

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. Joshua Shapiro Ed.D.
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Granite Ridge Intermediate School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2770 East International Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Fresno State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 93730-5400

County Fresno County

Telephone (559) 327-5000 Fax (559) 327-5090

Web site/URL
https://cnec.cusd.com/graniteridgeintermediate_home.aspx E-mail Joshuashapiro@clovisusd.k12.ca.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Ms. Eimear O'Brien Ed.D. E-mail eimearobrien@cusd.com
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Clovis Unified School District Tel. (559) 327-0000

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. Tiffany Stoker Madsen
(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):
- 34 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 44 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	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	259	280	539
8	312	269	581
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	571	549	1120

*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):
- 0.7 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 19.7 % Asian
 - 2.8 % Black or African American
 - 13.2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.3 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 43 % White
 - 20.3 % 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: 9%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	34
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	69
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	103
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	1120
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

Arabic, Armenian, Cantonese, Farsi, Filipino, Khmer, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Urdu.

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
41 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 30 %

Total number students who qualify: 335

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 12 %
134 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>20</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>4</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>13</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>31</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>9</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	11
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	60
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	15
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

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 19:1

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	98%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

Clovis North Educational Center's mission is to build a unified campus that inspires students to maximize their performance in mind, body and spirit. All resources at our site - both human and physical - are selected, cultivated, and deployed with a laser-focus to ensure that our students learn and achieve excellence.

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

<https://www.cusd.com/titleix.aspx#:~:text=The%20Clovis%20Unified%20School%20District,ethnicity%2C%20religion%2C%20sex%2C%20sexual>

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

Granite Ridge Intermediate School is located in a suburban area of Fresno in the heart of California’s San Joaquin Valley. The school is part of Clovis North Educational Center (CNEC), Clovis Unified School District’s third educational center, which opened its doors in August 2007. CNEC prides itself on being a 7th -12th grade campus composed of two schools, Granite Ridge Intermediate and Clovis North High School, which share the same mascot – the Broncos! When referring to the campus community, CNEC considers all students and staff as Broncos and as members of the same educational team. This unique educational setting has allowed the staff and community to strive for academic excellence through a variety of opportunities, which include a robust vertical articulation through the grade levels.

Granite Ridge is housed on a beautifully designed, well-maintained campus. Currently, the student body consists of 539 seventh graders and 580 eighth graders for a total of 1,119 students. Since the school was founded in 2007, enrollment at Granite Ridge has stabilized at approximately 1150 students per year in grades 7-8.

At Granite Ridge, student diversity is one of our greatest strengths. The current ethnic makeup is comprised of students who are White, multiracial, Asian, Hispanic, African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Pacific Islander. During the 2015-16 school year, the majority of CNEC students identified as White (52.1%). Since then, the percentage of students in this category has fallen to 43.04%. The percentage of students identifying as Hispanic or Latino has also grown by 5% over the same time period. As a result, CNEC now has no majority ethnic group. This increasingly rich tapestry of ethnicities continues to enhance the educational environment by providing students with the opportunity to consider a range of diverse opinions and perspectives beyond their own. This, in turn, has allowed students to critically reflect on their personal assumptions and look at the world from a fresh set of vantage points.

The school’s vision and educational beliefs stem from the district’s core values, which are based on the educational philosophy of CUSD’s first superintendent, Dr. Floyd Buchanan, who charged each school to provide “a fair break for every kid” and to value “people, not programs.” Every day, Granite Ridge strives to build a community in which all students feel connected and are celebrated for their unique contributions to the school. To this end, we teach and model the “Code of the North” as a way of building good character in students:

Live each day with courage. Take pride in your work.

Do what has to be done.

When you make a promise, keep it. Talk less and say more.

Make a difference.

Take care of one another. Together, we are better.

Leave it better than you found it.

Character counts, even when no one is looking.

Granite Ridge is also committed to providing a rigorous, relevant, and standards-based curriculum that drives students to employ higher level thinking skills, become problem-solvers, and learn how to communicate effectively. Our mission is “To build a unified campus that inspires students to maximize their performance in mind, body and spirit. All resources at the site—both human and physical—are selected, cultivated, and deployed with a laser-focus to ensure that our students learn and achieve excellence.” There are ongoing staff development and collaborative meetings throughout the school year designed to evaluate curriculum content and methodology, plan curriculum, and provide avenues for teachers to master the skills necessary to further challenge their students. Some of these staff development

days are district-driven, while others are site-based and involve a high degree of planning to ensure teachers are exposed to the most up-to-date research in techniques and pedagogy.

Every Wednesday and Thursday morning the staff meets in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). During PLC collaboration, best practices in instructional strategies are shared to maximize student learning. PLC meetings are used to evaluate state, district, and site-level assessment data, plan curriculum based on assessed needs, and implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

With over ten languages represented at Granite Ridge, English Learners (EL) are serviced with an English Learner class where they receive enhanced and targeted instruction. A credentialed push-in teacher provides additional group and individual academic assistance as needed. As a result, Granite Ridge's EL students perform admirably on the annual English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). The average reclassification rate over the past three years is 19%.

Granite Ridge also prides itself on unique programs aimed at maximizing student learning. Reading Apprenticeship Across the Disciplines (RAAD), Academic Seminar, Math Strategies, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), and Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) are supported with standards-based, district-adopted curriculum that targets the needs of all students, both low- and high-performing.

In the end, Granite Ridge Intermediate School lives by its motto—Unity, Courage, and Commitment. The community takes pride in the successes of the students and staff at Granite Ridge and embraces the 7-12 concept. Granite Ridge is proud of how much it has accomplished in its short history, and staff members stand ready to embrace future challenges as they continuously strive to provide an excellent education for students in mind, body, and spirit.

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:

Granite Ridge Intermediate School’s overall approach to curriculum and instruction, which is common across subject areas, involves a reliance on the collaborative work Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Following John Hattie’s research on collective teacher efficacy, we believe that organizing teachers into collaborative teams—according to subject area and grade level—is the most effective means for accelerating student achievement. When teachers are given the opportunity to work as part of high-functioning PLCs, the collective strength of the group is always greater than the sum of its parts. Because each teacher brings with him or her a unique set of experiences, areas of expertise, and perspectives, these shared qualities end up complementing each other, giving teacher teams the ability to more positively impact the learning of their students.

For these reasons, the bell schedule was intentionally constructed to include time for PLCs to meet before school each week on Wednesday and Thursday mornings. All subject area PLCs have been tasked with studying the relevant content standards, determining what is essential for students to learn in a unit of study, and creating a coherent instructional plan that will be shared by all members of the team. Through repeated cycles of inquiry, teacher teams build common formative assessments to measure student learning and then analyze the resulting data for strengths and weaknesses to refine the approach to instruction. This process provides the engine for a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) program by leading teacher teams to plan strategic interventions for students who need both additional support and enrichment.

PLCs are also afforded the opportunity to engage in vertical articulation between the grade levels at various points throughout the year. This vertical alignment allows teams to plan for a seamless continuity of learning between the intermediate and high school, ensuring that Granite Ridge students are given the skills necessary for success at the next level.

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

The English Language Arts (ELA) program is founded on the belief that students must have the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize information to be ready for success in college, career, and life in a technological society. Students must also be able to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, as well as analyze complex fiction and nonfiction texts in a diverse array of media forms. For these reasons, the need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every aspect of the ELA curriculum. It is understood that these universal skills will benefit students regardless of which major they choose to study in college or which career path they choose to follow.

Over the past several years, ELA teachers have worked to create a yearlong curriculum plan to achieve these goals and to ensure complete coverage of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The process began by determining mastery standards and supporting standards that would be addressed in each unit of study. Once the standards were identified, grade level teams designed a deliberate sequence for the curriculum so that each new lesson would build upon the prior knowledge that students had gained from previous learnings.

With the overall curriculum map in place, teachers continue to collaborate with their PLCs on designing and refining inquiry-driven lessons that lead students toward mastery of the content standards. Teachers also create common formative assessments to measure the degree to which students have achieved proficiency. In addition to utilizing these common formative assessments, ELA teams administer a series of California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) interim assessments throughout the year as benchmarks to evaluate whether students are performing at the level that is expected.

After analyzing assessment data, PLCs work collaboratively to provide Tier II interventions for students who need additional support or enrichment to achieve continued growth. One specific example of how teachers engage in Tier II intervention is through a deployment model that has come to be known as Bronco Week. During Bronco Week, students are assigned to the following groupings based on their performance on a given assessment: 1) did not meet the standard, 2) met the standard, and 3) exceeded the standard. Teachers then design targeted lessons for each of these achievement levels and share the responsibility for reteaching and enrichment by deploying students among their classrooms.

In addition to offering targeted interventions, the ELA department remains committed to providing “first-time best” instruction. With this goal in mind, the routines and strategies teachers have learned from Reading Apprenticeship Across the Disciplines (RAAD) provide the pedagogical basis for many of their lessons. One of the central RAAD strategies that the English Department utilizes is known as “Talking to the Text.” This strategy has become central to our educational mission because it encourages students to engage in metacognitive reflection as a means of monitoring their own comprehension. At the beginning of the year, teachers model this strategy through “Think Alouds” where they share their own thinking as they annotate a given text. Then, through a gradual release model, teachers move students toward being able to read and comprehend complex texts independently. The end result is that students are increasingly empowered and motivated to tackle difficult reading tasks as they move forward in their educational careers.

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

The Granite Ridge math department believes that students learn best when they are actively engaged in questioning, problem solving, reasoning, communicating, making connections, and explaining their own thinking. When students realize that they can make progress through this type of productive struggle, they begin to develop their own identities as powerful mathematics learners and users. Active-learning experiences also enable students to engage in a full range of mathematical pursuits—from exploring and noticing to questioning and analyzing—which make it clear that mathematics is about far more than mere calculation.

For these reasons, the math department has worked to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) by developing a balanced curriculum that emphasizes foundational skills and processes, builds deep mathematical understandings, and helps students to apply mathematics to powerful problem-solving experiences. The core curriculum has been designed to address both the content and practice standards as a means of fostering deep and effective learning for all. In each mathematics course, students learn by doing. As required by the CCSS, they must solve problems in mathematical and real-world contexts and learn to construct arguments using precise language. This means that teachers regularly shift their instruction and facilitate student learning with high-leverage routines that guide learners toward understanding and making connections between concepts and procedures. A new discovery-based curriculum in Math 7 (7th grade) and Math 8 (8th grade) also exposes students to problems involving real-world application and rigorous explanation and reasoning requirements.

To ensure that the curriculum is properly articulated and sequenced, the math department holds monthly meetings where teachers in grades 7 through 12 share best practices and develop common technical language so students can move seamlessly through the progression of courses. By vertically articulating the standards at each grade level, teachers are able to deliver instruction that overlaps and continuously loops, with increasing intellectual rigor at each grade level. Teachers analyze assessment data and work to address any gaps in learning by adjusting curriculum timelines, realigning mastery standards, and making any other changes that may be necessary.

Where assessments are concerned, Granite Ridge utilizes a wide variety of instruments to measure student learning. Subject-specific PLCs design common formative assessments to determine whether students have mastered the standards in each unit of instruction. PLCs also implement benchmark assessments that have been created by our Curriculum and Instruction department to verify whether students are progressing toward proficiency at various points throughout the year. Finally, the California Assessment of Student Progress and Proficiency (CAASPP) is administered every spring and results are reviewed to identify areas

for schoolwide improvement.

A great deal of our recent professional development in mathematics has centered on examining the results from assessments, learning how to design interventions for any learning gaps, and selecting instructional material to aid in this endeavor. Through this process, teachers have managed to enact a curriculum that focuses on discovery-based, student-centered learning where students are exposed to higher-level depth of knowledge (DOK) questions to enhance critical thinking and real-world application.

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

In the 2018-19 school year, Granite Ridge administered the California Science Test (CAST) for the first time. In the years leading up to this moment, teachers worked to align courses and pedagogy to match the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in methodology and content. Our school's success in switching to the NGSS standards is largely due to vertical articulation efforts. Science department meetings between intermediate and high school teachers take place monthly, providing time to share best practices, examine standards, and articulate instruction between the grade levels and subject areas. Since the introduction of the NGSS, we have integrated Earth, Life, and Physical Science standards into all 7th and 8th grade science courses. In 2020, the PLC leads also identified essential standards taught throughout the year within their grade level. Subsequently, the department began to vertically articulate the lessons for each course to ensure that students were receiving the most appropriate content and to ensure that there were no gaps in the curriculum.

Science grade-level PLCs have also worked to design common formative assessments that measure whether students have achieved mastery of course content and the requisite scientific thinking skills. For this reason, assessments contain questions that move students beyond the recall of basic facts and allow them to demonstrate that they can apply their knowledge to the phenomena they are investigating. Grade level teams will typically design a common formative assessment, evaluate answers on a common rubric, and identify areas for reteaching. The team then enters this information into a common spreadsheet that is tracked over time. The science department's goal is to use this data to continue implementing a systematic response to Tier I and Tier II interventions.

In addition, the science department has utilized various technological tools to help keep students engaged with the curriculum. For instance, some staff members worked closely with the Fresno County Superintendent of School (FCSS) to implement the use of interactive notebooks, which allow teachers to give continuous feedback and determine where students may need additional time and support. This curricular initiative proved to be so successful that several teachers traveled to state and national conferences to present on the strategy. Furthermore, as a result of moving to distance learning, teachers have increased their use of Google Classroom and online testing platforms. These tools have helped teachers identify opportunities for reteaching course content and providing interventions for specific students.

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

The social science department offers a World History course for students in the 7th grade and a United States History course for students in the 8th grade. Each of these courses of study was designed in accordance with the History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools, Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Science, and the History Social Science Framework for California Public Schools. The curriculum plans incorporated all three sets of guidelines to ensure that students not only to acquire core knowledge in history and social science, but also to develop the type of critical thinking skills that historians and social scientists employ when studying the past and its relationship to the present. While the California Content Standards outline the specific events and individuals that the course should cover, and the History Social Science Framework and the Common Core Literacy Standards describe the type of discipline-specific literacy that is necessary for students to engage in historical interpretation. A synthesis of all three ensures students receive an innovative, thorough, and relevant social science education.

With this goal in mind, teachers have worked to design inquiry-driven curriculum units that lead students to

investigate the central eras and events that have occurred in United States and World History. By focusing each unit on an essential question, students are prompted to critically examine primary source documents and begin learning to think, read, and write like historians.

Having also received training in Reading Apprenticeship Across the Disciplines (RAAD), history teachers use their knowledge of disciplinary reading strategies to help students access the content of their textbooks and think more carefully about what they read. During the past school year, when teachers noticed that some students were not performing as well as hoped on summative assessments, they administered a Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) assessment. The data revealed that many students who received low grades on history tests were also reading below grade level. The teachers then pooled their expertise to create a Collaborative Jigsaw activity, which involved “chunking” the text and supplying students with graphic organizers that helped them to identify key details in a particular section. Once the students finished with this portion of the activity, they created Google Slides and shared the findings with their group members. After implementing this strategy, teachers noticed that focus group students gained more stamina with reading and performed better on assessments. This is a prime example of how history and social science teachers utilize assessment data to identify gaps in learning and refine their instructional approach to ensure that all students will be successful.

1f. For secondary schools:

The Clovis Unified School District offers a comprehensive array of twenty-one different Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways across each of our five high school campuses, ranging from Agricultural Mechanics to Engineering Design and Public Safety. Through a districtwide collaborative effort, students are able to take advantage of this full range of offerings by enrolling in pathway courses at sister school sites.

At the Clovis North Educational Center where Granite Ridge Intermediate School is housed, there are three separate CTE pathways. In 2007, Granite Ridge was awarded a \$1.8 million grant to fund a Medical Careers curriculum pathway, which now has a full-time instructor offering three different courses in the medical field. In 2013, Clovis North High School added an Education Careers pathway that prepares students for careers in education. And in 2016, Clovis North began a Software and Systems Design pathway, which received a \$3 million grant to construct an industry-specific facility. This building was completed in 2020 and houses two instructors, as well as state-of-the-art computer equipment and machinery. All CTE pathways work with industry partners in our community to give students access to work experience opportunities, certifications, and dual enrollment courses at Clovis Community College.

To begin preparing Granite Ridge Intermediate students for participation in the Education Careers and Software and Systems Design pathways, the following courses are offered to 7th and 8th graders: Computer Applications, Computer Science Explorations, and Introduction to Education. These courses serve the purpose of fostering interest in the types of CTE courses students can take in high school and providing them with introductory skills that will be of benefit as they matriculate through the pathways. This is yet another advantage of being a 7th-12th grade educational center. Whereas many students must wait until entering high school to take advantage of CTE course offerings, students at Granite Ridge are given a head start in developing the type of skills needed for college and career readiness.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In keeping with our commitment to educate students in mind, body, and spirit, Granite Ridge Intermediate School provides a comprehensive range of courses. The drama program offers a Basic Drama class for 7th grade students and an Advanced Drama class for 8th grade students. In Beginning Drama, students learn basic theater concepts and stage terms such as pantomime and improvisation. They also learn performance techniques to help become more comfortable in front of an audience. Advanced Drama works to extend

these skills and prepare students for full length plays and musicals, which are presented to community and student audiences each year. Because the intermediate drama program collaborates with the high school drama director in staging these productions, this gives students the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and competencies that will lead to success at the secondary level.

The Music department provides a wide variety of performing experiences for students at all grades and ability levels. Instrumental music course offerings include an award-winning Marching Band that performs at local and statewide events, three middle school String Ensembles, Jazz Band, Color Guard, and Chamber Ensemble. Choral music offerings also include Soprano/Alto Choir, Tenor/Bass Choir, Concert Choir, Chamber Choir, and Treble Clef Choir. This rich span of courses serves as a vehicle to promote musicianship, critical thinking, creativity, expression, discipline, responsibility, good citizenship, personal growth, as well as a cooperative team effort.

A semester-long Art/Drawing class and a yearlong Advanced Art class are offered to students in the 7th and 8th grades. In the Art/Drawing course, students learn to coordinate mind, hand, and eye while creating projects using various arts and crafts materials and media. Painting, design, sculpture, art principles, and other creative activities are explored during the semester. The Advanced Art class then builds upon the skills students have acquired and leads them through an extensive study of Art History, Art Appreciation, and Studio Art concepts.

All students in the 7th and 8th grade are required to take courses in Physical Education (PE), which have been designed to meet the California State Content Standards. In PE, students are taught the motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform in a variety of activities. Students are also coached to develop physical fitness and to improve their overall health and performance. Throughout the school year, students are regularly assessed to confirm that they are meeting the Physical Education State Standards as well as being prepared to succeed on the California Physical Fitness Test (PFT).

One of the advantages of operating as a 7th-12th grade educational center is that intermediate students can challenge themselves to take Spanish 1 and French 1 classes at the high school level. Each of these courses introduce students to the language through thematic units that emphasize oral communication, listening, reading, and writing. By using common assessments, quizzes, and unit tests, teachers monitor student learning and adjust instruction to ensure students develop the necessary competencies.

Granite Ridge also employs a highly skilled teacher-librarian who regularly collaborates with content area instructors to design and teach innovative research units in a state-of-the-art media lab. This individual curates a full complement of research databases, print materials, and citation tools. Over the years, the Teacher Librarian has served as the backbone of a campus wide research initiative, which has proven essential in helping students develop the skills required by the Common Core State Standards.

In the interest of making sure that students leave intermediate school with relevant life skills, Granite Ridge offers a Teen Living elective with units of study that include nutrition, food preparation, self-esteem development, decision-making, money management, job skills, and clothing care. In addition, a Yearbook course is offered to students who are interested in working on the school yearbook. Through project-based learning, Yearbook students develop skills in layout design, story writing, editing, proofreading, advertising, marketing, and production.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Granite Ridge Intermediate School provides a series of targeted supports and interventions for students performing below grade level. At the beginning of the present school year, a full-time Intervention Specialist was hired to focus on continuously improving and refining a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) schoolwide program. To achieve this goal, the Intervention Specialist consistently reviews and monitors student assessment data and works with staff to design systematic interventions that meet student needs.

Three separate Tier III intervention courses are utilized for students performing below grade level in reading and mathematics. The Academic Seminar course addresses students who need additional support with reading, while the Math Strategies course focuses on students requiring additional instruction in mathematical computation. A Study Strategies course also centers on students needing to develop skills related to executive functioning, organization, and academic behaviors.

In order to ensure students are appropriately placed in the support course that meets their needs, school administrators rely on several data points. For instance, at the beginning of the school year, a Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) assessment was administered to all 7th and 8th graders to determine each student's reading grade level. The data was cross-referenced with course grades and teacher observations to evaluate whether a student would benefit from being placed in a section of Academic Seminar. If a student was found to be reading at grade level—but still struggling with their academic coursework—placement into a Study Strategies course was offered. The Math Strategies course also relies on a similar set of measures, such as assessment data and course grades, to ensure proper placement.

Finally, after discovering there was an achievement gap between African American students and the overall student population, the principal established an African American Student Advisory Group in 2019 to learn more about these students' experiences on campus and to find ways accelerating their academic performance. As a result of these interactions, the campus has deepened its commitment to culturally responsive teaching practices and ensuring students of color enjoy equal access to the curriculum.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

In recent years, the staff at Granite Ridge Intermediate has carefully analyzed data from the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) to ensure that all students are meeting their expected annual growth goals. Results from the CAASPP sort students into four separate achievement levels. Students who earn a 3 or 4 on the assessment are determined to have met or exceeded standards, while students who earn a 1 or 2 have either not met the standard or are close to meeting the standard. Within each of these categories, students are provided with annual expected growth goals that must be met the following year.

After reviewing the longitudinal data from several recent CAASPP administrations, it was discovered that students scoring a 3 or 4 were not achieving their expected growth targets as often as students scoring a 1 or 2. In essence, students who were performing above grade level were not growing at the same pace as their peers. After making this discovery, teachers recognized the need to examine how they were differentiating instruction to meet every student's needs, including those that are performing above grade level. This led to the implementation of a deployment model known as Bronco Week. During Bronco Week, teachers use the data from common formative assessments to deploy students according to achievement level. In addition to providing intervention for students who are not meeting standards, teachers also devise challenging enrichment lessons for students who exceed standards. The goal is to continue increasing the level of intellectual rigor for high achieving students so that they receive the type of academic challenge needed to sustain growth.

Beyond providing differentiated instruction for high performing students, Advanced Math and Honors Science courses are offered to students in 7th and 8th grades. Students seeking an added challenge can also enroll in Spanish 1 and French 1 classes that are taught on our high school campus. Moreover, a schoolwide GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) program provides a series of enriching colloquiums throughout the year. Students can also take advantage of membership in the California Junior Scholarship Federation (CJSF).

Where extracurricular opportunities are concerned, Granite Ridge has a full slate of academic teams and events that students can take part in. These include the Math Team, Forensics and Debate, Science Olympiad, Robotics, Science Fair, Science Bowl, and History Day. In recent years, these teams have successfully challenged accelerated students to maximize their potential. In fact, Science Bowl, Forensics, and Science Fair students have regularly competed at the national level for the past five years.

3c. Special education:

At Granite Ridge Intermediate school, all special education students have equal access to educational, co-curricular, and social activities. To ensure their success, special education teachers collaborate with general education classroom teachers in core curricular areas to meet the needs identified in each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). In addition, special education teachers regularly attend department meetings across all core subjects and grade levels to understand the curriculum and to effectively assist students in Resource Specialist (RSP) classrooms. Instructional Assistants (IAs) are also utilized in the classroom setting to support student's academic, emotional, and behavioral needs.

The IEP team determines appropriate special educational services for qualifying students. Once a student has been qualified for services, special education teachers, district support services, school psychologists, instructional assistants, and a language/speech specialist work to design an array of educational options for meeting students' needs. Case managers then foster success by communicating students' strengths, weaknesses, and IEP goals to their teachers. The special education staff also works in conjunction with classroom teachers to develop strategies for behavior management and instruction.

All members of the special education team are provided with Strategies, Motivation, Awareness, Resilience, Talents, and Success (SMARTS) curriculum training, which presents a series of approaches for accessing important executive functioning processes, goal setting, thinking flexibly, organizing and prioritizing information, memorizing, self-monitoring, and self-checking. The special education team also receives Formal Special Education Assessment training for the digital format. This allows teachers to assess students in a digital format and streamline report writing and assessment information.

The 504 team provides appropriate accommodations for students who qualify for a Section 504 plan. Each of Granite Ridge's 504 coordinators maintain their own student caseload. Each year, the coordinator facilitates a meeting that includes the student, parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, and other support staff to revise the 504 plan so that it best fits the student's current needs. A dedicated administrator oversees the team to ensure consistency and accountability.

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

Granite Ridge staff members work collaboratively to fully support diverse English Learners (ELs) as they navigate general education curriculum and language development. EL students are placed in designated English Language Development (ELD) classes based on their English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) levels. Highly qualified teachers specializing in language acquisition teach ELD classes. Curricular resources such as Interactive Readers and Edge curriculum provide scaffolding for students who have not acquired the necessary vocabulary or experiences that would allow them to engage successfully with text.

In addition to a pair of dedicated ELD teachers, several instructional aides are employed to extend instructional support. EL students are enrolled in designated pathways where integrated instruction is delivered in the core subject areas, including history and language arts, math, and science. Students needing greater structure and support are enrolled in an Academic Seminar class specific to English Learners. Teachers in this pathway are hand-selected for their ability to build relationships with students and academically support our EL population's general education needs. The EL pathways are designed to group students and optimize support from the general education teachers, ELD teacher, and instructional aides. Furthermore, ELD lunch and after school labs specifically focus on individual and group academic needs. Lastly, an ELD specialist is dedicated to ensuring the success of our Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) students. This individual monitors student progress every six weeks, providing necessary interventions during the mandated four-year monitoring period. This comprehensive approach in meeting the diverse needs of our EL population has led to student success, as reflected in our EL testing data.

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

Granite Ridge Intermediate School has implemented a Transitions Program for students who are identified as Low Income, Foster Youth, English Language Learners, or otherwise at risk of not graduating. The Transition Program focuses on students who might not seek out support but would benefit from mentoring and increased connections to school resources. Through this program, students are provided with the resources they need to be successful in the classroom, at home, and in the community.

The Granite Ridge Transition Team consists of a team coordinator, a counselor, six Student Relations Liaisons (SRLs), and two Instructional Assistants (IAs). The Transition Team is strategic, collaborative, and systematic in its approach to student engagement. The transition process starts with a referral from the counseling staff. The Transition Team then evaluates the student's needs and determines level of support required. A Tier 1 student is at lowest risk while Tier 3 indicates a student of high need. Once placed at the appropriate tier, students are teamed with an SRL, counselor, or IA. Recurring, one-on-one "Trust-Time Appointments" are scheduled in which Transition Team members focus on the academic and social/emotional needs of students, relationship building, and SMART goal development. Specific interventions based on student needs are assigned, such as Transition Tutor Time (TTT), Transition After-School Homework Lab, IA push-in support, and Clovis Support Intervention (CSI) referrals, to build student success. The Transition Team holds weekly PLC meetings focused on social-emotional, academic, and other student needs. Review of student data during these PLC meetings directs the conversation and ensures that we are providing appropriate student interventions. Furthermore, monthly PLC meetings with the counseling department help to build a strong student knowledge base so that informed, collaborative decisions can be made.

The Transitions personnel also extend into the community, conducting home visits for students who are demonstrating difficulty maintaining attendance. They provided computers, log-in assistance, and internet hot-spots to families in need of support with technology during distance learning. Furthermore, this department reaches out to develop relationships with future Broncos by working directly with local feeder schools. Throughout the year, Transitions SRLs visit the five elementary schools within the CNEC area boundaries to begin building trust and understanding with incoming sixth-grade students. The SRLs lead activities and discussions with these future Broncos and help develop their understanding of the Code of the North - the high standards for behavior and character to which we hold students and staff.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Granite Ridge utilizes a number of strategies to create a positive and engaging school culture for students. It is well understood that students need to feel connected to campus in order to thrive academically, feel supported emotionally, and progress toward college and career readiness. To that end, the school site employs a full-time Activities Director whose central job responsibility is to establish and maintain a welcoming environment where students feel a sense of belonging and are excited to come to school. During the lunch period, the Activities Director works with members of the Leadership class to involve students in series of appealing games and activities that include dance offs, food fairs, Spike Ball matches, and a “March Madness” Intramural Basketball Tournament. The Leadership students also regularly decorate the bleachers before sporting events and play music during the games to create an exciting atmosphere for students to enjoy. This is in addition to planning first-class rallies and dances during the fall and spring semesters.

Moreover, the school hosts a Club Fair at the beginning of the school year to make students aware of the wide variety of clubs that are available. With over seventy clubs on offer, ranging from the Anime Club and the Fishing Club to the African American Student Union and LGBTeens, there truly is a place for everyone to get involved.

To ensure the mental health and wellness of our students, Granite Ridge also employs a full-time psychologist who is tasked with providing support for students during acute crisis situations as well as designing programs for preventative mental health maintenance. During the past school year, the psychologist created a new chapter of Hope Squad, which is a peer-to-peer suicide prevention program whose members are nominated by classmates and trained by professionals. Hope Squad members show empathy to their peers, listen without judgment, and reduce stigma associated with help-seeking and mental illness. They also work to raise awareness of mental health issues with events like Hope Week where students are invited to participate in a series of themed dress-up days such as “Pajama Day: Self-Care Is Giving the World the Best You.”

Additionally, the Granite Ridge Transition Team strives to connect students to the culture of their school and the world around them by providing enrichment opportunities focused on team building, higher education, career and technical exploration, volunteer work, community events, and school events.

During the transition to distance learning, staff members realized that students would need to remain connected socially and emotionally if they were to succeed academically. As a result, the bell schedule was revised to include intervention periods at the end of the day where students could check in to receive support with any emotional or academic challenges. Yoga classes and online rallies were also planned to provide students with stress relief and a sense of diversion. By taking measures such as these, the school site was able to help our students successfully navigate the challenges that accompanied distance learning.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Granite Ridge Intermediate School, parents and community members are actively involved in evaluating the quality of the programs serving their children. To ensure a robust level of participation, input is gathered from a variety of sources. These include formal systems such as the School Assessment Review Team (SART), Intercultural Diversity Advisory Council (IDAC), School Site Council (SSC), English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), business partnership advisories, the Bronco Foundation Board, and other parent outreach groups. These committees provided regular opportunities for input and exchange that directly affect policy decisions. The school considers their recommendations when evaluating, refining, and implementing school goals and improvement plans.

The School Site Council (SSC) is the vehicle by which the school community comes together to chart the school’s path to improvement. Its primary task is to ensure the school is continually engaged in identifying

and implementing curriculum and instructional practices that strengthen the core academic program and allow for all students to be successful. The SSC is uniquely suited to carry out this function since it is representative of all segments of the school community. Being comprised of the principal, teachers, other school personnel, parents, and students, it provides a forum for all the major players in the school to come together to identify common goals and establish a plan to achieve these goals. The SSC's success depends upon both the ability and willingness of those involved in the process to collaborate in the development of an effective curricular and instructional program where students can attain higher levels of academic competence.

Apart from the traditional School Site Council, the School Assessment and Review Team (SART) provides a forum for parents and community members to learn about the school and to provide input regarding its leadership and operation. The SART committee consists of a broad spectrum of representatives that include the principal, selected staff members, parents, community members, and students. This committee meets monthly to assess and review effectiveness of policies, procedures, and programs that are in place or being proposed. In March of each year, Granite Ridge also conducts its annual SART Survey, which solicits parent feedback on curricular, co-curricular, technological, and other related issues. Subsequently, the SART committee meets to review these surveys and share the compiled results with the community.

Furthermore, the counseling staff hosts several community and parent workshops throughout the school year. These include a Scholarship Information Night, Bronco College Application Day, 6th Grade Parent Night, and 8th Grade Parent Night. By regularly inviting community members to visit the campus for these types of events, the counselors have helped the school site form a tightknit relationship with the population it serves.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Granite Ridge recognizes the importance of creating an environment where teachers feel valued and supported. For this reason, the site strives to offer high quality professional development programs that meet teachers' needs. To ensure that ongoing staff development offerings are targeted, teachers receive an annual needs-assessment survey. The results from this survey pinpoint areas that teachers feel should be addressed through professional learning. Taking this information into consideration, site administrators work to plan a series of professional development offerings for the upcoming school year. During Pre-Institute Week, which is the week before school begins, a minimum of eight hours is devoted to addressing the professional development needs that the staff has identified.

During the transition to distance learning, the school site went to great lengths to make sure that teachers continued to feel valued and supported. Central to this effort were the five teachers on special assignment (TSAs) who were hired to support the staff with any technology-related needs. From the start of the COVID-19 crisis, these TSAs organized the distribution of over 900 computers and 350 hotspots to families and provided staff with a multitude of virtual professional development sessions on digital learning platforms. For instance, these TSAs conducted extensive training with Zoom, which included tutorials for utilizing breakout rooms, maintaining a safe online environment, and creating interactive digital lessons. They also led a series of professional development sessions with Google Classroom for a variety of technical levels, ranging from total beginners to more advanced users. In addition to supporting teachers with professional development, the district provided a range of new online learning platforms that included EdPuzzle, PearDeck, Screencastify, and Turnitin.com. As a result of these efforts, teachers were able to continue delivering an educational program that met students' needs in the online realm.

Granite Ridge also strives to establish a professional culture by providing release time for subject area teams to engage in curriculum planning and to collaborate in the scoring of common formative assessments. During these planning and grading days, teacher teams are afforded time on campus—but away from the classroom—to score essays and unit tests, analyze the resulting data, and develop curriculum plans that target any identified needs. By allowing teacher teams to work together in this manner, the school site has noticed several benefits. For one thing, this alleviates a lot of the stress that accompanies having to grade a large volume of student work independently. It also allows teachers to leverage the expertise of their peers

when designing curricular solutions for gaps in learning. The result is that teachers feel valued for their expertise and supported with handling the workload that schoolwide assessment programs bring to bear.

4. School Leadership:

Granite Ridge Intermediate School employs a distributed leadership model where the responsibility for managing the academic, cultural, disciplinary, and logistical aspects of the school site is shared among a team of administrators. The principal is the lead educator who establishes a vision for academic success for all students based on high standards. The principal oversees the administrative team, budget, special programs, parent communications, and community outreach efforts. Because Granite Ridge exists as part of a larger 7th – 12th grade educational center with over 3400 students in total, it depends on two deputy principals with distinct sets of responsibilities to effectively manage the school site. One deputy principal is responsible for campus facilities and the day-to-day operations of the site. This individual oversees the maintenance and grounds crews, establishes supervision schedules, and manages the use of our campus facilities. The academic deputy principal, on the other hand, focuses on managing all aspects of the academic program. This includes creating the master schedule, analyzing student achievement data, devising intervention programs, and ensuring that the curriculum is organized to foster effective student learning.

The next level of leadership is comprised of six learning directors who oversee the various academic departments on campus. These individuals are responsible for leading professional development and observing/evaluating the teachers they oversee with an eye toward continuous improvement. Learning directors are responsible for working with their department chairs to organize department meetings and facilitate the effective operation of grade-level PLCs. One additional learning director runs the Student Services Office (SSO) and is centrally concerned with handling any behavioral and disciplinary issues that may arise on campus.

Organizing the management of the school in this manner ensures a high degree of resources remain focused on maximizing student achievement. For example, by having one learning director in charge of handling student discipline, it frees up the rest of the learning directors to focus on supporting the learning environment. In addition, by employing two separate deputy principals, it allows one of them to remain focused on managing the school site's academic affairs. For these reasons, the distributed model of leadership has proven instrumental in helping students achieve at a high level.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Granite Ridge Intermediate School shares Clovis Unified School District's commitment to improving the implementation of practices that lead to engagement with our diverse student body. To this end, teachers are required to participate in a two-day course on culturally responsive teaching provided through the AVID program. Additionally, some staff have taken professional development from Ruby Payne to improve their ability to understand the challenge and struggles of students from difficult socioeconomic backgrounds. Administrators, Transition Team members, and some faculty members have received professional development from Dr. Chike Akua aimed at improving the ability to design instruction that highlights the achievements of Black Americans in a balanced instructional environment. In addition, the administrative team recently engaged in the United Way's "21 Day Equity Challenge" to increase understanding of the historical and cultural structures that create barriers to access in education.

In 2018, Granite Ridge created a Diversity Council, composed of administrators, teachers, and students, whose goal was to create appreciation of the diverse cultures or groups on campus and to improve students' ability to understand and empathize with each other. In 2019, the principal also established an African American Student Advisory Group that gives the principal direct feedback regarding the experience of students of color on campus. Input from the African American Student Advisory Group helped shape the CNEC response to racial tension that arose in the spring of 2020 and eventually led to the creation of a schoolwide video, in conjunction with the United Way of Fresno, that addressed the African American student experience on campus. The video, which elucidates the need for further action, was well-received by members of the community and led to a positive impact on the campus culture.

Granite Ridge continues to examine the degree to which the local curriculum embraces diversity and reflects the experiences of underrepresented groups. When a group of African American students expressed concerns with the teaching of novels like *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Of Mice and Men*, the English department began the process of carefully examining how race is depicted in some of the novels it traditionally uses. Both books are currently in the process of being reconsidered, and the ELA team is examining literature from diverse cultures to serve as replacement teaching tools. This movement was driven by a desire to ensure that literature is taught sensitively and effectively to promote understanding, equity, and inclusion.

Additionally, a group of teachers from Granite Ridge is currently reading and evaluating diverse books for recommendation to the district's supplemental literature committee, and four teachers have volunteered for a district-level curriculum design team that will select diverse texts and design culturally responsive lessons around them. The end goal is to ensure that all students are served with a culturally responsive pedagogy and that the texts are being taught with sensitivity.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The central practice that has been most instrumental to the school's success can be summed up in a word: collaboration. Because Granite Ridge Intermediate School is housed within a larger 7th – 12th grade educational center, it boasts an uncharacteristically large and diverse group of teachers, administrators, and support staff who share the collective responsibility for educating all students. By harnessing the combined talents of over 150 teachers, the school is able to provide a wealth of benefits and opportunities that are not available at a typical intermediate school.

It all begins with the collaborative structure of the administrative team. Rather than having a separate principal and vice principal for each school site, we have one principal who oversees both sites with the assistance of two deputy principals. One deputy principal manages the logistics and day-to-day affairs of the educational center, which allows the other deputy principal to focus on managing the academic program. By dividing up the job responsibilities in this manner, the school is able to focus an extraordinary amount of resources on maximizing student achievement.

Perhaps the most significant benefit of being a large educational center is the vertical articulation that is possible when teachers in grades 7-12 come together as members of the same academic department. In each subject area, teachers from the intermediate and secondary sites work together to design curriculum that is based on a methodical progression of standards from year to year. By sharing in the creation of a deliberate sequence of learning outcomes, teachers ensure that Granite Ridge students are taught with an appropriate level of rigor and are prepared to succeed at the next level. At the end of the day, it is this development of shared expectations that pushes students to be their best in mind, body, and spirit.

The quality and variety of programs that are available to intermediate students also exceeds what would be possible on a smaller campus. Granite Ridge students have the ability to enroll in high school level classes and begin coursework in several Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways prior to leaving junior high school. The collaboration that takes place between secondary and intermediate level extracurricular programs—such as band and drama—further allows students to enjoy an exceptional and well-aligned course of study.

All of these efforts are supported by the teacher-librarian who collaborates with instructors to design inquiry-based units of study and to help students develop sound research practices. This individual maintains a full teaching schedule and regularly invites classes into the media lab for help with accessing periodical databases, documenting sources, and generating discipline-specific avenues for investigation. As a result of our school site's ongoing commitment to collaborative teaching, our students emerge from intermediate school prepared with the academic skills needed for success in the twenty-first century.