

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2022 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 Mrs. Jennifer Kyle  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 508 West Main Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Emerson State AR Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 71740-9360

County Columbia County

Telephone (870) 626-3306 Fax (870) 626-3313

Web site/URL  
[https://emerson.etbsd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=1641830&type=d&pREC\\_ID=1784237](https://emerson.etbsd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1641830&type=d&pREC_ID=1784237) E-mail jennifer.kyle@etbsd.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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. David Downs E-mail david.downs@etbsd.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Emerson-Taylor-Bradley School District Tel. (870) 626-3304

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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mr. Jim Martin  
(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.

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

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 signatures 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 2016 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

**The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.**

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 3 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 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	22	18	40
1	12	15	27
2	13	11	24
3	11	8	19
4	6	14	20
5	7	7	14
6	10	16	26
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>	81	89	170

\*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
  - 1.8 % Asian
  - 20 % Black or African American
  - 7.1 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 67.6 % White
  - 3.5 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 school year: 15%

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	16
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	25
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	166
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.15
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

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

Spanish, Filipino, Nepali

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %

4 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 52 %

Total number students who qualify: 88

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 16 %  
28 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 with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>3</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>5</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 14:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	94%	95%	95%	94%	94%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2021.

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

The Emerson-Taylor-Bradley School District, in partnership with the community, will help students to believe in themselves, respect others, and experience the joy of learning. We strive to provide a safe and secure learning environment for every student, as well as, equity of access to quality educational programs and technology and services to ensure students have the tools to pursue a better future.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

#### 4.11—EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

No student in the Emerson-Taylor-Bradley School District shall, on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or disability be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity sponsored by the District. The District has a limited open forum granting equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other youth groups.

Inquiries on non-discrimination may be directed to the superintendent of schools, who may be reached at 870-626-3271.

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, to the Title IX Coordinator in person or by using the mailing address, telephone number, or email address provided above. A report may be made at any time, including during non-business hours, and may be on the individual’s own behalf or on behalf of another individual who is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment.

For further information on notice of non-discrimination or to file a complaint, visit <http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm>; for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

Legal References: A.C.A. § 6-10-132

A.C.A. § 6-18-514

28 C.F.R. § 35.106

34 C.F.R. § 100.6

34 C.F.R. § 104.8

34 C.F.R. § 106.8

34 C.F.R. § 106.9

34 C.F.R. § 108.9

34 C.F.R. § 110.25

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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Emerson Elementary is located in the lower southwest portion of the state of Arkansas. It is a very rural area, rich in timber and wildlife. While most of the ethnicity only consists of two races, the racial barriers are very low, but the income barriers are not. It is easily seen where low-income families reside in the district, with a larger portion of middle-class income families living outside of the city limits. When it comes to supporting the school through academics and extra-curricular activities, those barriers are almost obsolete. The families and community members enjoy supporting students in school-based activities.

There is a broad spectrum of families included in the school. Students from wealthier families are sparse, but Emerson contains many middle-class working families. There is a larger population of low-income students, but many of those come from working families as well.

The town of Emerson includes one convenience store and a post office, but overall appears to be a lower-income area with multiple old buildings that are continually eroding with no maintenance. A city park with a half basketball court, one small inclusive play structure, and a picnic area was established a few years back, but maintenance is low due to a lack of city employees.

Since Emerson is in a rural location, many graduating students do not reside in the nearby area after high school or returning after a higher education program. Therefore, the population of children has shown a decreasing trend of Kindergarteners over multiple years; however, in 2021-2022 that trend ceased. A large number of Kindergarten students enrolled in school and have remained enrolled. Emerson does also receive students at all grade levels from a neighboring district through a “school choice” program.

Basketball is a huge tradition at Emerson with a large support from the community. Emerson has had two state championship teams in the late 1990s. In more recent years, two teams finished as state runners-up, multiple teams have qualified for the state basketball tournament. Also, the “Purple Hull Pea Festival” is an annual event in early summer during the first harvest of purple hull peas. The festival is held on the school grounds, and a large support from community members and outside residents is given. A championship tiller race is held during the festival with a multitude of racers from children to adults competing and it has even been televised.

Emerson Elementary has a strong academic program and has done well on ACT Aspire, the state assessment. Four years ago the third grade classes scored first in the state in reading, English, science, and writing and second in the state in math. Other grade levels have scored in the top ten in the state as well. Each year the state of Arkansas gives each school a grade from “A-F,” and for two years Emerson was an “A” school. (Since the Covid Pandemic, a letter grade has not been given).

There are many strategies used at Emerson Elementary to help build students to be successful. First and foremost, because the school is small, students’ basic needs are assessed each day, not academic needs but physical and emotional needs, beginning with the basic needs of food, clothing, hygiene, and even sleep. Research proves students who are struggling with these basics cannot perform academically. There is a backpack feeding program in place for students who need extra easy-to-open and/or cook food at home. This program is sponsored by community church organizations, a local charity group, and individual donors. Also, donations are given by area organizations for school supplies or clothing to help students in need. The school nurse is excellent in dealing with students’ clothing needs and will send many extra clothes home with those who can use them. During the pandemic, families were supplied with additional food bags, as well as the opportunity to have daily meals during a students’ quarantine timeframe.

Relationships are a second area that is promoted at Emerson for a multitude of reasons. Many students, especially older, have formed a trusting relationship with at least one school faculty member and are willing to share a problem or concern with that person. The school counselor talks with students, almost daily, and some are seen weekly in order to help deal with a problem in his or her life. The elementary administrator, teachers, paraprofessionals, counselor, interventionists, nurse, secretary, and custodian do an excellent job at building relationships with children. Students are shown care and concern daily.

Because Emerson is able to know students well enough to provide for their needs, then the academic standards can be set for students. Many classes have a small population of 14 or less. Students are able to receive interventions when necessary. Small groups struggling students meet daily, as well as groups to challenge students. The gifted and talented teacher meets with Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grades weekly to promote problem-solving skills. Emerson has established a GOLD (Genuinely Outstanding Learner with Determination) Student Program that highlights and celebrates students with no unexcused absences or tardies and no discipline referrals each nine weeks. Third through sixth grade classrooms have an “acceleration” period built in each day to focus on students who are struggling, as well as to, challenge students who are ready.

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

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

#### **1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:**

Curriculum mapping is based on the Arkansas State Standards (adapted from rigorous Common Core State Standards). The standards provide the basic proficiency levels students are held accountable to learn. Emerson uses the scope and sequence of the Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts II Curriculum (CKLA) which provides cumulative content rich background knowledge across multiple disciplines and grade levels to allow cohesive instructional outcomes. Teachers design scaffolded lessons using a variety of inquiry based learning practices and principles such as: Cognitively Guided Instruction and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math that allow a differentiated instructional approach.

Teachers continue that design process through additional resources such as best practices from highly successful schools, professional development, support from our educational cooperative, teacher colleagues within and outside of our district, individual research, and PLC meetings encouraging horizontal and vertical alignment.

Summative assessments include Renaissance STAR Early Literacy for kindergarten, Star Adaptive Reading and Math first through second grade for the beginning, middle, and end of year. For third through sixth grades, the ACT Aspire is administered at the end of the year in science, math, reading, English, and writing.

Formative assessments given are Renaissance Curriculum Based Measures (K-6) and STAR Adaptive (3-6) literacy and math. Other pieces of data include: work samples, running records, teacher observation, and teacher designed assessments in Edulastic. These are used for all core subject areas, and a compiled list of initial and level one screeners are administered specifically for characteristics of dyslexia when appropriate.

Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, the district offered a voluntary virtual learning opportunity. Families were given the opportunity to continue virtual learning for their student. A small percentage of the student population received virtual instruction, outside of students who were quarantined. Emerson has had the opportunity to be one-to-one with student devices. Recorded teacher instructional videos have been housed in a digital hub for families to view; all assignments were virtual as well. Data has proven students thrive more with face-to-face instruction; therefore, there is not a voluntary virtual option now.

#### **1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Emerson teachers develop a deep understanding of the Arkansas English Language Arts Standards. Each grade level strategically coordinates a scope and sequence that incorporates these standards and best practices for implementation into units of instruction that include literary and nonfiction reading, writing, and language.

Teachers use a comprehensive approach to teach the essential components of reading through the Science of Reading: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Emerson is using a new English Language Arts curriculum program called Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA), and this program includes those essential components.

Phonological awareness begins in kindergarten. Kindergarten through second teachers use direct instruction from Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum and CKLA. Both resources build a conscious awareness of speech sounds in words and develop the ability to manipulate those sounds.

The phonics instruction is scoped and sequenced according to grade level expectations. There is a heavy emphasis on phonics at grades Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd. Teachers use the lessons from CKLA to achieve

the rigor necessary for instruction. Decodable books are utilized from this program as well.

Vocabulary instruction is both direct and indirect. Direct instruction gives students exposure to analyze word parts (morphemes) and investigate words in context. Indirect instruction exposes students to words with language rich experiences.

Fluency is practiced and modeled by the teacher. Benchmarks are used to measure all dimensions of fluency including accuracy, expression, phrasing, and rate.

Lastly, comprehension is developed as students are taught to consciously think about their reading. Reading strategies are taught in literary and informational materials, where students learn to construct meaning. Teachers utilize a reading lab with sets of books for small group instruction. Grades 3-6 develop skills using literature circles.

Frequent assessments are administered to determine needs of students. Interventions are a part of regular classroom instruction; an interventionist is used for students with severe deficits, including dyslexia characteristics.

The teachers and administrator meet regularly in PLCs (Professional Learning Communities). During these times, assessment data is reviewed in order to focus on individual student needs.

### **1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The Arkansas Mathematics Frameworks are designed to teach less isolated skills and deeper problem-solving thinking. Since no specific mathematics program is equipped to do this, teachers use multiple resources to address the standards. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Math Expressions was the last curriculum purchased at the elementary about ten years ago. Teachers use pieces of this program as well as, inquiry-based learning, especially in the lower grades, self-developed problems and assessments, varied mathematics games, released items from ACT Aspire interim tests, and the online resources of IXL and Clever.

Teachers do an excellent job of teaching students multiple strategies to solve problems from methods of long division to methods of problem solving. Students are then able to use a method most suitable for their learning. A larger area of focus is student comprehension and explanation. Through oral and written explanation, teachers are able to assess and modify lessons as needed.

The elementary does not have a math interventionist or specialist; therefore, teachers are responsible for providing all interventions in the classroom. Beginning in third grade, teachers have an acceleration period to address students' deficiencies. Teachers are required to keep documentation throughout the intervention process on each student. Intervention resources have been provided from our local education agency. STAR Renaissance Math has been used throughout all grade levels to assess students. Interventions are also included with this program to target specific skills.

During monthly team meetings, teachers can use the student assessment data and intervention documentation to address student concerns and then work to find strategies that will benefit a student in need. Teachers also have the flexibility to build intervention groups of students of varied grade levels. For example, a fifth-grade student might be deficient in a fourth-grade skill, so the fourth grade teacher adds the fifth grader to a small group until that student is proficient.

### **1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Emerson addresses the Arkansas Science Frameworks through multiple formats. Not one science textbook can address all of the frameworks for the state; therefore, teachers use multiple resources to teach the standards. First, teachers use informational texts beginning in kindergarten. These may be a read-aloud, a small group book, an article found from a magazine, encyclopedia, or internet, or even an older textbook. Also, the district provides a site license from Mystery Science to help teachers address scientific ideas and

experimental labs. In the past the elementary bought a subscription to Discovery Education for the upper grade levels to use and is currently using Amplify Science. The videos, articles, and virtual labs are an excellent resource to use with students. Lastly, the Gifted and Talented (GT) teacher is a fantastic resource to have on campus for science. Kindergarten, first, and second grades attend enrichment once a week with the GT teacher; science concepts are the focus through enrichment. Students are able to build, code, discover, and problem-solve concepts. Other grade level teachers collaborate with the GT teacher and use resources and manipulatives housed in her room.

Many science concepts are taught through hands-on or virtual labs. Due to limited supplies, students perform labs in a small group setting, and teachers have the ability to place students in small groups to address strengths and weaknesses. Through the experimental process, students are required to elaborate and explain procedures, outcomes, and factual findings. While students are able to think and discuss through the process, writing skills are also strengthened.

Classroom assessments and the ACT Aspire Interim Assessments have been used in previous years to form intervention groups for those who have deficiencies. Currently, teacher developed assessments are being utilized to gather data. Teachers have specified intervention times built into their daily schedule to work with students. During team meetings teachers can collaborate to help one another address students' weaknesses but also to address students' strengths.

#### **1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The Social Studies Standards are integrated within our English Language Arts units at each grade level. These units incorporate focused standards, essential questions, student understandings, and vocabulary (both academic and content). Teachers incorporate technology to build background and enhance learning. Teachers use formative and summative assessments within the developed units to assess student learning.

A variety of resources have been gathered and studied. These resources include both fiction and non-fiction read aloud books, primary sources, presentations, and lesson plan examples. Teachers have access to a district made document that includes resource materials, important vocabulary to discuss, and essential questions for every Social Studies Standard. With the help of the district literacy specialist, a basic curriculum has been built, and teachers know where to access necessary pieces to use for instruction.

Both reading and writing are woven into our Social Studies instructional time. Teachers read aloud books that spark more interest in the topics. Teachers use these literary pieces to teach important skills. Not only do teachers conduct a read aloud, but also model their thinking during this time. It produces the perfect opportunity to teach a text's organizational features and to teach reading comprehension strategies, especially of non-fiction text structures. Teachers model by thinking aloud how they themselves use strategies. Students practice using these strategies during class time so the teachers can assess students' understanding. Students are guided with essential questions to stimulate thought and discussions, provoke inquiry and research, and gather information for discussions, projects, or written pieces.

During Social Studies, teachers not only teach the content of their standards, but teach reading and writing as well. The over-arching goal is to equip students with tools that help them become independent learners and thinkers.

#### **1f. For secondary schools:**

#### **1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Emerson Elementary provides multiple programs for all students, Kindergarten through sixth grades. Students attend art, Computer/Media, Library, Music, and Physical Education are weekly. Through these curricular programs, students are able to expand on the academic, artistic, and physical skills. Direct instruction, modeling, and individual interventions are methods used by the extra-curricular teachers to deliver instruction to students. Content and extra-curricular teachers collaborate to enhance the skills across each grade level.

Visual art is taught at Emerson Elementary; students attend this class for 45 minutes per week. The art teacher is able to focus on many skills from basic lines and shapes for younger grades to complex paintings and perceptions for older students. History through artworks is covered also. Students are asked to analyze artworks from relevant artists for multiple purposes and then create a piece with similar characteristics. For example, in the beginning of the year, Kindergarten students were instructed to observe works by Jackson Pollack and identify types of lines; students were assigned to use five types of lines in a piece of their own art. Fourth grade students were asked to observe and evaluate *Starry Night* by Van Gogh and construct their version of *Starry Night* on a landscape of their choice.

Elementary students attend a computer class weekly for 45 minutes. Through this time, typing skills are addressed for students who participate in online statewide assessments. Academic skills are reinforced through online educational games as well as, Google applications and Microsoft programs for academic purposes. Google email is available for student use to correspond with staff members across the campus. Google Docs, Microsoft Word, Google Slides, and Microsoft Powerpoint are all programs incorporated to help students build papers and presentations necessary for the core classroom.

A library time of 45 minutes weekly is given to students as well. During this period, the library teacher orally shares a picture book or novel with students and assigns an applicable written response. For younger grades, the response may include a drawing or simple list, but for older students a complex graphic organizer or summary is required. The assigned reading responses always compliment assignments from the core classroom. For example, third grade students read *Spinning Spiders* and were asked to make a web of facts about spiders. Webs are used in multiple disciplines in order to organize information, either from a text or students' ideas to form a writing.

Physical Education (PE) is provided at the elementary for 60 minutes per week for all grades. Students participate in structured exercise and also in team building sports. Students begin class with warm-up exercises, such as: jumping jacks and sit-ups, and then move on to timed stretches. This leads into a structured activity that allows students to build balance, perception, and bodily control. Before students begin, the PE coach or a student reads a set of directions or rules, and the class is asked to interpret them. The purpose is for students to use and apply these rules, an additional expository text, precisely by their own correct understanding; a quick discussion is held to confirm that all students understand the instructions.

A weekly music class of 45 minutes is offered to all students. Through music students focus on rhythm in multiple formats, such as: beats with hands, feet, and mouth; instruments like rhythm sticks, hand drums, and recorders; dance; and song. Musical opportunities are offered beginning in kindergarten to build rhythm through bodily motion and song. Beginning in fourth grade, students begin learning to play a more complex instrument. Kindergarten through third grades have the opportunity to showcase their talents through a winter concert that is open to family, friends, and the community. Prior to the Covid Pandemic, fourth through sixth grades displayed their talents in the spring concert or musical. The musical is a collaborative production between multiple teachers, parents, and community members where students voluntarily audition for roles. The end result has proven to be phenomenal!

### **3. Academic Supports**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level:**

Student populations are analyzed for students at risk. In order to identify students who need additional support, data is collected from multiple sources. Periodic formative assessments are administered to adapt instruction for students below grade level. Formative assessments used at Emerson Elementary are

Renaissance STAR Early Literacy, STAR Adaptive Reading and Math; DSA (Developmental Spelling Assessment); and Interim ACT Aspire tests. Data will be analyzed from the ACT Aspire Summative Assessment as well to insure students' growth in specified areas of English Language Arts, mathematics, and science.

Data sets from both the formative and summative assessments are reviewed by the principal, classroom teachers, and literacy specialist to be used as a diagnostic tool to locate the areas of greatest need. Multiple subpopulations have been identified with achievement gaps of 10 or more percentage points. The greatest achievement gaps fall with students in the African American, economically disadvantaged, and special education groups.

In order to address the achievement gaps, teachers create Tier 2 intervention groups prior to the beginning of the school year. Intervention groups are initially developed based on summative data reports; students receive intervention instruction within the classroom. Classroom teachers are responsible for providing and documenting intervention procedures and the success rate. Students who become proficient in deficit areas are removed from the intervention group, while others receive more intense instruction. If students do not progress to proficiency level through in class intervention, then the data is reviewed by the data team to determine if the student shows characteristics of a learning disability.

As data is analyzed, characteristics of dyslexia is the first disability addressed. Students who show deficiencies in the areas consistent with dyslexic tendencies are referred for additional testing. Students whose test scores support dyslexia characteristics are then, with parent permission, pulled for dyslexia intervention. Student whose data does not support dyslexic characteristics are reviewed for another disability. The team consults with the special education teacher and the special education supervisor, if necessary, to make a special education referral.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

Student populations are analyzed for students exceeding grade level. In order to identify students who are performing above grade level, data is collected from multiple sources. Periodic formative assessments are administered to adapt instruction for students above and below grade level; however, instruction is also tailored to ensure mastery of grade level standards. Formative assessments used at Emerson Elementary are Renaissance STAR Early Literacy, STAR Adaptive Reading and Math; DSA (Developmental Spelling Assessment); and Interim ACT Aspire tests. Data will be analyzed from the ACT Aspire Summative Assessment in specified areas of English Language Arts, mathematics, and science.

Students who consistently perform above grade level have instruction tailored to target their learning needs. Instruction becomes more challenging and intense. Intervention groups are established for challenging and addressing their specific learning needs, as well as, to excel their academic knowledge.

Students in Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade attend a weekly enrichment class with the gifted and talented teacher. Enrichment activities center around Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). For example, Kindergarten students get the opportunity to learn coding using "Bee-Bots". Students are allowed to explore these robots and command them to move straight and turn different directions. It is exciting to watch kindergarteners code these robots!

Beginning in third grade, students who demonstrate gifted qualities are screened for the Gifted and Talented program. Numerous data pieces including summative testing, grades, and parent and teacher evaluations, are reviewed by the committee to determine if the student exhibits the characteristics of a gifted student. Once students are identified as gifted, they are placed in the Gifted and Talented Program and receive appropriate services by the Gifted and Talented Teacher as well as the classroom teacher. Emerson Elementary does well in targeting students' needs and providing instruction to meet those needs.

### **3c. Special education:**

Student populations are analyzed for students who may exhibit one or more learning disabilities. In order to identify students with a learning disability, data is collected from multiple sources. Periodic formative assessments are administered to adapt instruction for who exhibit a learning disability. Formative assessments used at Emerson Elementary are Renaissance STAR Early Literacy, STAR Adaptive Reading and Math; DSA (Developmental Spelling Assessment); and Interim ACT Aspire tests. Data is analyzed from the ACT Aspire Summative Assessment as well to ensure students' growth in specified areas of English Language Arts, mathematics, and science.

Students who exhibit characteristics of a learning disability are tested through special education; those who are shown to have one or more learning disabilities are placed in special education and have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). IEPs are plans written by the IEP committee and are tailored for teachers to follow in order to address students' needs. Students with IEP's may receive direct or indirect services from the special education teacher. Support services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech and language are also designed to meet individual needs of students who qualify.

This population of students does show an achievement gap of more than 10 percentage points. These students receive all levels of Tiered Instruction. Classroom interventions are given; many also attend direct instruction with the special education teacher to achieve learning goals established through the student's IEP.

An additional subpopulation of students under the umbrella of special education is 504 students. 504 students are identified by classroom teachers and parents or guardians. 504 students have a tailored 504 plan written by the 504 committee; these plans are data driven to address each student's individual weaknesses. The 504 plan includes appropriate modifications to assist a student in being successful.

Both IEP plans and 504 plans are reevaluated at minimum once during every school year. Appropriate changes are made as data supports.

### **3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:**

Emerson Elementary offers an individualized intervention for English Language Learners. The population of ELL students within the school is small. The student's progress is dependent on age and English immersion, both inside and outside of the school setting. Uniquely, all of the ELL students at Emerson have bilingual opportunities in the home setting with the second language being English.

In the ELL intervention, the interventionist begins by focusing on vocabulary. Single vocabulary is taught through multiple media facets. As the student makes progression through vocabulary growth, then text is introduced. The text is simple in the beginning, and as the student makes proficient growth, more complex text is introduced to build comprehension.

In the general education classroom, students receive small group intervention from the classroom teacher to focus more intensely on his/her needs. Data driven instruction is delivered at an appropriate level to build independence.

In 2021-2022 Emerson received its first Filipino speaking student. This student has received the most intense intervention; however, English is the dominant language spoken in his home. This student has increased his vocabulary tremendously through intervention inside the classroom and through a one-on-one pull out intervention. This student is successfully reading English trade books, testing through the Accelerated Reader Program, and excelling.

### **3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:**

There is not a need for a program for other populations at this time.

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

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

Emerson’s faculty and staff take time to build relationships with students in order to recognize student's needs. With relationships comes trust, and trust is built between the faculty and students first. Students always connect with a teacher or staff member and feel comfortable enough to talk with them when a problem arises. The school counselor is an excellent resource that is utilized when a student has applicable problems. Time is always taken by the counselor to see a student when necessary; older students recognize the times when it is appropriate to see the counselor, and the teachers make the opportunity available.

Emerson Elementary utilizes rewards programs for various purposes. Students have the opportunity to be a GOLD student (Genuinely Outstanding Learner with Determination) every nine weeks; in order to be a GOLD student, one can have no unexcused absences or tardies and no discipline referrals. Every nine weeks students can earn “brag tags” to celebrate honor roll, being a GOLD student, and reaching their Accelerated Reader goal. Students can be honored by being the student of the month or a Proud Pirate. The students chosen to be Proud Pirates are recognized at basketball games, receive a t-shirt, and free concession stand items. These achievements are recognized on the school’s social media page.

Accelerated Reader (AR) has been strongly utilized over the course of the school year. Competitions have been built with quarterly rewards given out. Students who meet certain goals through the year can earn rewards. The class whose students meet their individual goals is rewarded; the class with the most points per student is rewarded. The overall points earner for the quarter is rewarded. Students are kept informed of these achievements through periodic videos from the principal. This has motivated students to be the best readers the elementary has had in numerous years!

Moving to a more technology-based school setting, students are being given more opportunity to coordinate and operate new equipment in the school. All classrooms have large screen, smart televisions to aide in instruction. Two televisions have also been placed in the hallways. Beginning with voluntary sixth grade students, daily school announcements are now being recorded and shared each day. Two students give the announcements, and one records. A green screen is used in the background for video editing, and students are responsible for the editing. The daily announcements, as well as highlighted learning activities are shared on the hallway televisions to keep students and staff aware of the current events at Emerson Elementary. The display is another positive promotion of student involvement and engagement to build positive attention across the campus. Accelerated Reader achievements have been an exemplary display on the daily slide show!

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

Family and community engagement has been addressed in multiple ways to create a welcoming atmosphere that supports positivity. Emerson organizes various activities to bring in members of families and the community. Kindergarten hosts a Thanksgiving Feast to celebrate and support history and invites students’ families to attend. Kindergarten and first grades honor mothers with a Mother’s Day Tea. This event encourages mothers, grandmothers, aunts, or other female family members to join their student in a brunch followed by activities to celebrate the role of moms. For students who have no one participate, female staff or community members are asked to join the celebration.

The elementary and high school campus jointly organized a “Trunk or Treat” activity for the elementary students at Halloween. The Emerson High School Student Council oversaw the organization of this event by arranging the location and providing the necessary equipment. Various high school clubs participated, including: the boys’ and girls’ basketball teams, the science club, Future Farmers of America, and cheerleaders. Local businesses and religious organizations also participated by decorating the trunk of a car or table. All elementary students safely trick-or-treated through the groups.

Two major academically focused events have been held during the current school year. The first is parent

and teacher conferences; these are held twice per year. Conferences are held after school in order to promote attendance from parents and guardians. Conferences are beneficial in showcasing students' achievements, as well as, stimulating relationships between parents and teachers. Teachers display student work samples and artistic models along the hallways. The second is a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Night for 3rd-6th grades. Southern Arkansas University's (SAU), education department organized and ran the STEM night for Emerson Elementary. Education students created Olympic-based STEM activities for elementary students to compete, create, and participate in. Approximately 40% of the students attended. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive! In turn a stronger relationship was built between Emerson Elementary and SAU.

Parents and community members also participate in various district-wide committees, such as: school improvement, special recognition funding, and wellness. These committees include representatives from both parent and community groups. Through committee meetings all parties can voice valuable ideas or concerns; this provides an excellent opportunity to hear input from others outside the educational realm.

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

Emerson Elementary begins the professional development plan first per the guidance of the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). ADE requires all teachers to acquire 36 hours of professional development. Emerson teachers are paid to receive an additional 24 hours. This positively impacts a growth mindset for the teachers and administrator, which in turns directly affects the students.

Each teacher is mandated to have a Professional Growth Plan (PGP), and 18 hours of professional development must address their goals. The principal conducts a meeting with each teacher to address the PGP; this allows collaboration between the two to focus on the teacher's needs. A plan is then created for each teacher based on data and teacher input. Emerson teachers can utilize all offerings through the local education agency. The principal also organizes and plans trainings for teachers based on campus wide needs. With the multiple training opportunities, teachers are able to focus on their areas of need and implement applicable changes.

Emerson Elementary moved to remote learning for a short period of time at the beginning of the pandemic. Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, this campus has only pivoted to virtual learning for very few days with most being weather related. During the 2021-2022, the campus did move to remote learning for three days due to large percentages of sickness from COVID and influenza. Otherwise, personnel and students have been on campus.

The staff has always been brought together through virtual and face-to-face meetings. The principal seeks out opinions and ideas on a regular basis to organize the school year and school-based activities. To ensure, staff is utilizing the most efficient practices with their time, the principal provides videos and information on proper procedures with new equipment and practices to fight against the spread of illnesses.

Because remote learning adds an additional layer of responsibility on the teachers, additional technology equipment and licenses were bought to lessen the burden. The staff bonded tremendously over learning the virtual learning procedures and avenues used to house videos, assignments, and additional instructional materials. Those who were stronger with technology readily helped any who needed additional support. The learning community grew even greater!

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

The principal's overall philosophy for Emerson Elementary is driven by the philosophy of, "Facilitate a safe environment that allows students to develop the skills to collaborate, independently think, problem-solve, and be productive members of society." It is the belief of the principal that all students should be molded to provide society with successful individuals who can make a difference in the world; no matter the size of the contribution, all students can be valuable. In order to prepare students to be productive, the faculty and staff must have strong leadership. Within a strong leader comes an array of approaches to lead a faculty. High expectations are set, collaboration is imperative between all stakeholders, relationships with great trust must

be built, and a positive school climate must be cultivated.

Cooperation is key to having a strong faculty; Emerson teachers know there is a revolving door to the principal's office for support. This is the first avenue to building cooperation and collaboration among the faculty and staff. Teachers have the opportunity to help make decisions on several levels. For example, each year the teachers are asked for input on conference times and the duty schedule. Those who are departmentalized collaborate with the principal about the schedule, regarding time per class and subject areas in English Language Arts. Teachers also help group students in classes for the upcoming year.

Emerson's supporting staff plays an important role on campus too. Supporting staff conduct interventions, aid with special needs students, and help the daily routine to be orderly.

There is one administrator, the elementary principal, in place at Emerson. The principal is responsible for a vast number of duties such as setting the tone each day by being the first person on duty with students, monitoring classroom instruction through walk-throughs and formal and informal observations, disciplining students, organizing multiple budgets, participating and leading special education meetings and PLC (Professional Learning Communities), and coordinating events. Leadership teams are organized by the principal and are required to meet monthly and keep documentation.

Administration across the district meet and discuss new or proposed policy and policy changes each year. One aspect of the meetings is student achievement; based on district data, policies are proposed to the school board or tabled for a later discussion. Elementary administrators research programs to use district-wide; any programs purchased for use are focused on student achievement. Teachers are encouraged to research resources as well and share the results with the principal, along with, how the implementation would be beneficial. A collaborative effort among the administrators and staff is nurtured to produce the best results for students.

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

Emerson Elementary is structured to support all its members from students to teachers to support staff. The overall arching philosophy is family oriented; "Treat others as you wish to be treated." That's exactly how the campus is run. Accomplishments are celebrated, and losses are growth opportunities.

Faculty supports one another emotionally, instructionally, and socially. All deserve the opportunity to be heard, and cooperation is key to building a stronger campus. The teachers have a growth mindset and use their knowledge to inspire students to do the same. It is unanimous to say, "Our students are loved!"

The building principal works to ensure the faculty and staff feel appreciated and loved. Unique talents are highlighted across the campus, and individuality is encouraged in the classroom. Positivity is the main focus from the administrator to set the tone across the elementary campus.

Emerson Elementary uses a wide variety of culturally diverse texts across grade levels. Core Knowledge and Language Arts is the new English Language Arts Curriculum, and it incorporates various pieces to highlight multicultural backgrounds. Pieces such as *Brown Girl Dreaming* and *They Call Me Güero* are used for instruction. These help students and teachers to continue to learn about culturally diverse individuals and situations. Students have opportunities to share cultural pieces with their classmates, and often it is a special experience that sheds positive light on individuals' backgrounds. Anytime students get the opportunity to be highlighted, it's a special experience.

District policy supports equity of access to academics and protects against prejudices across the campus. Policies also protect families from penalization of absence due to a religious holiday or cultural tradition. Being a small campus, it is easier to know our students' cultural needs and be sensitive to them. Often, families do well communicating with school personnel regarding an upcoming cultural event. Students who do not observe traditional American holidays are given options for avoidance; once the school is notified of cultural traditions, then it is noted in order to ensure a student does not encounter sensitive situations in the future.

The teachers and support staff genuinely have students' best interests at heart. Emerson Elementary truly works like a family and support the students and fellow co-workers to ensure the most positive environment for students to learn in. Experience has led to the belief that a positive and motivating atmosphere creates a stronger bond among its members. It's a trickle effect when the administrator sets the tone.

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

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The one practice that is the most influential in making Emerson Elementary a successful school is nurture. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, every individual's needs must be met before success is attained. Beginning with the basic needs, Emerson assesses every student and fulfills the needs that are not being met at home. Students who need food at home are placed in the "Backpack Program," this program gives students an assortment of easily prepared foods each week. During weeks students are not in school, multiple bundles are given prior to the break. Teachers and staff notify the school nurse of any students who do not have a heavy coat for winter, a local, charitable organization donates coats to give them. There are times a student appears to have little or no sleep; therefore, a place is provided for the student to rest. These are the first needs addressed at Emerson Elementary.

Safety is of most importance across the campus; therefore, precautionary measures have been put in place to protect all students from harmful actions. Students are aware of these safety features. While keeping students safe at school is imperative, having students feel secure is essential as well. At times a student will be nervous or fretful about being away from a loved one. During these instances, the principal, teacher, or other staff member will talk with the child and take any necessary steps in making the child feel more comfortable. From having a snack and talking it out to calling a loved one on the phone, Emerson staff members try to take the child's mind off the problem and reassure his or her security.

Teachers and staff take time to build relationships with the students. Knowing that relationships help students to do their best work at school is essential in making them successful; therefore, students' trust, at least, one individual on campus and feel comfortable to talk with that person if necessary. It is a top priority to make students feel loved while at school. During numerous team meetings the topic of success has arisen when discussing a child who is not showing success in the classroom. A common consensus is providing more attainable goals and highlighting those achievements in order to grow that child. The school counselor is also a beneficial resource to use when students have emotional problems. The counselor is always willing to meet with students and continues to check in with them periodically. Emerson does its best to meet all the needs of all students in order to help them reach their full potential.