant principal. Also, a part of that leadership circle are the counselors (1.5), director of special education, and a part-time programs coordinator. While the school is small the work that needs to be accomplished both at the school level and the district level is the same for our district as it is for other districts. For that reason, this resourceful team has many roles. To keep everyone on the same page the administration team works closely with each other as well as the staff through regular meetings and clear communications whether through emails or the weekly memo. The Superintendent's Advisory Council, made up of teacher and classified staff, allows for a staff-to-district open line of communication. This is also available for the principal through the School Council made of both teachers, classified staff, and parents. For students in need of academic or behavior interventions a Student Teacher Assistance Team (STAT) looks at data and provides recommendations and resources for staff to support students and teachers in the area of RtI. A clear "Roles and Responsibilities" chart is included in the faculty handbook so all staff understand which school leader can provide them support when needed. The regular communication paths discussed earlier provide a direct connection between staff and leadership. This open line of communication gives a voice and a sense of teamwork to the entire school. This teamwork is visible daily as the superintendent welcomes students to school in carpool duty, the principal distributes lunch to middle school students or the assistant principal creates online registrations for parent teacher conferences. This year, more than ever before, school leaders have worn multiple hats.

Upon the onset of the pandemic, the administrative team quickly shifted focus to providing staff support and training in their transition to online learning. In our initial meeting, we were able to teleconference with a teacher based in China, to learn from his experiences, successes, and failures, as his school's transition to online instruction had occurred three months prior. Through our ongoing communications with Chinese-based counterparts, in the weeks preceding the arrival of COVID-19 to our state, we were able to better develop a plan of action and source needed equipment and supplies in advance of the strains on the supply chain. Through conversations with staff and a parent focus group the team developed a transition plan. To support school-to-home communications, a website was created which included pertinent information, learning options and procedures. The thread that remained consistent in the fabric of our continually-evolving plan, was stakeholder voice. Planning always included collaboration with both staff and parents to ensure that all perspectives and needs were being considered. Some examples of practices that came out of the collaboration were Daily Learning Plans (DLP) and Wellness Wednesdays. During virtual instruction every teacher provided a DLP so that parents and students knew exactly what was expected from an instructional stance. On Wellness Wednesdays students were encouraged to use the day to catch their breath and engage in non-academic activities. Students who were behind in work were provided support opportunities to get caught up. Although not required, students thirsty for more, were encouraged to engage in virtual teacher-led Essential Arts lessons, published choice board activities, and fun online asynchronous administrator-led activities, that included submitting dance videos, learning to fold a fitted sheet and matching staff childhood pictures to their names.

Once we transitioned back to in-person instruction, we adopted the HyFlex model in 3rd through 8th grades, so that students who are quarantined or selected to stay home can log in via Google Meets to receive live



instruction and interact with their classes. Kindergarten through 2nd grade students that are learning from home receive virtual instruction from a teacher through google Meets.

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

Our core values, developed through a collaborative process open to all members of our school community include that: “We display tolerance of others who hold different beliefs and points of view, seek to understand others through active listening, and work together to prepare our students for the future.”

There are several activities and resources used by APS to support culturally responsive teaching (CRT) and learning. Below are a few examples that help to support CRT at APS. The Community Connections Club, available at both the elementary and middle school levels, engages students in community service. In elementary school, parents and teachers work together to provide opportunities for our elementary students and families to give back to the community. All elementary students make projects such as cards, holiday crafts, and snack bags during classroom parties to distribute to local charitable organizations. Some club members additionally participate in volunteer outings at local community service organizations such as Hope’s Closet, pet adoption centers, Kosair Charities, and Ronald McDonald House. The middle school group has a teacher sponsor and students lead activities with a local orphanage, Ronald McDonald House, and Waterstep.

Our school counselors also provide lessons on topics celebrating differences. This happens schoolwide for all of our students. The Library staff makes a concerted effort to provide diverse literature for our students and provides lessons that help support the area of CRT.

Our school leadership team, which is representative of the entire faculty, comes alongside the administrative leadership team to help provide recommendations and guidance for the upcoming school year. One focus from the summer leadership retreat was Equity and Race as well as Culturally Responsive Instruction. Our plan as a leadership team is to do a deeper dive into how the school meets the needs in this area of CRT, to determine specific areas of growth that we as a school community can address, and finally to develop a plan of action to accelerate growth in the area of Race and Equity/CRT.

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

---

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) focused on learning, collaboration and results, continue to be a focal point for our school. While PLCs have been utilized at APS for years, we continue to enhance and increase their utilization. With an effect size of 1.57, Collective Teacher Efficacy is ranked as the number one factor influencing student achievement (Hattie, 2016). Educators with high efficacy show greater effort and persistence, a willingness to try new teaching approaches, set more challenging goals, and attend more closely to the needs of students who require extra assistance (Donoho, 2017). PLCs have been utilized in multiple ways at APS.

One example is the collaborative work to create math pathways. The PLC approach was utilized to include the insights of teachers from multiple grade levels to establish a progression in mathematics that provides expanded opportunities for middle school students. Students have the opportunity to enroll in grade level or high school level mathematics courses. This year our first students will be exiting APS having successfully completed high school level geometry.

Another example is the development of a district writing curriculum map. Membership in this PLC was more extensive so time was embedded in the school day through the use of Anchor Academy. During Anchor Academy students were engaged with guest speakers (Mr. Science), theatrical performances (“The Big Bad Wolf Got Bullied”), and parent volunteer driven activities (Junior Great Books) while teachers worked collaboratively to develop and align writing curriculum, write learning targets and create formative assessments for each grade level.

A final example is a PLC whose purpose is to publish a district literacy philosophy ensuring a seamless and consistent approach to literacy instruction. To accomplish this, the PLC captured staff perspectives of literacy instruction and aligned them with research and best practice. Finally, the PLC distilled this information into an overarching belief that guides all literacy instruction and initiatives. Whole staff feedback was gathered so the work of this PLC would be representative of the staff.

Teacher efficacy is a guiding force to our work in professional learning communities as this commitment is one that is positively impacting student achievement. The dedication of our teachers, as well as the strong support from our families, allowed APS to focus on the needs of every student throughout the pandemic. Our counseling team provided support and gathered feedback from both teachers, students, and families and met with individuals on a need basis providing support for those families and students who struggled through the pandemic. Being responsive to our community allowed us to transition through multiple instructional phases, in-person instruction, at-home NTI, and hybrid phases integrating the HyFlex model to support at-home virtual student learning while maintaining in-person learning for students who wanted or needed to be in school. All of this was done following relevant Centers for Disease Control, Kentucky Department of Health, and local health department guidance.