

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Cross Roads Junior High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 14434 FM 59
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Malakoff State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 75148-9801

County Henderson County

Telephone (903) 489-2667 Fax (903) 489-1106

Web site/URL <https://www.crossroadsisd.org/> E-mail jkoep@crossroadsisd.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* Mr. Richard Tedder E-mail rtedder@crossroadsisd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Cross Roads Independent School District Tel. (903) 489-2001

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

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

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 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 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) 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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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, 2022 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 Students
PreK	0
K	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	40
7	27
8	44
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	111

*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):
- 0.9 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 2.7 % Black or African American
 - 14.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 79.3 % White
 - 2.7 % 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 2021 - 2022 school year: 28%

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

Cross Roads ISD is a small, rural 2A district with only a gas station and Dollar General which was recently built. We don't have a post office in our community. The largest contributing factor to our 28% mobility rate is the large number of economically disadvantaged students. Many of these families move from place to place due to financial hardships. When the family withdraws, this greatly affects our mobility percentages because our campus is so small. Families must drive to nearby cities for employment opportunities, so this also contributes to our mobility rate.

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred to the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	15
(2) Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	33
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	117
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.28
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	28

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

Spanish

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

6 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 65 %

Total number students who qualify: 72

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 12 %
Total number of students served 13

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 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>1</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>6</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 14 %
Total number of students served: 16

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 12

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	9
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	1
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

12. 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 12:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	95%	97%	99%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

15. 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.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

The staff of Cross Roads Junior High School believes that ALL students can learn. We believe that our school's purpose is to educate all students to high levels of academic performance while fostering positive growth in social/emotional behaviors and attitudes. We accept the responsibility to teach all students.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=626&code=FB>

18. **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

Cross Roads is a small, rural community located at the intersection of FM 59 and FM 3441 in southwest Henderson County. It is about 85 miles southeast of Dallas, or more specifically twelve miles southwest of Athens and nine miles south of Malakoff. Cross Roads Independent School District covers approximately 110 square miles and has an enrollment of 560 students. The school district is the heart of this tight-knit, agricultural community. The three local churches come together every August prior to the beginning of the school year to provide a meal for all district employees. They also partner with the district at Christmas to ensure disadvantaged students receive presents. Over half of the students' families graduated from Cross Roads ISD, so school pride and multigenerational traditions run deep.

High expectations are the driving force behind the success of Cross Roads Junior High (CRJH). The campus believes in success and nothing less. This competitive nature fuels the staff and students. Every fall, the vast majority of students participate in University Interscholastic League (UIL) Academics contests to show off their academic talents and keep the district championship streak alive. The entire staff takes the responsibility of developing students to excel in whatever the future may bring. Students are given multiple opportunities to become involved, active, and take on leadership roles in athletics, fine arts, elective classes, and agricultural programs which provide students self-management skills. By participating in these activities, students can safely try new things, challenge themselves, and progress toward becoming well-rounded, productive citizens.

The staff embrace the responsibility of educating early adolescents and advocating for them. They understand the uniqueness of this age group and choose to shape them into skilled and responsible young people. They ensure high expectations, academic rigor, and relevant learning opportunities are afforded to each student. They celebrate many achievements along the way making the campus a place where insurmountable positive reinforcement takes place. Daily, students earn GRIT tickets for going above and beyond in exhibiting positive character traits. Celebrations are held every three weeks rewarding students for good grades, attendance, and behavior. Monthly, teachers recognize one student per grade level as the students of the month. Every twelve weeks, each teacher nominates a student they feel exemplifies outstanding character and has the capacity to serve as a role model for the campus. These students are recognized as Top Cats during a breakfast where they receive a certificate and yard sign to proudly display at home. Combined, this recognition causes students' self-esteem to rise, and their self-improvement increases as they overcome fears and achieve goals.

The dynamics of the campus are much like that of a family. The small class sizes enable teachers to identify and address the needs of each individual student and provide the required interventions, supports, and enrichments to foster student achievement. Teachers also know students on a personal level and challenge them to strive to be better daily. They establish trusting relationships which promote students' social and emotional health. These bonds cultivate authentic conversations, offering students compassion and encouragement, yet remaining real with students emphasizing "life is tough, but so are you." The student body, in itself, is kindhearted and embraces all students. They accept individuals in the school for who they are and lend a helping hand, so everyone feels like they are part of the whole school experience. Several years ago, an innovative program, the "Compete for a Cause" dodgeball tournament was inspired by students to stress the importance of giving back and helping those less fortunate. This tournament is held every November to raise funds to purchase Christmas presents for identified students.

The campus is organized with clear guidelines and expectations for all staff members and students. The establishment of a clear, shared vision eliminates division. The campus does an excellent job of working together as a team. A mentor system has been established for any new teachers, teachers that are new to the campus, or teachers taking on new responsibilities. Mentors aid them in adapting to the school culture and climate as well as guiding them in the curriculum, teaching strategies, and communication skills needed in a new environment. Mentors provide novice teachers with supports to increase consistency within the school and promote teacher retention. The entire faculty possess the commitment and compassion to go the extra mile to help students grow and prosper. Teamwork is an essential ingredient to student engagement, achievement, and success.

Will Durant interpreted Aristotle's words by stating, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." On the junior high campus, purposeful teaching and empowering students is routine and practiced daily. Both teachers and students have a lot to learn from one another, and knowledge is power. When applied consistently, knowledge makes a positive impact, drives success, and paves the way for established excellence.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Cross Roads Junior High believes that literacy is essential in building a strong educational foundation. Because of this belief, the English and Reading classes are blocked to allow flexibility in combining instruction to further develop the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing. The English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) teachers communicate, work together, and all utilize the same ancillary materials that are aligned with the state curriculum standards, so students are familiar with the expectations from one grade level to the next. The teachers effectively use spiraling and scaffolding techniques to optimize learning and accelerate student growth. During guided instruction, students are refining reading competencies as the teacher introduces new concepts and models multiple reading strategies. The class discusses the text, makes inferences and connections, and synthesizes the information. The independent practice allows students the opportunity to apply the new skills or knowledge learned, so the teacher is aware of any misconceptions and immediately implements an intervention strategy. Diverse novels that engage and excite students are incorporated into the curriculum and read aloud with the entire class to encourage lifelong readers. Through novel studies, teachers build vocabulary knowledge, comprehension skills, and fluency in an authentic manner. Students write in journals about what they have read encompassing various skills such as summarizing, making predictions, analyzing characters, or locating text evidence to support a claim or stance. At the conclusion of the novel, the class watches the movie and analyzes aspects of both to thoroughly compare and contrast them in a variety of writing types. Technology is incorporated into the ELAR classrooms in a multitude of ways to increase collaboration. From working with partners to complete stations and escape room activities to writing and publishing papers, student laptops are readily used to increase and enhance instruction. Multiple online computer programs are also used in the classroom to reinforce reading and writing skills and provide breaks from paper and pencil tasks. As with any great educator, teacher created materials, including graphic organizers and anchor charts, are powerful visual teaching and learning tools integrated in the classroom to assist in scaffolding. Independent reading is a small but integral part of the ELAR classroom because it builds fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. By allowing students to self-select books from the library, teachers nurture excitement for books and foster a love for reading. Star Books Club has further encouraged students to read a book from the school library, classroom library, or home. Upon completion of the book, students fill out a book review that is displayed in the library, and their name and the name of a book they would like to own is entered into a drawing. Each six weeks, several students go home with a new book. This has started book sharing among the students and a drastic increase in independent reading. Throughout the year, data from both formative and summative assessments is disaggregated to inform and guide instruction. These assessments, including classwork, tests, daily observations, benchmarks, and state mandated tests, identify gaps, pinpoint specific student needs, and track individual growth.

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

Cross Roads Junior High's math department consists of two math teachers. One teaches sixth grade math and a sixth-grade math lab for each section of students. The math lab is necessary to allow time for the large number of state adopted content standards introduced at this grade level. The other math teacher is responsible for teaching seventh and eighth grade math along with a seventh-grade math lab which focuses on reinforcing algebra readiness and basic numeracy skills. The focus of the math department is to ensure students have a challenging learning environment that encourages high expectations for success through differentiated instruction that is developmentally appropriate. The teachers utilize several different types of curriculum materials and math strategies when providing instruction. This allows the teachers to support students and meet the individual needs of every student so each one is successful. The curriculum includes using the state adopted consumable worktext for guided practice. A purchased consumable workbook that is also aligned to the state adopted curriculum focuses on building higher order thinking skills and improving overall academic achievement is used for independent practice. Another key piece that the teachers also incorporate primarily in the lab is a supplemental workbook that builds on each state standard taught and

spirals them throughout the year. An online program is also used for review and long term skills retention. There are occasions that the teachers must search their instructional toolbox and use teacher created materials to ensure mastery. Each class begins with a bell ringer to engage previous learning and to connect previously acquired skills. Students may use their math journal that is full of notes, exemplar models, and vocabulary to guide them during the bell ringer. This is also a quick formative assessment on previously taught materials. The teacher reviews the bell ringer by demonstrating and modeling appropriate strategies and skills needed to answer different question types. Daily instruction is taught using the state adopted standards. Numerous strategies are applied, and various thought processes are shared for approaching and solving problems during guided practice. Notes are scaffolded, while guided practice is completed to ensure understanding, after which independent practice is assigned. The teacher circulates around the room to quickly assess the students' understanding, uses probing questions to easily identify where the curriculum must be supplemented with resources that reinforce concepts, or provides extensions for higher level problem solving. For independent practice and assessments, the teachers utilize the purchased consumable workbook that is more rigorous and forces students to apply higher order thinking skills. Through formative assessments such as daily assignments, quizzes, and tests, data is analyzed, so teachers can identify strengths and weaknesses of the class and individual students and make instructional decisions and adjustments. Summative assessments such as exams and benchmarks are given, and data is disaggregated into numerous reports which allows the teacher to determine students in need of intervention and identify skills that have not yet been mastered. From these reports, the teacher can make informed instructional decisions to expedite and facilitate necessary math remediation.

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

Science instruction at Cross Roads Junior High is vertically aligned to the state content standards and incorporates a state adopted textbook, consumable worktext, ancillary products, and teacher created materials. Instruction is strategically planned to engage as many learning styles as possible by incorporating experiments and hands-on activities. Students utilize journals to break down the student expectation before learning new material. This ensures students know exactly what they must learn to be successful. New vocabulary is introduced and thoroughly discussed, so students can make connections and use word association skills to aid in learning, using, and retaining these new words. Students create interactive notebooks filled with vocabulary, notes, and graphic organizers to quickly access information throughout the year as they work through their daily assignments or review for upcoming assessments. Instruction includes interactive presentations for note taking activities, guided instruction, and textbook assignments. Station labs are consistently used to reinforce learning and keep students engaged, motivated, and supported through comparative and investigative practice. These labs accommodate all learning styles by providing opportunities for exploration, investigation, research, reading, illustrating, writing, and other hands-on activities. Students also receive real world instruction and application on educational field trips. By spiraling the curriculum, student growth is supported through differentiated instruction which promotes high standards of learning and academic excellence for all students. Formal and informal assessments are given throughout the learning process. Formative assessments are used to monitor student learning and make adjustments to instruction, whereas summative assessments evaluate student learning. Data is collected from the assessments, thoroughly disaggregated, and used to identify where students are in their learning. Informed decisions are then made based on each student's needs to ensure all students gain and maintain a high level of knowledge. Individualized instruction, small group remediation, and tutoring are provided to fill identified learning gaps and maximize individual student growth.

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

Cross Roads Junior High employs two social studies teachers that believe history is a story and are passionate about sharing it with their students. Units are typically introduced using a presentation aligned to the state content standards. Teachers use state adopted textbooks to create presentations with a slide show of important historical events chunked into more manageable sections, so students can process information and better relate to it. The presentations are embedded with videos, documents, maps, and charts that provide a deeper explanation of the historical event, so students are engaged, and visual learners better understand the content. As the teacher journeys through history, one event at a time, students complete organized interactive and guided notes that make the content more accessible to them. Vocabulary instruction is crucial

because it is essential in understanding and comprehending key events. Planning purposeful vocabulary lessons keep students engaged in activities other than just writing definitions. Students create semantic word maps, word walls, pictorial illustrations, examples, and review games for word association to make vocabulary more than just memorization. Through storytelling, teachers rely heavily on classroom discussions using visuals and documentaries rather than just reading from the textbook. Students complete notes, timelines, maps, graphs, and various other activities as they voyage through the unit. Technology is also incorporated in research-based projects that students complete individually or in a small group. Choice boards are utilized for students to creatively choose their event to research and presentation format. Whether it is a newscast, interview or historical characterization, students present their information and teach the class. Teachers incorporate both formal and informal assessments using class participation, classwork, quizzes, tests, and benchmarks to evaluate student progress and adjust instruction. Data from formative and summative assessments provide teachers with information necessary to make instructional decisions regarding gaps in student learning, student growth, and students needing tutorials.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

Within the core content classrooms, increased rigor and high expectations help prepare students for high school and beyond. Students are pushed to use higher level thinking and complex problem solving. Teachers engage students and require them to participate in course content and activities to deepen their levels of understanding. Being an active learner is an essential skill that students not only need now but also in the future.

The counselor conducts college and career readiness lessons with the seventh graders that begin with conversations surrounding post-secondary options. Students examine various careers and educational requirements, evaluate different educational opportunities after high school, identify academic choices and extracurricular activities that will enhance their application, research the cost of post-secondary education, explore types of financial aid, and imagine a path to success. With planning, the goal of post-secondary education is attainable for all.

Eighth graders are given the opportunity to earn high school credit by taking a Career and Technical Education (CTE) class. Principles of Agriculture provides students the opportunity to gain experience, basic knowledge, and skills in the many facets of the agriculture industry. It lays the foundation in the field of agriculture which allows students to branch out into more specific areas of interest. Principles of Human Services provides students the opportunity to investigate high demand human services careers and essential job skills. Both CTE courses expose students to possible career paths upon enrollment in high school. In the spring, the high school counselor coordinates an eighth-grade bash for the students to attend at the high school, so they can tour the campus and visit with the CTE and elective teachers to discuss the career pathways available. The counselor then schedules times to meet with the student and the parent to select an endorsement area and sign a personal graduation plan for the coming school year.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

CRJH offers all students the opportunity to join band. In sixth grade beginner band, students develop a foundation of musical literacy and instrument playing. These students are divided into two sections, brass and woodwind, so the high school band director and assistant band director can work more closely with small numbers of students to develop these foundational skills. Seventh grade band students focus on musicianship and performing skills needed to compete in solo and ensemble contests. Eighth graders join the high school marching band. At this competitive level, students travel and compete in multiple marching

contests across the state in the fall. In the spring, they enter concert and sight-reading contests.

For students not joining band, sixth graders take a semester of art history and seventh graders take art. Art history takes students on a journey through a variety of art eras featuring an in-depth study of famous artists and their masterpieces. Seventh grade art, which is taught by the high school art teacher, builds a strong foundation of essential art skills through the fundamentals of design, drawing, painting, and sculpture. The use of diverse techniques and media promote artistic skill development, creativity, and an understanding of the language of art.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

CRJH students participate in physical education (PE) daily that follows the required essential knowledge and skills. Students in the sixth grade take pre-athletics which centers around athletic conditioning, strength, and agility. The pre-athletics class also focuses on the sports in-season, so students learn specific skills, drills, and the rules for those sports. Seventh and eighth grade students have the option to compete in athletics or join off-season. Girls compete in cross country, volleyball, basketball, and track, while boys compete in cross country, football, basketball, and track. Athletes report to practice an hour before school begins to work on sports specific skills and drills that are incorporated in peer and team activities. Coaches stress the importance of teamwork, hard work, communicating, and planning when pursuing a team goal. Athletics and off-season include strength and conditioning exercises where students learn the proper techniques needed to eliminate injuries. Both athletics and off-season are designed to increase personal fitness, sportsmanship, social skills, and self-esteem through participation in team sports or group activities. At the end of the PE period, coaches join the students in the cafeteria for breakfast and stress the vital importance of proper nutrition and its connection to athletic and academic performance.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

2d. Technology/library/media

Each classroom on the junior high campus houses laptops in charging carts for every student enrolled. With computers in every classroom, students are able to acquire and expand their technology skills using a variety of applications that are integrated seamlessly in the curriculum that follows the state content standards. Teachers supplement instruction with technology to explain concepts, coordinate student discussions, and stimulate high level thinking. This utilization of technology increases engagement in the classroom, enhances the curriculum and instruction, and allows students to collaborate with peers and the teacher using online applications.

Sixth grade students not joining the band have the opportunity to take keyboarding. Keyboarding is an important motor skill that is necessary for using computers competently. This class focuses on technique, not speed. Once fundamental keyboarding skills are learned, students incorporate them in basic word processing activities.

CRJH shares a library with the elementary campus. The library aide has designated Fridays for junior high students to visit the library during their reading class. Students learn how to use the online catalog to locate books, recognize genres and self-select books for independent reading. Students are encouraged to complete a book review on books read to be displayed on the Star Books Cafe wall in the library.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

Lastly, CRJH is committed to cultivating each student's character development through social-emotional programs led by the counselor. Tailored to campus needs, lessons focus on kindness, mental health, bullying prevention, human trafficking, and college and career readiness. The counselor visits each junior high classroom monthly and presents interactive lessons with age-appropriate videos that engage students and raise awareness of mental health, reduce stigma through normalized conversations, promote help-seeking

behaviors, and encourage good mental health. This requires students to connect, collaborate, and self-reflect. In December, teachers facilitate online student trainings that focus on student safety and responsibility. All students complete digital citizenship, internet safety for teens, drug and alcohol prevention, and teen dating violence. The campus has also partnered with a non-profit organization that provides life skills training to all sixth graders. This 15-session training equips students with a specific set of skills to succeed in this world and effectively deal with the many challenges they will face in life. The program focuses on making wise decisions, setting goals, bonding with family, making friends, and living a healthy lifestyle. The knowledge gained enables students to make appropriate decisions that lead to the healthy development of self-esteem, emotions, and behaviors.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

The needs of students performing below grade level are addressed in multiple ways. First, every sixth and seventh grade student is placed in a math lab. Because of the large number of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) introduced in sixth and seventh grade math, additional instruction, supports, and interventions are needed for students to build a strong mathematical foundation at the middle school level. Eighth grade students are placed in a comprehensive study lab. Monday's study lab focuses on reinforcing math skills and building a deeper mathematical understanding. Science and social studies are targeted the remainder of the week because of the large number of new TEKS introduced and assessed. This provides for a more thorough coverage of the science and social studies curriculum by allowing time for reinforcing concepts using an array of activities. Second, our English and Reading (ELAR) classes are blocked to accommodate the changes made to the ELAR TEKS a few years ago and the newly redesigned state assessment that students are currently taking. Now that writing is a major focal point at every grade level, this allows flexibility within the ELAR classroom to develop students' writing skills through one-on-one and small group targeted instruction. Additionally, to close the achievement gap, the special education (SPED) teacher and highly qualified instructional aide provide inclusion supports in the mainstream classrooms for many of our SPED and 504 students. They sit next to these students at the tables and provide assistance, reduce distractions, build confidence, and offer encouragement. Many times, they assist any student who is struggling without ever compromising the students under their direction. Finally, any student who needs additional instruction, supports, or interventions has the opportunity to attend tutorials before school or during break to close gaps in learning. Many students who are absent also utilize this time to receive instruction on missed lessons and assignments.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

For students performing above grade level, opportunities for academic acceleration begin in the classroom. It is the innovative classroom teachers who develop lessons with differentiated assignments, activities, and projects that meet the needs of every student. These students are also taught number sense skills in math, granted access to higher level reading materials from the high school library, encouraged to research and share information on various classroom topics, given the freedom to complete science, technology, engineering, and mathematics activities, brainstorm and produce science fair projects, and tackle Document-Based Question projects in history to learn to read smart, think straight, and write more clearly. All of these opportunities require students to develop high level critical thinking skills.

Every junior high student is encouraged to participate in the fall academic UIL district meet. Because of the wide array of contests available to students, over 70% of the student body participates. Contests include writing, speaking, mathematics, number sense, calculator, art, chess, listening, dictionary skills, music, science, spelling, and social studies contests. Students are given the opportunity to select events of interest to further their knowledge base and hone their skills with help from the talented staff.

Finally, identified sixth, seventh, and eighth grade gifted and talented (G/T) students are pulled every Friday to explore, research, collaborate, and complete various projects individually or as a group. The G/T teacher provides guidance, assists in creating timelines for each project, and monitors progress. These students present their projects using a variety of methods and technology. Upon completion of a project, students

self-reflect and evaluate their final projects. The G/T students also utilize leadership skills to organize a service project of their choosing for the school. In the spring, the G/T students are rewarded with an educationally enriching field trip.

3c. Students with disabilities:

CRJH believes all students can learn; therefore, high expectations are set for all learners. SPED students are exposed to rigorous instruction and content, so they can reach high academic mastery. The classroom teacher, SPED teacher, and SPED instructional aide understand the importance of teamwork and collaboration, so they work closely together to provide differentiated and explicit instruction that supports each SPED student. Most of these students are mainstreamed into the general education classroom, so they have the opportunity to learn in the least restrictive setting. Here they can thrive both academically and socially alongside their peers. Teachers implement the accommodations in each student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) to remove learning barriers in the classroom. Peer assistance also has a positive impact on SPED student performance in the mainstreamed classroom. For SPED students requiring more one-on-one or small group assistance in the classroom, the SPED teacher or SPED instructional aide provides inclusion support in the general education classroom. By sitting with these students, they can easily assist them and provide any interventions needed for these students to prosper in the classroom. Sometimes these students leave the classroom for additional assistance, but being instructed with peers is vital. Occasionally, SPED students who are two or more years below their peers require very targeted instruction in a SPED resource setting with the SPED teacher. Modifications are made to the grade level content to meet each student's needs. The SPED staff and administration solicit frequent feedback from classroom teachers on the progress of each SPED student. The SPED teacher then prepares reports each six weeks to keep parents informed of their child's progress. An annual IEP meeting is held with the parent and Annual Review and Dismissal committee to review the child's progress, address concerns, and finalize the IEP for another year.

3d. English Language Learners:

CRJH has very few English Language Learners (ELL). To be exact, they comprise less than five percent of the student population. The ELL students are integrated in the general education classrooms which allows them to be fully immersed in the English language. The ELAR teachers are English as a Second Language (ESL) certified and trained to incorporate strategies and any academic supports needed for language acquisition. Cross Roads ISD belongs to the Title III Shared Service Arrangement at the Educational Service Center (ESC) which provides high-quality professional development on research-based instructional strategies that all teachers can incorporate in their classroom. Teacher created visual aids such as graphic organizers, anchor charts, number lines, a three-dimensional Venn diagram for classifying real numbers, and a life-size interactive periodic table are displayed in classrooms and used as teaching tools for these learners. Teachers also model appropriate communication skills and provide opportunities for collaboration with peers which incorporates conversational practice and builds academic vocabulary in a more relaxed environment. Teachers monitor their language development throughout the year and report progress to the ESL coordinator who chairs the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC). The LPAC meets three times a year to review student data, make decisions regarding program placement and state and district-wide testing and accommodations, and appropriate placement for the next school year. The LPAC also identifies any academic supports necessary for student success. The ESL coordinator also organizes Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) testing for ELL students. The TELPAS assesses their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Performance data from the TELPAS is reviewed and shared with parents and teachers to track the ELL student's language acquisition progress yearly. CRJH provides bilingual written communication for parents who require it and the ESC provides parent engagement opportunities and informational trainings for these parents in Spanish.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

CRJH closely monitors all students in order to identify those struggling with a particular skill in order to apply research-based interventions. Teachers are at the heart of the Response to Intervention process. This proactive approach allows teachers to intervene quickly by providing small group or one-on-one targeted

teaching to help close identified gaps in a student's learning, so they don't fall further behind. Teachers use formal and informal assessments to help identify specific skills in need of improvement and monitor the student's progress to determine the success of the intervention to generate needed data and documentation of student achievement.

All teachers and support staff receive instruction on the detection and education of students with dyslexia, so they are equipped to identify students who are at-risk for dyslexia and can refer them to the district's dyslexia specialist to be evaluated. Students previously identified with dyslexia continue to receive services from the dyslexia specialist until they exit the program. Upon completion, these students are supported in the classroom with accommodations such as oral administration, spelling assistance, and extra time for reading and writing assignments. Their progress is closely monitored to ensure they are closing the gaps in reading or to help determine if they truly have a specific learning disability that requires further assessments and accommodations.

The campus also identifies and services students who are eligible for Section 504 services. These students have a disability which requires teachers to help level the playing field in the classroom by providing needed accommodations, so these students can participate in classroom instruction and other school activities.

The campus currently does not have any homeless students and has never had any migrant students. The district has an employee that serves as the homeless liaison to coordinate educational and health services for these students and collaborate with community resources to assist their families.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Building meaningful relationships with students and providing a positive, productive learning environment is key to students' academic, social, and emotional growth. Teachers strive to create a safe and inviting atmosphere by decorating the hallways with positive and encouraging materials centered around a central theme. This year's theme is GRIT which stands for guts, resilience, integrity, and tenacity. These traits are instilled in the students throughout the year both inside and outside the classroom. Students caught going above and beyond are rewarded with a GRIT ticket from staff members. These tickets increase campus kindness and raise participation because students are taking an active role in their learning. They turn a portion of the ticket into the office to be entered in a weekly drawing for prizes. Many announcements are made during lunch each day including celebrating student birthdays and recognizing academic and athletic accomplishments. Every three weeks, students who are passing all classes, have good attendance, and outstanding behavior are allowed to attend celebration. One class period is set aside for these students to participate in various activities such as volleyball, crab soccer, and drumba. By far, this is the best motivational tool, so students work extremely hard to make the list for celebration. Every month the teachers choose one student per grade level as the students of the month to be recognized in front of the student body. Students with perfect attendance each six weeks are given a bracelet which allows them the privilege to go to lunch first. Positive postcards from teachers are mailed to students each six weeks recognizing them for their work ethic, character, leadership skills or academic growth. Every twelve weeks each teacher nominates one student to receive the Top Cat award. This is the highest award bestowed upon a student, so the campus goes all out to make it special. Invitations are mailed to parents inviting them to a breakfast celebration where each teacher recognizes the positive character traits that their selected student possesses. The student receives a framed certificate and a CRJH Top Cat yard sign to proudly display at home. Every time students are recognized, it is shared on social media with families and the community.

Helping students plan for their future begins with the counselor presenting college and career readiness lessons and activities. Students also complete a career interest survey. Additionally, two CTE classes are available to eighth graders that earn them high school credit.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

CRJH promotes family and community engagement that involves all stakeholders. Communication is vital to the success of the campus. Parents are informed about their child's education through a messaging app that all teachers and the principal utilize to improve student achievement and parent involvement. The staff also keep parents informed with phone calls and emails to address specific concerns or celebrate individual accomplishments. Facebook is utilized to share information, recognize successes, and provide opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved in the campus.

Families and students are invited to attend Meet the Teacher before the school year begins to become familiar with their teachers, class schedule, and engagement opportunities. Parents are invited to join the athletic booster club, band booster club, and ag booster club based on their child's involvement. These clubs support students in extracurricular programs which are important in giving students a well-rounded education. The cafeteria staff are also on hand to provide food samples, hand out breakfast and lunch menus, and assist with filling out the free and reduced lunch form.

Parents, local business owners, and community members serve on the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) committee. This committee meets throughout the year to review data, gather input from all stakeholders, address concerns, and create the CIP. This document helps drive instructional decisions for the campus in order to accomplish campus goals. Everyone is invited to attend several community-wide events such as the Veteran's Day program, homecoming activities, and band concerts. Family and community members are invited to the year awards program and eighth grade graduation to celebrate students and their many successes.

The campus staff coordinates a dodgeball tournament in November which raises funds that are used to provide Christmas presents for needy students. This campus-wide fundraiser teaches students the importance of working together to achieve a goal. Staff members also pay \$25 to wear jeans the entire month of December. These funds are combined with the money raised from the dodgeball tournament. The campus has also partnered with a nearby warehouse that donates some school supplies, clothes, and technology that has greatly benefited the campus, students, and families. A local non-profit also supplies backpacks with essential school supplies for the neediest families. CRJH fully understands education is definitely a group effort, and with everyone working together for the good of the campus and its students, success is inevitable.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The school's vision combined with stakeholders' shared beliefs and values, define CRJH's campus culture. Because there is a clear vision that prevents division, CRJH has a unique, welcoming, and professional culture. The foundation of the school's success is the initiative staff members take in going above and beyond the required responsibilities and creating a culture of empowered, motivated, valued, supported, and trusted educators. The campus principal is highly visible and responsive to staff by providing guidance, support, and establishing trusting relationships. The principal values staff input when making decisions on campus improvement. Throughout the year, all stakeholders meet to discuss areas in need of improvement, set goals, and implement strategies for goal attainment. Near the end of the school year, the principal meets to evaluate progress and identify new areas to target in the coming year to guarantee a continuous improvement process on the campus. The principal strategically finds and plans professional development for all staff and herself to attend during the summer as a group. This is not required, but because it is a close-knit campus, this is something they always do together. In November, the district provides a \$1000 staff development stipend to professional staff who attend 18 hours of professional development during the summer and support staff receive \$400 for completing six hours.

Simple acts of kindness and the little things make the greatest impact. The principal ensures the campus staff feel valued, supported, and celebrated by providing lunch on special occasions, treats on a regular basis, Super Sonic drinks once a month, and jean passes throughout the year. The principal "gnomes" teachers every three weeks to recognize them for having a distinguished characteristic that is unique to the campus culture. The gnome, along with a gift card and handwritten note, sits in the teacher's room before being delivered to another staff member. The teacher's picture is taken and displayed on the junior high wall of fame and shared on social media. The staff also support and mentor one another. Teachers recognize colleagues with GRIT tickets for going the extra mile. These tickets are entered in a drawing for gift cards during faculty meetings. All teachers eat together during lunch, which allows seasoned teachers the opportunity to share successful strategies with new teachers and offer support. Positive campus culture trickles down from the staff and directly impacts the students and their academic achievements.

4. School Leadership:

School leadership begins with trust at the highest level. The Cross Roads ISD school board members are guardians of the public trust and tasked with overseeing the management of the district. They work together with the superintendent to bring the best possible education to the students. As a team, they provide the needed resources and support for the district to operate efficiently and effectively. The superintendent must trust the campus principal to be the instructional leader on the campus and develop teachers thereby ensuring students get the very best learning experience. Providing teachers with the right resources, professional development, and sustained support is the principal's top priority. She attends conferences and multiple workshops, many of which are with the teachers on the campus, to stay informed of educational changes and share information with staff members. She believes when educators immerse themselves in new knowledge, they are investing in themselves, their career, and the students. The principal holds herself to a high level of excellence and models ethical and exemplary behaviors of what is expected of the staff and students. When high expectations are set, teachers and students rise to meet them. Collaboration plays an important role on the campus because it encourages constructive conversations and teamwork. When teachers are given a voice in decisions, it promotes a sense of ownership and support for initiatives and change. The principal has an open-door policy which fosters positive relationships with the teachers and staff that acknowledges their value and worth. A teacher's time is most precious, so the campus principal

goes above and beyond to not waste a minute of it with menial tasks. She serves teachers throughout the school day, so they can focus on providing quality instruction, closing achievement gaps, and maximizing student growth. Many days her to-do list is completed after school hours because she strongly believes in a servant attitude. The principal is also highly visible on the campus throughout the school day. By being in hallways, classrooms, the gym, and the cafeteria, the principal is very involved in the day-to-day activities. This constant presence also creates a strong sense of security for the entire campus and consistency in overall student behavior. The campus is like a family and must be supported. It is the principal who provides encouragement, motivation, support, and inspires the staff to be awesome every day. Her campus is her family, and she puts them first each and every day at school.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Cross Roads is a rural, agricultural community that is not very diverse. Students have little exposure to varied cultural experiences outside the school; however, administration and teachers expose students to diverse, educational instruction both in and out of the classrooms. Staff are respectful of all differences. Community involvement along with mindful educational experiences help ensure that all students feel accepted.

Teachers integrate intellectually and culturally diverse curriculum components into all content activities. The librarian acquires books that include a multitude of experiences and struggles, so students learn about these differences and appreciate them. Reading teachers incorporate novels such as *Night* by Elie Wiesel and *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis which offer a perspective that students may otherwise never know through a story that creates open and accepting minds and hearts. The science and social studies teachers ensure significant personalities are introduced, recognized, and appreciated including women like Marie Curie and Susan B. Anthony as well as culturally diverse influences like Dmitri Mendeleev and Frederick Douglass. Outside the classroom, students are given opportunities to travel to the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and visit The Perot Museum of Science, The Holocaust Museum, and the Dallas World Aquarium to provide a powerful learning experience and exposure to a world outside of Cross Roads.

In this small district, the school is the hub of the community which allows students, staff, and family members the opportunity to form relationships and be involved in various events and activities throughout the year. There is very little staff turnover, and most students have been in very small classes together since kindergarten. This makes the district more like a large family. This close-knit structure has ensured that student differences are accepted whether those differences are physical, intellectual, or economical in nature. The campus and community participate in districtwide pep rallies, homecoming week activities, the fall festival, Thanksgiving lunch, fundraisers, and the annual Veteran's Day program. When winter storms knock out utilities for many in the community or high winds and possible tornadoes pose a threat, the school opens its doors for community members to have a safe place to access electricity and running water. The junior high campus also helps meet the needs of socioeconomically disadvantaged students by providing donated school supplies and backpacks and adopting angels at Christmas, so students who are in need feel accepted by their peers. Being a resource for those the campus serves builds trust and a sense of belonging.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Charles Kettering, the famous inventor, proclaimed, "High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectations." This is the key to CRJH's success. The principal is the backbone of the campus and has very high expectations of herself. By nature, she is a very competitive person, but mostly competitive with herself. Her desire to be the best that she can be pushes her to continuously learn and grow. The principal sets the tone of the campus by establishing a clear vision that challenges all staff and students to rise, stretch, and push themselves to accomplish great things and succeed. Expectations for behavior are established and enforced to maintain a structured learning environment that is safe and allows students to thrive and grow academically. This shared vision creates unity and drives away division.

These high expectations spill onto the teachers who embrace the challenge and accept the responsibility of working together as a team to make the biggest impact in the classroom. Rules and expectations for student behavior are the same in every classroom. This consistency reduces distractions and discipline issues allowing teachers to maximize student engagement. Teachers spend weeks practicing routines and procedures to minimize disruptions to learning and set a strong foundation of classroom management. Students are more confident when they understand the standards for behavior are the same from class to class. Teachers challenge themselves to stay on the cutting edge of their content area by continually looking for new and innovative ideas, activities, and resources to incorporate in their classrooms and improve instruction. Teachers hold students accountable and push them to use higher level thinking skills to tackle difficult tasks, collaborate with peers, analyze solutions, and evaluate their reasoning. Encouraging and motivating students to perform at high levels every day is not an easy task, but it is ingrained in the students to dig deeper and work harder because success is rewarding. Teachers provide tutorials, offer supports, and foster a can-do attitude that assists students in achieving their goals. Students track their progress, challenge themselves, and work to advance to the next level.

Parents have high expectations for the campus because they want their children to be the best they can be and take advantage of opportunities they were not afforded. The community also sets the bar high when it comes to education because these students are future leaders. Education is a shared commitment between dedicated educators, motivated students, and supportive parents with high expectations.