

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 3801 College Boulevard  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Farmington State NM Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 87402-4661

County San Juan

Telephone (505) 599-8608 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://mesaverde.fms.k12.nm.us/ E-mail pschritter@fms.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\* Dr. Eugene Schmidt E-mail eschmidt@fms.k12.nm.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Farmington Municipal Schools Tel. (505) 324-9840

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 Mr. Kyle Rhodes  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The electronic signature on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 10 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 4 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 18 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	37	37	74
1	36	35	71
2	30	41	71
3	43	25	68
4	36	33	69
5	39	24	63
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	221	195	416

\*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):
- 26 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0.7 % Asian
  - 0.5 % Black or African American
  - 36.2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 31.6 % White
  - 4.8 % 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: 11%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	29
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	23
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	52
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	479
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

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

Navajo, Spanish, Russian, Tewa

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 56 %

Total number students who qualify: 233

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %  
65 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>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>5</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	98%	98%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

Mesa Verde Elementary creates an environment committed to educating all children by facilitating academic and social growth through a partnership with parents for student success.

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.

In order to accommodate as many students as we could based on evolving mandates and to respect some family’s decisions to learn from home, Mesa Verde Elementary implemented multiple learning models during the 2020-21 school year. All students learned virtually until September 2020. Once we were allowed to bring students into the building, kindergarten to third grade attended Tuesday through Friday while our fourth and fifth grades followed an A/B model Tuesday through Friday. Monday is at home learning for all students. Intermittent closures between November and January caused us to shift back to virtual learning. In March, we were allowed to bring all grades back to full time in-person learning. Approximately 50 of our students chose to remain in virtual learning. To maintain student-teacher relationships, we have maintained classroom rosters even as students move in and out of virtual learning. Working collaboratively in their professional learning communities all grade levels have chosen to keep all instruction and interventions live. One grade level has done videos and then followed up live. Students have attended conferences, receive materials, and upload assignments through Schoology. During special times in school students have received instruction in the respective classrooms and virtual students have received video instruction. As a result, Mesa Verde Elementary teachers have simultaneously taught their virtual students and in-school students for the entire year. Students were provided with laptops or iPads and internet access. Mesa Verde did not change school expectations for academics and have increased social emotional support. We have continued our attendance policy which includes developing a relationship and partnership with parents supporting

them with struggles. Teachers have checked on the students that are not attending virtually or in school daily.

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**

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Mesa Verde Elementary School was built in 1965 as a neighborhood walking school. The school shows strength through diversity while including a wide variety of students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. The population of Mesa Verde is a diverse population and changed from a neighborhood walking school to students that rely on busing for transportation as well. Parents and teachers at Mesa Verde Elementary school have a vested interest in the success of all students.

Mesa Verde is very proud of and embraces our diverse population. We have communities within our community. Each micro-community is embraced by the overall community and population to come together in one diverse group of students and families.

We have our neighborhood families that are middle to lower income with rental housing available as well. Many of these students walk or ride bikes together to the school. When the weather is warm, we conduct a walking Wednesday in which we include all communities that make up our common community. The students in the neighborhood walk or ride bikes and students that ride the bus are dropped off at the college, just up the road from our school, and they walk to school as an equal part of the community.

Students are bussed from diverse neighborhoods including high-density manufactured homes as well as rural settings. During economic downturns and the more recent COVID pandemic we have had single family dwellings turn into multiple family dwellings housing many family members come from other areas including Shiprock and places in Arizona.

Our primary focus is on students and their well-being; including academic, social, physical and emotional. Mesa Verde Elementary creates an environment committed to educating all children by facilitating academic and social growth through a partnership with parents for student success. As a result of our growth mindset approach and fidelity to our system, we are a high performing school with a strong positive and encouraging culture. We celebrate student growth, personal achievements, cultures, and simple successes. Our school is supportive, friendly, and safe. Families feel welcomed and cared for by the staff. We see the good and communicate the ‘why’ in all we do to students, staff, and the greater community. Teachers are the experts in the classroom and data is the cornerstone in all we do; it drives instruction. Teachers are empowered to strengthen instructional practices and encouraged to find the leader that resides within. Best practices are collaboratively shared with colleagues each week.

Our formal system in place consists of a collaborative growth model and continuous monitoring of our systems for improvement. It includes our Mesa Verde Instructional snapshot, our mini action plans to collect and analyze data, attendance team, behavior focus group, leadership team, instructional team leaders, and our professional learning communities; collectively this forms our intricate system.

The Mesa Verde curriculum follows the learning goal proficiencies which are based on the Common Core Standards. Mesa Verde believes in backward planning and prepares a timeline of when the learning goals are taught and the amount of time it takes to teach those to proficiency. Staff start with exemplars, create assessments, and proceed with the backward planning of lessons accordingly. Staff then meet weekly to assess and adjust as needed. We use daily exit tickets, common formative assessments, and quarterly interims to help guide our instruction. In addition, we celebrate and provide positive feedback regularly both in and outside of the classroom.

Mesa Verde prides itself on how well teachers and students alike adjusted to virtual learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which is a testament to our well-established systems. Strong home-school relationships are the bedrock of our culture and proved instrumental in the transition. Teachers reach out to parents and students daily in the event of an absence and the administration team makes daily home visits to support the technological shift of virtual learning. Moreover, Mesa Verde staff provided sample schedules and tips for organizing the home in an effort to support parents and students. The counselor and social worker also provided surveys and, as a result of the surveys, created parent support groups that address their needs. The adeptness and proficiency of our systems and planning has allowed our teachers to ensure that



students are taught everything to proficiency. Moreover, we build relationships and address social-emotional needs, in order to keep them moving forward on the trajectory to success.

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

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

Mesa Verde uses the Farmington Model of Instruction (FMI) and learning goal proficiency scales which clearly describe declarative and procedural knowledge students need to know and are based on the New Mexico Common Core Standards. These learning progressions show how students' understanding develops over time and ensures the rigor of the curriculum. The instructional strategies found within FMI are meant to generate certain mental states and processes in students' minds in the acquisition of knowledge and demonstration of enhanced learning. Instruction and resources include need base differentiation. English language arts is a balanced literacy approach to develop critical thinkers that communicate effectively. It includes, reading, word work, writing, listening, and speaking. A common vertical alignment rubric for students is used for editing and publishing. Resources are: Houghton Mifflin-Journeys, LETRS, 95 Percent and Think CERCA. Math students are required to use multiple strategies and pursue conceptual understanding, procedural skills, and fluency. The Standards for Math Practice are thereby integrated with the Standards for Math Content. Resources include: Envision and Do the Math. The NM STEM Ready! Science Standards combine science, technology, and engineering to meet the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). To support our unique culture and diversity we use our topic scales and Harcourt Brace & Company Reader Collections for social studies.

Mesa Verde utilizes backward planning. Quarterly timelines and unit plan of learning goals are prepared and adjusted so that all are taught to proficiency. Staff start with exemplars, success-criteria, assessments, and continue with planning accordingly (unit plans and then lesson plans). Our teachers are strategic; being mindful about time they spend on each learning goal. Staff have instructional time for all subjects in which they are teaching in-building and virtual students simultaneously. Observation data, work shown and exit tickets are used to identify and support students with misunderstandings. Teachers provide support immediately after lessons or schedule a conference time to meet. Perseverance, stamina, and growth mindset has led Mesa Verde to surpass elementary school performance across the state. Our instructional infrastructure is an exemplary educational model, with evidence and research-based strategies, that yield high instructional results. We use the Marzano High Reliability Schools framework for strategic planning and use the compendiums to help support the curriculum. This is part of our collective commitments.

Mesa Verde teachers are unique pioneers, front runners, and leaders in using formative assessments to identify student needs. Our formal assessments are common formative assessments (created by our PLCs), interim data, and state assessments. This includes short cycle early literacy and numeracy assessments (Istation), and end of year assessments. Teachers create exit tickets for every lesson.

Data continues to be our cornerstone in which we implement quick data checks, feedback, and adjustments based on need. These quick data checks help teachers change directions and keep the adjustments fluid. We set realistic, time-bound goals and stick with them until we reach proficiency. Teachers analyze student data, write mini action plans that identify gaps in student learning and grade level PLCs meet weekly to analyze, adjust, collaborate, and develop reteach and enrichment to support all students in achieving academic potential. This process is outlined in our mini action plan; a living document, in which staff collect and analyze data. These steps include: looking at the individual student assessments, finding the individual gaps, coming up with a plan to reteach, and revisiting after the reteach. Mesa Verde Elementary were early adopters of data walls. Data is displayed in a data room and throughout the school. Students track their data. Students can articulate what they have learned and their level of proficiency as a result of tracking. We have continued this practice through the pandemic by sharing data virtually with parents.

Students with strategic skill deficits have a scheduled intervention time for early reading and math skills based on the drill down data from Istation and other assessments. All teachers, educational assistants and administrators, help support these efforts. The lessons that the students are given focus on basic conceptual understanding of skills development in early literacy and math skills. During this time all students not in groups are provided additional practice and support that is based on the specific grade level skills they need to improve.

As a result of our unique and precise systems we made little adjustment for online instruction. We created additional strategies to teach online however, the curriculum remained intact. Small groups support continues, provided in various ways, in order to meet the needs of all learners. The daily learning objectives (DLO), purpose of the lesson, chunking, actively processing, recording, representing, graphic organizers, anchor charts, virtual whiteboards, note taking, polls, and chats are an outline of what lessons contain. These are all things we used in prior years as well.

**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:**

All students K-5 participate in all other curriculum programs for approximately 50 minutes each day rotating through library, physical education, music, and computer classes. They meet either in person or online via our Schoology platform.

Library time includes a read aloud and cross curricular lessons which are also recorded and accessible for virtual students. In these lessons, students may be constructing or designing projects, or they may be utilizing their research skills. The lessons help with acquisition of essential skills and knowledge such as learning to read, mathematics, problem solving, investigating, exploration, research, and more. Resources include: books in the library, e-books, digital magazines, and other virtual resources help quench a student's thirst for information as well as instill a love and knowledge of reading. Makerspace will be used as we are allowed.

In addition to physical education standards, students practice acceptable prosocial behavior, cooperation, and sportsmanship. Students are encouraged to try non-traditional adventure challenges such as slack-line, crate stacking, and self-hoisting. Many students surprise themselves by going beyond what they felt they were capable of doing, or by overcoming fears. Virtual learners get 60 minutes physical activity daily. Resources to help motivate, inspire, and teach fitness are posted in Schoology. The physical education teacher distributed a packet of materials including balls, paddles, and other game resources that students can use at home to support their learning.

Music is such an essential part of educating the whole child as it includes all the learning styles of aural, oral, kinesthetic, and abstract. Our school has the unique privilege of being well stocked with Orff instruments (bars, percussion, and shakers), as well as having a class set of ukuleles. With these instruments we are able to bring literature to life. We use well-loved song tales, picture books, and folk tales and enrich the student experience using these instruments. We are able to use traditions of other cultures through dance, technology, and games to find value in differences, and through that come to a greater self-appreciation for each of us and the cultures we have in this area.

The pandemic caused us to stretch, grow, and educate ourselves in new ways. The world has become our classroom as we have had to be innovative and resourceful. We have grown like never before, and as a result, have been able to reach students in different ways. Online relationships flourished as students who were uncomfortable speaking in class have been able to participate from their own keyboard.

Computer Science curriculum and programming are taught; including computing systems, networks and the internet, data and analysis, algorithms, and programming, and impacts of computing. In addition, students complete projects on the computers that meet the learning goals for grade level proficiency. Skills taught overlap and support learning in the classroom.

The art teacher was virtual but has returned to in person. Instructional videos are available in Schoology. Art  
NBRS 2021

lessons that focus on art history, generating, conceptualizing, organizing, refining, developing, conveying meaning, relating, and synthesizing are all concepts taught. Again, reinforcement of those critical skills taught in the classroom. The art teacher meets with students online weekly to support the learning.

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

We have a “Walk to Intervention” which supports our core beliefs that these are everyone’s students. During a 30-minute block each day for reading and a 30-minute block each day for math our students that are performing below grade level receive interventions specifically tailored to their needs. Early literacy or numeracy skill deficits are identified and those students are grouped for targeted learning. All teachers have a small group of students during this time. The students are grouped across the grade level and sometimes above or below grade level based on need. At this time students that are performing above grade level are also provided with support either from the gifted teacher or independent work to increase their performance. If students are below grade level, and identified for special education, they may receive a reading group with the special education teacher. If their skills do not warrant a need they are placed with a general education teacher to target the specific skill.

Below grade level students identified for special education also receive inclusion support when all students are receiving Tier 1 instruction on learning goals. Those students, as well as any other students that might need additional support, are given this support in the classroom by both the special education teacher and the general education teacher.

In addition, we also have a life skills room for our more severe and profound students. Students in this classroom go to lunch, physical education, music, library, and computer with their peers. They participate in the Walk to Intervention and are part of the inclusion model to the general education classrooms for targeted academic support based on assessment data.

In an effort to provide the greatest level of support to our English Language Learners (ELL) our teachers have committed to earning an endorsement in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL). Seventy-three percent of our classroom teachers currently hold a TESOL endorsement. Students that are identified as English Language Learners students are placed in a classroom with a TESOL endorsed teacher who implements research-based best practices that support learning grade level content while acquiring academic English. Contextualized (Sheltered) instructional strategies are embedded into our Farmington Model of Instruction. Moreover, students are provided targeted English Language Development instruction through the district and state approved computer-based program, Imagine Learning Language and Literacy. Daily intervention groups that target specific skill deficits are built based on the data from weekly common formative assessments. In addition, all students’ foundational reading skills are assessed in a six-week cycle; this ensures consistent feedback and narrows the likelihood for gaps in learning.

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

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

Collaborative support is the number one priority, and its impact on our climate is evident in the relationships between students, families, and staff at Mesa Verde Elementary. It is all about the students at Mesa Verde and staff continuously come up with creative ways to support our students. We are reflective and make adjustments as needed. Pre-pandemic we had after-school tutoring by teachers; math and early literacy programs specifically tailored for support of those struggling students. We had before-school tutoring using our middle school students from across the street to provide tutoring for our elementary students. We had one of the largest STEM programs for our students after school. In addition, we offered tap and yoga to allow students many options and supports. The wide variety of selections afforded an opportunity for all students to be successful in something. Mesa Verde continues to create an environment of high expectations for all students and teachers are committed to preparing our students and supporting them in both academic and social-emotional success.

We shifted our supports virtually. Motivation and engagement looked a little different in this platform. We helped students set boundaries at home and create routines. Teachers support students with strategies including student independent tracking of academic goals, social-emotional goals, celebrating success, interest surveys, altruism projects, gratitude journals, questioning techniques to start conversations, break out rooms for small group conversations, and other online social circle practices. Students show their work, which not only holds them accountable, but also allows teachers to do a quick data check to determine any misunderstandings and support them. This expectation was part of our system prior to the pandemic but served students and teachers even more so when we shifted to an online platform.

Teachers have implemented open dialogue including, ‘I wish my teacher knew,’ to provide opportunities for students to share about themselves. Teachers provide time after conferences, provide additional small groups, and eat lunch with students to give them time to build relationships and to share. The social worker and counselor meet weekly with all students and practice mindfulness and growth mindset activities.

We have addressed attendance as a relationship building project. Teachers contact students daily to check on them and make sure they are okay, especially if they are not attending their online conferences and submitting work. The message we strive to convey is: We are here for you. How can we support you?

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

Mesa Verde relies on parents as partners and has continued to work on making our school a Community School, despite the challenges of a pandemic. We have an active Parent Teacher Organization of which many of our teachers are involved. Academic Parent Teacher Teams provide authentic engagement around academic content in which teachers partner with parents in collaborative, relationship building events. We also have quarterly Parent Advisory Council Meetings, which continues (virtually) despite the pandemic. Quarterly celebrations of academics, behavior, and individual recognitions continued. Parents are invited to these Zoom celebrations. We had a virtual Open House at the beginning of the year. Our social worker and counselor, seeing a need, provided a PAX (Latin for peace, health, happiness, and productivity) night to help support parents at home with simple ways to help students with their social-emotional learning. PAX is also practiced regularly in the school for social-emotional learning. An annual Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, and Science Fair are also held and parents share in this celebration.

Celebrations occur not only daily in the classroom, but also schoolwide. Weekly Tootles; a recognition of student success or positive praise for helping others, is shared on the loudspeaker every Tuesday. Our daily pledge also includes our Wild Cat pledge which focuses on the social-emotional aspect and is a reminder of what we represent following the golden rule, self-regulation, and communication.

Additionally, our counselor and social worker sent out a parent survey at the beginning of the year asking what families needed. Over 200 families responded and asked for support which included: food for the

home, hygiene products, academic needs, testing skills, lunch services, internet, and mental health needs. These needs were addressed in school or referred out to other community organizations based on needs.

In order to support families, we have had a drive through for parents. Parents come to the front of the school and we go out and support them with technology and other support. We do weekly call outs and emails that share what we are doing for professional development, data and planning on Mondays, celebrations of success, and gratefulness from kind acts by our parents.

We send out a weekly email to parents that keeps them updated on what is happening in the school as a whole. We send out quarterly surveys to parents, students, and staff and make adjustments for school improvement, based on feedback.

Our Attendance Team has been an integral part in maintaining open communication with families. It consists of administration, a grade level representative, the counselor, social worker, and the nurse. Weekly home visits (by administration and the counselor) have been one of our biggest successes in building relationships, engaging families, and providing support for student success in school. These visits served a variety of purposes: attendance support, technology support, creating routines and schedules for families, and providing food; we even delivered a washing machine to a family in desperate need. Parents are contacting us more openly and being proactive in sharing their specific needs so we can support them without loss of instructional time. We attribute this to our authentic relationships.

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

The principal believes in a collaborative hands-on approach with boots in the classroom. Administration is also there to listen and support. All staff are an integral part of the decision-making process. The staff input is valued and helpful in all the decisions made at the school level. In each of our school-wide teams (Attendance Team, Finance Team, and Behavior Focus Group) there is a grade level representative, who is someone other than the grade level leader. This ensures that everyone shares an important role. Our teachers have input in schedules, systems for drop off and pick up, what social distancing should look like, and general planning, as well as their instructional plans. Staff feel comfortable to share their ideas because they will be heard. Some examples include our music teacher creating our school-wide schedule, a fifth-grade teacher creating a minute-by-minute dismissal plan (to ensure social distancing), a video of what the day looked like minute to minute and what to expect was also created by several staff members and a spouse. Again, this speaks to the staff, they have continued to believe and implement our systems with fidelity and support for each other.

Weekly professional development is provided including planning for the reentry, academic and instructional support, technology, ELA, and math. Staff and Instructional Team Leaders share the professional development. Our counselor and social worker have also shared self-care strategies. Exit tickets are created at our staff meetings to inquire about additional professional development needed.

Instructional Rounds are an observational professional development that is tailored to teacher interest or need. Our Instructional Team Leaders and teachers attend classroom lessons to observe colleagues that are experts in a pedagogical practice. The observers provide positive feedback on the lesson. Then, the Instructional Team Leader observes the teachers implementing the new strategy and provides actionable feedback.

Vertical alignment meetings occur quarterly. Staff collaborate with the grade level above and below them. Discussion is about student preparedness and reflection on adjustments. Differentiated, job-embedded professional development is afforded to all teachers through non-evaluative instructional coaching. All teachers are included in this monthly process that honors teacher reflection and facilitates goal setting. The principal and assistant principal continue to support the refinement of skills through cyclical individual coaching sessions.

All staff are included in our systems. The secretary runs our monthly finance meeting, has been trained to troubleshoot technology and provide support for student participation.

Administrators acknowledge varying comfort levels with technology plans. Staff members helped others set up their systems with cameras, projectors, and document cameras. Virtual whiteboards were discovered by a teacher and shared with all.

Weekly celebrations are shared in the weekly memo as well as in person. Little tokens of appreciation and gratitude have also been given. Weekly letters are written to staff families, as a way of modeling relationship-building. It's powerful, and it's part of how we have built a supportive culture. This is how the strong systems of support and collegial accountability will help us weather the coming shifts in the learning model.

We are all in when it comes to supporting our community. Our self-reflection around the district commitments is a powerful statement about Mesa Verde's willingness to reflect and adjust.

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

The principal's philosophy is that all staff are leaders in some capacity. The goal is to empower staff to find their abilities and inner strengths to continue to grow, develop, and help others to develop. Mesa Verde leadership is reflective and responsive. It consists of a representative from each grade level. The leadership brings needs to the meetings and takes back supports or needs as well. The principal and assistant are servant leaders and are there to support staff and students so that quality instruction is provided to students including socially and emotionally. Our Instructional Team Leaders and leadership help guide all staff in achieving the goals of our 90-day plan, assessing what is going well, and what needs improvement.

The administrators, grade level representatives for leadership, and Instructional Team Leaders monitor the fidelity of their team to policies including our behavior management system, safety policies, instructional policies, intervention programs, relationship building, and resources that focus on student achievement. This is done through our PLCs at each grade level. Administrators attend PLCs weekly and leadership representatives lead for their grade levels. Weekly planning, data analysis, and interventions are decided in a collaborative way. A relationship building rubric was created by each grade level for the school. It has focused on strategies used in building the relationships and is monitored by administration. Administrators ensure that policies, programs, relationships, and resources are adhered to during walkthroughs and are documented in our monthly virtual and in school data tracking.

Our Instructional Focus Team brings back information from our district meetings and provides professional development and instructional coaching. Our math district representatives also share information from the district meetings and provide professional development.

Mesa Verde believes that safety is a priority. As our population has grown, we had struggles with high traffic volume on our main street as there is middle school and college on this street, as well as a high school in close proximity. Last year the principal and assistant principal received flagger training to help support the flow of traffic after school and also spent a great deal of time planning a better transportation pattern for our buses. Our detailed plan for entry and exit by students, as well as the videos created by all staff, are testimony to the value of safety and the fidelity to these systems.

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

Staff espouse the attitude that all students can learn and model a growth mindset to our students. Culturally sensitive strategies are shared by staff, and practiced with fidelity in the classroom, to meet the needs of students that are both traditional and non-traditional learners. Teachers strive to validate each student's home culture and language through the school environment and instructional strategies that are relevant to their lives. We celebrate cultural diversity including: Indigenous people celebrations, Cinco de Mayo, and recognizing the uniqueness of our Native American and Hispanic cultures.

Staff are a diverse population and share their culture with colleagues and students. To ensure success for all, the majority of our staff are TESOL endorsed. The staff that are not yet endorsed provide TESOL strategies in their classrooms that are good supports for all students. In addition, our students that need additional support in their native language and the transition to English are offered this through Imagine Learning. Additionally, enrichment classes are available in Spanish.

Given the social emotional needs during the pandemic we are addressing the social-emotional struggles that have been created. As a staff we are encouraging all students and families to return to in-school learning based on the social-emotional support that is needed. Students have not been part of the social structure of in-school learning with other students for over a year. With that, the need to reeducate students on social interactions is critical. This has been communicated to parents and we are prepared to address this with our behavior management system, including PAX, and the additional support of our social worker and counselor. The counselor and social worker provide services on an individual basis. We will continue to provide an equitable education, although virtual learning might look different. This has also been communicated as well. We are respectful of the needs and fears of parents that are resistant and are listening to their concerns providing support and reassurance.

Students and staff have experienced death during this time for various reasons. We approach each situation in a culturally sensitive manner and provide equitable responses. Our staff is supportive through donations and we have a Sunshine fund that supports staff as well. Staff have given time to other staff and supported them by taking their online learners for instruction. We have had staff take food, tissue, monetary donations, and even provided services like walking and pet clean-up to alleviate stress on others during this difficult time.



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

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Mesa Verde believes in collaboration, having a growth mindset, and practicing mindfulness. We are student driven and have high expectations for all students. Our reflectiveness, resilience, and perseverance as a community has been even more apparent during the pandemic. Fidelity to our systems is what makes Mesa Verde successful with backward and forward planning of the assessment cycle, weekly data meetings and updating mini action plans, professional learning community collaboration, instructional planning model, attendance and behavior plans, and our system for monitoring their effectiveness.

Strategies are implemented, continuously monitored, reflected upon, and adjusted in all of our academic practices through our strategic collective commitments which results in the more focused outcomes of fidelity to academic successes. The collective commitments and systems include: safe, supportive, collaborative culture, effective teaching in every classroom, guaranteed and viable curriculum, and standards-referenced systems.

Mesa Verde strives for educational excellence and has a reputation as one of state's schools with the most academic growth. Mesa Verde has posted the 7th highest proficiency growth rate for ELA in the entire state of New Mexico, including elementary, secondary and charter schools. Mesa Verde Elementary School placed in the top 20% of all schools in New Mexico for overall test scores (math proficiency top 20% and reading proficiency top 20%) for the 2017-18 school year. Mesa Verde achieved recognition for an "A" school on the New Mexico Report Card four straight years. The mission of Farmington Municipal Schools: 'To prepare all students for life, college and career success,' is truly taken to heart in the staff and students and their efforts continue to show in the success of our students. Even after the 2019-2020 school year the New Mexico Public Education Department removed grades, Mesa Verde continued to achieve the highest scores in the district for ELA and math. The school has averaged 7 percent growth every year.

Teachers recognize our responsibility to reduce achievement gaps. As a result of the intervention strategies outlined above, we have improved equity at Mesa Verde Elementary (MVE). As an example, for the period between 2017 and 2019, all MVE students grew 13 points in math. We are especially proud that at the same time, our historically underperforming student populations grew at a faster rate (15 points for Hispanic students and 19 points for Native American students). Title One percentages continued to increase during this time which supports our belief that all students can learn.

Some of our national highlights include: the Leadership team presenting their expertise at the Think CERCA conference in San Diego in 2018-2019; a nomination for the R.E.A.D. award because of our success with the 95% reading program; along with the principal being invited to the National Principal Summit with the district team to discuss district engagement in April of 2021. This is follow up to last year's summit which was canceled due to the pandemic. All of this success supports the one practice of fidelity to our systems along with being willing to reflect and adjust.

We approach adversity with perseverance and resilience. Our staff was so confident in the strength of our systems that despite the pandemic, we volunteered to participate in a district audit as a way to help us identify opportunities for further improvement. We do not allow students to opt out and we as a staff will not give up or opt out on students. For the 2020-21 school year, two Mesa Verde teachers were selected, because of their growth, into roles that allowed them to make a bigger difference as instructional coaches. We are now training new teachers that are student teaching in those roles. Two of our leaders in the building stepped into the Instructional Teacher roles and they have done it seamlessly, again because of our systems in place.

In closing, Mesa Verde staff, students, and community are very proud to be honored with this nomination.