

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 2310 Larkspur Drive
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Johnson City State TN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 37604-2470

County Washington County

Telephone (423) 854-4800 Fax (423) 854-4810

Web site/URL https://www.jcschools.org/10/home E-mail simmonst@jcschools.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Steve Barnett E-mail barnetts@jcschools.org

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

District Name Johnson City School District Tel. (423) 434-5200

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. Kathy Hall
(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):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 11 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	28	31	59
1	43	45	88
2	46	38	84
3	34	51	85
4	46	37	83
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	197	202	399

*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
 - 12 % Asian
 - 10 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75 % 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: 5%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	22
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	424
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Panjabi, Hindi, Vietnamese, Arabic, Russian, Nepali, Portugese, Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
10 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 28 %

Total number students who qualify: 110

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

33 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>6</u> Developmental Delay | <u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
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 20:1

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	97%	96%	96%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Our mission is to prepare students academically, socially, and culturally by utilizing a variety of learning experiences to ensure that they become successful, 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.

Towne Acres offered two options for our families for the 2020-21 school year. Families could choose remote learning or in-person learning for their children. This was the same for all of the schools in our district. Families of elementary school students were able to make changes after each quarter, while our intermediate, middle, and high school students were able to make changes at the end of the semester. There were two times during the school year that our operating schedule was altered. All of our students started the year learning remotely for the first three weeks. After three weeks, those students who had chosen in-person learning were able to come back to school. This same strategy applied the first week students returned in January when all students learned remotely.

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 Johnson City community takes great pride in Towne Acres Elementary School. Our school is known for our strong parental and community involvement, as well as our strong academic performance. The majority of our students come from middle-class, professional families who are actively involved. Our school demographics have changed quite a bit over the past ten years. Our free and reduced lunch rate has increased, and we have become more ethnically diverse, evidenced by the fact that we have students from around twenty different countries.

Towne Acres has employed a number of strategies to help our students succeed. From an academic perspective, our teachers continue to plan and carry out high-quality instruction each day. Grade level teams plan together weekly and utilize the district's academic coaches to make sure we are teaching the Tennessee State Standards in a rigorous manner. We administer quarterly checkpoints in ELA and Math, and this data is analyzed closely to determine individual student needs and to identify any standards that may need to be reviewed and refined with the class.

Even though our school is limited in terms of paraprofessionals, we make use of other resources to provide small group and individual assistance for our students and teachers. Related arts teachers serve as classroom assistants if they have open blocks during the day, and we have benefited from partnerships with our local high school and universities to have student volunteers working with our students. Every classroom teacher receives at least thirty minutes of classroom assistance each day, and that time is primarily used to work with students. Our district also has a robust summer learning program that serves our students.

Our students have access to counselors throughout the day. We have a school counselor who teaches classes, but we split her third and fourth grade blocks so she can provide individual or small group counseling for our students. She also has a 30 minute block set aside in the middle of the day to meet with students who have social or emotional needs. Our district has a partnership with a local agency that provides services for students who have social and emotional needs. A case manager is at our school every day, and we have a therapist/counselor who is assigned to our school one day a week. Our counseling team works together to conduct friendship groups and other focus groups to help students learn and grow socially.

Towne Acres students are encouraged to reach their potential physically. All students receive an hour of physical education class each week along with a daily recess. In response to the pandemic, our PE teacher has uploaded exercise videos to our new related arts website that allow our students to perform workouts at home and in their classroom on days with inclement weather. The PE teacher also encourages students to be physically active with their families by completing a Student Activity Bingo card that lists numerous ways students can be physically active at home.

Towne Acres has developed some unique programs over the past few years to help our students reach their full potential. As we continue to address the STEAM component, we have implemented a Maker Space element to the library media center as well as STEM challenges for students. We have after-school coding clubs for multiple grade levels, and our 4th graders are able to participate in the Lego League, Jr. competition each fall. We have primary grades and upper grades teachers who team up for STEM Buddies and Tech Buddies, which are programs designed to have upper grades students serve as mentors for younger students on STEM related activities.

Our school resource officer (SRO) started an after school group called the Distinguished Gentlemen's Academy that focuses on teaching proper etiquette and manners to 4th grade students. The six-week program ends with a family meal, and the students learn how to set the table and serve their families. One of our 3rd grade teachers conducts a Math Builder's club that works together to design and build a community library where families in the neighborhood can exchange books.

In many ways, Covid-19 has made us a better school. We modified our arrival and dismissal procedures to provide adequate spacing, and we have determined that our new procedures are much safer for our students and have led to a decrease in behavior issues during these times. Teachers improved their use of classroom

management systems (Canvas and Google Classroom), which has benefited our students throughout the year, both during in-person learning and remote learning. When students are absent, we now have a system in place to provide synchronous instruction to all students. When a teacher was required to quarantine, the teacher provided instruction from home while a paraprofessional or substitute teacher supervised the students. This allowed us to provide high-quality instruction to students each and every day, even when the student or teacher was absent.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Towne Acres Elementary School offers a rigorous academic program that focuses on teaching the Tennessee State Standards to a level of mastery for all students. Our school believes in setting high expectations for student learning, which requires teachers to maintain high standards for their planning, instruction, and professional growth. Teachers in each grade level plan together and share best practices during weekly grade level meetings. Our teachers also utilize curriculum specialists in the areas of ELA, Math, and Science to ensure that lesson plans and assessments are rigorous and challenge students to reach their full potential. Our goal is to equip students with the work ethic, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking skills that will allow them to become independent thinkers and succeed during their academic career.

English Language Arts/Reading

Towne Acres teachers in grades K-4 teach the Tennessee State Standards for Reading, Writing, and Speaking/Listening. Each year a grade level representative from each elementary school works with the district's literacy coaches to develop pacing guides for each nine weeks period.

Teachers and students in grades K-1 utilize the HMH reading series as part of their ELA curriculum along with programs such as Accelerated Reader, IXL, Words Their Way, and Letterland. Students in 2nd grade use the HMH into Reading series as part of their core curriculum, while 3rd and 4th grades use the Benchmark Advance series. The inclusion of novel studies, especially in 3rd and 4th grades, allows teachers to explore longer texts to address many of our reading content standards. Teachers make sure to supplement additional nonfiction or fiction texts weekly depending on the textbook's focus for that week. Epic Books provides a wide variety of online books for students and has been extremely useful this year during the periods of remote learning. There is an increased focus on writing instruction in grades 2-4 as students learn the three modes of writing (opinion, narrative, and informative). Teachers utilize Tennessee State Anchor Papers for writing to aid in instruction and the state writing rubric to help students self-assess writing samples.

Our primary grades implement a balanced literacy approach that includes a gradual release of instruction with phonics, language, reading comprehension, teacher read aloud, and writing. Foundational literacy skills with a focus on phonics and phonemic awareness play a large role in our K-2 classrooms as students learn the skills that will help them become accomplished readers. Kindergarten and first grade teachers employ small group centers and stations during their literacy block to better meet the individual needs of our students. Students in Kindergarten and 1st grade take home Reading A-Z leveled readers nightly to practice fluency and comprehension on their level. Kindergarten and first grade students are able to access additional learning materials and resources through Google Classroom where they are able to access presentations and other learning materials. First grade students also participate in our Accelerated Reader program, which allows students to read books on their reading level and that are of interest to them.

Whole group instruction provides the foundation in our 2nd-4th grade classrooms as teachers introduce new concepts. By using informal classroom assessments throughout the instruction, teachers are able to determine the next steps for students. Teachers provide additional small group instruction to students who are experiencing difficulties while other students work cooperatively or independently to complete classroom practice assignments. All of our 2nd-4th grade students utilize Accelerated Reader to differentiate reading instruction and provide students with texts that are rigorous and challenging. Learning modules are developed by teachers and posted on Canvas (3rd and 4th grades) or Google Classroom (K-2) so that students can revisit classroom presentations and access additional resources.

For grades K-1, data is collected three times per year using the mClass Reading Assessment that measures student progress in the areas of phonemic awareness and word reading, as well as writing samples. All first grade students take the STAR Reading test each nine weeks to determine their independent reading level and to allow teachers to track growth each nine weeks. The STAR Reading assessment allows teachers to match students with books that are appropriate to their reading level and provides a level of differentiation.

Kindergarten students are assessed using STAR Reading as they demonstrate the proper level of skill to complete the assessment independently. This is a very fluid process in kindergarten as students reach this level at different times throughout the year. Kindergarten teachers and students participate in the State Portfolio Assessment, which measures student progress at three different points in the year.

Quarterly checkpoint assessments are administered using the Illuminate platform in grades 2-4 to assess student mastery of the nine weeks learning standards. Results are used to group students for small group instruction that is standard specific. Data is also used to recruit students for remediation and enrichment programs that are offered after school. Teachers implement a daily spiral review, which focuses on the content standards with the lowest scores from the assessments. All 2nd-4th grade students take the Easy CBM assessment and a writing assessment three times per year, and these results are used to identify students to receive RTI instruction for extra support. Advanced students are able to access higher-level content using IXL, Study Island, and reading higher-leveled text with Accelerated Reader. Third and fourth grade students participate in the state's annual standardized test, which is the TN Ready assessment.

Mathematics

All of the teachers at Towne Acres use the HMH Go Math textbook series for instruction. Pacing guides are developed collaboratively at all grade levels by a teacher representative from each school and the district's math coaches. In addition to the HMH materials, 2nd-4th grade teachers also utilize online programs such as Zearn, Khan Academy, Study Island, Sumdog, and IXL to comprise our math curriculum. The primary focus in kindergarten and first grade is to develop a foundational understanding of numbers, operations, and shapes. The major concepts in 2nd grade include number sense to 1,000, adding and subtracting with regrouping, measurement, and data collection with graphs. Third and fourth grades continue to develop a stronger number sense, multiplication, division, fractions, and geometry. Students in 3rd and 4th grades also utilize problem-solving journals as part of their curriculum.

Kindergarten and first grade teachers use a hands-on approach to math and use manipulatives daily to allow students to develop a foundational understanding of numbers, operations, and shapes. A center-based approach is used in Kindergarten and 1st grade with math instruction. In grades 2-4, an emphasis is placed on developing a deeper number sense, fact fluency with all operations, and a firm understanding of fractions and measurement. Teachers challenge all students with rigorous whole-group instruction then provide support for students who need it. Students in 4th grade also participate in daily problem-solving tasks that focus on providing explanations and evidence for solutions. These tasks require students to explore multiple solution paths and develop a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. Websites such as Zearn and Khan Academy are valuable tools that can be used to differentiate, especially for advanced students. Students can receive instruction on higher grade level math through educational videos and step-by-step tutorials.

All K-4 students take the Easy CBM universal screener for math three times per year. This enables us to develop small groups of students for RTI instruction and after-school remediation and enrichment programs. Students in grades 1-4 take the STAR Math assessment at least three times per year and growth is tracked over the course of the year. Checkpoint assessments using Illuminate are administered each nine weeks and data is analyzed to identify students in need of extra support and content standards that need to be retaught. We also receive subgroup reports through this platform that allow us to make sure we are teaching all students at a high level. The district math coaches provide an overview of the assessment as a district and resources to help teachers reteach trouble areas. Problem solving journals are created at the district level and are utilized at the conclusion of each unit to add an increased level of rigor to unit assessments. Daily assessments are assigned in the form of exit slips, Canvas quizzes, IXL assignments, and the Go Math textbook. Third and fourth grade students participate in annual state testing, which is the TN Ready Assessment.

Science

Teachers in the primary grades work to integrate Science into other curriculum areas through nonfiction texts and writing. All of our teachers incorporate hands-on learning modules into their weekly lesson plans

and incorporate the 5 E's lesson plan (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate). Our primary grades explore living vs. non-living, man-made vs. natural resources, and states of matter. Second grade students learn more about animal life cycles and habitats, energy, and earth's process. Third and fourth grade students continue learning more about energy and forces, weather, and plant/animal adaptations. Each grade level integrates writing into instruction to allow students to demonstrate a deep understanding of the science standards through their writing.

Towne Acres takes a hands-on approach to science instruction. Science instruction requires students to think critically and problem solve as they engage in inquiry-based tasks that require students to develop a deep understanding of scientific phenomena. Digital journals using Google slides are used by 3rd and 4th grade students during science instruction. Our school has a site-based account to purchase science materials, and our PTA and Booster Club also budget money each year to purchase science materials for our teachers and students. Our school does not have science textbooks, so we rely on websites such as Generation Genius and Mystery Science for introducing the content standards. Our district Science coach also provides resources for our teachers and leads the team that develops the pacing guides for the year that are based on the Tennessee State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards.

Towne Acres Elementary holds an annual Science Fair that encourages students to explore and learn more about science topics that are of interest to them. Projects are displayed in a common area so all students can have access to the projects and learn more about different areas in science. We also have an annual STEM Day that includes hands-on activities for students and presenters from a variety of STEM careers.

Checkpoints are administered two times per year, which allows teachers to assess their own instruction of the content standards and the learning of students. Teachers use exit slips, Canvas quizzes, and online programs such as IXL and Study Island to assess student learning on a daily basis. Teachers also place an emphasis on journal activities and writing tasks to assess student learning. Third and fourth grade students participate in the annual TN Ready assessment, which is Tennessee's standardized state test.

Social Studies

The Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers at Towne Acres integrate the Tennessee Social Studies content standards into their ELA instruction as well as their assigned classroom time for Social Studies. Students learn about neighborhoods and communities in K-1. Second, third, and fourth grade students learn about government, economics, geography, and American history. Teachers utilize resources such as TN History for Kids, Scholastic News, ReadWorks.org, Newsela, and nonfiction texts to provide curriculum to meet the Tennessee State Standards.

Teachers use nonfiction texts and educational videos to introduce Social Studies content. While it is often integrated with ELA instruction, teachers utilize cooperative learning strategies such as the jigsaw strategy, carousel, and snowball strategy to allow students to explore content and share their learning. Social Studies content in grades 3-4 is organized into learning modules on Canvas so students are able to have more control over the pace of instruction and can utilize various sources to learn the content.

Teachers rely on classwork, exit slips, homework, and unit tests to assess student learning. The use of choice boards in the upper grades provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their learning through a wide array of avenues. These activities are based on Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and allow students to show what they have learned in non-traditional ways.

Pandemic Response

Our school system offered families two learning options for the 2020-21 school year. However, all of our schools began the year virtually for the first three weeks. We also adopted this schedule when we returned to school in January. With the exception of those times, an in-person option and remote option have been available throughout the year. Families could choose to be fully remote, or they could opt for in-person learning. At the elementary level, families were able to choose each nine weeks. At Towne Acres, we were able to have one teacher from each grade level be the remote learning teacher for our students who chose

that option, with the exception of our kindergarten students who combined with another school. Remote teachers for grades 1-4 continued to meet with their grade level teams to maintain consistency with planning and instruction and prevent feelings of isolation for the teachers who were teaching virtually.

At the end of the first quarter, several students opted to return for in-person learning, but it was not enough to necessitate a teacher returning from virtual to in-person learning. At the end of the second quarter, our numbers increased to the point that we had to have our 4th grade virtual teacher return to in-person learning, which allowed us to better space students, but it forced us to reshape rosters to accommodate this move. For the first time at Towne Acres, we went to a 4 person team instead of either two 2 person teams or one 3 person team. The change has actually allowed us to have more instructional time for ELA than we do when we have a 3 person team. A similar scenario unfolded in 3rd grade at the end of the third quarter, so our 3rd and 4th grade remote students are currently being taught by remote learning teachers who are at other schools.

Our instructional approach has evolved since in-person learning ended last March. Our teachers and students have grown in their use of learning management systems, such as Canvas and Google Classroom. These tools have made it easier for students to address make-up work when they are absent. Teachers post presentations, assignments, links, and other important information on these pages so students and parents always have access. Accessing the content from the management system and logging in with their class via Zoom or Google Meet has helped keep students on pace with their classmates during times of extended quarantine. The breakout room features on these platforms have allowed us to continue to have students work collaboratively in a remote setting.

Devices and hot spots have been available during times of remote learning so that students have access to virtual learning. Several upper grades teachers have transitioned to digital journals this year to accommodate for changes in our schedule. The use of flipped lessons, asynchronous resources, and on demand, student paced lessons has allowed students to be able to move at their own pace, which builds confidence in their abilities.

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 at Towne Acres go to five related arts classes each week: Physical Education, Music, Art, Library, and Guidance. Each of these classes takes place for an hour each day with the exception of our kindergarten students who visit two related arts classes each day for 30 minutes each. Third and fourth grade students split their hour of Guidance with Tech Lab. Typically, we use the time in Tech Lab to focus on keyboarding skills, Microsoft Office applications, or Google applications, but given the challenges of this school year, we have used the Tech Lab time as a time for academic intervention, remediation, and enrichment.

All of our related arts classes have made adjustments in response to our Covid-19 safety protocols. When students go to Art, they each have their own supply box as opposed to using the community supply like we have in the past. Our Art teacher developed over 100 online lessons that are primarily accessed by our students who are in the remote learning program. However, students who are in our traditional program also have access to these lessons on the related arts website, so our students are actually receiving more instruction than in a typical year.

Guidance class has been needed more this year than in years past. The pandemic brought about stress and emotional issues for students. In addition to meeting with students using platforms such as Google Meet and

Zoom, our counselor has also met with more small groups than usual. Part of the class time for 3rd and 4th grades is dedicated to Tech Lab with another instructor, which allows our counselor to meet with individual students during this time. She also implemented a 5-10 minute window at the start of each class for students to share anything that is on their mind. This leads to interesting discussions among the students and provides tremendous insight into how our students are feeling this year. Allowing students to have this outlet during each class has been an eye opener and will be a strategy we continue to use going forward.

Our Library Media Specialist has spent extra time reviewing digital citizenship and online safety this year. She has also utilized our related arts website to post numerous videos of authors and other famous figures reading aloud books to students, and these can be accessed at school and home. She continues to support our English Language Arts curriculum by addressing literacy standards during her classes. Remote learning students are also able to check out books through a system she has developed. This has allowed us to keep high-quality literature in the hands of our remote learning students.

Physical Education class added a few components to address our current operating schedule. Online workout videos are available for remote learners to complete asynchronously, and he also conducts synchronous lessons with remote learners. Classroom teachers utilize these videos with their classes when there is inclement weather so that students receive physical activity each day. Our PE classes have also encouraged students to be more active at home this year. Our teacher developed a Bingo board for students to complete at home with their family that includes a variety of fitness activities and encourages students to try new sports.

3. Academic Supports:

At Towne Acres our subgroup numbers are typically low in terms of the number of students who are in each subgroup, so the Super Subgroup is very important when we analyze data. We traditionally do not have large subgroup numbers in each grade level, so we normally approach intervention from the perspective of helping all students who are performing below our overall population. Our approach and philosophy has always been “success for all.” TN Ready data and our quarterly checkpoint assessments are analyzed after completion of the assessments. Our teachers look at individual student performance, standards performance, and subgroup performance on each of these assessments.

Teachers develop lesson plans that provide differentiation and address the needs of learners of all levels. This includes leveled spelling lists in the primary grades, leveled texts for independent reading, and online programs that allow teachers to assign content from lower grades to allow students to work on existing learning gaps. Teachers continue to work in small groups with students who need extra support during classroom instruction. Each teacher receives at least 30 minutes of instructional support from a paraprofessional, academic tutor, related arts teacher, or student volunteer. Our Booster Club funded an academic tutor the past two years to provide extra support in our 3rd and 4th grade classrooms for students who are performing below grade level. Assistant time is to be spent working with students each day, so our students who need support receive extra help each day. We continue to serve students in all grades in our RTI program.

Several after-school programs are available for students who need support. Homework clubs and tutoring groups are available for 2nd-4th grade students who need academic help. Invitations are first extended to students who are identified as having the greatest need, but any student is able to attend if they want the extra support. Classroom teachers, the principal, and student volunteers provide the support and intervention for these groups.

Towne Acres Elementary has an intellectually gifted program that serves students identified as intellectually gifted. Students who qualify based on an achievement test, IQ test, and checklist meet two times per week and engage in project based learning tasks. Students learn how to solve

problems as members of a team and find solutions to a wide array of problems that are presented.

Classroom teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of advanced learners. The use of small group stations and centers allows teachers to group high-performing students together to explore content that is more rigorous than their grade level standards. Opportunities for self-paced, self-directed learning are posted on Canvas and Google Classroom to allow high-performing students to engage in activities that are above grade level. The Accelerated Reader program allows students to read books that are above grade level and be able to assess their comprehension on these texts.

Technology allows students to push themselves in areas where they excel. Programs such as IXL and Study Island allow students to work up a grade level if they have mastered their grade level content. Math teachers utilize Zearn and Khan Academy to challenge students who are performing above grade level in math. Zearn and Khan Academy provide video tutorials on topics that are advanced for students in their current grade, so students can challenge themselves with higher level content.

Based on previous data, we have identified our Special Education (SPED) students as the subgroup with the most consistent needs academically. Our special education teacher collaborates with classroom teachers to provide the best instruction we can for our special education students and to provide for accommodations on a daily basis in terms of assessment. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are reviewed at the beginning of each school year by the special education teacher, special education assistants, classroom teachers, and related arts teachers. Students are served through pull-out services with our SPED teacher and/or through inclusion services provided by our SPED teacher and assistants. Many of our homework club and tutoring participants are students who are served in special education. This year we have used Hapara to better tailor instruction to a level that our special education students can be successful. This has been very beneficial during the weeks of virtual learning this year.

Our certified ESL teacher also collaborates with classroom teachers and works to provide support during her classes that address the content taught in the regular education classroom. Each student has an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) with goals that are worked on collaboratively between our ESL teacher and the classroom teacher. Individual Learning Plans are reviewed every four weeks and modified as needed to best serve our ELLs. Our school's PTA Diversity and Inclusion committee plays a role in addressing the needs of our special education students and English Language Learners. While most of their work involves improving communication with student families, they have also sought ways to increase the participation of these students in school-wide events, which boosts the confidence of these students and allows them to take part in a way that is more comfortable to them. We also have two teachers who are fluent in Spanish and utilize them to assist with home visits and phone calls.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Towne Acres works hard to provide a positive environment for students to support their overall well-being. Teachers communicate at least weekly with families through our communication app Bloomz and email. Phone calls and home visits are utilized for making connections and building relationships with families. The PTA Facebook page is also a great tool for connecting families with our school and makes them aware of special events at our school. With the absence of field trips, our school conducted monthly “Spirit Days” for students to show their school spirit. A spirit stick was awarded to the winning classes each month. These days provided a boost of encouragement for our students this year.

Our philosophy is that well-planned instruction with engaging lessons is the key to keeping students fully engaged and motivated academically. Teachers work with students to set goals in reading and math each quarter, and these goals provide motivation for our students to achieve their full potential. Teachers review STAR Reading and Math data with students quarterly and also communicate student progress on quarterly checkpoints. Setting learning goals, monitoring progress throughout each quarter, and reviewing quarterly checkpoint data helps students take ownership of their learning, which is highly motivating to our students.

There are several after-school programs that are engaging and motivating for our students. We have coding clubs for 1st and 3rd graders this year. Fourth grade Lego League is also a program that is highly motivating for our students. Students research a problem and work together to develop solutions to the problem, which they present at the competition each year. They also design and program a robot to complete a variety of tasks. Our Student Council for 3rd and 4th graders helps build leadership capacity in our students, and they lead our school in a number of school projects and community service projects, which include our annual food drive along with another venture to help a local organization raise money and bring awareness to their initiatives. Girls on the Run is a program that focuses on fitness, character development, and social-emotional health with our 3rd and 4th grade girls. There are weekly lessons that are shared at each meeting to nurture and help our students reach their potential. Our Distinguished Gentlemen’s Academy led by our School Resource Officer focuses on character development, manners, and how to handle oneself in a variety of social situations.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Towne Acres is fortunate to serve families and a community that values education and support us in many ways. Covid-19 protocols prevented parents and volunteers from coming into our buildings, so we made adjustments this year. We have benefited from parent volunteers providing classroom assistance in the past, so we worked to find ways to provide additional support for our teachers and students. Our partnerships with area institutions of higher education have been more important than ever. We have been strategic with the placement of student teachers and utilized student volunteers from our local high school to make sure our teachers and students receive the support they need.

One of the key strategies we implemented this year was clearly communicating the expectations and changes surrounding our Covid-19 protocols. The principal posted informational videos during the summer to inform parents of changes so parents could make informed decisions regarding in-person or remote learning. Teachers conducted the majority of their parent teacher conferences using Google Meet or Zoom and have continued to use these tools to communicate virtually with families. Our PTA Facebook page also proved invaluable this year as we posted updates and information about our school on a regular basis. PTA general meetings were recorded using our morning news program, and posted on the school’s website and PTA Facebook page to keep parents informed. Our monthly newsletter that details the month’s events and provides a review of the previous month went to a digital format this year.

Our school has utilized Zoom and Google Meet to allow students to learn from professionals in different fields. Our Library Media Specialist invited authors to interact with our students using these platforms. Our STEM Day typically consists of professionals from various STEM fields visiting our school to conduct

presentations for classes, but this was conducted using live video as well as recorded sessions this year. This allowed all of our students to have access to more sessions than they would in a typical year.

In response to the issues surrounding this unusual year, our partnership with our local mental health agency, Frontier Health, strengthened over the course of the school year. Our case manager and therapist met with our guidance team weekly and communicated with parents to understand the specific needs of the students and families. We also worked with a local agency to continue to provide food bags for more families, and our school has an annual Christmas initiative where faculty and families help those in need by supplying clothing, wish list items for children, and food for the holidays.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Towne Acres traditionally provides a very strong professional development plan for teachers. Some activities are recommended by the district leadership and typically involve content planning and learning with our district's curriculum coaches. The principal works with grade levels and the site-based leadership team during each school year and over the summer to pinpoint areas to engage in professional learning. After spending the last quarter of the 2019-20 school year in a remote setting, our site-based leadership team along with individual grade level teams determined a focus needed to be on remote teaching and learning. Surveys were sent to every teacher soliciting feedback regarding the main areas where they needed to grow and learn (i.e. communication, synchronous instruction using video platforms, assessments, etc.).

Over the course of the summer, we utilized our teacher tech leaders to ease the transition to fully remote learning for the first few weeks of school. Our district has a teacher tech leader program that allows teachers to apply to be a part of the program, and they meet on scheduled Saturdays with the district's Instructional Technology supervisor to engage in high-quality professional development and attend a national tech conference. We have always asked our tech leaders to present what they learn from each conference at a faculty meeting, and we took it a step further this year as they conducted a one-day tech conference at our school. Teachers could attend in-person or virtually and had access to all presentations from the day. The tech leaders did a follow-up session during an administrative day when teachers reported back to work in January that had a more narrow focus on presentation and assessment tools.

The principal has always claimed that the amount of professional knowledge in the building is exceptional and needed to be shared both within the walls of the school and outside of our walls. Teachers regularly present at the district level to other schools as well as share formally and informally with the teachers at Towne Acres. Teachers are able to share their professional development needs and wants with the principal, who utilizes TEAM observation data, assessment data, and informal observations to support teachers' wishes for professional development. The fact that our school uses a collaborative approach helps teachers feel ownership of their professional learning while also making sure professional learning is in the areas that have an impact on student learning.

4. School Leadership:

The school's leadership philosophy is one of shared leadership. We have a site-based leadership team comprised of a grade level representative from each grade, a related arts teacher, a classified staff member, two parents, and the principal. Members of this team serve a two-year term with the years being staggered so there is always some sense of continuity within the group while also welcoming fresh ideas. For example, our third grade representative is in her second year on the team, so we will have another third grade teacher rotate into this leadership role next school year. Our fourth grade representative is in her first year so she will remain on for another year.

This group meets one time per month to discuss items that require feedback from stakeholders to make sound decisions. Grade level representatives share information with their grade level teams and gather feedback to share with the team. Our leadership team reviews data quarterly and utilizes the data to make decisions about professional development for grade levels. The team also plays a large role in the site-based budget process. The group reviews previous budgets, looks at current accounts, and develops the budget. This includes ideas and recommendations for capital improvement projects, additional personnel, and

special budget requests. This allows grade level teams, classified staff, and other stakeholders to have a voice in this process.

The school's leadership ensures that our focus is on student achievement and student well-being. Videos and live streaming tools are shared on a variety of platforms to address programs and policies that affect student achievement. Our PTA Board and Booster Club Board meet monthly via Zoom, and our principal and a teacher representative are a part of these groups. Information is shared with these groups who help disperse information to our stakeholders. Our school relies heavily on the financial support of these two groups, so our principal regularly communicates our school's needs as well as our plans on how to address these needs.

The principal sends out a weekly bulletin to staff that highlights the items of importance for the upcoming weeks. Weekly grade level meetings provide opportunities for leadership to work with each grade level to analyze pertinent data, communicate items from the district level, and answer questions that staff members may have. Faculty meetings take place on the first Wednesday of each month and allow for mass communication on important items. Faculty meetings utilized Google Meet for the entire school year to ensure adequate social distancing and maintain safety protocols.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Towne Acres has adopted several strategies for addressing the needs of our students, families, and staff. The development of our Diversity and Inclusion committee on our PTA has spearheaded our recent initiatives. The committee began after some reflection as to why certain groups were not attending larger school-sponsored events such as Open House and Fall Carnival. After much discussion and dialogue, we came to the conclusion that some of the events were a bit overwhelming for some students and families, so we enacted plans to address these issues. Communication was key during this time, and it was important that we listened to why certain families were not participating at a high rate. We began assisting with transportation for those who needed it and reached out specifically to some of our ELL families where language was a barrier. The committee also found that our special education students and families were not attending these events, so we developed sensory areas and cool down rooms for students and families to utilize during these types of events.

Our Library Media Specialist ordered a large number of books for our library focused on improving the diversity in our collection. We have increased the number of books written by African American authors and have a focused display during African American history month that highlights titles written by and about African Americans. The library has also increased the number of books about different countries and cultures over the past three years. This has been a welcome addition for our international families and sparked interest in all of our students to learn more about different cultures.

All students go to Guidance class one day per week, and the counselor spends time teaching students about the importance of being themselves and celebrating their differences. Lessons often involve a short text along with role-playing activities to help students develop appreciation for one another. The principal received many inquiries over the summer about how certain events would be addressed at the school level. Many of our families, especially in the primary grades, were not comfortable with exposing their children to some of the issues currently plaguing our country. In response, our guidance counselor implemented a 5-10 minute time at the beginning of each class for students to share anything on their mind. This provided a spring board for the counselor to follow-up with particular students who were experiencing hurt or uneasiness about the current state of affairs during her extra counseling periods that were started this school year.

Our school has a representative on the district's Equity Committee, which was formed during the summer. The committee is comprised of teachers from each school, community members, current

students, and administrators. They have developed a path to help all of our staff become more culturally aware through increased professional development.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

It may sound simple, but I truly believe that the one practice that has been the most instrumental for our continued success this school year has been to maintain high expectations for our students and staff. We have tried to maintain a positive attitude regardless of our circumstances and not make excuses when we have struggled with things. Our entire faculty has grown professionally over the course of this school year, which has been needed to move our students forward.

The faculty and staff at Towne Acres continue to expect the best from our students and from ourselves. With all of the changes that had to be implemented to ensure the safety of our school, our staff needed to make adjustments to make sure that we were at our absolute best. Instead of focusing on the problems, our staff chose to focus on finding solutions that would allow us to teach at the highest level and keep students in a position to achieve at the highest level. We have found ways to be creative so that we can maintain school spirit and a positive learning environment where students feel happy and successful, in spite of Covid-19 restrictions that have taken away many of our most enjoyable events such as field trips and assemblies.

Teachers have adopted new strategies and practices to allow for easier transitions from in-person to remote learning. Even though we have only had about four weeks that our school was fully remote, we have had to deal with groups of students needing to quarantine for extended periods of time. Our teachers have become even more tech savvy over the course of the year, and the improved use of our learning management systems have essentially created an "on demand" system where students and families can directly access classroom content from home. We have never been able to support students who are absent as well as we have this year.

In summary, harnessing an attitude of "we will find a way" has allowed us to continue to serve our students at a high level. At times, this has led to scheduling changes to allow for more time with the guidance counselor to address social and emotional needs. There are other times that we have reworked assistant schedules to provide extra support where it was needed. Teachers have conducted more after-school tutoring programs and enrichment programs than in a typical year. Our school has always held our teachers and students to very high standards, and this year maintaining those standards has led to our teachers being willing to invest even more time than normal into providing the best education for our students.