

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Tamara Carlson

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

Official School Name Fullerton Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 606 4th Street P.O. Box 520

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

City Fullerton State NE Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 68638-3176

County Nance

Telephone (308) 536-2431 Fax (308) 536-2432

Web site/URL http://www.fullertonpublicschools.org E-mail tcarlson@fullerton.esu7.org

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/TheFHSWarriors Facebook Page http://facebook.com/FPSWarriors Google+ \_\_\_\_\_

YouTube/URL \_\_\_\_\_ Blog \_\_\_\_\_ Other Social Media Link \_\_\_\_\_

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. Jeff Anderson E-mail janders@fullerton.esu7.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Fullerton Public Schools Tel. (308) 536-2431

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. Stacy Kramer  
(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, write N/A in the space.*

## 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. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
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. 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.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

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

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- ☐ Urban or large central city
  - ☐ Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
  - ☐ Suburban
  - ☒ Small city or town in a rural area
  - ☐ Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	21	6	27
1	9	12	21
2	16	9	25
3	14	12	26
4	12	10	22
5	8	18	26
6	6	12	18
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	86	79	165

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 96 % 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 2014 – 2015 school year: 8%

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	170
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.082
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL

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

N/A

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 38 %  
Total number students who qualify: 62

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %  
25 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. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>5</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>7</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>3</u> Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	10
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance 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 16:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	97%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

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.

The mission of Fullerton Elementary is to inspire individuals to Believe, Achieve, and Succeed.

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

## PART III – SUMMARY

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The mission of Fullerton Elementary is to inspire individuals to Believe, Achieve, and Succeed.

The Fullerton school district is located in Fullerton, Nebraska, in Nance County. We are primarily a small agricultural-based community. Our school district consists of a kindergarten through twelfth grade system with an overall enrollment around 312 students. The elementary and junior high/high school buildings are connected by a shared commons area, which also serves as a lunchroom. This physical setting provides a sense of unity and pride from kindergarteners to seniors. Our elementary students benefit from the role models of the high school students. Seniors are often seen throughout our elementary building reading with students, assisting teachers and connecting with the younger students. The sense of family is created among the entire district due to the culture that is created.

Fullerton Elementary School is a K-6 elementary school with an enrollment of 164 students. Of the elementary students 38% qualify for free or reduced lunches. Our students are met each day by seventeen certified teachers, six support staff and one principal. The staff at Fullerton Elementary takes great pride in creating a personal connection with our students and families. The average years of service for our staff at Fullerton Elementary is fourteen years. We take great pride in the longevity of our staff and the connection to our community. The staff is continuously learning new ways to reach students and increase individual student performance. Our parents are actively involved in the educational process. Our parent-teacher conference attendance is usually at 100% at both fall and spring conference sessions. Parents assist with fieldtrips, classroom celebrations, programs, the AdvanED process of our accreditation and numerous other times throughout the year. The climate within the school creates an environment that is welcoming, with a sense of team felt throughout the hallways.

Fullerton Elementary has a network of professionals that assist the education of our students through their specific areas of focus. A technology person is on staff to assist in student learning and to prepare elementary students for the one-to-one laptop system (all students have their own laptop assigned to them) at grades 7-12. One will often find her in a classroom helping with a lesson, using technology, or preparing for staff development sessions. The media specialist is located in the library, which also consists of a computer lab equipped with 34 Apple laptop computers. Our media specialist assists with classroom research projects, extended curriculum learning and media skills classes. Both music and physical education are taught to all elementary students. This creates a sense of connection to experiences later in their educational career through choir, band, weight training and athletics. The elementary has two full-time resource teachers and a Title I teacher on staff to assist with individual student needs. One of the resource teachers is also a certified vision teacher. The Title I and resource teachers are very focused on individual student needs and are able to assist in all learning areas for their students. They communicate with all staff to insure the highest level of student achievement. Along with the resource teachers, Fullerton Elementary utilizes an Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist and a Speech Language Pathologist for students with a verified need in these areas. We appreciate their professional assistance in helping our students to grow and learn.

In 2009 Fullerton Elementary began implementing the Response to Intervention System (RtI) to aid in student achievement across grade levels. Teaming with our RtI consultant, we have been constantly reflecting on data to inform our decisions regarding student achievement. We are constantly reviewing data from student achievement to make adjustments to intervention schedules and processes. We began the use of direct explicit instruction in 2009 and adopted a new reading series in 2010 to reflect the use of systematic instruction practices. We implemented Early Interventions in Reading to assist in closing the gaps in reading for students in the fall of 2015. We are excited about individual gains that have been documented in year one of the program. We continue to monitor student progress through DIBELS NEXT monitoring. We use small group setting for reading and math by creating a rotation between teachers and subjects. This concept helps the instruction to occur in smaller groups where monitoring individual progress can be manageable and supports can be in place for learning. Reading has been one of our main focus areas over the past few years; however, we are constantly reflecting on curriculum sequence of all subject areas to ensure the best overall education possible at Fullerton Elementary.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

#### Reading

The reading curriculum at Fullerton Elementary is continuously reviewed and aligned to our current Nebraska standards. In 2009 Fullerton Elementary began implementing the Response to Intervention System (RtI) to aid in student achievement across grade levels. Students are monitored with Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills-Next (DIBELS-Next). If they have scored significantly below benchmark, they are placed in small intervention groups and receive instruction targeted to the area of need. A scientifically based reading intervention program (Early Interventions in Reading) is in place to assist in closing the gap in learning for identified students. The groups are flexible to allow movement across groups and transition to the core program. The reading series was purchased in 2010 to reflect a direct explicit instruction approach to learning. The series was selected by using a rubric evaluation process involving comprehension, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency and alphabetic principal ('The Big Five') involving all teaching staff in the selection process. The reading series that was selected was Treasures (McGraw-Hill) due to the overall rating across 'The Big Five' and the ability to reach all levels of learners. This transition helped teachers create a systematic approach to instructing reading. Teachers also transitioned to using templates for lessons, which focus on specific areas of learning. The combination of direct explicit instruction and templates created a common language and use of terms in the language arts instruction across grade levels. The reading block consists of 90 minutes in which instruction and practice occur. Outside resources that are used to assist student learning include special education services, Title I and intervention periods for students performing below benchmark. All of the outside resources occur outside of the core reading block to insure all students receive the core instruction at their level.

#### Mathematics

The math curriculum at Fullerton Elementary is continuously reviewed and aligned to our Nebraska standards. The elementary staff worked throughout the 2009-2010 school year evaluating math programs to review scope and sequence across grade levels that were available in a series. The staff unanimously agreed to adopt the Envisions Math program across grades kindergarten through sixth. The district purchased both the digital technology aspect along with the series components to use at the elementary level. The Fullerton district has Promethean boards in all learning environments; therefore, the digital side to Envisions adds an extension to the classroom learning in math. The series features video presentations of each topic to add depth to the introduction. All aspects of the series are accessible through the Promethean board, which creates active learning for the students within each lesson. The teachers are able to demonstrate examples of the topic without having to take the time to draw out or create examples due to the availability through the program. Special education teachers are able to adjust instruction and practice through the use of the digital materials to ensure reaching each individual student's needs in the area of math.

Teachers also utilize the IXL web-based program for review of topics and practice. The IXL program is designed to align directly to the Nebraska standards and motivates students through the mastery of skills. IXL is used to reinforce skills that are taught and as a continuous review of learning. Teachers are able to track student learning and address concerns on specific areas as a class or for individual students. Student progress is stored by IXL so it creates a year-by-year progression of skills that are mastered.

#### Science

The science curriculum at Fullerton Elementary is continuously reviewed and aligned to our Nebraska standards. Fullerton elementary teachers use a combination of the science series and hands-on exploration in teaching the area of science. Science offers opportunities for active participation, exploration and discovery centered on learning objectives and activities. Teachers have spent time evaluating the scope and sequence across the grade levels to ensure coverage of science topics. At grades 5 and 6 Fullerton utilizes departmentalization for select subject areas, which includes science for grade 5. This allows for science class to occur in a smaller group to assist in active participation and experiment activities. A smaller group for teaching and learning in the area of science also helps the teacher ensure understanding of key concepts. Teachers also have access to shared equipment through a centralized storage area for science supplementary

materials. Science is an area that has a vast array of equipment and supply needs in order to allow for experiments and exploration. By creating a central area for storing materials that can be shared, it opens up access to items for all staff.

### Social Studies/History

The social studies curriculum at Fullerton Elementary is continuously reviewed and aligned to our Nebraska standards. All students at Fullerton Elementary are exposed to social studies through our series and connections in their community and environment. Understanding the world around our heritage and us as individuals is a foundation of our learning objectives in social studies throughout the elementary. Nebraska History is a specific area of study for students in grade 4. As part of the textbook series, students are also immersed in areas of Nebraska history around them by a field trip to the State Capital in Lincoln, Nebraska, and the one-room schoolhouse located by our local museum. Students in fourth grade spend a day reenacting life in pioneer times at the one-room schoolhouse complete with pioneer attire, making candles, homemade butter and classroom experience from times long ago.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

### Arts

The fine arts curriculum is created to reach across grade levels from kindergarten to twelfth grade. The curriculum is a guide to instruction across grade levels and is integrated into other areas of learning. The exposure to the fine arts through music and art gives students an appreciation for creativity and discovery.

Elementary classrooms often integrate art into the language arts area of study. This creates a connection to learning by active involvement and application. Student artwork is displayed throughout the classrooms and hallways to create a sense of pride. Each year student artwork is displayed at the county fair for patrons to enjoy. Often classes will connect with our high school art teacher in creating larger art projects such as exploration in clay creations or projects that involve additional support in art.

The elementary students perform at two concerts each year in vocal and instrumental music. All elementary students participate in vocal music, which consists of music, movement, theory, performance and understanding of essential music vocabulary and concepts. Grades 5 and 6 have the opportunity to participate in instrumental music. Instrumental music focuses on technique, terminology and understanding of music development.

### Physical Education/Health

All elementary students participate in the physical education program. Physical Education is designed to help students develop physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. The overall focus of the physical education program is to provide students with the knowledge to develop and maintain a strong healthy body through mental and physical fitness and to teach the wise use of leisure time through beneficial activities. The key areas of concentration within the physical education program include motor development, physical fitness, lifetime skills, team games and multicultural awareness. As a district we work closely with our physical therapist to ensure accommodations for inclusion of all students in physical education.

The elementary health education curriculum is designed to allow the student the opportunity to obtain a high level of knowledge and understanding of health concepts and to become aware of recent advancement and changes in the field of health. The five strands of health education that are covered within the curriculum are dental and personal care, drugs, first aid and safety, growth and development, and mental and physical health.

### Technology

Fullerton elementary strives to expose students to the most up-to-date technology available to assist in learning across curriculum areas. Promethean boards were purchased for all learning environments across the district. Teachers utilize the Promethean boards for active participation centered on the learning objective. The active participation increases students' attention and application of the learning. By having Promethean boards available in all learning environments it increases exposure to technology across grade levels and subject areas. Fullerton is an Apple products based school. We have one-to-one laptops for



students in grades 3-6 and laptop carts available for grades K-2. Our special education classrooms have access to not only laptops but also ipads for individual learning needs of students. Both our reading and math series also have digital access available to allow teachers to expand on the learning objectives with technology.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Fullerton Elementary uses a variety of instruction and assessment methods to ensure all students are progressing. By using multiple methods to form decisions on student achievement, we can better identify strengths and weaknesses in academic performance. These areas can then be addressed by a variety of methods.

Student engagement is increased due to the use of technology in learning. All classrooms are equipped with interactive Promethean boards to enhance student learning. The math series (Envisions) uses multiple technology features to ensure student understanding. Each lesson is introduced with an interactive video to engage students in the objective of the lesson. This concept also helps increase understanding by utilizing auditory and visual representation of the learning. Technology and the use of Promethean board access are also used to focus explicit, direct instruction within the reading series by creating templates for student practice. This increases instructional time by having the templates created prior to the lesson. The templates can be quickly accessed and transitioned within the teaching; therefore, creating multiple practices in a short amount of time. The templates also assist with differentiating instruction across reading groups due to being digital and easily adjusted based on student needs. Students also have access to Apple laptop computers within the classrooms. Students at grades third through sixth have their own laptops assigned to them; whereas, kindergarten through second grade have mobile laptop carts available for their use.

Teaching is centered around the Instructional Theories Into Practice model (ITIP). This practice creates a systematic approach for all teachers in lesson design. The preteaching, practice and reteaching within the instructional design assist in student understanding of the objective. There is constant reflection and assessment during the learning to identify the level of student understanding. The teachers use multiple assessments for learning including formative and summative. Teachers use data from NeSA (Nebraska State Accountability Assessment), STARS (Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading), Accelerated Reader, ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills), classroom assessments and performance to make educational decisions for individual students.

Information from the data is used in making decisions about teaching and learning. Students are placed in RtI intervention groups based on the information collected from the multiple data sources. The intervention groups are structured around individual needs. Paraprofessional support is utilized in addressing student needs within individual or small groups depending on placement based on data-driven decisions.

### 4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Fullerton Elementary uses a variety of assessments to evaluate student performance and adjust instruction as needed. Assessment data is tied to our overall Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) and is reviewed regularly and adjustments are made such as adding EIR when data showed a gap in student performance for our at-risk population. Another example of a data-driven decision was the addition of the C4L (Check For Learning) process. This provides a method for teachers to adjust instruction based on individual performance. The multiple data sources include ITBS, NeSA, STARS, DIBELS and formative classroom assessments.

The NeSA is administered in the areas of Reading, Math, Science and Writing in the state of Nebraska. Grades 3-6 participate in the Reading and Math assessment while only grade 4 is assessed in Writing and only grade 5 in Science at the elementary level. Fullerton Elementary was ranked first in the state of Nebraska in reading during the 2012 assessment period and has remained in the top 10 schools the following two years. Many strategies have been implemented to increase overall reading achievement in the elementary, which is reflected in a 16% increase in overall performance from 2010 to 2015. Data also shows that the gap is closing for the students that scored in the not-met category in reading between 2010 to

2015. The percent not-met in the 2010-2011 school year was 21%; in 2014-2015 the gap of not-met closed to 5% of the population showing an increase in students performing at or above the standard. NeSA Math performance also showed substantial growth in the area of student performance for the elementary. The overall math performance reflected a 19% increase between the 2010-2011 school year and the 2014-2015 school year. The data also notes that the elementary is closing the gap on students not meeting the standard in math by a moving from 17% not meeting the standards to only 8% in the not-met category in 2014-2015. Elementary Science performance has remained around the 90% proficient in the elementary over the past four years. Science is only assessed at one grade level for the elementary and also utilizes the C4L system to assist in adjusting teaching based on understanding. Writing is a current area we are focusing on as an elementary. Our overall scores average around 77% proficient over the last three years; however, this exceeded the state average of 52%. As a K-6 elementary we have spent time addressing the area of writing across grade levels by utilizing a common editing practice and visual organizer. Staff development time has been utilized for grade span meetings to address consistency in writing processes and practices. With science and writing being assessed at one grade level in the elementary, scores can fluctuate due to smaller numbers of students in each grade level over different years.

With NeSA being a large factor of our data collections, the district also uses performance result from ITBS, DIBELS, STAR and classroom assessment measures in making decisions about student performance. Parents receive information regarding the multiple data systems throughout the year. Twice a year, parent-teacher conferences are held and are a time that face-to-face discussions occur with parents to increase understanding of the results and answer questions that parents might have regarding their individual student. The elementary takes great pride in the high attendance rate at conferences. If a parent is unable to attend the scheduled time, teachers make alternate arrangements to communicate. Powerschool (on-line grading system) also helps inform parents of student performance in the classroom and helps bridge communication throughout the year. Other important information is shared through email, notes home and phone conversations as needed throughout the year. Report cards and midterms are sent home during the reporting periods and contain information on classroom performance. The State of the Schools Report is available to the public through our district webpage and newsletter. Banners are displayed in the Commons Area of the school showing district and school ratings for NeSA performance. A district-wide pep rally is also held each year to promote school pride for academics. The pep rally makes a statement about not only competing on the court or field but also in the classroom.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

To inspire individuals to Believe, Achieve and Succeed in a sense summarizes the overall feeling among all stakeholders of Fullerton Elementary. As stated by the African proverb “It takes a village to raise a child” is reflected within the mission and culture of our school. Parent and community support has helped create an environment for success for our students and staff. As one walks through the hallways, a sense of family can be felt by the interactions that are occurring. This is not only believed to be true by those close to the school but also by visitors to the district as noted by our recent CIP external team. The close interactions and relationships stem further than just with staff and students. The local TeamMates Chapter plays an important role in mentoring youth within the school. The mentoring program helps provide support, purpose and a vision for youth that are involved in the program. Fullerton Elementary supports the TeamMates program by working with mentors in developing a schedule to meet throughout the week. Several staff members also serve as mentors for the TeamMates program. High school students are often seen interacting with elementary students in the classroom and at extracurricular activities. The parent support is shown by the involvement in classroom celebrations, programs and field trips, as well as supporting the overall educational process of the school.

Teachers take great pride in their roles by having high expectations in the classroom and taking interest in their students’ lives. They show unity in their actions. As problems arise, it is not only one classroom’s concern: it becomes the concern of all staff. For example, the staff have worked together to improve writing skills by creating a spiraling approach, from kindergarten to sixth grade, creating ownership at each level. The staff work together as a team to solve problems as well as have fun together and relate to students outside of the classroom setting. Some recent events we have had that reflect our approach to relating to our students outside of the classroom setting would be creating an end of year video for students to watch staff interacting in a humorous music-type setting, renting a bouncy house with a maze, competing against each other and students and taking the ALS ice bucket challenge. We also welcome our students each year in August with a ‘Red Carpet Event’ where each class walks down a red carpet decorated path into the elementary to start off a GREAT school year. We close out our year in May with a Hawaiian-themed awards presentation to recognize all the academic achievement throughout the school year. All of these activities and others were centered around creating a sense of pride and unity as a school.

The staff, students, families and community of Fullerton have the belief that our culture is raising children to understand that if they believe, they will achieve and certainly succeed.

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

Parents play an active role in their child’s education, and we acknowledge that parents are the child’s first teachers. Parent and the community are involved in our AdvanEd school improvement process. We utilize information from parent surveys and information that they share into creating the environment of our school. Parents are often found volunteering for classroom field trip, track and field day and celebrations within the school. During our elementary programs, throughout the year, one will find our gymnasium packed with family and friends offering their encouragement and support for our students as they perform and share their talents.

The elementary has a high attendance at parent-teacher conferences not falling below 98% over the past four years. Teachers use parent-teacher conferences as an avenue to share information with parents and also build relationships to create a balance between school and home. Our Title I program holds an annual parent meeting each year to communicate the instructional process of the program and answer any questions. Working with parents to create a positive learning environment is a key to optimal student performance and growth.

The families and the community are kept informed about events occurring at school by our district newsletter, principal’s newsletter, district webpage, facebook and twitter. The large marquee sign in front

of the school displays current information about events occurring at the school. This serves as a reference for parents and community members. Leadership will continue to strive to communicate effectively with stakeholder groups and provide opportunities for feedback. Keeping the community informed is essential in creating a positive environment for learning.

The district utilizes Powerschool (an online grading program), which allows parents to log in to access student grades, attendance and information regarding performance at school. This system allows parents to create conversations with their child and their teachers regarding classroom performance. The State of the Schools Report is available through our webpage, which gives information on student performance, attendance rates, mobility and an overall perception of the district.

There is a sense of pride that can be felt within the hallways and classrooms. The support from the community is something that can be noticed within minutes of entering the doors. The local newspaper often highlights accomplishments of students and the school with stories and pictures. As a district, our overall performance on the state test has been an element of excitement and pride for the entire community. We know the support from our parents and community contributes to our overall success in educating our students. It is often said that a school is the community; however, a school success is determined by the support of the community. We believe it is truly a partnership in educating our youth and helping them grow into positive additions to our society.

### 3. Professional Development:

The elementary has been involved in a variety of professional development activities centering around curriculum areas and district practices. The transition to RtI brought about numerous staff development opportunities. The staff received training regarding program specific, creation of instructional templates, direct instruction and the teaching of vocabulary. Throughout the continuous improvement process the staff was involved in data retreats centered around our goal of increasing reading proficiency. Our current focus for staff development is working with a consistent writing process across grades kindergarten through sixth grade. We will continue to examine the direction and effectiveness of strategies that we implement to improve writing.

Staff is trained in using the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next (DIBELS-Next) for benchmark and progress monitoring of students. All new staff are required to receive training in order to utilize the system for monitoring of student achievement. Specific staff also received training in Early Interventions in Reading (EIR) to use with students that are performing substantially below benchmark on the DIBELS-Next assessment. According to district policy all staff are required to be trained in Instructional Theory Into Practice (ITIP) to align with our evaluation and educational philosophy. We are in the process of setting up a transition process to Marzano over the course of the next few years.

We currently utilize a monthly late start to allow for staff development and increase communication across the building. During the monthly late starts, time is delegated to areas of need including technology, AdvancEd continuous improvement process and examination of data for the district. Staff is also kept current on required safety trainings throughout the year as part of the district policy. The late starts are strategically placed the day after the Board of Education meetings to allow for communication of board information to staff, which creates a direct tie between the staff and board working towards a common goal.

### 4. School Leadership:

The Fullerton Schools philosophy is centered on building a community of leaders to move the district in a positive direction. We understand it takes a multiple team of leaders to make a lasting impact, which is created with a team environment. We are a team of educators from every aspect of the district. The team includes everyone that touches a child's life within the school including bus drivers, cooks, janitors, teachers, school board, paraprofessionals, secretaries, principals and superintendent. It takes a collective effort to create a team of leaders.

The superintendent has been a part of Fullerton District for twenty-two years. Within those twenty-two

years he has served in a variety to leadership positions. For seven years he served as the elementary principal for Fullerton. This was followed by two years in serving Fullerton and a neighboring district in the administrative position. During this time he would spend time in both districts as principal. The next six years he served a dual role as elementary principal and Superintendent for Fullerton Public Schools. For the last seven years he has served as Superintendent due to the hiring of an elementary principal for the district. The Superintendent has created open communication with the board of education to best serve the students of the district. The governing board, along with the direction of the superintendent works to maintain Fullerton Public Schools as a highly effective school. The board has adopted policies and practices that are clear and emphasize instruction, assessment and student growth. They plan and allocate resources based on the superintendent's suggestions allowing the leadership to foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.

The elementary principal has been a part of the Fullerton School system for sixteen years and has served as a principal for seven years. The principal works closely with the elementary staff in ensuring curriculum and instruction are aligned to district practices. The principal leads the supervision and evaluation process for elementary instruction. The focus of supervision and evaluation is to improve and ensure student achievement. The principal holds frequent staff meetings and utilizes daily announcements to keep open communication with staff. The principal encourages input and discussion regarding student performance and practices to ensure continuity of instruction.

Over half of the elementary teachers currently have a master's degree in teaching. The teachers serve on numerous committees throughout the district which helps gain insight into practices and policies within the school. Teachers are encouraged to attend workshops and staff development opportunities throughout the school year. During our recent accreditation visit teachers indicated that there is a supportive and collaborative culture that provides a challenging learning environment supported by professional development. Teachers within the district are instructional leaders of their classrooms utilizing a variety of resources including but not limited to programs, materials and numerous technology resources.

Our support staff has a major impact on the overall success of our school. Without their expertise in their specific areas our students would not be as successful in the classroom. From the bus driver greeting the students in the morning and safely returning them home at the end of the day, to our secretaries keeping the lunch accounts and bookkeeping accurate, to our cooks preparing the nutritious meals, to our clean facilities and to the paraprofessionals that give individual attention to our students. THIS is what makes us a highly successful school. Without each one of these roles being fulfilled by a caring individual our students would not experience the positive learning atmosphere within the school building.

In reflecting back on all leadership positions within the building, a true sense of pride is evident from multiple viewpoints. As stated in our recent accreditation visit, the staff feels that the school leadership implements the continuous improvement process by providing excellent conditions to support student learning. The staff indicated that the school's leadership provides accountability by using documentation, communication and meaningful data to maintain a strong supportive environment for student learning and works collaboratively to build an authentic and meaningful culture.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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A practice that has had the most influence on the success at Fullerton Elementary is the implementation of RtI, which resulted in changes to instructional practices and programs. Reflecting on data for our elementary, we knew we needed to take a closer look at closing the gap for student achievement in the area of reading. The principal attended meetings around the Response To Intervention (RtI) model and began a team of educators centered on the implementation at Fullerton Elementary. In 2009 Fullerton Elementary began implementing the Response to Intervention System (RtI) to aid in student achievement across grade levels. Teaming with our RtI consultant, we have been constantly reflecting on data to inform our decisions regarding student achievement and instructional practices. The RtI system has served as an accountability system for us as educators to make decisions based on data and reflects on our overall teaching strategies centered on individual student achievement. The RtI system has three tiers in place to address student achievement. Tier One is supported by classroom instruction and practices. Tier Two adds additional support for student achievement outside of the core instructional time. The Tier Three instruction provides intense intervention for students that are substantially below benchmark. There are a small percentage of students involved in Tier Three.

Students performing below benchmark on the DIBELS Next screening are placed in intervention groups to focus on areas of need. The groups are flexible to allow students to move as needed in levels of intervention time. As a team we are constantly reviewing data from student achievement to make adjustments to intervention schedules and processes. Through our examination of data and instructional strategies we knew we needed to adjust our teaching, begin the use of direct explicit instruction and adopt a new reading series in 2010 to reflect the use of systematic instruction practices. We began to see improvements in our overall reading achievement but recognized there were still some subgroups that did not make as much gain in reaching benchmark by the spring of 2015. We began researching with our RtI consultant and we implemented a systematic research-based intervention to use with students substantially below benchmark.

We are excited about individual gains that have been documented in year one of the program. We continue to monitor student progress through DIBELS NEXT monitoring and mastery results from the intervention program within our RtI process.