U.S. Department of Education
2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Ryan Ambrose

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

Official School Name Checotah Intermediate Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1401 SW Second Street

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Checotah   State OK   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 74426-5259

County McIntosh County

Telephone (918) 473-2384   Fax (918) 473-1437

Web site/URL https://www.checotah.k12.ok.us   E-mail drambrose@checotah.k12.ok.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* Mr. Monte Madewell_____E-mail mrmadewell@checotah.k12.ok.us

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

District Name Checotah School District   Tel. (918) 473-5610

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. Laurie Burkhalter

(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   2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   1 Middle/Junior high schools
                                            1 High schools
                                            0 K-12 schools

                                            4 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
   [X] 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	57	38	95
4	62	56	118
5	45	63	108
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	164	157	321

*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):

28.5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
0 % Asian
1.8 % Black or African American
2.2 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
55.2 % White
12.3 % 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: 23%

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

We are a rural community located at the intersection of Highway 69 and I-40 near Lake Eufaula. Although the majority of our students stay with us for 13+ years, we do have a number of families who are traveling through for a short period of time, for various reasons, and we also have students who spend time with family members who have moved to the lake. Once whatever was rocky in their life settles, they move back to their other family members.

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 *to* the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	36
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	33
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	69
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	295
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.23
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	23

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

Spanish, Cherokee

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %

2 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 74 %

Total number students who qualify: 237

8. Students receiving special education services   <u>21</u> %
   with an IEP or 504:   <u>67</u> Total number of students served

   Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>3</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>34</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>5</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>35</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: <u>12</u>

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	15
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.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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

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%	95%	94%	94%	95%
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 X

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.

"Creating Individual Success" is the foundation of our vision statement. We value every student as a unique individual, we challenge all to succeed, and we create, recognize, and celebrate individual success. Everything we strive to achieve at C.I.S. is geared to "Creating Individual Success."

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

https://www.checotah.k12.ok.us/336159_2

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

Checotah Intermediate School (CIS) is a 3rd-5th grade school which is one of four schools within the Checotah Public School District. Checotah is a small, rural town located in southeastern Oklahoma. The socioeconomically diverse community has a large agricultural industry, a commerce industry consisting of retail chains, and many community entrepreneurs owning and operating their own businesses. There are teachers, police officers, garbage men, and the normal small town employment within the community. That being said, the unemployment rate of 5.6% is still above the state average, bringing with it poverty and the struggles associated with it: possible lack of education, substance abuse, homelessness, hunger, etc.

With socioeconomic diversity comes an unevenly yoked student body. Many of the students have parents/guardians that are active members of the community and active within student academic and extracurricular activities. As many as there are of these students, there are just as many coming from homes lying on the opposite end of the spectrum. These students may experience homelessness, hunger, and many other uncertainties. They may have no academic support at home and be unable to be involved in any extracurricular activities because of costs and/or parental support.

Checotah Intermediate recognizes the uneven playing field and works to grow each and every student from where they are. Within the first few days of school starting, students are given benchmarks to find their current quantile, lexile, and reading levels. Each of their first semester goals are set from these scores. Once students' goals have been set, they receive a goal sheet with their current scores and their individualized goal score for each assessment. From there on, students are assessed each month to see the amount of growth they have obtained. The new scores are written on their goal sheets so they may track their own growth each month and also see the narrowing of the gap from each of their original scores to their semester goals. Presenting each student with their own goal sheet helps them visually see the academic growth they are making, creating in them a sense of capability and academic responsibility. When a student reaches a goal, it is celebrated with Bonus Bucks, teachers' and administrations' praise, and oftentimes the cheers and applause of fellow students. Students even let the custodian know when they have reached their goal. She celebrates in the hall right along with them. Once a student has reached a specific portion of their main goals, their picture is taken and hung on the wall. The growth the student sees boosts self-assurance as well as academic confidence.

Bonus Bucks rewards are our school's monetary unit. Students earn and save Bonus Bucks throughout the year to participate in an end of the year auction. Prizes range from throwing a pie in the principal's face to an iPad. No one goes away without a win! Bonus Bucks can also be used to purchase various items from different teachers. One example is "Friendly Lunch." Students purchase the coupon for a set amount of Bonus Bucks, and then enjoy lunch with a friend in the teacher's classroom. Students can buy a coupon to take their shoes off during class. It is all up to the teacher's own creativity.

Bonus Bucks can be given for reasons other than academics. Many times students are given Bonus Bucks for an act or behavior that seems praise worthy. A student caught being kind to his or her peers or helping one of the staff could be noticed and then rewarded with Bonus Bucks. There is also the possibility that a struggling student could be working on overcoming a specific behavior, and as he or she succeeds, the student is rewarded with praise and Bonus Bucks. The students watching their balance of Bonus Bucks grow throughout the year encourages positive behaviors and a hard work ethic.

CIS does not only work to reach students, but also strives to work with the community and parents/guardians of all students. This year the school was chosen as a recipient of a five year OK AWARE grant. AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) works to decrease mental health stigma and raise mental health awareness among our school and community, while providing mental health training and education to our teachers, administration, and community. Additionally, the program helps to connect students and family to outside community resources. The program helps CIS further reach its students.

CIS has striven to stay open as much as possible throughout our current pandemic situation. Our 20/21 and current year have been extremely successful. For those families that feel it is in their child's best interest to

learn at home, we offer a blended learning option. Students stay connected with their teachers through Google Classroom and email. They are also required to complete daily check-ins with the teacher assigned specifically to blended learners for a portion of the day. The blended learners come to school two days at the end of the month to take assessments. They test solely with the teacher to keep from being exposed to other students. Their growth and success is monitored and rewarded just as our traditional learners are.

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:

CIS teachers use data-driven instruction to align curriculum with the Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS). Our technology-based instruction is formulated specifically for each student to ensure that every student reaches academic success. Each student is given an individualized goal plan in order to see goals and track progress. These individualized goals are determined then set based on data collections entered digitally by teachers and are derived from a series of assessments that are entered and collected.

With reading/ELA and mathematics at the forefront, science and social studies are integrated into the ELA curriculum. We believe all core subjects are extremely important, however reading is the foundational backbone to academic success across the board. Providing differentiated instruction is very important. With that in mind, we use various web-based programs to meet the individual needs. Reading/ELA incorporates Achieve3000, Epic, and Accelerated Reader into the curriculum. The use of these programs offers a plethora of history and science related articles of all interests and reading levels while tracking comprehension. Math supplements with the use of programs such as Soft Seven and Splash Learn to spice up fundamentals while also tracking growth.

Formative assessments for our school's core curriculum are acquired, tracked, and stored digitally with the use of IXL, STAR Reading, Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), Scholastic Math Inventory (SMI), and I-Station. Students are also assessed with the use of weekly quizzes, Kahoot, Google Classroom, and in-class discussions. These are used to monitor student progress throughout the year in order to prepare them for success on the Oklahoma standardized tests. Since March 2020, we have relied heavily on Google Classroom to meet the needs of all of our students, especially those that are blended, virtual, and distance learners. Arrangements are made for those students to come in once a month for formative assessments.

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

CIS focuses on reading and language arts curriculum directly from the Oklahoma Academic Standards provided by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. These standards provide a direct path for instruction by vertically aligning standards from grade to grade. At CIS, teachers and students are very goal based and driven. Our staff believes we can progress any student a full academic year in one school year. In striving to meet this achievement, we meet the students where they currently are, set clear goals, and strive daily to achieve those goals.

CIS provides a 1-to-1 learning environment where each student has a desktop computer that connects them with their teachers, coursework resources, and assessments. As a result, learning is an active, student-centered approach. Instructional approaches are designed to be the driving force to increase data results. We engage students, reach all learners, and hold them accountable to be directly involved in the learning process. Technology puts learning in the hands of the students to a far greater degree. It allows for a variety of learning styles, provides differentiated instruction, and offers time for interventions to take place while everyone else in the classroom is still learning. Monthly assessments have become a highly valued tool for our staff. Teachers regularly monitor student progress using both formative and summative assessments. In reading and language arts, students take the STAR reading assessment and the Scholastic Reading Inventory as a form of assessment to track lexile scores and reading level growth. We use I-station, IXL Diagnostic, and Achieve3000 for a more immediate formative assessment. All assessment data is tracked on our CIS team data sheet.

Each student is also given an individualized data sheet to keep in their daily binder to visualize goals, track their progress, and ultimately push themselves to reach all goals set. Students who need additional support through intense instruction are provided small group interventions with our Reading Specialist. In

conjunction with measuring student growth monthly, meeting with staff team members to collectively motivate students and immediately reward students when a goal has been met has been a pivotal move for our students to be active participants in their learning. Since CIS provides a 1-to-1 learning approach, curriculum is delivered through Google Classroom which allows a flawless transition whether students are traditional or virtual learners. Flexibility is given to allow teachers to be creative and flourish in their own teaching styles. Some staff members record lessons while others are taught live through an active Google Meet with students to deliver instruction. Overall, we agreed that delivering strong instruction, providing rigorous lessons, and tracking the data no matter where our students were located was going to give us the best opportunity to increase student learning results.

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

We approach Oklahoma Learning Objectives and goals at CIS competitively. With our belief that "we can grow every student at least one year within an academic year," we set goals for each student according to the quantile gains we expect to meet. Every child receives goal sheets with anticipation and knows what the goals are in each academic field. CIS serves students from grades third through fifth, and every student has a goal plan from the same curriculum programs. We use Scholastic Student Math Inventory (SMI) for individual student quantile levels; Soft Seven Fast Code gives math-fact drills in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. IXL gives an accurate diagnostic on our students' areas of strengths and deficits along with practices that align with our Oklahoma Academic Standards.

Our teachers enjoy autonomy in selecting resources for teaching objectives. Students at CIS can easily work at their own pace to reach their own goals. Student goal sheets guide them in taking responsibility for their own education by encouraging self-motivation. Each semester, teachers share the data on a school-wide spreadsheet. As objectives are taught, goals are met. We use SMI and IXL Diagnostic Arena to pinpoint individual learning levels. Instruction is given as a whole group. Students "at risk" or Tiers II and III receive individual instruction. Tier III students are supported further by an interventionist. Students have a resource room available to them equipped with a tutor to help them one-on-one.

Formative assessments are addressed weekly as needed to drive instruction. Summative assessments are given monthly to ensure objectives are met thoroughly. Students work independently meeting both personal goals and learning objectives. We are supported by an administration who relishes celebrating every victory. Students meet new goals each semester. Then, those who meet their goals attend lavish goal parties. Every child wants to attend the goal parties.

March 2020 brought unimaginable challenges to education. Educators felt the urge to keep continuity with our students' academic needs. Google could bridge that gap. Our teachers trained each other on the many facets of Google's digital format. We opened our doors in August 2020 and parents were given the choice whether to send their children to school or remain virtual. The school provided Chromebooks and/or hotspots to each child who had no capability at home and social distancing barriers and procedures for those who learned on campus. Our teachers integrated Google's Classroom and Classworks as the digital format and immediately began teaching our students how to contact teachers, join classes, receive instruction, and turn in assignments. We can now use one teacher to schedule our low population of virtual students to come on site for their summative assessments. Not knowing if we would be shut down compelled us to remain ready with a plan. During high levels of virus outbreak or exposure as well as inclement weather, we have been able to go virtual rather than missing calendar days. We can use virtual learning to our advantage, when needed.

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

At CIS, science is integrated through reading of expository text through technology-based reading programs, Accelerated Reader and Achieve. The assessment data of students' performance at individual reading levels is invaluable across the curriculum. The online program IXL assesses students' conceptual understanding of science. Students have participated in cross-curricular activities by reading THE CITY OF EMBER and in science, creating waterwheels and studying renewable energy.

In fifth grade, our students move into explicit, direct science instruction. Students are taught the scientific method and participate in various hands-on experiments both in class and while on virtual. A virtual experiment was completed when students were given the task to measure snowfall and measure the speed of melting by changing the variables. Enrichment students are virtually traveling to different countries learning about the country's animals and their habitats. Our After School Program and our Enrichment students all use inquiry based STEM projects such as building towers, creating catapults, participating in egg drops, pinwheel designing, launching paper rockets, creating hoop gliders, making recycled paper with newspaper, and learning about force and motion with a Hot Wheels ramp and computer coding. Students chose one weather instrument to build from everyday materials and compared their data using math knowledge with the actual weather station affixed to the building. Students participated in field trips where they rotated through different STEM workshops led by certified teachers. CIS partnered with Muscogee Creek Nation to encourage our indigenous students as well as our female students to develop an interest in science by providing computers and materials for a robotics program called Bot Ball. Students of all different academic abilities were able to participate and compete. They wrote code to program robots to perform simple tasks to more complicated tasks. Students are currently looking forward to our Spring Science Fair.

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

Our country's history and civic engagement is of the utmost importance at Checotah Intermediate. We begin with our third grade students by encouraging them to experience civic learning curriculum through classroom instruction focused on local community and which broadens to encompass our national history as well. The civic learning program focuses on patriotism through musical selections. Students study the history of each musical selection as well as learning the words to each selection. Students also collaborate to write, memorize and present speaking parts that are designed to inform the audience of the significance of each selection in relation to our country's history.

We combine interactive-classroom and lecture based instruction to positively impact and influence behavior and attitudinal outcomes regarding the democratic process. Students participate in mock voting in several different situations. These situations vary by teacher and grade level but have included mock presidential elections which included in depth discussion of the process of voting. Peer discussions, moderated by teachers, help our students develop skills, knowledge, and temperament needed to become effective political and civic minded citizens.

Our civic learning continues through all three grades and builds upon the basic foundation established in third grade. We strive to instill pride in our community and guide students toward service to others. Some service learning projects we participate in have included canned food drives, a toy drive, and coin drives. We continually look for opportunities to encourage students to become productive, thoughtful, participatory citizens.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

CIS believes that students deserve light hearted, yet thought provoking experiences outside of the classroom in order to enhance their physical and cognitive abilities. We offer a variety of other curriculum areas in hopes of creating well-rounded individuals and to promote problem solving and social skills. Art is implemented into each course. Through art, students can provide a visual representation of what they have learned. These creations can be proudly displayed lining the walls of our school's hallways. For example, upon taking a stroll outside an ELA classroom, one might observe artistic forms of idioms, personification, or settings for a certain book. Outside a math classroom, one might observe symmetry or the water cycle

from a science classroom hallway.

Music and PE are offered daily in grades 3-5. In music, students learn about the icons of classical music such as Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and Chopin. Fundamentals of reading music are also introduced in our music department. Students spend the majority of their time in music learning musical pieces to sing and perform in concerts for family, friends, and people of the community. Our physical education program strives to motivate students to live active lives by creating physical activities and events that promote fitness and are enjoyable and challenging. Aside from the daily workouts and activities such as dodgeball and sharks and minnows, our PE department also sponsors a series of annual events. These events include the Turkey Olympics, a track meet, and a 3 on 3 basketball tournament. Turkey Olympics is a series of games in which students compete with their grade level peers. Our track meet is an all day school event held at our district's track and field. Students compete in events such as the 50 and 100 yard dash, sack races, football and baseball throw, and jump roping. Ribbons are awarded from first to fifth place.

Library visits are implemented into our ELA program. Our school library uses flexible and fixed scheduling. Once a week each classroom visits the library during their reading block; however, it is open daily for students to utilize. Our school's library provides a warm and inviting environment for students to engage in independent reading. Students also use the library to access Accelerated Reader (AR) and digital libraries such as Epic. Maker Spaces are provided in the library as well to promote creativity and emphasize science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). These spaces include Legos, IO Blocks, K'Nex, PowerClix, Geomags, and Pipe STEM Manipulatives.

Our Gifted and Talented program is offered for students grades 3-5 who have met the requirements. They meet once a month to engage in STEM activities. They also go on a few field trips throughout the year. However, since March 2020, we have been limited on the types of activities we normally engage our enrichment students in and have gone virtual using Google Classroom to create online field trips and activities. Students in grades 4 and 5 are able to tryout and participate in our CIS academic team. Academic team members meet once a week to practice for buzzer competitions as well as written competitions. They travel to surrounding schools four times a year to compete in two buzzer competitions and two written competitions. Winning teams are awarded plaques, medals, and ribbons. Academic team members were allowed to compete in buzzer competitions this past year; due to COVID19, the written competitions were canceled.

3. **Academic Supports**

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

CIS students have individualized semester goals that support each student wherever they are academically. These goals are designed to increase their individual scores in math and reading with a year's growth by the end of each school year. Students' baseline scores are derived from the beginning of the year's first round of assessments, which includes STAR, SRI, SMI, I-station, Achieve3000, and IXL. Students' scores are written on their goal sheets and entered into our teacher-shared data sheet throughout the year with our monthly progress monitoring. Interventions are built into many of the technology programs that we provide to all students which includes students on an individualized education plan (IEP). Students on an IEP receive interventions from the classroom teacher, Special Education Instructor, and/or teaching assistant through inclusion in the regular classroom. Students who are identified as below level receive additional diagnostic assessments to identify their specific learning gaps in oral reading fluency, comprehension, phonics skills, and additional areas as needed. Tier 2 students receive additional time to work on deficit areas with the use of I-station, IXL, and Achieve3000. Students who are identified as Tier 3 also receive academic intervention from our reading specialist through 50 minute weekly sessions that provide one-on-one and small-group practice on needed reading skills. Third grade students who have been identified as being below our state's benchmark for reading may receive 45 minutes of reading intervention daily with our reading specialist in addition to the ELA 90 minute block of instruction. A resource room is also available for any of our students who need additional time to complete assignments. Adjustments to interventions needed are ongoing as students are exited from their Individualized Program of Reading Instruction (IPRI) and/or meet reading proficiency benchmarks for their particular grade.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Since each student's semester goals are designed with the expectation for them to increase their individual scores in math and reading with a year's growth by the end of each school year, this also provides the motivation and challenge that our above-level students sometimes require. Above level students are also challenged through technology programs that we provide such as IXL, Achieve3000, I-station, Math Fact Genius, and Soft Seven. I-station, IXL, and Achieve3000 are some of the technology programs that provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of our students who are performing below level, as well as challenge the needs of our students who are performing above level. For example, Achieve3000 provides articles of varying interest and Lexile levels to meet the increasing literacy development that our above grade level students need. IXL helps our students master skills that are part of our Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS) at their own pace through interactive questions, built in support and rewards. I-station's Indicators of Progress (ISIP) measures student growth with built-in adaptive diagnostic and screening programs. I-station can then provide students the instruction they need when they need it. At the beginning of each year, students may try out for our Academic Team, which meets monthly to practice, and also travels to compete against other schools. In addition to the technology programs that we have built into our academic supports, we have teachers that provide whole-group and individualized instruction that all students need, wherever they are academically. Our teachers also have goals to create individual success with our students whether it's through direct instruction, explicit instruction, or the technology we provide, but above all, we try to inspire our students to grow through the relationships that we develop with them.

3c. Special education:

The special education program at CIS includes 21% of the student population. Our SPED students receive a wide range of services based on the student's academic , behavioral, and/or developmental needs. The SPED department consists of three SPED teachers and two paraprofessionals. We also share two speech teachers with the rest of the district. Two of our SPED teachers are trained in inclusion instruction where the SPED teachers go into the general education classroom to provide necessary support. Not only do students complete the same academic work as their general education peers, but also they are held to the highest standards possible. The SPED teachers provide student assistance and collaborate and work closely with the general education teachers in lesson planning and tracking progress for IEP students. This allows us to make adjustments as needed.

Students with more severe disabilities are taught in a multi-age, self-contained classroom. The academic, social/emotional, and behavioral needs of these students are addressed based on their developmental level as stated in their IEPs. Helping each of these students reach full potential is our goal. Our school believes very strongly that ALL students can learn! With this in mind, every student is given individualized goals in math and reading to meet each semester. This school year our SPED students have shown a Lexile growth of 475 which is 4.6 years worth of growth and a Quantile growth of 539 which is 5.3 years worth of math growth . It is very rewarding to see our students, especially our SPED students, reach their goals.

CIS uses technology such as IXL and Achieve3000 that enables us to provide all tiers of instruction. Both programs allow students to work at their individualized level and advances them as they improve. For progress monitoring and data tracking, we use the Scholastic math inventory, Scholastic reading inventory, STAR, and I-station. By monitoring data, we are able to focus on the areas needed by each student. We believe that tracking and monitoring student data is absolutely essential for the academic growth of all students.

We also work closely with the parents of our SPED students and include them in every step of the SPED process. Once the IEP is in place, parents are met with as often as possible and adjustments are made as students progress throughout the year. Parental input is critical for success. Another success worth mentioning is our incredible speech program. We have two speech pathologists who have graduated 11 students from the speech program so far this school year. Six of those students attend CIS. The success of our SPED program is due to the hard work and diligence of everyone involved.

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

The number of students who speak another language in our school community is rather low. With .9% of the student population classified as ELL, we have taken measures to ensure that their academic needs are met. Whenever a student comes to us as an English Language Learner, they are tested in phonological awareness, phonics, and reading fluency. Our reading specialist uses Literacy First as a diagnostic tool which aids in identifying the area of need for these students. Our reading specialist works with our ELL students in a small group setting of only 2 -4 students at a time. This allows her to provide intensive and explicit instruction. The students spend 50 minutes, 3 days a week with the reading specialist. While in the regular classroom, our ELL students are able to access books in Spanish and even take accelerated reading tests in Spanish. Other computer programs that our school utilizes, such as I-station, IXL and Achieve3000, also have a Spanish speaking setting that can be used if and when needed.

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

Every student at CIS is equally important, and we do all we can to help make sure that most basic needs are taken care of. We fully understand that if physical needs are not met, educational goals make little difference. All of our students have access to three meals a day for free. We've had local churches work together and provide weekend food for students, and we also have a local fund that provides clothes for those in need. There are also local churches and organizations who provide food banks and clothing access for families. When school closed during the pandemic, our food services provided food twice weekly at advertised designated locations which made access possible for all.

The district attempts to balance the technology inequalities by having Chromebooks and hotspots for those who are without. If there is some type of language barrier, we will use translators or translating services so that we can correctly communicate. Once we have done all we can to meet the basic needs of all of our students, they are all held to the same academic standards. Our goal is to advance every student a year in a year and our teachers and support personnel will use all of the resources listed in the other narratives to meet our goals. For instance, students have individualized semester goals that support each student wherever they are academically. These goals are designed to increase their individual scores in math and reading with a year's growth by the end of each school year. We also have a School Based Services Specialist on staff who focuses on family and community engagement. She helps teachers pair students and families with needed services. She, along with others, helps coordinate partnerships with local organizations to encourage student emotional and academic growth. Our students are the reason that we are here, and we will do all we can to ensure that they are safe, happy, and progressing academically.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

As a tool to encourage and monitor student success, we have implemented an academic goal reward system. Baseline data is collected at the beginning of the academic year. We utilize the following online programs: Accelerated Reader, Scholastic Reading Inventory, Scholastic Math Inventory, Soft Seven, IXL, Achieve, and I-Station to help set goals and monitor growth toward these goals. Every student receives a goal sheet each semester which clearly states his/her goals. Each of the academic goals are assessed on a monthly basis, and teachers have a brief student/teacher conference to celebrate growth and formulate a plan to ensure goals are achieved as well as taking time to update goal sheets with assessment results. Students also have a clear attendance goal outlined on the goal sheets. These goal sheets continually encourage student engagement and provide opportunities to give positive feedback and encouragement to students. Progress on these assessments also monitors and ensures college and career readiness development.

Bonus Bucks are paper money utilized to reward students and can be earned for high performance on assessments, growth on assessments, being a responsible school citizen, and being kind or supportive of peers. Students have the opportunity to spend Bonus Bucks throughout the school year for small rewards, or they may choose to save their Bonus Bucks to purchase a larger item from our end of the year Bonus Buck Auction. The Bonus Buck Auction is a huge motivator, both academically and in regards to behavior, throughout the year. Each semester we also have a Goal Rewards Party for students who achieve all their individualized goals and the attendance goal. These parties involve food, fun, and giant inflatables!

Our staff received SWIFT Education Center training provided through the Oklahoma State Department of Education Project Aware in Addressing Mental Health in an OK ISF Framework: Whole Child - Whole System. This training prepares each teacher to provide a supportive, caring, and positive environment which fosters students' social and emotional well being. Our school has always focused on supporting students' social and emotional growth; however, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've increased our vigilance. Grade level PLCs meet on a regular basis, often daily, to discuss specific student's needs.

We have implemented Google Classroom which is an online platform we utilize to launch daily lessons, instruction, and encouragement for our students when circumstances surrounding the pandemic have prevented them from being present in the traditional classroom. This platform has allowed instruction and engagement to continue without interruption.

The 21st CCLC, after-school program, is used to engage our students by providing STEM, coding, arts, culinary classes, physical education, and tutoring. During the Covid-19 closures, the after-school program continued to provide activities in the form of packets that could be picked up. Google Meets were held, and activities were provided digitally through our Google Classroom platform.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The entire staff at CIS is dedicated to communicating with parents. Early each year we host a "Meet the Teacher Night" where parents and students are invited to come and meet teachers and tour the building. Teachers and staff are available to answer questions and outline expectations for the upcoming year. Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year, and parents are encouraged to attend and discuss student progress and needs. Since the onset of the pandemic, we have used telephone or email conferences as needed.

Prior to the pandemic, multiple events showcasing student activities and performances were held for community and family members including chorus concerts, band concerts, a talent show, Turkey Olympics, three-on-three basketball tournament, schoolwide spelling bee, track meet, awards and promotion ceremonies. The newspaper features articles on many of these events as well as events being featured on social media platforms for those unable to attend. During the pandemic, CIS live streamed awards and

promotion ceremonies with only students and staff in attendance. The live stream link was made available only to parents and guardians.

Teachers utilize ClassDojo, an online platform, to communicate with parents regularly and promote events, celebrate student success, and discuss student needs. Parents can also initiate communication with teachers at a time that is convenient for them. Teachers also use weekly class newsletters which are available to parents and students in paper form or digitally through ClassDojo. The school website is also used for parent communication and student celebrations. Other social media platforms are also used.

We have a School Based Services Specialist on staff who focuses on family and community engagement. She helps teachers pair students and families with needed services. She, along with others, helps coordinate partnerships with local organizations to encourage student emotional and academic growth. Through our school lunch program, students have received weekend snack packs which provide food to students. These snack packs provide students with the security of knowing their basic needs are being met every day of the week, so they are able to come to school prepared to learn.

We have partnered with local businesses and organizations to encourage student emotional and academic growth. Cross Telephone generously provides class t-shirts for every student in our building. This ensures every child feels united as a part of the CIS family and promotes this unity during special events where all students wear their matching shirts. The local branch of Optimist International presents a bicycle safety course and gives away bicycles to our third grade students. The Checotah Foundation for Academic Excellence, Inc. provides numerous classroom grants which directly benefit our students. Grants have included book club books, STEM activity supplies, and countless other valuable learning opportunities. Many local businesses contribute items for our Bonus Buck Auction each year. With the support of the community and parents, CIS students experience academic, social, and emotional growth.

3. **Creating Professional Culture:**

Checotah Intermediate School teachers and staff are proud of our commitment to a professional culture. At our site, each voice is a valued part of the decision making process that impacts our school. What really sets our culture apart is that we are so much more than colleagues: We are a family that values and supports each other. The culture of our staff is the basic foundation that influences the overall atmosphere on our campus for both students and staff.

Positive recognition is important at Checotah Intermediate for staff as well as students. As a part of the CIS family, all staff members are recognized for their hard work and contributions to our school. At our beginning of the year Meet the Teacher night, the administration provides dinner for staff. The administration also provides meals for staff prior to parent-teacher conferences and during the holidays. Personalized signs were delivered and displayed for every teacher's classroom to begin the year. Throughout the year, the Sunshine Committee and administration provide staff with unannounced treats, snacks, and notes of appreciation.

We value our teachers and their professional growth. CIS has a schedule which allows teachers to participate in school and district professional development, PLCs, and individual planning and preparation time for their classroom. Additional support is provided by utilizing resources to provide materials, programs, additional staff and high quality professional development for staff to support instruction. Designated district-wide professional development days include a breakout session designated to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment.

CIS and district administration knew that supporting teachers during challenging school closures and the transition to and from remote learning was essential. Our connected and supportive staff has played a vital role in the transition to and from distance learning throughout the pandemic. At the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, our district provided many valuable opportunities for teachers to learn how to use programs and platforms such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, ClassDojo, Get Epic!, and many more. The training was available in person through Professional Learning Committees (PLCs) or online through links provided by our technology department. Technology specialists were available to meet with teachers and walk them

through using the technology platforms as needed.

With our strong positive culture, teachers are comfortable asking for help when needed and collaborating to tackle any task, even one that was initially as daunting as creating a distance learning program. Our principal realizes teachers often struggle and are overwhelmed with the challenges presented by virtual/remote instruction. He emphasizes that we are an amazing staff, and he assures us he is there to support us with any need. His leadership through these trying times has been impressive. His positive get-the-job-done attitude toward facing frequent changes in scheduling, procedures, mandates, and instructional challenges has never faltered. He continually makes our staff feel valued, supported, and safe.

4. School Leadership:

At CIS, like most other successful schools, it takes all of us working together to ensure that our students are advancing as far as possible academically, socially, and emotionally. We all have our own piece of the puzzle that we are responsible for. As for administration, we have just been able to add a counselor this year, but for the previous eight years, our administrative team has consisted of only our principal and secretary. The principal, along with normal daily responsibilities, has been in charge of leading meetings, organizing data, creating individual student goal sheets, and helping with research that can help our school improve. The principal has an open door policy for anyone who needs his time. By being open and helpful, everyone is welcome to brainstorm ideas and find ways to be as innovative as possible while meeting the needs of students academically, socially, and emotionally.

Each grade has lead teachers who are relied on to help motivate and focus the other teachers in their group. Other staff that are on par with our Lead Teachers include our Librarian and Reading Specialist. These incredible people support all of our staff by helping to gather data, especially for students new to our district, and checking that our students have successfully completed their goals. Those teachers and staff who are not in a leadership role also have a vital role in our success. We all, including teaching assistants and other support staff, have equal say in what our semester goals should be. The only minimum criteria is that we advance students at least a year each of the years that they are with us.

Our student goal sheets have evolved to currently include goals to reach a certain Lexile, Quantile, and STAR score, Accelerated Reader points, Achieve3000, I-station, IXL Math and Reading, attendance, and their expected growth is based on their level when we set goals. Although the process of developing student goals by our leadership team is instrumental to our success, we have other leadership committees that help guide our school. These include Discipline, Attendance, Health and Fitness, Professional Development, School Safety, School Improvement, PLCs, and First Year Teacher Residency Committees. With a staff our size, once all of these committees are staffed, everyone in our school has an opportunity to have his or her voice heard. All of these committees help to serve our students with resources and support which are vital to their success.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

At CIS, classrooms provide an environment that includes children from a variety of cultural backgrounds and ethnicities, children who require supports such as Individual Education Plans (i.e. IEPs), and children who are gifted/talented within the curriculum areas. Our school fosters a family atmosphere not only where all are welcome, but also where all are accepted. We assist families anyway we can, whether a family needs a translator at a parent teacher conference, is a new family to the community and needs resources to help them and their children get settled in, or needs social service resources. It is our duty as educators to first nurture, then teach.

When using direct instruction, teachers strive to create an inclusive classroom environment which empowers all students to share their thoughts. Additionally, diverse work during instruction is presented using examples and models drawing from a broad spectrum of cultures and backgrounds. Teachers regularly vary instructional approaches to better create relatable intercultural lessons. They establish inclusiveness in their instruction by highlighting how the topic may relate or apply to all students.

It is also incredibly important to remember that a child's basic needs must be met in order to perform on an acceptable cognitive level. Once a student knows the teacher is invested in his or her education, a relationship flourishes and lines of trust and communication develop fostering a respectful, cooperative classroom/school conducive to learning. There are useful ideas, practices, and beliefs observed by others that hold deep meaning and importance to those that surround us. Our dream for every child, family member, and staff member of CIS is that each one would feel the equity we promote in our school in knowing that we truly believe that each one of us plays a special part in our world and has something special to offer our world. The number of students in our community with differing races, cultures, backgrounds, and experiences is ever changing. Cultural responsiveness must be exhibited by teachers and leaders to ensure the elimination of inequities within our educational system. The diverse needs and backgrounds of our students, families, and staff are addressed in our daily activities, planning, and events.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Many have heard, "Students don't care what you know until they know you care," and we believed it before COVID-19 and cling to it even more intensely now. Our students have experienced something no other group of students have, and our staff strives on a daily basis to assess our students' emotional well being while simultaneously striving to help them grow academically.

The teachers and staff at CIS are keenly aware of the students we serve. Our mission and vision center on individualized education and focus on the whole child. We know that research has proven that relationships are paramount to student engagement and academic success. These relationships support academic success as well as social and emotional growth. The success of Checotah Intermediate School is derived from developing positive relationships with students and among staff. The relationships we develop with students allow us to have an awareness of students' social, emotional, and academic needs. Students who know they are cared about are more willing to follow instructions given by their teachers and are more likely to ask for help when it is needed.

Our Goal Rewards Program which is structured to individualize the student experience allows teachers to closely monitor academic growth. Individualized student goals are established after collecting baseline data. This program provides monthly data which drives student-teacher conferences on a regular basis. This data also continuously drives instruction. The data team includes the principal, special education teachers, reading intervention specialist, and grade level teachers. We use student performance data from Soft Seven, Star Reading Assessments, Scholastic Reading Inventory, Scholastic Math Inventory, IXL, Achieve 3000, and IStation. Students are aware of these goals and are actively involved in the entire process. Teachers are able to utilize the relationships they have built with students to encourage students to put forth the necessary effort to achieve and/or exceed these academic goals.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our teachers and staff have experienced numerous challenges. Teachers and staff felt safe reaching out to each other and our principal for ideas on how to readjust best practices, implement new strategies, adjust plans, share recently acquired inspiration, or to ask for feedback because of the positive relationships we have with each other. While our teachers and administration worry about the impact time away from the traditional classroom has had on our students, both academically and socially, we also believe the ability to build and maintain positive relationships with our students as well as with each other will ensure continued success at Checotah Intermediate School.