

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 2001 Sequoyah Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Maryville State TN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 37804-3425

County Blount County

Telephone (865) 983-8551 Fax (865) 977-0725

Web site/URL https://jse.maryville-schools.org E-mail joshua.oliver@maryville-schools.org

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Mike Winstead E-mail mike.winstead@maryville-schools.org

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

District Name Maryville City School District Tel. (865) 982-7121

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 Mr. Nick Black

(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**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2016 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

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

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	9	10	19
K	66	68	134
1	77	78	155
2	56	65	121
3	72	80	152
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	280	301	581

\*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):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0.9 % Asian
  - 2.2 % Black or African American
  - 9.6 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 87 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 school year: 10%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	30
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	29
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	59
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	581
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.10
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

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

Spanish, Japanese, Russian

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 24 %

Total number students who qualify: 140

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 16 %  
93 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>9</u> Autism                  | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>19</u> Developmental Delay    | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>38</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	30
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	40
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	94%	96%	98%	96%	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.

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

John Sevier Elementary's mission is to create an environment that allows the individual, family, and community to embrace lifelong learning and growth. We shall provide a positive and caring, safe environment that promotes intellectual curiosity, encourages creativity, and establishes a tradition for achieving one's personal best academically, emotionally, and socially. We shall accomplish our mission by fostering: Cooperation, Responsibility, Positivity, Accountability, Adaptability, Trust, Equity, and Diversity.

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

<https://www.maryville-schools.org/utility-pages/non-discrimination#:~:text=It%20is%20the%20policy%20of,%2C%20activities%2C%20or%20employment%20policies.>

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

## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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Maryville is located between the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains and the larger city of Knoxville, Tennessee. It is a small town but growing. Visitors and residents alike are drawn to the welcoming atmosphere, outdoor opportunities, and breathtaking mountain views. However, the Maryville City School district may provide the biggest draw to the area due to its stellar reputation for providing an excellent education. The Maryville City Schools system has been recognized by the SCORE Prize and TN Rewards schools, AP Honor Roll, and the National Blue-Ribbon Schools program. Maryville High School has a much higher than average graduation rate than the State of Tennessee. The district underwent a universal system technology transformation, and all students have been issued a device, i.e., a laptop or tablet. The local school board is supportive of teachers and very proactive in ensuring that resources are readily available to maintain the current level of expectation, which is set extremely high, for academic achievement for the system's students.

John Sevier is one of three elementary schools that serve students in grades kindergarten through third grade. In addition, John Sevier Elementary contributed to Maryville City Schools' designation by the state as being the highest performing district in 2020-2021. Our school is considered a quality educational institute, but it is also regarded as a welcoming and nurturing place where the students are encouraged and challenged to meet their potential.

John Sevier is a collaboration between a supportive district, quality teachers, committed parents, and engaged students. The district provides resources, training, and materials while still allowing each school the autonomy to be creative in meeting students' needs. Due to the school's impeccable reputation, John Sevier hires and retains highly qualified teachers who use effective instructional strategies and maintain their passion and motivation for growing students academically, emotionally, and socially. Teachers are supported in their efforts by the Parent Teacher Organization, school volunteers, school leaders, and district resources. John Sevier teachers and students work together to highlight the culture of John Sevier in the community. Teachers actively seek the involvement of all parents through curriculum nights, Loved with a Loved One, Fox Trot, and Pastries for Parents. John Sevier Elementary families and community stakeholders share our desire and partner with us to reach our goals of reaching, teaching and growing our students. John Sevier offers students unique opportunities to grow as leaders. For example, students can be members of the Unicycle Club, which performs at area universities, high schools, and community events.

Everyone at John Sevier encompasses the school motto of "Expect the Best!" We work each day to give meaning to our motto by meeting the challenges and opportunities presented by heterogeneously grouped classes. Teachers focus on individual student growth, in addition to achievement. Two expanding groups of students within the school are English Language Learners and the Economically Disadvantaged population. Our staff and student support staff address the specific needs of students with instructional delays, language barriers, and instructional delays. John Sevier addresses the whole child's needs through our daily special area classes: STEM, library, gym, music, art, and guidance. Social and emotional needs are addressed by our school counselors utilizing targeted small groups.

John Sevier builds a life-long love for literacy with our students by focusing on creative thinking and innovative reading and writing instruction. Our belief in the importance of literacy extends beyond our school wall and into the surrounding community; this includes our partnership with Maryville City Schools Foundation and other businesses within our community. Each year during One Book Blitz, the foundation provides a book to every student in our school. During One Book Blitz, teachers and families worked together to transform the school into the book's setting. In addition, students participate in community scavenger hunts and attend the Maryville High School drama production based on the book. The event emphasizes shared reading experiences for the entire JSE family and demonstrates the importance and value of literacy.

During COVID-19, John Sevier Elementary provided high-quality engagement and instruction for all students. As a result, Maryville City Schools were opened for in-person learning for the 2020-2021 school year. While many other districts were closed or providing digital instruction, JSE remained open to



minimize the amount of learning lost due to the pandemic. As a result, our students received daily, in-person, high-quality instruction even during a trying year. In addition, some JSE families opted to have their children receive instruction digitally. These courses were taught by certified grade-level teachers who provided students with daily instruction, both synchronous and nonsynchronous. Digital students were taught the same academic curriculum and held to the same high standards as traditional learners. Teachers at John Sevier were committed to ensuring all students received rigorous learning opportunities even during the pandemic.

Every student that walks through the door at John Sevier is valued as an essential part of our school community. John Sevier meets the academic needs of each child and establishes a solid foundation that carries on the "Expect the Best" mentality long after students leave John Sevier.

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

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

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

John Sevier Elementary (JSE) has long embraced the philosophy that relationships are vital to success. Each day, our staff members welcome students on sidewalks and greet students by classroom doors to set the tone for our daily motto, "Expect the Best." JSE is a community school where voice matters and all children are championed, valued, and supported. Because of these relationships, students feel empowered to become a part of the school, not merely a student at school. Students look for ways to show their best throughout each day, including leading the morning announcements, serving as a member of the JSE Fox Guard, participating in intramurals or clubs, and giving their best in the classroom.

John Sevier embraces excellence through engaging learning experiences, meaningful collaboration, maintaining a whole child focus, and respect for diversity in a caring, secure, and positive environment. The positive correlation between building relationships in and out of the classroom and high academic performance has become a motivating factor toward continued success. Students and teachers have data conferences to focus on academic goals individually and promote ownership in the educational process. Teachers are given autonomy in the classroom in terms of instruction, grouping, flexible and traditional seating, and problem-solving lessons resulting in high achievement and high individual growth. The autonomy given to effective teachers makes John Sevier's classrooms look different than many classrooms in other districts because school and district leaders trust and empower teachers to be effective and highly trained professional educators. The atmosphere at John Sevier is contagious, as seen by our community partners and families who continuously support our school. Going beyond academics is the difference-maker for John Sevier. We expect the best, and because of this, John Sevier has been able to become one of the most distinguished learning environments in Tennessee.

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

John Sevier takes a balanced approach to literacy instruction. The ELA curriculum is guided by the Tennessee Academic Standards, MCS Literacy Framework, and evidence-based best practices in teaching. Instructional planning and delivery encompass phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. This approach is furthered by purposefully integrating writing throughout the literacy block and other content areas. As a result, students are immersed in quality literature and structured writing lessons and become proficient with literacy skills and learn to enjoy the art of reading and writing.

At John Sevier, we strive to provide choice and time in the text to promote proficiency and love of reading. Students must spend adequate time actively reading to become proficient readers. Therefore, time in the text is the guiding principle when organizing and planning the literacy block. During the system's recommended 2.5 to 3-hour literacy block, students are engaged in interactive read-aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, explicit phonics instruction, and specific skill lessons. Our Scholastic Book Room contains multiple copies of leveled readers for use during guided reading groups. Teachers also have access, within their room, to other Scholastic materials such as mentor-writing titles, whole class reads, and texts that support skill instruction. In addition to voluminous reading, each student participates in explicit phonics instruction based on Reading 360, Scholastic, Benchmark, or a combination. Reader's Workshop is a strategy used to enhance independent reading time strategically and includes reading fluency, writing, and comprehension accountability. Students may choose from various rigorous texts that are at their instructional level. Appropriateness of the materials and the rigor of instruction are paired with individual student/teacher conferences and adequate tracking and monitoring to ensure student engagement and productivity. Teachers monitor, ask questions, assess, and support the students in becoming fluent readers. Immediate feedback for remediation, practice, and enrichment can also be provided through our technology programs, such as Moby Max, IXL Reading, SeeSaw, STAR, AR, I-Ready, and Scholastic Literacy.

John Sevier's teachers also focus on developing students' writing and speaking skills. An effective and robust writing process is a critical component of a literacy block, and JSE implements The Six Traits of Writing curriculum. As a result, students have ample opportunities to learn to express themselves across each genre of writing: informational, opinion, and narrative. Students respond to the text, compose stories, present book reports, and participate in reading clubs during writing instruction. In addition, teachers hold student conferences to set individual goals for our developing elementary writers.

Assessing individual student needs and setting clear goals is vital in growing students in literacy. John Sevier uses the information from multiple metrics (formative and summative assessments) to determine instructional groupings and mastered skills or learning gaps. The data gives teachers a clear idea of each student's current abilities and the skills needed to become proficient readers and writers. Some of the assessments we use include Scholastic, I-Ready, FastBridge, and TE21. Sharing assessment results with our students and parents allows us to meet the needs of all of the students.

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

John Sevier Elementary's math instruction is driven by the Tennessee State Curriculum Standards, focusing on four major concepts backed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics – Number and Operations, Measurement and Data, Algebra, and Geometry. Each standard is then planned with a districtwide pacing guide created with teachers from each grade level, preK-3. These standards are taught using the I-Ready Math curriculum and hands-on problem-based learning focusing on specific student social-emotional learning styles, including proprioceptive and vestibular needs. In addition, teachers utilize common planning times and schoolwide vertical planning to discuss and research instruction for their classrooms. Special service area teachers are also encouraged to join planning meetings to incorporate math into their art, gym, music, and STEM lessons.

Classroom teachers consistently use the paraprofessional in each preK-3 classroom for small group instruction. Teachers have implemented research-based practices and data to differentiate students' fluid and dynamic grouping. John Sevier provides math instruction, including the opportunity for students to discover, show the application of skills, justify new knowledge by using discourse, create and productively struggle throughout their instructional approaches.

The teachers at John Sevier use various formative and summative assessments to gather all the data needed for creating lessons and student instruction. John Sevier uses the information from multiple metrics (formative and summative assessments) to determine instructional groupings and mastered skills or learning gaps. The data gives teachers a clear idea of each student's current abilities and the skills needed to become proficient in mathematics. These data resources include benchmark testing with TE21, I-Ready diagnostic, Mastery Connect, Moby Max, and IXL math to target individual learning needs. The TE21 and I-Ready diagnostic tests are given three times per year to drive teacher instruction and allow educators to pinpoint high levels of success and areas for refinement. These benchmark assessments allow for high rigor and questions designed similarly to state assessments. Mastery Connect assessments enable our teachers to create formative and summative assessments by the standard. Teachers assign Moby Max lessons for students to practice their various skills, allowing the teacher to individualize the instruction or provide group lessons for independent work. In addition, teachers utilize the I-Ready online adaptive programming. This program allows students working above grade level to have individual lessons to maximize their growth while low achieving students work on remediation lessons. This program allows students working independently to work through their learning journey. Students below the 25th percentile receive Response to Intervention services, and progress is monitored bi-weekly. RTI instruction is based on various practices, including small group teacher-led instruction, in-classroom support, and the use of high-quality resources.

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

John Sevier Elementary addresses science standards in a variety of ways. We use hands-on learning in places like our school garden; field trips to engage students off-campus and on; one-to-one technology within the classroom, utilizing curiosity-inducing materials in our STEM program; and integrating science

content across academic areas. Our school uses these approaches because we believe having an environment rich in exploration, observation, and creativity encourages students to develop critical thinking strategies that can be universally applied to academic and real-life scenarios relevant to the students' lives. These authentic experiences allow students to retain learning more effectively. We believe kids learn best through strategic play, hands-on experiences, and project-based learning created from state science standards.

In 2016, each grade level team at John Sevier purchased read-aloud books to support Teaching Literacy in Tennessee Unit Starters. Unit Starters invite students to participate in projects, engage in high-level literature, and make scientific studies accessible. Our students also use technology such as Epic, Scholastic Literacy, and Brain Pop to further research informational text and topics related to Tennessee science standards. We use assessments to evaluate growth and progress toward understanding the scientific process and concepts. Student learning is assessed through labs, traditional assessments, collaborative work, and rubrics. Students are also allowed to demonstrate learning through projects and presentations. Students are expected to meet goals that enable them to analyze, create and apply their science skills in their science work.

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

John Sevier Elementary addresses social studies standards to meet the needs of all students. John Sevier Elementary uses the Maryville City Schools pacing guide to build social studies units and decide how to present materials to address grade-level standards. Using an integrated curriculum and combining social studies with ELA standards invites students to engage in social studies through high-level literature and make real-life connections. Research supports that the brain is a pattern-seeking device, and John Sevier teachers have become experts in integrating subjects to help the brain make meaningful learning connections.

John Sevier Elementary has purchased literature and resources to support student learning, engagement, and curriculum integration. Those resources include Scholastic News Magazines, BrainPOP, PebbleGo, IXL, Epic, Generation Genius, Nearpod, and Scholastic Unit Studies. Teachers also have access to the Scholastic book room, which houses hundreds of nonfiction and fiction texts aligning to state standards. Teachers at John Sevier bring social studies to life by incorporating guest speakers and field trips to museums and the Great Smoky Mountains. JSE teachers utilize one-to-one technology to bring further social studies experiences to students through Nearpod and incorporate historical resources in the community to give students hands-on learning opportunities. Social Studies Unit Starters, provided by the state, invite students to participate in projects and demonstrate learning through project-based inquiry, tying the ELA and social studies curriculum together.

Teachers use formative and summative assessments to evaluate growth and progress toward understanding the Social Studies concepts. Student learning is assessed through individual and group projects, traditional assessments, collaborative work, and rubrics with Nearpod, Mastery Connect, and IXL Learning programs. Additionally, students demonstrate learning through at-home projects and class presentations.

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

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

A good foundation in early learning is crucial for future educational success. John Sevier Elementary (JSE) believes that participation in early childhood programming boosts academic success in subsequent grade levels by developing specific domains of readiness indicators. Therefore, the instruction provided Integrated pre-K program (IPK) at John Sevier Elementary is aligned with TN ELDS standards. The IPK teacher understands the correlation between early skill development and future learning and is dedicated to developing and providing appropriate activities and instruction based on each student's periods of development and learning type. In addition, the teacher considers that early experiences impact a child's development (cumulative and delayed) when developing instructional lessons.

Learning is integrated and simultaneous across all developmental domains. The teacher focuses on and integrates all eight areas of development. Classroom instruction focuses on social and personal self-awareness, English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, creative arts, and physical development. The curriculum and instruction provided by the JSE IPK enable our youngest students to reach the goals established by the Tennessee ELDS.

The benchmarks proposed in the Tennessee ELDS can be examined to understand the correlation between early skill development and future learning. For example, embedded in the standard for Reading Standard Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity Standard 10, read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently. However, one does not learn to recognize and name all upper and lowercase letters of the alphabet without the experience of handling and viewing print material and hearing the stories that lie within their pages. The building of skill levels from one level to the next creates a flow of learning on a continuum from PreK throughout their educational experience.

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

John Sevier Elementary (JSE) offers a wide variety of special area classes to educate a well-rounded child. These classes support students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge and include library, music, physical education, art, STEM, and guidance. These classes are attended by all pre-kindergarten through third-grade students for one hour a day on a rotating seven-day schedule.

We incorporate the National School Library Standards from the American Association of School Librarians in the library. Our library learning is based on AASL's Shared Foundations of Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore, and Engage, which help students make connections with the world around them. In addition to providing supporting texts for reading lessons in the classroom, knowledgeable and consistent curation of the library collection ensures that students will remain interested in and excited about reading and the acquisition of knowledge.

JSE guidance classes help children learn to build positive relationships with peers, express their thoughts and feelings, problem solve, increase their self-efficacy, acquire good manners and social conventions, and develop early work skills for academic success. Our school counselors carry out the goals through teaching resources such as daily greetings, role-playing, reading books, partner activities, interactive notebooks, task cards, critical thinking, and positive self-talk. In addition, our guidance program aims to support students as they grow in their understanding of self, others, and their world.

Learning music and playing an instrument teaches essential life skills such as creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. Students at John Sevier play non-pitched percussion instruments in pre-school, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten music classes. First, second, and third-grade music students progress to Orff instruments, drums, and recorders. Music improves memorization skills and standardized test scores and teaches perseverance, discipline, and active listening skills.

Students' needs are met physically and academically in our physical education classes. A key component to meeting the needs of our students is to build non-locomotor and locomotor skills in class and through a variety of special programs such as Swim Week and Bike Week. Building fine and growing motor skills are the building blocks and foundation of our student's physical confidence for the future. We are also the pilot program using new innovative technology in the Lu Interactive Playground. This technology incorporates cross-curricular activities in social-emotional health, science, spelling, geography, math, and test-taking while students exercise.

John Sevier's art classes encourage creative thinking and allow students to participate using a variety of learning styles. Art projects are modified for individual students' needs to ensure every student is successful. Visual art pushes students to create as complex a project as they wish. Making and creating art improves students' social skills, increases their ability to build relationships with other people, and teaches them to celebrate differences.

STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) classes help develop critical-thinking skills. Students can think abstractly and approach problems from multiple angles to find practical solutions to the best of their ability. In addition, STEM education allows students to develop communication skills, flexibility, and leadership through project-based learning.

### **3. Academic Supports**

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

With an excellent general education curriculum and instruction in place, the focus at John Sevier Elementary (JSE) turns to individual students. Classrooms are also designed for flexible grouping of students and levels of scaffolding to increase engagement and foster independence. John Sevier's teachers use STAR, I-Ready, and Scholastic diagnostic tests to determine the correct book level for independent reading. In addition to differentiated instruction, classroom teachers use I-Ready, IXL, Scholastic, and MobyMax programs to individualize student practice and meet students with specific needs. These programs are adaptive, offering assessments that allow teachers to pinpoint student strengths and weaknesses. Ongoing assessment within these programs helps inform teachers about how they can modify instruction to maximize student learning. John Sevier educators also use continuous connections within reading, writing, speaking, and problem-solving to promote knowledge transfer and teacher and student modeling of cognitive decision making and problem-solving.

Students that fall below the 25th percentile on the math and reading benchmarks (given three times during the school year) are identified. These students are rescreened using Aimsweb. Additional information is gathered, including attendance records, vision and hearing tests, ELL performance on WIDA, recent adverse experiences, behavioral needs, and possible existing medical conditions. All information is used to make the most accurate and precise decisions about a student's learning deficits.

Intervention teachers and student support personnel meet with teachers, families, and JSE administration to determine what tiered supports are needed for these students. If needed, an individual intervention plan is designed to target the identified deficits for each student. Intervention plans are built using effective literacy and math learning components. Skill level assessments determine the lowest skill deficit in phonics or number sense skills hierarchy. The intervention plans are designed to address the skill deficit in multi-sensory, explicit, and systematic.

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

In the classrooms at John Sevier Elementary, the academic instruction is differentiated, student groups are data-driven, and instruction consists of varying levels of rigor and depth that will increase engagement and foster the independence of students performing above their grade level. The classroom teacher and teaching assistant can develop individualized activities to address skill gaps based on student responses to class questioning. One-on-one instruction or activities are provided to encourage a student's continued academic growth, creative thinking, and critical thinking.

To best the needs of students performing above their grade level, the individual student's artistic talents and personal interests are considered. Teachers design student-centered curricula, hands-on experiences, and challenging activities that meet student interests to keep them engaged. Students are allowed to learn about topics in which they are interested and dive deeper based on their level of performance. Integrated use of technology and hands-on experiences for students to explore and discover innovative ideas and topics allows students to use adaptive applications offered in technology. Students are given options such as choice boards to complete assignments to apply their knowledge and will enable the creation and justification of what they have learned. Students are encouraged to think critically, ask questions, and explore their interests. John Sevier's teachers embody the spirit of relationships by modeling for students how to become peer leaders in the classroom and beyond as well.

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

John Sevier Elementary (JSE) considers the unique needs of students in special education. Teams for each identified student work collaboratively to develop individualized Education Programs. Special education, general education, related service providers, and families work together to meet individual student needs based on their qualifying disabilities. Special education teachers collaborate with general education teachers to plan and provide classroom accommodations and interventions such as extra prompts, extra time, visual schedules, flexible seating, check-ins, breaks, and reading aloud for those who qualify. Staff implement incentive charts or behavioral contracts to motivate students and improve appropriate participation. Special education teachers provide small group or individual interventions to address student difficulties based on data from psychoeducational evaluations, iReady, STAR, and FastBridge.

Identified students receive intervention on their instructional level to remediate skills using research-based programs that may include SPIRE or Wilson. These students are progress monitored using FastBridge reading and math assessments. Some students receive social-emotional support within their classrooms by being around peer models and talking through difficulties with special and general education staff. Students may sometimes participate in a social skills group to learn and practice social and emotional skills in a small group environment. Special education and general education teachers are continually collaborating, planning, and problem-solving about the needed accommodations and interventions that will best allow each student to succeed in the general education setting. JSE staff focuses on building relationships between the student and the teachers to establish trust, helping students be more motivated to engage in their learning.

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

John Sevier Elementary (JSE) focuses on the whole child and the partnership with parents when addressing the needs of English Language Learners. First, the ESL teacher evaluates students' English language abilities in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Then, after evaluating data from multiple metrics, the ESL teacher collaborates with classroom teachers and family members to develop an Individual Learning Plan. This plan contains individual student goals, identifies areas for growth, or the next area of development, a description of the student's strengths, and the accommodations that would be appropriate for the individual child.

At JSE, the ESL teacher serves as the initial point of contact and family liaison for many ELL families and is the first to reach out and initiate a relationship with the family to ensure they have equal and fair access to all school or educational information. Buy-in is essential to student growth and academic development. Therefore, parents and family members are invited to participate in a weekly ESL Conversation Time at JSE. This weekly meeting provides a safe and supportive place where ELL students' parents and family members can ask questions about school and homework, practice their English, and even learn about American culture through topics they choose or find interesting.

AT JSE, most ELL students receive at least one hour of services per week. Beginners or struggling EL students may require additional support and be given more time with another group or a smaller group. They may also receive services in their classrooms from the ESL teacher or the ESL teacher assistant. ELL students are encouraged to develop basic conversation skills and academic language that will benefit them in the classroom and overall schooling. Students know that their teachers have high expectations for their academic development and language acquisition.

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

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

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

Engaging and motivating students begin early each morning at JSE. Students are greeted warmly by the Morning Welcome Team whether they arrive by bus or by car. Students are then greeted by name by their teachers at the doors to their classrooms. Classrooms, hallways, specials areas, and playgrounds at JSE are inviting spaces all students feel welcomed and safe. Each morning teachers take the time to learn about their students' interests, feelings, and concerns in community groups. Teachers use this information to help increase academic and behavioral engagement in the classroom and develop relevant and engaging lessons.

Teachers play a crucial role in students' motivation and engagement. Teachers create and deliver relevant and active learning opportunities. They engage in self-reflective activities to improve instructional practices and instruction that challenge, enrich, and extend students academically and personally. The entire JSE team works collaboratively to help students take ownership of their learning and develop confidence through problem-solving activities that help them know how to handle challenges and failures. Our teachers work with integrity to create inclusive lessons that allow all students to see themselves in literature and classroom materials.

Positive and healthy teachers positively affect the social-emotional lives of our students and their families and make even more significant educational impacts. The district and JSE leadership have put support in place over the last two years to support the staff's mental health and emotional needs. This staff support is essential to maintaining our school's positive climate and culture. Effectively handling stress and anxiety allows for better interpersonal interactions and improved relationships.

John Sevier Elementary (JSE) embraces excellence through engaging learning experiences, meaningful collaboration, maintaining a whole child focus, and respect for diversity in a caring, secure, and positive environment. The positive correlation between building relationships in and out of the classroom, student engagement, and motivation is a core belief at JSE. Positive behavior supports, positive role models, and positive classrooms are essential to student academic growth, social-emotional learning, and self-efficacy are central tenets that provide the foundation for continued success for students and staff. The staff at JSE maintains a dedicated focus on relationships, and teaching the whole child is the foundation for John Sevier's continued success. Each day teachers work hard to ensure that students at JSE receive the best academic instruction and engage in enriched social-emotional learning opportunities.

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

At John Sevier Elementary, our families and community are a part of our students' successes. John Sevier has several unique annual traditions that engage and involve the JSE staff, students, families, and community partners. These events include JSE Swim Week, Lunch with A Loved One, JSE Bike Week, and One Book Blitz.

Swim Week is a collaboration between our local county parks and recreation department. Swim Week occurs during the first couple of weeks at the beginning of the school year. All JSE students receive free swimming lessons with our special area teachers, swim coaches, and volunteers during the school day. In addition to learning how to swim, JSE Swim Week teaches our students critical water safety skills. JSE Bike Week is a two-week-long course taught by our physical education teacher that gives all students access to bicycles and the opportunity and instruction about how to ride a bike. In addition, Walmart and the Roth Cycling Foundation have donated bicycles and helmets. Another beloved JSE tradition is Lunch with a Loved One. Everyone in the JSE community is encouraged to bring their favorite lunch and gather outside with students and staff for a meal and conversation. One Book Blitz has become another meaningful experience that connects our school with our families and the greater community.

JSE's longstanding community partnerships positively affect the social-emotional lives of our students and their families and make even more significant educational impacts. For example, the ESL program assists



students and their families with academic and social support, including the availability of tutoring and interpreter services. John Sevier also partners with Second Harvest Food Bank to provide weekend food bags for families. AA community mental health agency provides various student and family mental health services. The MCS Family Resource Center assists JSE families with clothing, school supplies, parenting classes, transportation services, medical and dental needs, and emergency assistance. Maryville College sends student-athletes to discuss the importance of education and share their love of reading with JSE students. In addition, JSE is supported by the Maryville City Schools Foundation (MCSF). The MCSF awards grants to teachers, provide funds for various educational programs, and supports innovating and enriching opportunities for students.

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

At John Sevier Elementary (JSE), the motto of "Expect the Best" is embraced by everyone. JSE teachers are passionate about their profession, growing their students academically, and implementing the most effective instructional strategies in the classroom. As a result, purposeful and meaningful professional development is planned and implemented with these goals in mind. School leaders often conduct needs assessments, issue surveys, and have team-level conversations about tailoring professional development that will meet teachers' needs. In addition, when standards are changed, or a new curriculum is adopted, in-depth professional development is provided to prepare teachers to implement these latest programs or standards with their students.

JSE teachers have opportunities to participate in various professional development opportunities. Some recent training includes Tennessee Department of Education Reading 360; Ruby K. Payne Poverty Framework training; the school-wide study of the book, *Help for Billy*; Scholastic Literacy; RTIb Training, Crisis Intervention training; I-Ready Math; and I-Ready Reading training. In addition, professional development at JSE occurs in grade-level PLC meetings, school-wide faculty meetings, system-wide and grade-level team planning meetings, district curriculum pacing meetings, and dedicated professional learning days.

Collaborative PD opportunities allow the staff to utilize cohesive language to support our instruction, continue best teaching practices, and utilize high-quality, research-based instructional programs. In addition, to school or district professional developments, teachers also have the autonomy to pursue self-directed professional development topics to differentiate for student needs, hone instructional practices, and increase positive classroom climates. Teachers are also encouraged to engage in self-directed professional development, and a variety of supports and resources are available at John Sevier. A professional library for teachers contains many professional development books on assorted topics for teachers to check out.

During the pandemic, training was provided to faculty and staff on meeting the various needs during Covid-19 to prevent and close academic and emotional gaps and, hopefully, to provide gains in the current and upcoming years. In addition, teachers were given time and flexibility to plan and prepare for digital instruction during the switch to distance learning in March 2020. In preparation for the 2020-2021 school year, technology training was provided for Digital learning and technology support and resources throughout the school year. Our district also held daily face-to-face instruction in the 2020-2021 school year. As a result, teachers maintained high expectations for student achievement and growth while taking additional time to ensure our student's physical and emotional needs were met.

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

Learning is a social process that relies on interactions with others, is shaped by the communities in which it occurs, and both are affected by the current policies that govern them. At John Sevier Elementary, school leaders employ a distributive leadership style that encourages and shares leadership and demonstrates the belief that all stakeholders should be invited and involved in our educational learning community. School leaders, the JSE School Leadership Team, grade and subject level teams, and the JSE Parent/Family-Teacher Organization meet regularly to discuss and share ideas and items that will help drive continual improvement for our school. JSE stakeholders have shared goals that include trusting relationships, a whole-child focus, maintaining balance, and the importance of hearing from and listening to all stakeholders.

John Sevier's leaders have stressed four critical keys to school-wide success. These are increasing academic achievement for all students, cultivating leadership, maintaining a positive work culture, and demonstrating to teachers that they are a priority and a vital tool in the overall vision. In addition, input and feedback from staff, students, and families about what happens at John Sevier are valued and often solicited. The leadership believes that attending to all the voices in our school community positively impacts our students' and families' engagement.

The district and school leader teams worked collaboratively to develop reopening plans during the pandemic. JSE's leaders responded to the needs and concerns of the school community by becoming increasingly flexible and adaptive with their leadership styles and approaches based on the situation at hand and the individual needs of the student, family, or staff members. During this time, the school leaders often focused on relationships, working to reduce the stresses on staff and families by clearly and openly communicating and improving access to resources. As a result, less time was spent focusing on data. In addition, our leaders often solicited the concerns of the school community members to help alleviate fears and anxiety brought on by the historic and unpredictable pandemic period.

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

To the greatest extent possible, John Sevier Elementary's classrooms, hallways, professional learning communities, meetings, school and community events, and all school communication should prefigure the democratic and just society we envision and thus contribute to building that society. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms," and that is what anyone would expect when walking the hallways or into any classroom at John Sevier, whether as a student or as an educator.

John Sevier recognizes the disconnection that some students and families have with education. They take the time to develop relationships and integrate and value all types of knowledge and knowing. Our teachers want our students to gain knowledge and be transformed, and all students are encouraged to speak about the limits of what they know and how they know it. The leadership and the staff at John Sevier are passionate about making every student feel safe and remain keenly aware, via self- and school-directed professional development, that all forms of trauma influence epistemology. The classroom should be a connected place that is filled with continual learning.

To ensure that we are sensitive and responsive to the needs of our stakeholders, the school leadership team worked collaboratively to develop an equity and access guide that would serve as the basis for our path forward. In addition, John Sevier faculty and staff participated in training on recognizing and supporting students affected by generational and extreme poverty. The school also holds events throughout the year that encourage conversations about current issues and concerns. A recent example includes a family night at the local library about identifying the causes of anxiety and ways to alleviate students' stresses and concerns exacerbated by the pandemic. Food and childcare were provided at this event to allow for greater participation. Translators and interpreters are always available to ensure that everyone can participate fully in each conversation. The leadership at JSE maintains open-door policies and encourages comments and discussions from families and community members.

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

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Success is dependent on utilizing many effective strategies to make connections and grow students. John Sevier works with all stakeholders to ensure that student's needs are met through various academic, assessment-related, and socio-emotional practices. However, the one strategy or belief that sets us apart from other schools is the idea that teacher autonomy is the best way to benefit students. Autonomy, by definition, is the right to self-govern or function in an independent fashion. At JSE, teachers have the aptitude and are provided the freedom to look beyond a set curriculum or resources and choose what will best meet the needs of the students and their families. Allowing teachers and support staff the ability and flexibility to utilize teaching materials beyond the recommended curriculum provided by our district best meets each student's academic needs, learning styles, and socio-emotional needs. Teachers also understand that each child's academic and socio-emotional needs can change moment-by-moment. Therefore, once again, they use their autonomy of resources to reach each student right where they are every day. Teachers realize that these needs change from year-to-year, specifically during and post-pandemic. They have seen a greater need for autonomy in the socio-emotional needs of each student. This rise in socio-emotional needs has challenged our teachers to truly dig deeper into the autonomy of reaching the students and the entire school community. School leaders continually recognize teachers' strong aptitude and professional training and trust them to make the correct decisions about instruction, differentiation, and interventions. This mutual trust and respect increase the JSE teachers' self and collective efficacy. Teachers are further supported and encouraged to seek professional development that meets their own needs; when teachers are empowered, valued, and supported, the total school community benefits.

The confidence that John Sevier has in teacher autonomy extends beyond the instruction of students. It also allows teachers to implement individuality and creativity when planning in grade-level teams, communicating with parents, or making school-wide decisions. Thus, completely meeting academic standards set by our state with rigor and best practices. This practice then directly drives the individualization of each teacher and team identifying their specific professional development needs to reach, teach, and lead with excellence. As a result, John Sevier Elementary school is not only a school that walks out the school motto and "Expect the Best" each school day, but it is a school where educators are motivated, empowered, and recognized as professionals passionate about reaching teaching our students.