

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 Dr. Karyn MJ Christy
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Wilson's Creek 5-6 Intermediate School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4035 West Weaver Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Battlefield State MO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 65619-9255

County Greene

Telephone (417) 523-7800 Fax (417) 523-7995

Web site/URL https://www.sps.org/wilsonscreek E-mail kchristy@spsmail.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Grenita Lathan E-mail glathan@spsmail.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Springfield School District R-XII Tel. (417) 523-0026

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. Alina Lehnert
(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):
- 38 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 9 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 52 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	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	105	112	217
6	140	119	259
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	245	231	476

*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):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 4.2 % Asian
 - 4.7 % Black or African American
 - 3.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 82.3 % White
 - 5 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 16%

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

Springfield Public Schools (SPS) offers transitional transfers. Wilson’s Creek as a 5th and 6th grade Intermediate building has students transferring based on the school district having a transition after fifth grade. SPS also offers “choice programs” to fifth Grade students and we have several students from our feeder schools who attend those programs for fifth Grade before returning for sixth Grade.

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	37
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	38
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	75
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	476
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.16
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	16

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

Romanian, Spanish, Chinese, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Russian, Zho-Chinese

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 27 %

Total number students who qualify: 127

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %

35 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>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>13</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>7</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: 16

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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1

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	96%	97%	96%	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.

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

The Wilson's Creek community is committed to developing meaningful character traits and learning that is engaging, relevant, and personal.

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.

Wilson’s Creek has been through three operating models during the 2020-21 school year. We began the year in a hybrid model with one-half of the students attending in-person Monday and Tuesday and the other -half attending Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday, the classroom teachers utilized online live video meetings to give virtual instruction to all students.

The second operating model brought all students back to the classroom on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday with Wednesday remaining a virtual instruction day.

The third and final operating model has placed students back into in-person instruction five days a week. Students and staff have been remaining masked, socially distancing as much as possible, washing hands frequently, and maintaining a clean 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

Wilson's Creek Intermediate School, referred to as "The Creek," is the only intermediate school (grades 5 – 6) in Springfield Public Schools (SPS). SPS is Missouri's largest accredited school district, which has built a reputation of academic excellence based on the outstanding performance of our students and schools. More than 23,500 students attend 35 elementary schools, one intermediate school, nine middle schools, five high schools, the Phelps Center for Gifted Education, and four early childhood centers. The Creek was established in 2005 due to overcrowding on the southwest side of our district. Students attending "The Creek" come from a variety of backgrounds and challenges, including all ranges of the socioeconomic spectrum.

Over the sixteen years since its inception, we have had the same principal, principal's secretary, and many of the same teachers. When staff come to "The Creek," they want to stay, building a high sense of trust and friendship into the fabric of our building. We are a part of a "Dream Team;" who enjoy learning from and growing with each other. Lisa Delpit has coined the term "warm demanders" for teachers who help students reach their potential in a disciplined, structured, and nurturing environment. Wilson's Creek wholeheartedly embraces this belief in children; our students, regardless of their culture or economic status, will be able to reach their full potential. This collective efficacy, described by Hattie as, "The collective belief of teachers in their ability to positively affect students," is foundational to "The Creek." When we build positive relationships while maintaining our high expectations, our students thrive. Our mission statement, written with input from both students and staff, drives all we do at The Creek.

"We are committed to developing meaningful character traits and learning that is engaging, relevant, and personal."

Students begin the year by learning about our character education program, P.R.I.D.E., that supports all students' success. Together we explore what it means to be Prepared, Respectful, Involved, Determined, and Empathetic. We are the Wilson's Creek Lion P.R.I.D.E! One of our largest areas of focus is to consistently celebrate character and learning here at "The Creek" by recognizing students meeting or exceeding expectations in various ways. Student P.R.I.D.E. behavior is recognized with P.R.I.D.E. shout out certificates, given out regularly by teachers to acknowledge "PRIDEful" student conduct. Students who display such behavior and complete their work to the best of their ability can celebrate their hard work on a weekly basis. Examples of learning celebrations, include P.R.I.D.E. recess, club time, and end-of-quarter celebrations. Since implementing these celebrations, many students have worked hard to complete assignments and projects in time to participate.

At-risk students are assessed by our intervention team based upon concepts from our social-emotional learning and training. When our students are having a difficult time in the classroom, or simply walk into the school with noticeable distress, we have the students speak to the counselor or our FOCAS (Focus On Character And Studies) room teacher. Our FOCAS room is a place where students can have some time away to talk to an empathetic adult, have some quiet time, take an assessment, or work with support from a teacher. At Wilson's Creek, we aim to be adaptive and responsive to all of our student and staff needs in order to ensure everyone feels safe and cared about each day.

During our daily 30 minutes of academic intervention time, called PRIDE Time, students can have their learning supported or enriched from their 'must-do' or 'may-do' learning options with teacher assistance. For more intense interventions of academic or character, we have an Intervention Team to support our students. If students have completed their learning for the week, Friday is 'Club Friday' Time. During this time, students may choose a teacher-led club, which is held during the school day so that all students may participate. Various clubs are offered so all students' interests can be unearthed and cultivated. Students offer choices in what interests them, and teachers choose what they would enjoy facilitating.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

English language arts (ELA):

The district has adopted a supplemental curriculum as well as adaptive software aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards. The school and the district have also been working to organize our standards into quarterly divisions based on these standards, highlighting standards deemed to be essential. These divisions allow us to design both a pre-assessment and post-assessment for each quarter to monitor student learning as well as allow teachers to hold students to a higher level of accountability in an equitable way.

In the school, ELA teachers break the time down into writing instruction, a skills mini-lesson, and adaptive software time. Students systematically progress through their writing standards in short five minute practice lessons emphasizing editing and revision, though longer papers are accomplished throughout the year. An example of one such writing project is called “I Wish My Teacher Knew” where students are encouraged to let the teacher know of anything outside of or inside of class that may be happening in their lives. Students tell teachers some very personal things, and the teachers have the opportunities to build bonds through responses in writing.

Teachers then move into a skills mini-lesson based on the needs of the students which are pulled from the adaptive software. Lastly, students are allowed adaptive software time each day to produce growth at their level and to encourage making students involved and determined readers. At the end of a unit, assessments may come in the form of a writing task, a project utilizing the skills, or pencil-paper assessment. All these assessments align to the Missouri Learning Standards.

In our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) teachers analyze student responses to the mini-lesson practice questions or adaptive software results. They have conversations with fellow teachers about how each teacher taught specific material so that all students benefit. This is especially helpful when teachers find they need to go back and reteach a skill not understood by many students.

Teachers have adapted instruction to online learning thanks to the various resources provided by our district. Over the last two school years, teachers in all subject areas from all over the district met in subject-alike cohorts to build online assignments into our Learning Management System (LMS) Canvas. This provides teachers with an online “blueprint” from which to choose pre-built lessons and gives them lessons to modify to their students’ needs without having to do everything on their own. These lessons come with all the tools necessary to teach the lesson through an online live video meeting. In addition to the provided lessons, Teachers also utilize adaptive software to continually prepare students for real-world reading at their reading level.

Math:

The district has adopted curriculum resources aligned with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) eight mathematical practices which heavily emphasizes student-led discussions. The course content in our mathematics curriculum is developed not only around the mastery of the Missouri Learning Standards at grade level, but also on developing the growth mindset and attitudes of our students towards mathematics. Teachers use a problem-based approach in mathematics in our district which focuses on students learning mathematics by solving problems. Students learn mathematical ideas from a problem-solving experience rather than the rote steps that must be taught before problem solving.

Much like English Language Arts, our PLCs analyze student responses to formative assessments (cool downs) for each lesson to determine how to best serve students the next day. An assessment is included at the end of each unit as well that serves a more summative purpose, while still providing feedback to students and teachers in which instruction or interventions are adjusted moving forward.

Teachers have adapted instruction to online learning, thanks to the various resources provided by our
NBRS 2021

district. Our district curriculum has various online tools and lessons that are taught completely using technology during virtual learning. During COVID-19, adjustments have been made by our teachers to adapt to our hybrid model of teaching before returning fully seated. Technology tools were and still are utilized in ways that allowed students to make meaning of mathematics through the technology when a teacher may not be present. Math talks are encouraged beyond the walls of the classroom using discussion boards.

Social Studies:

The district has adopted a curriculum aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards, but our school adds an additional element. In Social Studies, our teachers provide instruction on the ELA nonfiction reading standards. Also heavily influential at the district level have been the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) guiding principles. These principles have pushed our teachers' instruction from recitation of historical facts to engaging in civic problem-solving inside of various historical contexts.

Students progress through the year in a chronological manner, studying the first nomads all the way to ancient Rome. Students are taught how to analyze nonfiction text features, so they get more out of a nonfiction text, as well as how to ask good questions of the text to gauge their comprehension of the material. Students read different authors' perspectives on the same historical event to understand history is not always what one reads from one point-of-view. Towards the end of the year teachers open up to the students' big questions, such as "Was Alexander the Great really great?" Then teachers lead them through analyzing primary sources so students can answer the question for themselves through an essay. These skills give students an opportunity to explore the kind of character that is worth pursuing as they study how humanity has handled major turning points in history.

In PLCs we analyze student needs based on nonfiction standards assessed in short exit tickets. Teachers then work to support each other through resources and lesson ideas.

Social Studies has been the biggest area of adaptation for "The Creek." Over the last school year, teachers have met and divided up building lessons for each other into Canvas that align to the Missouri Learning Standards. Online live video meetings and online document-based questions for our students have been immensely helpful. Online programs for document-based questions provide online text and thought provoking interactive notebook skills to help ease the learning process of virtual instruction.

Science:

The district has adopted a curriculum, written by district teachers utilizing a variety of resources and aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards. These standards are based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and taught with fidelity. In Science, our teachers provide a project-based learning approach to help students explore earth science in a real world and engaging way, challenging them to explore how the world operates.

Students progress through the year from learning about earth's place in the universe all the way through the composition of earth itself. Teachers provide students with a hook to engage them in the larger problem and then guide them through learning how to solve that problem. Teachers who teach science also teach mathematics so often they will pull in mathematics to help get an extra exposure of whatever content they are covering. Students learn to work in groups and to treat each other with respect and courtesy; they also get to know each other as well as their own various strengths and weaknesses as a person.

In PLCs we often spend time looking at formative assessment data and project stages to ensure students are on track to gain mastery of the concept.

Science in COVID-19 has been very challenging, in that grouping and experiments have not been allowed to occur. Some of this has been mitigated through videos, demonstration labs, as well as virtual labs located by our teachers.

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:

Wilson's Creek students in both fifth and sixth grade are acquiring essential skills and knowledge through music (orchestra, band, or general music). These skills include planning, persistence, commitment, and responsibility. Group performances teach students to be part of a team and to help each other learn to succeed. For our orchestra students this means twice-weekly rehearsals from 3:00-3:30 while General Music and Band students have moved their schedules in line with the rest of Wilson's Creek. Both Band and Orchestra students have had to adapt to playing that is focused on extended fundamentals work as classes have been divided into small subsections rather than entire ensembles. General Music class has had to shift over to studying musical history and styles over vocal performances until recently when they could return to the classroom five days a week.

The visual arts program at Wilson's Creek Intermediate encourages students to create imaginative visual expressions, develop an artistic voice, and take creative risks. Even when a project is complete, there is always more opportunity for students to further engage their creative minds with "May Do" options after they complete their "Must Do's." Fifth graders receive art once a week and sixth graders receive art five times in a two-week period. Student projects are cross-curricular with other disciplines to help enforce important concepts. For example, students must begin a project with a quote that inspires their visual connection and completion of an original piece. The ultimate goal is for students to establish a lifelong appreciation of visual art, by giving them choices in a variety of media, as well as cultural and historical styles of art. In keeping with goals to make education engaging, relevant, and personal, past students have even been able to grace the community with a collaborative art piece that hangs in the Battlefield Mall, here in Springfield.

Physical education (P.E.) is scheduled in such a way that both fifth and sixth grade students have PE year round. We have a robust Archery program taught by our Missouri Physical Education Teacher of the Year. It is taught in sixth grade and our sixth grade Archery team consistently wins first place at the City Level and competes at the state level. For students in the gym, adaptations have had to occur to meet standards as well. Skills acquisition has been broken down to be completed at the individual level as team activities have not been allowed. The warmups and lessons still allow for students to demonstrate mastery of essential grade-level skills, such as being able to, "Participate In moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activity at least 60 minutes per day. (S3.M6.6)" though now the lessons take a more individualized approach. Virtual learning occurred through online live video home workouts with the PE coach which students reported they thoroughly enjoyed.

Health is another key area of collaboration between staff in response to COVID-19. Students in fifth and sixth grade complete health modules on standards, pertaining to nutrition, body systems, hygiene, and emotional wellness in the classroom with the Science Teachers utilizing the Canvas LMS. Students are required to write summaries of health and wellness lessons that meet ELA writing standards set forth by the English teachers.

Sixth graders at Wilson's Creek participate in Project Lead The Way's (PLTW) "Innovators and Makers" in the last quarter of the school year. With the PLTW unit Computer Science for Innovators and Makers, students learn about programming for the physical world by blending hardware design and software development. Using microcontrollers with inputs and outputs, they develop code that brings their physical designs to life.

Library is an essential part of fifth and sixth grade as well. The librarian invites students to explore their interests in books and media once a week, as well as engaging students in "Chat-and-Chew" activities with the Springfield-Greene County Library and city-wide "Battle of the Books" competitions each year. The

librarian also comes into the classrooms of the English teachers and teaches lessons aligned to standards dealing with evaluating sources or citing evidence in a paper. The librarian has continued to engage students during virtual learning through the use of YouTube for book trailers, as well as assignments uploaded to the LMS.

At Wilson's Creek, we realize the value of character in both education and in the workforce development. To this end we provide opportunity for character education with a monthly character word focus through our counselor. The character word of the month is highlighted in morning announcements and posted in classrooms as well as hallways to create a school culture of character. Students participate in a character lesson which highlights definitions and how character impacts their lives and community. Students have monthly character challenges to encourage them to take their learning and put it to practice not only at school but in their homes and into their communities. Students in each homeroom are recognized by their peers and teachers for demonstrating good character by being selected as Students of the Month. Our desire is for Wilson's Creek to produce students of high character who will positively impact our world.

3. Academic Supports:

Wilson's Creek has two student populations that require specific targeting for intervention: students in Special Education and students who qualify for free/reduced lunch.

Wilson's Creek Special Education department is unique to SPS in that it allows for one special education teacher to be case manager and teacher for fifth grade students and one special education teacher for sixth grade. This approach allows for better communication with our regular education grade level teachers and helps everyone to more closely monitor students struggling and needing academic and/or emotional support.

We take great care to make sure each of our students' individual goals and needs drives our instruction and our plan to help them reach their potential. During the school day, we provide a wide range of services for the students. Some require minimal resource support, such as an assessment read to them or a quiet place to work. Other students need direct instruction classes when significantly behind in reading, writing, or math. Depending on the student's needs, some years we provide a "Class Within A Class" instruction for students within the regular education classroom. For state assessments the school utilizes district-provided curriculum targeted for students with special needs to help prepare them for the test.

Not only do we provide academic support for our students, but some of our students have health needs and/or behavior concerns that require Special Education services. Individual Health Plans and/or Behavior Intervention plans are written for specific student needs when necessary. Functional skills curriculum has been a focus the past few years due to an increased need in our population.

At Wilson's Creek we also find that students who come from homes qualifying for free/reduced price meals struggle on state assessments and make up 26.8% of our student population. In order to assist these students with greater precision, a focus of whole-faculty PLCs has been to identify and implement interventions that emphasize relationships and rigor.

In addition to our P.R.I.D.E. Time for all students, we provide very small group instruction time in the form of EXPLORE. This is an SPS initiative that brings students together with a caring certified teacher after-school to continue working on reading and math skills to help students grow to grade level. We use EXPLORE to help students begin to feel success at their current ability level so that they gain a desire to learn. This desire to learn then enhances our ability to help students reach their goal of grade level achievement.

In addition to EXPLORE, we have an Intervention Team structure within the individual classrooms where identified students have a series of supports given to them to enhance their learning. These interventions, such as differentiated assignments, when paired with the relationship the student has with their classroom teacher, has had many students experience success.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

We have various processes in place to continuously create a positive learning environment and to encourage our students to take ownership of their learning. As part of our School Action Plan (SAP), we chose these goals as our areas of focus. We began this year (as every year) by choosing our school year theme for our student and staff shirts to read: "Do Good, Be Kind @TheCreek." This was an appropriate theme for this COVID-19 year, as so many people need emotional and physical support.

Every year teachers model for students the growth mindset, high expectations, and empathy for students from the first day of school. All of this begins in non-academic ways through group team building activities that emphasize the kind of character we wish them to grow. Teachers make mistakes and accept correction with humility, showing students it is okay to make errors and then learn from them. As the year continues, they model high expectations in the quality of their assignments given to students and in their discussions of Wilson's Creek Lion P.R.I.D.E. behavior. Empathy and grace are given when students fall short of a goal, so they learn failure is not something to fear.

Academically, differentiated instruction paired with student choice boosts engagement. When students are given the opportunity to taste success, they are encouraged to continue on that road. We ask them for constant feedback in the classroom to provide us with their ideas as to how they learn most effectively. The right questions, asked in a caring way, are a powerful tool! As the year progresses, and we take benchmark tests, such as the i-Ready® assessment, students are provided with self-monitoring data and goal setting sheets. This gives students time to reflect on what is effective academically and what is not, keeping their minds engaged in metacognitive thinking about how they learn best.

Socially, students are engaged and grown throughout the year with help from our Student Council. Student Council leads the school in fundraisers, food drives, and holiday giving baskets for various community organizations. One of our most successful and long-running fundraisers is for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. In 2017, Wilson's Creek was designated the top fundraising school in the Midwest Chapter (Missouri, Southern Illinois, and Arkansas) for the LLS Pennies for Patients fundraiser; and over the last eight years, the school has raised \$30,000 for the organization! PRIDE Shout Out certificates, lunch time celebrations, and field trips to local universities and community college also engage students in social growth opportunities.

To maintain connection with students in the COVID-19 classroom we have done many things. We have gone to more distance-appropriate teambuilders, but luckily many lessons of character have been able to be given with content similar to years in the past. For academics we have been able to utilize online video meeting breakout rooms to continue differentiating instruction; and, with more technology-heavy lessons, students have found more engagement than sitting in traditional classrooms.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We engage family members and community members to support our student success and school improvement in various ways. Weekly newsletters, e-mails, grade checks, as well as teacher or parent requested conferences have kept us in touch with our families most successfully. Our Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) has also been vital to maintaining the relationship between the school and families in the form of organizing family events at the school, holding monthly meetings, and running online book fairs. Wilson's Creek also asks for family input through parent surveys each semester. These surveys allow us to know deeper what our families feel like they need and give us the ability to serve them more effectively.

Our community has also invested so much in the students of Wilson's Creek. Our local university (Missouri State University) sends a variety of practicum students to our buildings so that we may provide more one-on-one time to engage our students in learning. MSU also allows us to train student teachers and provide the teachers and students access to fresh perspectives and styles of teaching while teachers impart time-tested

pedagogy. Our local Park Board System Partnership is named, School-Parks Are Reaching Communities (SPARC). SPARC utilizes our school to run before and after school programs as well as extracurricular activities for students and engage them in social physical fitness and creative pursuits. Our local Rotary Club members, before COVID-19, came into the building to support our students' character education. Wilson's Creek Battlefield Museum and historic land site has hosted our W.C. artwork community events and supported our students in learning about our nation's history.

W.C. families are a vital part of our student achievement at Wilson's Creek, yet we have had to make some adjustments due to social distancing this year. We began the school year with a drive-through Meet the Teacher and team online live video meetings with families. We also provided a digital Orientation posted to our school website. The newsletter for each grade level has included families to keep them informed. This enables families to better support their students and the whole school community. All teachers utilize either Class Dojo® or their section of the newsletter to send out additional photos of the classroom. This has been a great way to invite the parents 'into the classroom,' during COVID when parent presence in the building is very limited. Parent conferences for Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), 504 plans, and teacher teams, are all encouraged to participate in live online video conferences. In special circumstances, if parents are unable to Zoom or be on a conference call, safety precautions are taken for a staff to meet with the parents in person. In past years, parents have been invited in as speakers for character development or subject level lessons. This year, some teachers have utilized online video meetings with special speakers. PTA is still active during COVID. Our PTA has chosen to take as many events outside as possible.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

This year has created new challenges and opportunities to grow. Yet, we realize we are not alone and together we can accomplish more than we can by ourselves. Our school creates an environment where all staff feels valued and supported by recognizing the strengths of each team member and acknowledgment of what they bring to the team. Growth mindset, collaboration, and professionalism is modeled by all staff members. All staff consider themselves lifetime learners which allows them the opportunity to feel successful and then replicate it.

Each certified staff member is asked to complete a 'strengths finder' assessment to identify their areas of strength as a team member. Teaching teams are created based upon two factors: the content area in which the teacher is most successful facilitating and the teammate who has strengths and expert skills from which the teacher can grow and learn. Teachers understand it is their responsibility to share their strengths for the good of the team and in turn to learn from the strengths of the other teacher. In this way, when a year such as this comes, teachers are ready to support one another to create a highly functioning team.

Teachers were given quick instruction on how to manage this new curriculum and set up. It came more quickly to some than others. Nonetheless, due to our culture of teamwork and caring concern for each other, our teachers were able to support one another in amazing ways! Normal beginning-of-the-year learning was put to the side so teachers could focus on their preparation for hybrid learning. Although every year there is emphasis on taking care of your family and yourself first, so you have the emotional and physical strength for your students, it was even more imperative this year. Teachers are professionals therefore they are treated as such.

The gift of time, along with some grace and mercy in many areas, was necessary. Accountability for hours is important, yet even more flexibility was given this year in how they utilized their time as we all worked together to give our students our very best.

Professional learning was moved to Wednesday virtual learning days. We shortened our normal learning schedule for Wednesday, so teaching staff had time to meet with their PLCs. The only new learning that took place, besides the online curriculum, was social-emotional learning. This was vital to support the staff as we talked about our emotions and how we express them. Teachers have found that this training has given them important tools to deal with the additional demands this year has brought. The staff has noticed a difference in how this reflective time has been an appropriate and positive support to them. Feedback also

shows that learning has positively impacted our students as they go through their own set of new challenges this year.

4. School Leadership:

Wilson's Creek utilizes elements of both Transformational leadership and Instructional Leadership to increase student achievement. This leadership is driven by the school's collective mission: The Wilson's Creek community is committed to developing meaningful character traits and learning that is engaging, relevant, and personal.

Since our building has only one principal, it is even more imperative that Wilson's Creek hire and retain great educators who can be warm demanders. Warm demanders are teachers who have both high expectations for themselves and the students and the ability to create positive, trusting relationships with students. Research from Lisa Delpit in her book, *Other People's Children*, shows when both attributes are in place, student success is nearly guaranteed.

Everyone in the school is on the team because our greatest resources are our team members. Classroom teachers, support staff, food service, custodians, secretaries, and any substitute in the building is responsible for the climate/culture and learning environment in the school. Each student is everyone's student, and each team member is everyone's team member. All team members are treated as a professional and everyone has a purpose on the team.

Transformational leadership is utilized to build high performing teams, while encouraging, inspiring, and motivating all team members to be innovative and create change. This change is to ensure future success of all students. Instructional leadership is utilized to support the whole school community to focus on student learning outcomes by improving teaching quality. Therefore, our professional learning communities focus on three areas: 1) Standards-based teaching and assessment, 2) Positive learning environment, and 3) Analyzing data to direct instruction. Professional learning communities consist of grade level/subject level teachers. Teams work together and leaders emerge depending upon the focus area.

PLC's analyze data to ensure all resources, processes, programs, and resources align with our school mission statement. Additionally, teachers observe one another as part of their PLC's. They share strategies that were successful for them, so it can be replicated throughout the school. One of the major strengths of Wilson's Creek is teacher collaboration. Every teacher has a strength whether it be technology, innovation, relationship-building, etc. Staff have a collective growth mindset. Therefore, they are constantly learning from one another and supporting each other.

To ensure leadership strategies and the learning in PLC's translates to student achievement in the classroom, various tools are utilized. Classroom walkthroughs, informal and formal observations, evaluations, and celebrations of learning are a consistent and vital part of our monitoring of both teacher and student learning.

Due to COVID-19 we have taken additional steps to ensure we can support a safe learning environment. Classroom teachers had to focus on their new instructional strategies and online curriculum to accommodate the virtual learning this year. Therefore, our Intervention Team has taken leadership to ensure our learning environment is safe and functioning. Our Intervention Team consists of our principal, nurse, counselor, attendance secretary, Instructional Technologist, FOCAS room teacher, food service workers, and custodians. Each team member took care of their area of expertise utilizing direct instructions from our district administration. Our three main goals were to make it possible for our students to remain masked, distanced, and clean. Our teaching team was then given the supplies and guidelines to assist them to keep those goals in the classroom, hallways, and bathrooms.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Culturally responsive teaching and learning is critical to the success of all students. At Wilson's Creek staff members work diligently to ensure a culture and climate of equity, cultural awareness,

and mutual respect. Striving to be warm-demanders, we need to build trust to ensure an equitable climate. To build trust as warm demanders, we must listen to our students and learn about who they are and what matters to them.

All SPS staff members are active participants in trainings during the year and site-based Equity Champions participate in additional quarterly training, as well as receive additional supplementary resources to support students and staff members. Training is provided to equip staff members with the knowledge to enhance academic and personal support of underrepresented and under-resourced students, to promote cultural enrichment and consciousness, and to enrich our commitment to inclusion to sustain a learning environment that supports equity and diversity.

In addition to developing staff members, students participate in learning opportunities throughout the year. In the classrooms and lunchroom students study the rich cultures that make up the United States and world. Throughout the year students learn about the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights, human rights, social injustice, celebrate black history month, and women's rights., Students are taught tolerance, work to burst stereotypes, and recognize holidays celebrated throughout the world. Teachers create curricular opportunities that support equity and diversity in the classroom. At Wilson's Creek we strive on utilizing 'teachable moments' when real life situations occur.

At Wilson's Creek we strive for all to exhibit P.R.I.D.E behaviors. P for Prepared to stand up for anyone who needs an "upstander" to stick up for them. R for Respectful. We show respect for everyone, regardless of any type of diversity. I for Involved. All students are expected to be Involved in their learning of diverse cultures and peoples. D for Determined. We are purposeful, positive leaders, and expect ourselves to live up to our best selves and to help others to do the same. E for Empathetic. We practice patience, are safe and kind, and are highly encouraged to listen to opposing viewpoints and show empathy.

The Wilson's Creek staff notifies our Intervention Team of any needed support for students, teachers, and families. Our Intervention Team then decides how best to move forward. The counselor, equity champion, nurse, or other Intervention Team members will be assigned to assess the situation so we can brainstorm for possible solutions. For example, we might request an interpreter to contact families who do not speak English and the teacher needs to have a conference with them.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one strategy we have attributed to student success during this unusual COVID year is that of being warm demanders. At Wilson's Creek, we have always been committed to ensuring academic excellence with warm relationships. Our staff shares the common passion and belief that all students can grow and learn. The COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges but did not change our expectation of providing a rigorous and engaging learning environment for all students. At Wilson's Creek, this is achieved through positive relationships, growth mindset, and celebrating growth.

Positive relationships are a priority in any year, but a necessity in this year. We started the year teaching in a hybrid model, so getting to know students took creativity and endurance. Strong relationships require students to trust their teachers. Building trust requires teachers and students to take a risk, be vulnerable, and be willing to share themselves. Being warm demanders allows us to have high expectations, but still smile and have fun while creating a safe environment for trust to grow. Although we have had to adapt and be creative to find new ways for team building activities, our staff rose to the challenge. Our school became a cohesive unit focused on growth and success. Our staff supported each other, and we challenged all our students, those who were seated and those who were virtual, to give us their best effort and take ownership of their learning. Our students know they are loved, and in return, they want to be in school, as is shown by our high attendance numbers.

Having a growth mindset has been imperative for students and teachers alike and at Wilson's Creek, you will find this in abundance. As problems or obstacles arise, teachers and students work together to find solutions instead of making excuses. This pandemic year brought about some new challenges due to inequalities for some of our students who did not have support or resources for "at home" success. However, we did not let this deter our expectations. We continued to provide flexible learning opportunities and online video meetings to meet the needs of all students and maintain our high standard of participation and engagement. Our middle-of-the-year assessment scores are proof that our flexibility and efforts were a success. Overall, our middle of the year standardized data showed an average growth of 60-80% across both grade levels in reading and math. These are similar middle-of-the-year growth numbers to what we have come to expect during a "normal" school year at "The Creek".

By being warm demanders, we believe love never gives up, is always hopeful, and perseveres through every circumstance. We have been able to maintain our high standards of learning while providing the love and flexible support to achieve and celebrate our best together. We are better together.