

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

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

School Mailing Address 8801 North 56th Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Paradise Valley State AZ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 85253-2246

County Maricopa County

Telephone (480) 484-8710 Fax (480) 484-8701

Web site/URL https://www.susd.org/Cherokee E-mail wchantler@susd.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. Scott Menzel E-mail smenzel@susd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Scottsdale Unified School District Tel. (480) 484-6100

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. Julie Cieniawski
(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 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

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):
- 19 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 29 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	35	33	68
K	56	56	112
1	63	30	93
2	52	42	94
3	59	61	120
4	45	59	104
5	52	54	106
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	362	335	697

*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):
- 0.5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 6.6 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 12 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75.9 % White
 - 2 % 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: 17%

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

The pandemic led many families to transfer to an online only instructional model offered at a different Scottsdale Unified school at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. As the school year went on, a significant number of families elected to return to full-time, in-person instruction at Cherokee as they recognized Cherokee's instructional setting was the best fit for their students. Please note, the high mobility reflects an increase in enrollment at Cherokee over the school year and that the high mobility rate for this school year is an anomaly caused by the pandemic.

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	76
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	26
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	102
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	602
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.17
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	17

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Russian, Spanish, French, Dari, Pashtu, Farsi, Uzbek, Nuristani, Vietnamese, Other non-Indian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
36 Total number ELL

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

Total number students who qualify: 51

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 9 %
64 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>8</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>41</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 12
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	27
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	14
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	22
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 26:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	95%	95%	96%
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.

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.

We inspire, motivate, and empower all to think critically, act collaboratively, and embrace diversity for a life of intellectual exploration, community engagement, and personal growth. Vision Statement: Engaging all students in world-class future-focused learning.

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

susd.org/Page/4957

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

N/A

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Cherokee Elementary School is located in Paradise Valley, Arizona and is part of the Scottsdale Unified School District (SUSD). The school was built in 1974 and underwent a complete rebuild in 2020. Cherokee offers Special Education, English Language Learner, and Gifted programming in addition to several unique before and after school programs.

Cherokee has an Accountability Grade of an ‘A’ from the Arizona Department of Education. This grade is based on achievement on the State’s Academic Assessment. Cherokee has regularly scored in the top 10% of all schools in Arizona on state assessments. Cherokee also earned the title ‘A+ School of Excellence’ in 2013, 2017, and 2022 from the Arizona Education Foundation (AEF). The A+ status must be renewed every fourth year and involves a site visit from the AEF A+ Judges. All public and charter schools are eligible to apply for this program, but only 21 schools were named as recipients in 2022.

An incredibly supportive parent population has helped Cherokee achieve many of its goals. Cherokee is surrounded by several charter and private schools; nevertheless, many parents choose to enroll their children at Cherokee because of its outstanding reputation, academic performance and supportive culture. Numerous staff have chosen Cherokee for their own children, and others even attended Cherokee when they were children.

Over 50% of Cherokee students come from outside of our attendance boundary which adds to the diversity of the campus. Cherokee offers Special Education services, such as Resource, Speech, and Occupational Therapies. An unusually large percentage of students have qualified to receive Gifted services in the form of a pull-out program and Cluster Grouping. Currently, over 10% of students receive Gifted services. By way of comparison, our district average of Gifted students is roughly 3%. Additionally, the English Language Development program (ELD) had the honor to serve 26 refugees from Afghanistan during the 2021-2022 school year. The refugees were enrolled under the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Act.

The Cherokee leadership and staff continually look at ways to improve and create an annual Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) setting goals in the areas of Academics, Climate, Rigor, and Communication. A number of strategies are deployed to meet goals and continually use data to drive decision making and planning.

One example of an effective strategy used school-wide is student goal setting and self-assessment. Each child has the opportunity to create meaningful goals for themselves and then track their own progress towards the completion of the goals throughout the school year.

Another strategy is the use of flexible groupings in the core academic content areas. Flexible grouping helps teachers meet students' individual needs at a higher level. This strategy provides smaller class sizes for students who are in need of extra support and opportunities to enrich and enhance the curriculum for students who demonstrate mastery. The Cherokee Association of Parents and Teachers (APT) funded certified Reading and Math Specialists which supported smaller class sizes and added an additional layer of support for students.

The Cherokee staff created a master schedule that included dedicated times for each grade level to provide Response To Intervention (RTI) services. Teachers use the RTI block to offer remediation and enrichment opportunities and as a time for Specialists, Speech and Language Services, or any other services to work with students using the tiered model of support. Data collection and progress monitoring also occur during the RTI block.

Cherokee provides many opportunities for its students to receive social and emotional support. The CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) Framework is used as a foundation for applying evidence-based social emotional learning (SEL) strategies to our students. Sanford Harmony curriculum and district resources help the students explore concepts such as: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. Lessons on cultural

awareness and sensitivity are embedded within approaches to SEL. Additionally, the campus has a social worker to provide individual and small group support while supporting grade-level and school-wide SEL initiatives.

The Cherokee staff regularly integrate movement and physical support for our students. Classrooms have alternative seating choices and fidgets to help students concentrate and satisfy sensory needs. Brain breaks are embedded into lessons to provide students with movement and music during transitions. Additionally, the Core Knowledge Language Arts Curriculum (CKLA) integrates movement and physical activity in many of the lessons. Cherokee also has a robust Physical Education Program taught by certified teachers.

Cherokee is well known for its positive culture and nurturing environment. The Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program includes multiple layers of support. A PBIS Committee was formed and includes members from every grade level and special areas. The Committee created an electronic folder with resources for each teacher. The resources are differentiated by grade level and give teachers flexibility. The committee also developed a common language to define school-wide behavioral expectations known as CARE. This slogan represents the words Considerate, Accountable, Respectful and Engaged and are the behavioral foundations of every classroom. Additional resources include a data tracking form and means to recognize exemplary individual behaviors and groups at the classroom and school-wide level.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Cherokee’s Vision Statement changed this year to mirror the district’s vision of: “Engaging all students in world-class, future-focused learning.” The school also adopted the district’s mission of: “We inspire, motivate, and empower all to think critically, act collaboratively, and embrace diversity for a life of intellectual exploration, community engagement, and personal growth.” In an effort to be future focused, all of the district adopted curriculum is aligned to the Arizona Common Core Standards. The curriculum programs are rigorous with an emphasis on problem solving and integration of reading and writing standards across multiple content areas. Each Cherokee student is provided a Chromebook, allowing the teachers to integrate online resources into their lessons and activities in order to foster future-ready skills so important in today’s world. In addition to these district philosophies, Cherokee staff members also created a set of values known as the Cherokee CARE values. These values are part of the school’s PBIS program and are used daily to help accomplish the goal of providing a warm and caring environment for students and providing consistent, campus-wide vocabulary. With recognitions like Silver Horseshoe Awards, Secret Students, and CARE Cards, all staff members have a variety of ways to acknowledge students for consistently demonstrating the core Cherokee values. Another unique quality of Cherokee is the staff’s philosophy of collaboration and teamwork. Students are seen as belonging to the school, not just their homeroom teacher. All staff feel a sense of responsibility for student learning and achievement. When students succeed, the staff can celebrate together. When a student is struggling there are many resources and supports with which to draw.

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

The core English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum for grades Pre-K-3 is Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA). This program was adopted as a district-wide curriculum because of its strong alignment to Arizona state standards and use of research-based practices to support a strong foundation in reading. CKLA guides teachers in the systematic teaching of reading and writing and provides essential time for review and practice to build automaticity and fluency. Students have ample opportunities to apply phonics and decoding skills using literary and informational texts to build their vocabulary, knowledge and love of reading.

In addition, K-5 teachers use an ELA program, Units of Study, which was created by teacher leaders in the district. Units of Study integrates ELA standards with other content areas, such as science and social studies, to support literacy goals across the curriculum. The unique feature of Units of Study is the use of classroom sets of trade books, allowing teachers to plan whole class or small group novel studies. Teachers follow a scope and sequence, which includes read-alouds, discussion questions, vocabulary word cards, writing prompts, video clips and paired nonfiction articles to support each unit. Students are exposed to a wide range of materials to help them learn about a topic from multiple perspectives.

Differentiation is built into lessons through a variety of instructional strategies. Teachers rely on data and student observations to plan lessons that are best for all learners. In order to promote higher-level thinking, teachers incorporate a variety of strategies such as: cooperative learning, flexible groupings, Kagan strategies, Prompts of Depth and Complexity, and Thinking Maps. Student goal setting and reflection are used to support growth and increase rigor. Teachers also incorporate different learning styles and modalities into lessons. Students use interactive notebooks to organize content and deepen their understanding of a concept.

Technology is an integral part of ELA lesson delivery at Cherokee. ViewBoards are used as an interactive learning tool where teachers create and deliver content and students are active participants in their learning. Cherokee’s 1:1 Chromebook ratio allows students to have access to technology on a daily basis. Students use Chromebooks to conduct research, listen to audio books, take assessments, and create digital content.

Teachers use a variety of tools to learn about their students. These formative assessments may include FastBridge (a universal screening tool), CKLA diagnostics, STAR reading test, and informal observations. FastBridge identifies at-risk students based on nationwide norms. Once at-risk students are identified, they are given specific interventions and progress monitored using the FastBridge program. The STAR reading test measures a child's independent reading level and matches them with a range of books in their Accelerated Reading (AR) range. These multiple data points paint a picture of a student's knowledge in core ELA areas, providing teachers with a road map to plan instruction. In order to monitor reading growth throughout the year, teachers use assessments and quizzes embedded in the CKLA and Units of Studies curricula. Teachers are constantly assessing progress, reflecting on instructional practices, and assisting students in setting new goals.

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

In 2019, SUSD adopted a common core Math curriculum for grades K-5 called Big Ideas. Included with the teacher editions and student workbooks, there are also many hands-on manipulatives used to introduce and reinforce concepts. These tools serve to deepen students' understanding and mastery of standards taught. The Big Ideas curriculum emphasizes abstract thought, reasoning and inquiry. Students learn to persevere as they are asked to explain their thinking and answer the essential questions that drive each day's instruction. Big Ideas incorporates technology into daily lessons, and the online components allow for flexibility of work completion and test taking. In the past two years, this format has been crucial in supporting students who are out for extended periods of time. Teachers also pull from Engage New York Math curriculum to provide differentiation.

Several years ago Cherokee designed a program to group students by their ability in the area of mathematics. This program is called Charger Math, after the school's beloved mascot Charger the horse. Grouping students by ability empowers all students to grow and master grade level skills. Students who are above grade level in math can challenge themselves and each other by completing independent projects and other enrichment activities. Students who are below grade level in math have the opportunity to work with other students who are at a similar level.

To make this program a reality teachers must assess students' achievement in math. Several factors are considered for this task. Schoolwide assessments are given using the FastBridge and i-Ready programs. FastBridge tests both general math knowledge as well as fluency with math operations. The i-Ready program tests core knowledge in all five math standards domains and assigns a grade equivalency based on student scores. Teachers also utilize assessments from the Big Ideas curriculum and teacher created assessments to place students in the right math class.

There are several benefits to the Charger Math program, the largest being that each student has his or her specific mathematical needs met while learning the same standards with the same curriculum. Students who excel in mathematics can move at a faster pace and learn more complex ways to apply their knowledge in new situations. Simultaneously, students performing below grade level benefit from smaller classes with a slower pace and more hands-on learning. Another strength of Charger Math is its flexible grouping component. This means that grade level teams are constantly assessing students' progress and moving them as necessary.

In addition to the grade level teachers, the Gifted and Learning Resource Center (LRC - Special Education) teachers are an integral part of the success of Charger Math. The Gifted teacher works closely with the teacher instructing the next highest level to ensure that they are sharing their enrichment ideas and resources. Sometimes the Gifted teacher will team up and combine classes to complete a specific project or assignment. The LRC teacher collaborates just as closely with the classroom teacher teaching the lowest level to ensure that they are also sharing ideas and resources. The Gifted and LRC teachers align their schedules so that all students receive math instruction at the same time of day.

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

Cherokee follows state science standards to engage students in science content using the inquiry based method. Cherokee teachers utilize district adopted FOSS (Full Option Science Systems) science kits and Discovery Education Techbook to teach the Arizona State Science standards. In addition, the district incorporates science into the reading curriculum which promotes integration across the curriculum.

FOSS Science programs provide hands-on, engaging, inquiry-based investigations for students grades kindergarten through 5th grade. Students begin each investigation with a guiding question. This is followed up by hands-on learning or active investigation in an attempt to find the answer to the posed question. Students discuss their thinking in peer interactions and keep notes of their learning in science notebooks. Student readings connect to the concept of the investigations and enrich student learning. Assessments are embedded in investigations students complete.

The Discovery Education platform is both a resource for teachers and students. Teachers utilize this resource to provide instruction through the use of vetted videos, activities, and teaching tools. Students have access to Discovery Education Science Techbook, which offers access to science videos and virtual activities that support instruction of the standards.

In addition, Cherokee teachers offer extended learning opportunities that support the science curriculum at many grade levels. Two student-designed gardens support science learning providing hands-on learning opportunities and allowing for students to observe changes over time. Second grade students build ice castles to watch them melt and evaporate to observe how matter changes states, and third grade students explore the food chain and anatomy of mammals with owl pellet and sheep's eye dissections. Experts in the field of science, technology, and engineering join fourth grade students to teach them about exciting careers in science and they work as teams to build small, working robots during STEM Week.

While most of the assessments are embedded in student investigations, all fifth grade students are required to take the Arizona State Science test, which is a summative state assessment that identifies science proficiency in the areas of Science and Engineering Practices and Crosscutting Concepts in Physical, Life, and Earth & Space Sciences.

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

Cherokee teachers utilize Arizona's Social Studies standards, which call for the development of four disciplinary skills. These encourage students to develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills as they think like historians, analyzing multiple perspectives and coming to their own conclusions regarding historical events.

The content in the primary grades features a heavy focus on civics at the local, national, and global levels. In the intermediate grades, a historical storyline is followed, beginning with Arizona history, followed by studies of indigenous populations of North and South America, European exploration, and historical events in North America from European colonization through the Industrial Revolution, as well as their cultural, economic, and environmental consequences.

A variety of instructional resources are incorporated into Social Studies lessons. Technology-based resources include BrainPop, DBQ (Document Based Questions) Project, Newsela, and ReadWorks. There is an emphasis on the use of primary sources. The district also incorporates Social Studies into its Reading curriculum, allowing for the integration of Social Studies across subject areas. In addition, lessons include the incorporation of writing, simulations, Socratic seminars, and hands-on projects such as salt dough maps.

Many grade levels offer special events to further the Social Studies curriculum. In kindergarten, students participate with their families in Children Around the World, where students learn about a country and present what they have learned, giving them the opportunity to develop as global citizens. Third grade uses Arizona's statehood day as an opportunity for the students to explore the "5 Cs" of Arizona's economy through different hands-on activities. Other grade levels have offered field trips or virtual field trips to historical sites, such as Montezuma's Castle, in order to enhance their students' learning.

Assessment of Social Studies standards is primarily based on student contributions to class discussions, the use of evidence to support claims, and students' ability to determine cause and effect relationships. Often, state summative assessments utilize Social Studies content as the basis for reading and writing assessments.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

The Early Childhood Center (ECC) at Cherokee offers preschool and pre-kindergarten classes for our youngest children. The program is tuition based and is overseen by the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS). The program employs certified teachers and a curriculum that follows the Arizona Early Learning Standards.

The ECC utilizes many of the same strategies and approaches that are seen in the primary grades. The teachers differentiate instruction, use flexible groupings and collect data regularly. The ECC teachers also have the opportunity to collaborate with K-5 teachers and have access to the K-5 instructional practices database. The ECC staff participate in school-wide professional development with their colleagues in addition to their own professional development (PD), geared towards early learning.

The teachers align their teaching with the Arizona Early Learning Standards and utilize the CKLA curriculum, which is used in grades K-3, as their core academic program. Preschool and pre-kindergarten students are taught the foundations of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, while developing a broad background knowledge, seamlessly preparing them for the transition to kindergarten. The children in the ECC gain exposure to a robust math program and have several science and social studies standards, themes and lessons embedded into their program. ECC students also have exposure to the SEL curriculum and participate in the school-wide PBIS program.

Generally speaking, the children who participate in the ECC program demonstrate a higher level of kindergarten readiness both academically and socially. Kindergarten readiness is also evident in the students' familiarity with play-based, small group learning that facilitates individualized instruction in Language Arts, Math, and Social Studies.

Pre-kindergarten students at Cherokee, on average, leave with at least 10 letter sounds and can count over 20 by ones. Students also learn and utilize social emotional problem-solving tools which are taught through the SEL program that includes the Sanford Harmony curriculum. Anecdotally, the kindergarten teachers report that they can see a big difference between the children who attended the ECC and those who did not.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

SUSD and Cherokee understand the importance of providing children with curriculum in the areas of Visual Arts, Physical Education, Vocal Music, and Performing Arts Programs (Specials). Students receive Specials each day and have the benefit of being taught by teachers who are content certified. Each Specials teacher provides a robust curriculum and explicitly teaches grade level content standards aligned with the Arizona State Standards. K-5 students benefit by having access to the media center weekly. K-5 students also have the opportunity to participate in several curriculum programs available to them before and after school.

The Visual Arts teacher works with the K-5 homeroom teachers to create projects that align with the grade level curriculum standards in addition to the Visual Arts Standards. By way of example, students were able to demonstrate understanding of the concepts taught during an Arizona Geography unit by creating a physical model during art class. Students are regularly exposed to several academic concepts throughout the year and able to apply those concepts to the creation of art.

Physical Education teachers provide K-5 students a specific, grade level curriculum while also providing other skills like sportsmanship, team building, rule following, sequencing, goal setting and Science

curriculum standards associated with Health and Wellness.

The General Vocal Music teacher exposes children to music standards throughout the year which gives students the opportunity to learn to read, sing, and play music on a variety of instruments. Some examples include the Orff xylophone, African and Djembe drums, rhythm sticks, shakers, triangle, tambourine, boom whackers, as well as electric piano keyboards. Additionally, a separate Band and Strings teacher works with students to introduce them to the performing arts and develop the ability to play an instrument. She differentiates her lessons based on age, experience and instrument. Students in the program learn to read music and perform for an audience. The teachers in the music programs provide students opportunities to learn about music through reading and writing assignments tied to grade level standards.

Every Specials teacher contributes to the academic CIP goals and is required to support students in the realization of those goals. Reading and writing standards are regularly addressed in the Specials classes and aligned with the grade level CIP objectives. The Specials Team meets regularly in its own Professional Learning Community (PLC) to discuss data and ways that they can support each grade level.

The Cherokee Media Specialist works with all K-5 students and teachers to support SEL, reading goals, and curriculum. The Media Specialist meets with teachers regularly to identify and order books that align with what they are teaching and what interests the students. The Cherokee Library houses one of the largest elementary collections in the district which helps support Cherokee's many above grade level readers.

Technology is available to every student. Each classroom has an LCD touchscreen display, audio enhancement and document camera that are utilized regularly by both teachers and students. Additionally, every K-5 student receives a Chromebook and a Google account to facilitate learning. All students use the Chromebooks for quarterly assessments on FastBridge and i-Ready and students in grades 3-5 utilize them for state assessments. Each grade covers specific technology competencies annually.

The Arizona Tax Credit Program has made it possible to further enhance the curriculum by adding curricular programs outside of the school day. The before and after school programs are run by the teachers and are optional for all students to participate. One example is the Coding and Robotics classes this past year which covered Science, Technology and Mathematics standards. Seventy students participated in the fall semester which doubled in the spring semester. As a result of this interest, Cherokee participated in its first ever "Hour of Code" where the entire school set aside an hour to explore coding.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Cherokee tailors instruction in a number of ways to meet the needs of our under-performing population. Teachers differentiate instruction based on ability, learning style and rate, paying close attention to students with the greatest needs. Resources, outside of the core curriculum, are identified that will have the largest impact, such as Read Naturally, Words Their Way and Sonday reading system. Additionally, high-yield strategies are used campus-wide to maximize student achievement, such as student self-reflection, meaningful feedback, high-frequency exposure, use of specialized research-based materials, and use of technology.

Under-performing students are identified through a strong Multi-Tiered System of Supports and grouped according to various data points. Once students have been grouped, each grade level is tasked with differentiating instruction and locating curricular resources to meet the needs of students who are below grade level. Aides and Specialists, funded by the Cherokee APT and Arizona Results Based Funding, help to provide targeted interventions. For example, in 3rd grade, there are two aides who instruct a small group of students during the reading block with a goal of increasing oral reading fluency and boosting academic vocabulary. These Specialists are following the exact scope and sequence of the classroom, but with more scaffolded supports and alternate resources. In addition, teachers use the recommended FastBridge interventions and i-Ready lessons to fill in learning deficits. Students are progress monitored weekly and the team utilizes this data to ensure that interventions are effective. If students are not making adequate

progress, they are referred to the Intervention Planning Team (IPT) to review interventions, fidelity of implementation and make further recommendations. The IPT team continues to monitor progress and could recommend a referral to the special education multidisciplinary team for review of existing data to determine if a special education evaluation is warranted.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Cherokee has a large percentage of its students performing above grade level. Teachers regularly differentiate instruction and give opportunities for above average students to work above grade level during RTI, and in core content areas using strategies like flexible groupings. Cherokee also uses the Gifted cluster model for grades 1-5. This model includes at least one teacher in each grade level that teaches students who have either been identified as Gifted or are achieving at a much higher level than the majority of their peers. Cluster teachers use a wide variety of strategies to enrich the learning of these students. Having the cluster of Gifted students in the same class allows teachers to group students together to complete differentiated projects and assignments. These projects are usually more open ended and often require some outside research. Students are asked to apply mastered skills in different ways. The district provides training and support for all cluster teachers. Cherokee's full time gifted teacher is also a great resource and can provide ideas and material for cluster teachers. Using the i-Ready computer program, students have access to above grade level skills through their own personalized "learning path." This path is tailor-made for each student and uses information based on pre-assessments to give lessons that build and extend on concepts already mastered.

Cherokee offers a Gifted Math class in grades three, four and five, while a Gifted reading class is offered to students in fourth and fifth grades. These classes are taught by the Gifted teacher and are replacement classes, meaning the Gifted teacher is the teacher of record, providing all instruction and grades for those subjects. These pull-out classes allow the school to meet the needs of the Gifted students, while also meeting the needs of other students in the regular grade level classrooms. Additionally, the school is able to have smaller class size ratios due to this additional program staffing.

3c. Special education:

Cherokee serves students with mild to moderate learning disabilities in the Learning Resource Center (LRC). There are currently 1.5 teachers meeting the needs of 22 students with the support of four paraeducators (one of whom is 1:1). In addition, there is a .4 Psychologist. There are 1.5 Speech Language Pathologists; serving 42 speech language Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Other service providers include an Occupational Therapist and Physical Therapist.

Prior to two years ago, Cherokee also housed two Social, Communication, Academic Programs (SCA) to meet the needs of higher functioning students with autism. SCA students were placed at Cherokee from their home schools and typically were with their non-disabled peers for 80% or more of their day with paraeducator and special educator support. In the Fall of 2020, these programs were merged into the LRC program. Cherokee and the respective parents chose to keep these students here despite the changes in programming because of the success that was seen in these students. As a result, the LRC program is not the typical resource setting with 30% students being served having autism. In addition, there are students with multiple disabilities, mild intellectual disability, and developmental delays. When looking at the least restrictive environment, 66% of the LRC students spend greater than 80% of their day out of the general education environment.

The LRC provides a continuum of curriculum and services, attempting to align with the general education curriculum, and working closely with teachers to meet the needs of individual students. The general education curriculum is the first choice unless it is proven that students are not progressing. The LRC teachers are highly qualified in alternative curriculums, such as Wilson Reading System, Framing Your Thoughts, Guided Metacognitive Skills, as well as a variety of paragraph structures. In addition, teachers use a variety of social skill programs, including Sanford Harmony, Wise Minds, and Super Flex to meet students' social and emotional needs.

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

Cherokee follows the district-wide model to support English Language Learners. All identified ELL students in grades K-5 receive 120 minutes of English Language Development through a combination of high-quality classroom instruction and small group pull-out support. In both settings, ELL students receive instruction that is guided by the Arizona English Language Proficiency Standards and utilizes research-based programs to support language proficiency. The success of this model is reliant upon strong communication between teachers, district personnel, and parents. Staff has access to a Community Specialist who helps facilitate communication with families and arranges for interpreters and translation services.

Data collection and analysis is an integral part of the ELL program. Students who initially qualify for the program are grouped by language proficiency level. Along with data from district and state assessments, ELL students' language proficiency is reassessed each year to demonstrate not only language, but academic growth as well. Students who reach proficiency are closely monitored for two years after exiting the program. If students are successful without these layers of support, they are fully exited from the program.

While targeted skill instruction is one way to help ELL students reach proficiency, Cherokee realizes that additional support is necessary to help close the achievement gap. Cherokee provides a free, before school tutoring program, called Action Tutoring, which is open to all current ELL students and those in monitor status. Action Tutoring promotes equity and provides additional opportunities for students who may not otherwise have access to support. During tutoring, two certified teachers provide students with homework support and targeted skill support in a small group setting.

ELL students also have access to a free summer program called Learning Excellence and Academic Performance or LEAP. This program runs for three weeks in the summer and certified teachers provide specialized instruction in the areas of technology, reading, writing, and math.

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

Due to the location of Cherokee and the demographics that make up the school, migrant and homeless students are not typically enrolled populations on campus. However, in the 2021-2022 academic year, Cherokee welcomed 26 non-English speaking, Afghan refugee students under the McKinney Vento Homelessness Act. While there was no specific program in place for this population, the staff utilized many of the existing interventions and programs in order to offer academic and social-emotional support to the students. These supports include the use of reading and math specialists, a certified ELL teacher, and an on-site social worker. In addition, Cherokee's APT organized donations of clothing and classroom supplies to support these students. Cherokee has many volunteers who have come together to support this need for the refugee students.

The school district has a representative who assists with students who are classified as homeless under the McKinney Vento Act. The school works with this individual to ensure that the needs of these students are met, including transportation to and from school. Also, technology is provided to students in order to support academic growth. All students receive a Chromebook and have the option to rent a mobile hotspot if needed. This year, the school purchased a subscription to the online program, Starfall, as a means of developing the literacy skills of the refugee students. Technology in the classroom is also used to support translation programs, such as Google Translate. This helps teachers, staff, and other students communicate more effectively with this group of students, providing them with more opportunities for academic success.

School-to-home communication is vital to student success and the staff values the ability to meet and share information with students' families. As the families are non-English speaking, volunteer interpreters from the community came together to assist teachers with parent-teacher conferences. In addition, the district provided transportation in order to allow the parents to attend conferences. This support has led to more student success in the classroom.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

All stakeholders at Cherokee attach great importance to rigorous academic, social-emotional, and character education. The staff uses a collaborative approach to ensure that the values taught are a top priority. Students feel a sense of belonging and community due to the safe, happy, and nurturing environment that has been created. The PBIS program promotes the highest standard of learning, growth, and personal development and as a way to support students in becoming productive members of society and life-long learners. Staff members encourage a growth mindset and prepare the students with knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be successful in post-secondary education.

PBIS language is aligned to promote a connection between CARE and current SEL research. The new CARE language quickly became a powerful mantra for the community. A campus matrix, using visuals and words, was created to guide students on expected behaviors in all areas of the campus. CARE posters are displayed in every classroom and throughout the campus.

Cherokee students participate in activities on campus that promote a strong sense of community. One example is the video news program that runs every morning. Students help in the production and delivery of content each day. In addition to celebrating student and staff birthdays and milestones, students are recognized for displaying CARE behaviors. Cherokee students in grades 3-5 have the opportunity to be involved in student government or STUGO. These student leaders help plan campus events, support fundraising efforts, and communicate campus happenings with their classes. Many student leaders continue their leadership roles in middle and high school.

Student engagement and learning was a top priority during the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, Cherokee teachers jumped into action to distribute chromebooks, hot spots, and student materials so that student learning would continue in a virtual environment. Cherokee teachers and staff worked to create a safe and supportive learning environment for our students. One way staff kept students engaged was to provide daily video announcements streamed from the principal. This small effort helped many of our students remain connected to their community. Teachers modified their schedules to offer a dedicated hour for students and parents to check in with their teachers at the end of the day. Cherokee students remained resilient and showed tremendous growth as evidenced by 2020-21 state assessment data. In the current school year, teachers provided tutoring and livestream instruction for students who were quarantined. Teachers also used Google Classrooms to keep students involved in their learning while at home.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Cherokee APT (Association of Parents & Teachers) is the most valuable partner that Cherokee has. Students benefit from an active parent community that has high expectations and is willing to fund additional people, programs and equipment to help its students succeed. Cherokee is known for having resources well-beyond what is offered by the state and the district. These resources give the students unique opportunities to learn and allows the teachers to have many opportunities to customize each child's learning experience.

Members of the APT utilize their connections to help provide the school with amazing community building events and fundraising opportunities. The APT will usually bring in about \$200,000 annually, which is then used to purchase resources, such as classroom aides for every grade level, additional supervision for safety, a media specialist, an art aide, certified teacher Specialists, and academic programs. In addition, the APT utilizes the facilities in order to provide a number of community building events and activities for students and families. Game nights, movie nights, Trunk or Treat, Fitness Challenge, dances, Art Walk, and open meetings are examples of activities that promote positive relationships within our community.

United for Libraries is an organization that honors the work of deceased influential authors. When the decision was made to name Cherokee Arizona's first, and only, Literary Landmark, it provided a wonderful

opportunity to promote reading and share the works of Barbara Park, author of the Junie B. Jones series of books.

Cherokee has had a number of partnerships with outside agencies that have provided counseling services for some students. SUSD has contracted with Scottsdale Prevention Institute (SPI), Jewish Family Services (JFS), and Everybody Matters. For the 2021-22 School Year, due to grant funding, SUSD was able to secure a full-time social worker to continue working with Cherokee students and to provide the staff with SEL resources and support. SUSD also provided the school with a Community Liaison who offers outreach and provides community members with support.

Other partnerships worth mentioning include the Scottsdale Charros and the Paradise Valley Police Department. The Charros provide scholarship opportunities for staff, an Educator of the Year award for each school, multiple grant opportunities, and an annual \$1000 stipend to address other needs. The police department helps with events, traffic control, and has a daily presence on the campus.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Cherokee staff members are treated as professionals by the administration and receive a tremendous amount of praise and support from the community. The teachers take their roles and responsibilities very seriously. They are well respected by the administrative team and community as evidenced by annual surveys and anecdotal information. There is very little attrition annually and the morale of the staff is positive.

While sites have some autonomy over professional development opportunities, there are district-wide trainings which help promote equity across the district. When there are new initiatives, the district often uses a “train the trainer” model. Teacher leaders from each site are trained and, in turn, will train the rest of their staff. The administration works collaboratively with the Teacher Instructional Leaders (TILs) and other teachers to identify needs and plan PD. Decisions are data driven and based on student needs. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to share their expertise with all members of the school community.

Prior to the pandemic, the community planned much of its PD on Gifted learning strategies due to the high percentage of students who have been identified as Gifted. Teachers were able to collect hours towards the completion of a Gifted Endorsement and the APT supported this charge by creating a PD budget that teachers could use for training and classes that supported obtaining a Gifted Endorsement.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented the staff with new challenges and opportunities for growth. Professional development approaches were modified during the time that transmission numbers were high with the focus changing to safety and meeting the needs of the community in an online setting. Teachers received training on multiple online tools and equipment during this time.

Virtual learning, also known as Enhanced Distance Learning (EDL), was offered to SUSD students when COVID numbers were soaring in parts of the 2020-21 school year. The staff could choose to work from home or from their classrooms during this time. Staff members were given the opportunity to continue teaching online even after a return to in-person learning. Administration also offered professional development to staff virtually, if they did not feel safe meeting in-person, and tailored the PD around delivering quality instruction using a virtual model. Administration also found ways to help staff with childcare when learning was completely virtual by hiring a teacher to work with the staff’s children on site while their parents delivered instruction from their classrooms. Thanks to the efforts of the staff, the school was able to minimize the impact of the pandemic on students and provide a quality education.

4. School Leadership:

Cherokee administrators believe teamwork is essential. They capitalize on the collective capacity of the school and community. Leadership is visible on the campus in many ways and includes many staff and community members including: the administrators, TILs, Site Council, APT Executive Board, Team Leads and Student Government members.

The Cherokee Principal and Assistant Principal have a large role in creating and maintaining the school's climate and culture. They continually look for ways to improve and regularly ask for input. Generally speaking, the principal is in charge of: school budgets, communication, evaluations, staffing, compliance, policy enforcement, professional development, data collection, annual Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) and is the educational leader on the campus. The assistant principal oversees: operations, safety protocols, student discipline, evaluations, 504s, SPED, assessment, and student teachers.

Cherokee has three teachers, identified annually, as Teacher Instructional Leaders (TILs) who regularly consult with administration on topics, such as climate, professional development, curriculum, accountability, CIP, school needs, and data review. The TILs are well-respected by their colleagues and contribute a great deal to the success of the school.

Each grade level has a Team Leader who is responsible for keeping them on task, and on-track, throughout the year. The Team Leader documents CIP progress and keeps minutes from their grade level meetings.

The school has a Site Council that meets monthly with the principal to discuss school-wide initiatives, culture and tax credit programming. The Council includes an equal number of teachers and parents.

The APT Executive Board oversees all operations of the association and meets monthly with the administration and teacher liaison to discuss activities, events, fundraising, communication, climate, resources, facilities and ways that they can support Cherokee. The principal uses this opportunity to advocate for funding of resources, programs, people and capital improvements that are needed around the campus.

Student Government (STUGO) allows students opportunities to develop leadership skills. Members of STUGO are elected by their peers and meet monthly to discuss events, fundraising, climate and culture. STUGO members include the principal in their meetings and always provide a unique perspective and ideas on how to improve the school.

An example of leadership ensuring student achievement is the creation of the annual CIP. The CIP is data driven and to be successful requires collaboration, resources, funding and support from every stakeholder. It is created and used to demonstrate student academic achievement in addition to supporting a positive culture, enhancing communication and increasing rigor school-wide. The leadership teams meet quarterly with each grade level to discuss the CIP goals and testing data to identify at risk students.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Cherokee's student population comes from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, including the recent addition of more than twenty students who are refugees from Afghanistan. This puts cultural awareness and inclusivity at the forefront of all teaching practices on campus. One of the most important tools is the nurturing relationship each teacher develops with his/her students. This instills a sense of community and trust, leading to respect for all students on campus.

All teachers at Cherokee participated in cultural awareness training during the 2021-2022 school year. Teachers were presented with strategies and resources to increase their ability to teach and meaningfully engage students from diverse backgrounds in their classrooms. Some of the resources included lessons to share with students about diversity and respect. In addition, the school utilizes Sanford Harmony as an SEL program, and there are included lessons and activities surrounding the recognition and appreciation of diversity and inclusion.

Classroom discussions promote a sense of community. These conversations take place during morning meetings, literature discussions, or through subject areas such as social studies. Students learn how to communicate, listen, and respectfully engage in conversations with others from the very beginning of their education. These open, honest, and age appropriate discussions allow students to listen to multiple perspectives and learn to respect differences amongst their peers. Teachers are aware of current social movements and events. When discussions arise, they must be sensitive to the age group of their students and

diverse family perspectives.

In response to the diverse needs of the students, Cherokee employs numerous aides and specialists. This includes a full-time ELL teacher, certified math and reading specialists, and a social worker. A team of volunteer interpreters visits weekly to meet with our new, non-English speaking students. These interpreters have supported the children with their transition to their new school and provided communication support for the teachers, students, and parents. Also, Cherokee's community came together to support students from Afghanistan on Nowruz, the Afghan New Year. Students were given the traditional gift of new clothing and classes featured lessons on the holiday.

Cherokee teachers and students have access to a wide variety of books about different countries and cultures. This helps students to be more culturally aware, increasing respect for students from different backgrounds.

In an effort to ensure equitable access to technology, all students are provided with Chromebooks, which they are permitted to use for schoolwork in the classroom and at home. Families are also given the opportunity to check out mobile hotspots to ensure access to reliable internet.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

One practice that has been instrumental to the school's success is Cherokee's RTI program, which follows a multi-tiered approach for academic and socio-emotional growth. Beginning in kindergarten, students are given standardized, one-on-one assessments in reading and math to identify individual needs. Modifications, accommodations, interventions, and extensions are made to hold all students to a high standard, but in ways that allow for individual achievement. The foundation of this model is a master schedule that provides each grade level a designated RTI time. During this time, at-risk students receive targeted research-based interventions. Students are evaluated three times per year using the universal screener, FastBridge. This program assesses students' core math and reading abilities and identifies them as high-risk, some-risk, or low-risk based on nationwide norms.

Targeted interventions are implemented in small groups by classroom teachers or specialists/interventionists. The interventionists allow for greater adult-to-student ratios and provide small group options for at-risk students. For example, a first grade teacher might work with a small group of students to target phonemic awareness deficits, while an interventionist supports a group of students working to increase their oral reading fluency. Students are progress monitored on a weekly basis. Grade level teams review data to determine the effectiveness of interventions and ensure student growth.

Cherokee added i-Ready as an online intervention this year and is used in addition to FastBridge, which is a district-wide initiative. All students complete an i-Ready diagnostic assessment that designs an individualized learning path. This resource is an effective tool that provides differentiated instruction. While students complete meaningful tasks independently, teachers have the opportunity to meet with individual students or with specific intervention groups.

The staff has received extensive training on the i-Ready and FastBridge programs. There is also an RTI committee made up of one representative from each grade level, the special education staff and administration. This committee meets regularly to discuss best practices for RTI, share resources, and brainstorm solutions for underperforming students.

RTI time is also used to support Cherokee's SEL initiative. For example, the social worker may push into a classroom during this time to help a group of students learn about Zones of Self Regulation or cope with a change at home. While in another classroom, the teacher may support a small group of students struggling to make friends.

The Cherokee RTI initiative has yielded the greatest impact on student achievement of any program implemented in the past decade. It allows teachers to respond to student needs quickly and efficiently and help all students achieve high standards.