

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 205 NM Highway 228
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Mesquite State NM Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 88048-5404

County New Mexico (NM)

Telephone (575) 233-3925 Fax (575) 233-0905

Web site/URL http://mq.gisd.k12.nm.us/ E-mail asilvaggio@gisd.k12.nm.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* Mr. Travis Dempsey E-mail tidempsey@gisd.k12.nm.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Gadsden Independent Schools Tel. (575) 882-6200

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mrs. Laura Flores
(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):
- 16 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 4 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 24 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 | 14 | 11 | 25 |
| 1 | 16 | 26 | 42 |
| 2 | 19 | 21 | 40 |
| 3 | 16 | 23 | 39 |
| 4 | 18 | 23 | 41 |
| 5 | 31 | 19 | 50 |
| 6 | 22 | 24 | 46 |
| 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 | 136 | 147 | 283 |

*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
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 98 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 1 % White
 - 0 % 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: 3%

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

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

| Steps For Determining Mobility Rate | Answer |
|--|---------------|
| (1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year | 5 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year | 4 |
| (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 | 298 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.03 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 3 |

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 66 %
187 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100 %

Total number students who qualify: 283

8. Students receiving special education services: 21 %
60 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>5</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>17</u> Developmental Delay | <u>18</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>10</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7
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 | 2 |
| Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 14 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc. | 10 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 10 |
| 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 12:1

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% | 95% | 95% | 95% | 94% |
| 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.

Mesquite Elementary School is committed to the Academic development of all students in both English and Spanish. Through this developmental process students will become secure in their ability to become successful and productive citizens.

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.

Since March of 2020, our school has been practicing online instruction only. Beginning in March of 2021, we will be moving to a hybrid model.

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

The small town of Mesquite New Mexico comprises close knit families that are extremely loyal to one another and community. Parents work outside the home and for the most part, have not been exposed to the opportunities that a formal education can provide. Parents see a better future for their children. Many of our students have spent the last school year alone in their homes trying to be successful with online learning. A majority of our students take care of younger siblings while trying to complete schoolwork. Many of our families are migrant, which means that many of these students live in households where the family dynamic is ever fluctuating due to work situations and environments. A small percentage of our parents need to commute in order to remain employed. In the past our students felt less than and many of them did not see beyond the life that they were living. By encouraging them to look beyond today and into tomorrow, students began to value their own self-worth. By emphasizing the successes and addressing the failures we were able to turn our school into a place where students felt safe, valued, and appreciated. Our faculty and staff have taken on the challenge of, in some cases, being parent, teacher, counselor and advisor for some of our more at-risk students. As a result, we have become a community of learners where our students feel that all things are possible. Instruction is data driven and using data has been instrumental in developing in school and after school support systems for students. Intervention groupings have not been limited to struggling students, rather groupings also include enhancing our top-level students.

Working collaboratively is of utmost importance at our campus. Involving and communicating with the community in annual events have developed a great rapport between parents and school. Each August parents and community members are invited to a "Meet and Greet" where they can get to know their child's teacher and goals for the upcoming school year. Literacy, Math and Science Night are more opportunities for parents to be exposed to curriculum standards that their children will be introduced to during the school year. In addition, administration holds "Coffee with the Principal Meetings". These meetings provide parents with an opportunity to dialogue openly with administration.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Since we are a Dual Language campus, our entire core curriculum incorporates both English and Spanish standards. In the area of English Language Arts the focus is EL Education, which provides equitable and inclusive learning opportunities for all students. For mathematics we utilize the i-Ready Math curriculum, an online program that provides students of all ages differentiated instruction and supports them and their individual paths to success. In the area of science we follow the HMH Science Dimensions Curriculum which elevates science literacy and engineering to meet new Next Generation Science Standards with ease. The history curriculum is derived from Pearson's My World Social Studies, which is streamlined, flexible and attuned to today's classroom.

Due to the pandemic, the delivery of instruction may have changed, but the content area has remained standard based. Our district and campus have adopted Google Classroom as the primary platform for the delivery of instruction. Students in grades first through sixth were provided with Chromebooks and Wi-fi Hotspots if needed. Kindergarten students were provided with iPads. iPads were essential for the kindergarten students because at this age, the majority of the students are continuing to develop fine motor skills and the iPad provides the support for those skills while enhancing their learning by providing tactile practices to make learning connections. The administrative team and teaching staff worked diligently in assisting both parents and students with the use of this technology. The technique of building lessons online is totally innovative due to the fact that we have to address a variety of learners without actually seeing their expression or reaction. Even though technology is currently a driving force, we have also included various curriculums within Google Classroom thus providing students more learning opportunities in the areas of mathematics, science, and language arts. As a way of differentiating instruction, and by analyzing individualized campus student data, campuses were allowed to seek online programs that would enhance our district scope and sequence.

The transition from onsite to remote assessments has been a seamless one due to our campus's practices prior to COVID-19. Prior to remote learning, in addition to classroom computers, our campus was equipped with multiple mobile electronic devices as well as four separate inhouse computer labs in which students regularly accessed their assessments. All students were trained through modeling the appropriate way to progress monitor their own growth and individual goals.

Some of the techniques that we have integrated to our online platforms have given the teachers tools to implement videos while merging daily assignments that are pertinent to understanding the content. The use of Google Meets within the classroom has provided our students with the opportunity to have open dialogues and discussions with each other and their teacher. In addition, this application also allows for flexible grouping with the use of breakout rooms, thus allowing the teacher to separate and tier students by content knowledge levels.

Students are familiar with learning standards because they are stated clearly at the start of each day along with the learning objectives. Due to vertical alignment and co-planning, our campus is committed to addressing all learning standards by using the same approach. At the conclusion of each content lesson, students are assessed with an "exit ticket" to check for understanding. Teachers then reflect and utilize this information to reteach and/or differentiate according to student's responses.

In maintaining consistency and high expectations in all classes, each grade level meets on a regular basis thus ensuring that all students are exposed to the same educational opportunities. Teachers are encouraged to submit daily schedules and weekly lesson plans that indicate their knowledge of individual student characteristics to include special education modifications, English language development and students experiencing specific social and emotional needs. In addition, differentiation is evident through student groupings, use of accommodations/modifications and block day tutoring plans.

As the campus transitioned to i-Ready Math, teachers were provided with an abundance of data to help drive their instruction while guiding them through differentiation within the standards of mathematics. I-Ready

Math makes mathematics accessible, increases student engagement and builds confidence. I-Station testing continued monthly to measure the progress of language arts concepts. New Mexico Interim Measure of Student Success and Achievement (NM-IMSSA) was introduced to students in grades three through six to assess student performance in the areas of reading, language arts, and math. To assist teachers in aligning all of the data, the campus formed a data committee to disseminate, evaluate and utilize the most essential data points. The instructional coach then provides professional development in which teachers use this data to co-plan and to form tier groupings that are specific to student needs. These groupings continually evolve in accordance to assessment datelines, classroom observation and student work.

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:

In an effort to educate the whole child, our campus ensures a variety of curriculum areas that serve to enhance both cultural and character development. The campus offers art, music and physical education to all grade levels. Because we are collaborative and collegiate, elective teachers are an integral part of our professional learning communities. The instructional coach ensures that these teachers are given data and direction on how to incorporate this information into their lessons. For example, during art and music classes, student's vocabulary is enriched through song and or visual expression. Physical Education incorporates mathematics during stretching and other physical activities. Nutritional standards are part of the physical education curriculum as well as an introduction to essential components of human anatomy.

Art class exposes students to artists from various countries and backgrounds. Students are encouraged to tap into their own creativity and individual interests as they develop art projects that are related to the artists being studied at that particular time. In keeping with creativity measures, our music classes are also designed to tap into individual musical talents that students display. The pandemic did not stop our art teacher from entering student art into various competitions. Furthermore, our music teacher offered music sessions as a way to keep a positive focus during some of the darkest days of the pandemic. It is important to note that musical selections reflect cultural and holiday celebrations.

Our reading intervention teacher ensured that proper library selections were provided to all students based on grade level. A virtual library was created through Google Slides that provided training and information regarding cyberbullying and mental health. In partnership with Barnes and Noble, students were provided with online books in both English and Spanish as another form of resource. In addition, the school counselor visited each and every classroom offering guidance and assistance to those in need of emotional support.

In the spirit of continuing with "normalcy" the faculty and staff readily agreed to create a music video in which students were reminded of how much they were missed and valued. The administrative team provided students with personal messages that emphasized the positive behaviors that students were displaying during this rather unique time of learning.

After school activities were developed to make the school day more appealing to a wide variety of student groups. Students were allowed to participate in cheerleading, student council, Young Guns basketball and after school enrichment classes. The spirit of competitiveness was ignited in our students. As a result, many sought more activity outside the school setting. The campus has seen the importance of having an outlet for students at all times, but especially during online learning. As a campus, we have been able to continue providing these outlets regardless of setting. Therefore, block scheduling continued with a stronger emphasis on student physical development and emotional need.

3. Academic Supports:

Our dual language campus is one that promotes an inclusive learning environment for every student. Because each student is unique and diverse, we are continually looking for ways to provide a safe and appropriate learning environment for all students. The campus has taken a proactive approach in supporting both the top and bottom quartile of students. These students are often left to be unchallenged. Through block day intensive tutoring sessions, student data has paired teacher strengths with student needs. As a result, each student is given the opportunity to have his/her own individual education plan through differentiated instruction and cooperative group learning. Inclusion teachers are seen as co-teachers in the general education setting and both general education and special education teachers work collaboratively to analyze and disseminate student data. Through this practice, data driven instruction allows support especially for the bottom quartile. Because our special education students comprise one-fourth of our total enrollment, it is imperative that both general education and special education work together through tutoring programs and interventions to ensure academic growth.

Mesquite Elementary is a school with a high English Language Learner (ELL) population. Students are assessed in kindergarten and the results of this assessment are used to provide the appropriate scaffolding materials to the teacher. This assessment includes the students' English proficiency in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening comprehension. In addition to this assessment, parents are asked to provide information on a Home Language Survey that assists with student placement. This group of students has an opportunity to be exited from the English Language Development (ELD) program when they score a five or higher on their ACCESS assessment. Once a student has achieved this goal, he or she will be monitored for four years to ensure continued academic growth. Each year, our school has exited more than ten students. This has been a successful assessment for our students due to the fact that each of them can see the end goal and work to achieve it. In addition to this assessment criteria, students must also demonstrate successful independent working skills at grade level without the use of accommodations. Students are encouraged to continue on the path of bilingual education while pursuing their bilingual seal for high school graduation.

Our campus is fortunate to have a migrant program that is accessible for qualifying families. The goal of the migrant program is to provide all migrant students the opportunity to obtain the skills and tools to be successful community members. This program ensures that students that move around the state continue to receive a free and appropriate education regardless of living environment. Our campus provides a parent liaison to support migrant, homeless and low-income families in need of shelter, food, clothing, and utility needs. Students are supplied with the necessary resources they may require to be successful in the classroom. Social Work services along with an attendance advocate help ensure student academic success.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

High expectations have been maintained for all students during remote learning. Students willingly continue to wear uniforms knowing that a good week of hard work and good behavior will allow them a "No Uniform Day" on Friday. A teacher sponsored/student led weekly newsletter was provided to both parents and students in which extraordinary student behaviors were acknowledged and celebrated. Administrators routinely visited remote classrooms noting academic successes and achievements. In addition, administration including the counselor, provided opportunities for students to seek individual guidance and counsel when needed.

The philosophy of what has moved us forward and what continues to move us forward is the mantra of "Respect and Dignity" in all that we do. This belief system is what drives our campus' growth academically, socially, and emotionally. These two pillars have assisted in creating a common vocabulary that all students and staff can utilize and apply that transcends both academic and positive social skills. Practicing respect of self and others has provided an opportunity for our learners to take risks in their learning without fear of what their peers may say or how they react. Modeling dignified actions such as helping others, being honest, trustworthy, and team-oriented assist in classroom management and motivating our teachers and students alike. When teachers, support staff and students are speaking and practicing the same language, true learning and growth can be fostered.

Having our cornerstones of "Respect and Dignity" has paid dividends for our campus since we have been forced into the remote learning platform. Having the students away from the classroom has removed the human element. Having the ability to revisit these pillars has provided our staff the opportunity to provide something that is mentally tangible to our students to hear and grab onto during those times when remote learning becomes difficult. It gives our staff an opportunity to motivate during a time when motivational tools have been taken away. It provides a team attitude in a very individual era of learning. Making respectful decisions such as keeping cameras on, following remote learning norms have had a huge impact on moving our students forward. Making dignified decisions such as being on time, turning in work and working independently when no one is with you have been habits that were built long before distance learning became a part of our daily lives.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Mesquite Elementary takes a great deal of pride in our ability to involve our families and community partners on an ongoing basis. We feel that it is paramount for administration to be involved and engaged in parent needs and concerns. Each month, our campus hosts "Coffee with the Principal." This provides our parents and stakeholders an opportunity to sit down in a nonrestrictive environment and have an open dialogue with school administration regarding any issues or questions that they may have. For the past seven years we have adopted a Veterans' Day Celebration. On this special day, students and teachers create project-based gifts to award to our veterans for their service. Due to the overwhelming success of the Veterans' Days in the past, it was imperative to our school and our community to provide the same service to our veterans despite the COVID-19 roadblocks. Following CDC guidelines, our campus was able to successfully navigate our annual celebration again this year. Veterans drove through our campus parking lot and received a gift basket along with a certificate thanking them for their services.

Attendance has been an ongoing focus of improvement the past seven years. We have consistently seen a yearly improvement in our attendance percentages and it has positively impacted our student success. Attendance is a component of the education process that truly is a team effort between school and home. Our attendance committee works directly with our families in an effort to collaboratively reach a goal. This committee consists of the principal, a counselor, a data clerk, a teacher, and our campus attendance advocate. Weekly meetings take place to address issues that may impact a student attending class such as internet issues, childcare or parent work. These individualized parent meetings not only assist in improving attendance, but also build positive working relationships between work and home in our most difficult hour

as educators. During this period of remote learning, our campus has been vigilant in ensuring that students and families received the proper technology and technology supports. Our district social worker and parent liaison were consulted whenever a family was struggling with a lack of services due to COVID.

Administration has an open door policy, whereby parents are not only welcomed but encouraged to seek support when necessary. The principal has cultivated an environment in which parents understand the importance of school and family working together. Parents are constantly reminded that Mesquite is their school.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Our campus has always held the value of a safe and positive learning environment for all those that are a part of the educational process. Our administration has always gone above and beyond to recognize success and progress within our campus. The principal sends weekly emails each Friday recognizing the small and large victories and successes that our staff has each week. This weekly recognition goes beyond focusing on our teachers. By understanding that all stakeholders contribute to an organization's success, custodial staff, special education ancillary staff, support staff, office staff and instructional assistants are provided with the same opportunities for recognition. The administration further celebrates and supports by recognizing a monthly employee of the month in both certified and non-certified categories.

In stride with the “team” concept here at Mesquite Elementary, grade level leaders have taken the initiative to obtain at least a Level I Google Certification in an effort to streamline the transition from on-site to the virtual platform. This enabled teachers to train their colleagues, thus expediting the success that we are having with the online model. Teachers and staff in need of additional training were provided that assistance by our Google Certified staff.

In adhering to campus collaboration, all staff participates in weekly PLC Meetings. During these meetings, teachers are provided with research based best teaching practices, Culturally Responsive teaching habits and data driven instructional lessons. This information is disseminated with fidelity in an effort to keep all parties utilizing common vocabulary and teaching practices to move all students forward. Teachers and staff drive their own professional development by assessing individual areas of personal strength and/or areas of improvement. The instructional coach ensures that teachers are following their professional development plans and goals.

Teachers are given the opportunity to participate in various campus committees to include; data, leadership, intervention, and participation in New Mexico DASH. These committee members are encouraged to facilitate and maintain key concepts and best practices. Level III teachers serve as mentors to new and/or struggling colleagues.

4. School Leadership:

Open communication and the freedom to share ideas and philosophies of best practices in the classroom has been encouraged and fostered on our campus for the past seven years. Our administration has a tight grasp on the concept that success is a group effort and knowledge is only knowledge if it is shared.

Administration takes a great deal of pride in empowering teachers and giving them the freedom to take ownership of their classroom while implementing the necessary teaching strategies and requirements that are mandated by the district regardless of setting. These opportunities of empowerment are given through a variety of teams that have been assembled in an effort to efficiently deliver new information expeditiously.

The principal has formed an administrative team of future leaders that includes; the assistant principal, a special education lead, the school counselor, an intervention lead teacher, the instructional coach, and an uppergrade level team leader. Meetings are held virtually every Monday with a set agenda of pertinent information that the week ahead encompasses. The team is asked for input and areas of concern that they may have encountered from staff during the previous week. The campus staff has become very comfortable seeking guidance from any one of the team leaders.

Both the principal and assistant principal have worked together to follow district, state and CDC directives/guidelines in an effort to keep staff safe and motivated to work. Social distancing is encouraged for those working on campus and all staff are required to supply a Daily Health Survey prior to arriving on campus each day. This daily survey is shared with our district nursing department as well as campus administration. In addition to these precautions, our campus is fully sanitized by our campus custodial team each Wednesday while all staff works remotely.

Administration has fostered a climate of "family" while setting high expectations for all. Teachers and all staff know that they are valued and appreciated for individual qualities that they each bring to the campus. Teachers are encouraged to pursue professional growth and opportunities. The principal has taken great pride in cultivating future administrators. Each individual at Mesquite Elementary School knows that they are crucial to the development of our students and their academic success. There is no "us" and "they", only "we".

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

In response to cultural diversity, our entire district has been participating in VABB (Validation Affirmation Build Bridge). This process involves viewing five videos in which each employee must participate and reflect. Due to these reflections, teachers self-analyze their instructional practices and student interactions to ensure that they are inclusive to student diversity. Although our campus practices "Respect and Dignity" toward all groups and cultures, these videos have given all of us an opportunity to see how we can improve in our daily encounters with our diverse population.

Due to our geographical location, several of our students are separated from family and friends due to the border between Mexico and the United States. When possible, students travel across the border on weekends which at times has affected their daily classroom attendance. Teachers are aware of the dilemma that these students face and are sensitive to their academic and social emotional needs.

All staff have been successful in assessing the cultural appropriateness of student behavior in certain situations. Teachers have become adept in pausing before responding to student actions. The importance of validating the cultural response has become critical to our students' academic success and social emotional well-being. Teachers and staff members respond respectfully to students while connecting culture to academics. The word "but" has been eliminated from our vocabulary because it makes responses seem negative and non-accepting.

Teacher created materials, lesson plans and resources reflect cultural diversity while encompassing and embracing all ethnic backgrounds, cultural traditions, and individual student academic backgrounds. Teachers incorporate culturally celebrated holidays such as Diez y seis de Septiembre, Dia de los Muertos, and Black History Month day within their lessons. When possible, instruction is student led which allows students to have ownership of their learning opportunities. Students are encouraged to ask questions and share ideas through cooperative group learning.

The campus is aware and sensitive to social, political, and current events that may affect and influence student learning and social emotional development. Due to COVID, many of our students have lost family members. To help them deal with this loss, the administration along with the counselor has been there to support and assist student and family needs.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our biggest success is due to the positive, professional, and academic climate that has been built over the past seven years. Upon the arrival of the school's current principal, teacher, staff, and student morale was at a very low point. The school had a reputation for being underachieving with a lack of teacher and student performance. All stakeholders had a belief that achievement was not possible. Students, teachers, and staff felt less than their peers at other campuses.

The principal began by empowering all stakeholders to come to the office with concerns and solutions to these concerns. A focus was placed on building relationships with all parties involved in the educational process. The "gotcha approach" was replaced with an atmosphere of support. Teacher strengths were emphasized, while areas of deficit were addressed in a positive manner. The school mantra was developed with a "Respect and Dignity" approach. Teachers and staff began treating the students the way that they wanted their kids and grandkids to be treated. All staff members were provided a quote from Barbara Coloroso that states:

"If kids come to us from strong, healthy, functioning families it makes our job easier. If they do not come to us from strong, healthy, functioning families it makes our job more important."

Student behavior and choices was another area that was affecting student achievement. An administrative team was formed to address these issues. Parents became paramount in moving their students forward. The school began to work hand in hand with families and the campus became a welcoming support system. Teachers felt supported and valued and, as a result, students began to feel the same way. The principal made it a point to know each and every student's name and she ensured success by celebrating positive points of success.

Communication became key with transparency always at the forefront. The campus became a family unit with an "All for one and one for all" attitude. Weekly emails, parent phone calls, newsletters and the outdoor marquee kept the entire Mesquite community informed. Teachers were encouraged to assist in building positive relationships with parents by making two positive phone calls home each week regarding their students.

By incorporating the previous strategies the school progressed from an F to a C, to a B, and finally from B to an A. We are proud to have maintained this positive status through the past four years. The transition to online learning has been challenging but due to the strategies in place, we continue to be successful.