A+ School of Excellence™ Application Guide
2021-2022 School Year

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A+ SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

The A+ School of Excellence™ program began in 1983 as a way to identify, celebrate, and recognize educational excellence in schools throughout Arizona. In addition to showcasing outstanding public schools, the A+ program provides school teams with an outstanding comprehensive framework that serves as a basis for school self-assessment and planning. The A+ School of Excellence™ Award is a powerful energizer for increasing public confidence in recognized schools, often resulting in greater parent and community involvement and even serves as an economic driver for some communities. A+ Schools are celebrated and recognized as exceptional. Earning the highly prestigious and coveted A+ designation spotlights the positive successes happening in public schools every day.

"Becoming an A+ School was one of the best strategic planning experiences I had with my staff as a principal."
- Brett Bonner, Asst. Superintendent for Educational Services, Sahuarita Unified School District

Schools that ultimately earn the A+ School of Excellence™ designation consistently share the following traits:
- Model quality and equity
- Demonstrate a strong commitment to academic excellence
- Respond successfully to the changing environment of education
- Cultivate learning-centered, safe school environments
- Encourage innovative instruction by supporting teachers
- Actively address the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs of all their students
- Demonstrate superior ability to go above and beyond the norm in providing services to children, families, and the local community

A+ SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE PROCESS

To be considered for the A+ School of Excellence Award, schools begin by submitting a written application. Written applications are reviewed by a panel of experienced judges comprised primarily of A+ School principals along with superintendents and other district administrators. Panels may also include teachers from A+ Schools, higher education personnel, and other Pre-K-12 professionals.

- Step 1: Schools submit a written application.
- Step 2: Written applications are reviewed by teams of experienced A+ principals and superintendents. Teams may also include other district-level administrators and teachers.
- Step 3: If the written application is successfully reviewed, schools are granted a site visit. Schools who do not get a site visit are provided with written feedback and encouraged to incorporate that feedback in submitting a new application for the next cycle.
- Step 4: Schools receiving site visits are visited by a team of Judges who vet the programs and activities described in the application. Site visits are a day and a half.
- Step 5: Schools who have successful site visits are granted the A+ Award. Schools who are unsuccessful are encouraged to reapply and are provided with written feedback and encouraged to incorporate that feedback in submitting a new application for the next cycle.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SCHOOLS SEEKING THE A+ AWARD

To be considered for the A+ School of Excellence™ award, the following criteria must be met:
- The school must be a district public or public charter school with some combination of grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade.
- School must be rated by the Arizona Department of Education's **most recent ratings** as an "A" or "B" school and must demonstrate high student academic achievement or growth over time for all students through other assessments.
- The school must be in at least its **fifth full year of operation in its current (or similar) grade configuration** when the application is submitted. Schools who are unsure about this requirement may contact AEF to discuss.
- The school's principal must have completed at least **three consecutive full years** as leader of the applicant school when the application is submitted. *Exception:* An exception may occur for schools who are renewing for a *consecutive* A+ Award if the following conditions are met: A renewal school may have a principal who has completed **one full year** at the time of application **if** the principal was already an administrative member at the school when the most recent A+ Award was granted AND was a member of the A+ application writing team for the most recent Award. ***An exception may occur if the new principal has been on staff a minimum of two full years at the time the application is submitted; was already an administrative member of staff at the school; and was involved in previous A+ applications. Schools with questions about this requirement or with extenuating circumstances are encouraged to contact AEF to discuss.***
- The school or school 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.
- 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.
- The US 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.

- The school must not have been recognized as an A+ School of Excellence™ in 2018, 2019, or 2020. Schools with expiring A+ Awards are encouraged to renew their status. Schools renewing must complete a new A+ application and site visit process (if granted) to receive the A+ designation again.

DEADLINE, TIMELINE, AND AWARD TERMS

APPLICATION DEADLINE for the 2021-2022 school year: August 31st, 2021: Applications are due by 5:00pm MST. No exceptions. Applications submitted after 5:00pm MST will be disqualified. *Plan ahead!*

Adjudication Timeline:
August 31st, 2021: Application deadline
Late September 2021: Applications are reviewed by panels of A+ judges
October 2021: Schools are notified if a site visit will be conducted
October 2021 - February 2022: Site visits are conducted
Late February/March 2022: A+ School of Excellence™ winners are announced/Award ceremonies occur

Schools selected for the award receive $500 and a banner for display on campus. A school retains the A+ designation for four years as long as they remain an "A" or "B" school and continue to exhibit the exceptional qualities that are the hallmark of A+ Schools. Schools that earn the award agree to comply with AEF™ authorized logo and name usage requirements related to the A+ School of Excellence™ designation.

LENGTH OF AWARD TERM:
A school retains the A+ designation for four school years as long as they remain an "A" or "B" school and continue to exhibit the exceptional qualities that are the hallmark of A+ Schools. **Schools renewing their A+ designation will reapply at the <u>beginning of their fourth year</u>. NOTE: A "renewal school" is a school applying for another <u>consecutive term</u> as an A+ school. Schools with a lapse in years are not considered renewals.**

Example: A school earning the A+ Award in 2020 under the revised timeline will keep the A+ designation for these school years:
- August 2020- July 2021 – Award year
- August 2021- July 2022 – Year 2
- August 2022- July 2023 – Year 3
- August 2023-May 2024 – Final year: Schools submit renewal applications by August 31st; Schools successfully renewing may continue using the A+ Award designation; schools not renewing will discontinue use in May 2024.

Renewal Schools Timeline:
For schools submitting applications to renew their A+ status, the following applies:
- 2017 schools: reapply August 31st, 2021
- 2018 schools: reapply August 31st, 2022
- 2019 and 2020 schools: reapply August 31st, 2023

APPLICATION WRITING TIPS

Schools who earn the A+ School of Excellence Award designation go above and beyond the everyday practices that all schools are expected to implement. Applications should center around what makes your school exemplary. As the application is being compiled, consider:

What makes your school unique from other schools in your district or community?

Tip 1: Applying for A+ should be an inclusive process involving a variety of perspectives and voices from different stakeholder groups. The application should not be driven by a small group of individuals or be solely principal-written.

Tip 2: Designate your A+ application writing team. Consider including building administrators in addition to the principal; teachers; librarians and guidance counsellors; parents; and any other stakeholders whose voices may add value to your application.

Tip 3: Start early! Most school leaders consider the A+ application process one of the best strategic planning experiences their school undertakes. This is a time to reflect what you do well and how your school shines. Allow ample time for the writing team to explore, discuss, compile, and fine-tune.

Tip 4: Upload the Word version of the A+ application to Google Docs or another document-sharing site and allow stakeholder groups to research and write in small teams initially. Set deadlines for when sections should be completed, shared, and read by the rest of the team to allow time for further research and revision.

Tip 5: Work collaboratively throughout the entire process but, when you think you are ready to submit, designate one final writer to unite each section of application into one unified story. The final application should be cohesive in vision, thought, and voice. It is evident to Judges when an application has been wordsmithed and written by one final voice.

Tip 6: Be specific and support the claims made in your application with rich, relevant, and meaningful data and evidence. Keep the following in mind when preparing and writing your application:
  ▪ The prompts throughout the application are intended as useful tools for self-assessment, strategic planning, ongoing reflection, and involvement of all relevant stakeholders in a common school improvement process.
  ▪ It is important for the school's principal to play an active role in the self-evaluation process and application writing to ensure that the entire school has been thoroughly assessed and analyzed. Not doing so usually results in a weak application that lacks the depth that true self-assessment and analysis provide.
  ▪ The A+ School of Excellence program examines schools in a comprehensive manner: Questions and prompts are intended to address important internal and external aspects of school operations, be broad enough to suit diverse school contexts, and accommodate new or changing goals and strategies within any particular school.

Tip 7: Highlight the excellent and unique programs and practices that set your school apart from other schools and point to your successes. **Do not focus on examples of activities, strategies or programs that are expected or common among schools.** For example, having a safe campus is not unique. Safety is a concern that all schools address. When asked to highlight a unique curriculum program, highlight something that may not be commonplace in many schools or highlight how you might have adapted a

widespread program but are implementing it in a unique or unexpected way. For example, Project-Based Learning is a very commonly used and popular curriculum among schools. While it may be worth mentioning, making this a focal point of the application would not set the school apart, unless your school was implementing it in a truly unique way.

Tip 8: Shy away from sterile writing. Reviewers want to hear your story. Give your application heart and soul. Paint a picture of your school, your community, your students, etc. This is an opportunity to showcase your school's uniqueness. Discuss your data in a human-centered way. Your application should make reviewers want to visit your school.

Tip 9: Word limits are designated for each question. Applicants are strongly advised to fully utilize word limits assigned to each section of the application. Underutilization of word limits might not provide sufficient evidence that a school is going above and beyond basic requirements and expectations.

Examples of evidence that schools may wish include:

Academic and non-academic activities, programs, and practices; school-wide function
- Purpose, goals, outcomes as related to vision, mission, values, strategic plan, and goals
- Evidence of effectiveness and success as related to vision, mission, values, strategic plan, and goals
- Participation rates (raw numbers or percentages) compared to class size, grade level, overall student population, etc. disaggregated by grade levels, gender, other
- Well-documented, continuous, ongoing and sustainable assessment and improvement
- Qualitative feedback including satisfaction surveys, participant feedback, anecdotes, engagement surveys

Awards/Honors
- Date received, by whom, and community members affected
- Significance and relevance

Meetings
- Purpose of groups/committees as related to vision, mission, values, strategic plan, and goals
- Make-up of groups/committees and how that is determined
- Meeting frequency and attendance
- What transpired; outcomes

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

- The A+ application must be submitted online by the specified deadline. Paper copies will be disqualified.
- Applications are compatible with both PC and MAC operating systems.
- The online application has a "save and continue later" option. If you choose to finish later, the principal will receive an email with a link that can be used to access the application at a later date. ***Note: This email often gets diverted to school spam or junk folders. Please check these folders before contacting AEF.***
- It is the responsibility of the applicant school to track and comply with word counts for each section of the application; note that the system will NOT allow submissions to exceed the word limit stated under each question.
- Responses must be in narrative format. The online formatting used to complete and submit an application does NOT allow for pictures, graphs, charts, bullet points, bolding, italics, etc.

- Spellcheck before you submit.
- Proofread before you submit.
- All applications are time-stamped upon submission. Any entry received at the stated time and date deadline will NOT be accepted.
- **If using Google Docs, do not try to copy and paste from Google Docs directly into the application as it will impact spacing and text formatting. You must download the Google Doc as a Word document and copy and paste from that.**

ONLINE APPLICATION

The link to the official online application may be obtained on the AEF website at: https://www.azedfoundation.org/a-schools. While schools are encouraged to use the Word version of the application for collaboration and preparation, only the online application will be accepted.

ARIZONA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION CONTACTS

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PRINTABLE APPLICATION

(For preparation and collaboration only. To be eligible, schools must submit the online application.)

SECTION 1: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

1) APID: _____

This is your A+ ID. A new 4 digit number assigned to each A+ applicant and recipient. If you are a previous recipient of the A+ School of Excellence award, you have been assigned a number. If this is your first time applying for an A+ award you can leave this blank. An APID will be assigned to your school after submission of your application.

2) Official School Name: _____

3) District Name: _____

4) Grade Levels (Click all grades that apply)
[ ] Pre-K
[ ] K
[ ] 1
[ ] 2
[ ] 3
[ ] 4
[ ] 5
[ ] 6
[ ] 7
[ ] 8
[ ] 9
[ ] 10
[ ] 11
[ ] 12

5) Has your school previously earned the A+ School of Excellence Award?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No

5b) *(question will only appear in online app if previous A+ recipient)* Please list all years where your school received the A+ Award:

5c) (*question will only appear in online app if you indicate your school was a previous award recipient)* Has your principal participated as an A+ Judge since previously earning the A+ Award?
[ ] Yes*
[ ] No

6) Main School Phone Number: _____

7) School Physical Address*
Street Address: _____
Street Address Line 2 (Suite, etc.): _____
City: _____
State: _____
Zip Code: _____

7b) Is the school's mailing address the same as the physical address?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No*

(this field will appear if addresses are different)
Street Address: _____
Street Address Line 2 (Suite, etc.): _____
City: _____
State: _____
Zip Code: _____

8) Principal's Name:
Prefix: _____
First Name: _____
Last Name: _____

9) Principal's Direct Email address: _____

10) Principal's Direct Phone Number: _____

11) Number of years principal has been in their position at the school. _____

12) Name of District Superintendent*
Prefix: _____
First Name: _____
Last Name: _____

13) Preparation of Application: Representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups (i.e. administrators, teachers, other school staff, students, parents, and community representatives) must be involved in the preparation of the application. List the individuals actively involved in preparation. List primary authors first. * (The online version of the application has a table to organize the names of authors.)

School Site Visit Dates

If your school is granted a site visit, this information will be sent directly to the lead judge of the team who will visit your school. The lead judge will work directly with your school administration to schedule your visit dates.

2021-2022 Site Visits: Between October 1st, 2021 and February 12th, 2022.

Site Visit Length: Site visits occur over two consecutive days.

14) Given your school's 2021-2022 calendar, what dates would be ideal to host an A+ site visit?

15) Please provide the dates of any activities that may interfere with the scheduling of an A+ visit. (Ex: Early release, fall break, overnight or all-day field trips, professional development days, etc.)

SECTION 2: DISTRICT & SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

16) Total number of Pre-K-12 students enrolled in the district:*
_____

17) Number of schools in the district by category: *
Elementary: _____
Pre-K-8: _____
Middle/Junior High: _____
High School: _____

18) Total Schools in District. *_____

19) Students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in the school. * *(The online version of the application has a table to organize the number of students in each level.)*

20) Total number of students enrolled in the school. * _____

21) Racial/ethnic composition of students in the school. *
% Black or African American: _____
% Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander: _____
% Hispanic or Latino: _____
% American Indian or Alaska Native: _____
% White: _____
% Other: _____
(Specify): _____

22) Pick the category that best describes the area where the school is located. *
( ) Urban, large central city
( ) Suburban with characteristics of urban areas
( ) Suburban
( ) Small city/town in rural area
( ) Rural

23) Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year.
*Calculate this rate by taking the total number of students who transferred to or from your school between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in school as of October 1, and multiplying by 100.*_____

24) Limited English proficient students in the school. *

Total number of students: _____

Total percentage of the student population: _____

Total number of languages represented: _____

24b) Specify languages: _____

25) Students who participate in free/reduced-priced meals. *

Total number of students: _____

Total percentage of the student population: _____

26) If the free/reduced-price meals method is not a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how the school arrived at this estimate.

_____

_____

27) Students receiving special education services. *

Total number students in special education services: _____

Total percentage of student population: _____

28) Indicate if your school is the district site for any specific magnet program(s). *

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

[ ] If so, include name of magnet program(s) and student enrollment for program(s): _____ *

29) Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below. * (The online version of the application has a table with categories for: administrators, classroom teachers, therapists, resource teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, and "other.")

30) Total number of full-time equivalent staff members. *_____

31) Attendance rate for past four academic school years. * (The online version of the application has a table with categories for: average daily student attendance rate, average daily teacher attendance rate, teacher turnover rate, student promotion rate, and graduation rate (high schools).) Data will be needed for school years, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021.

32) Describe any significant changes or trends in the attendance rate data above. Explain why the changes occurred and the impact on your school programs. Note: For the 2019-2020 school

year, the panel understands attendance rates were impacted by early school closures due to COVID-19. You do not need to spend a great deal of time in your response explaining this incidence.

800-word limit*

_____

SECTION 3: SCHOOL SUMMARY

The school summary provides the panel with important background information for understanding the school. Please note that if the school is recognized, the summary may be made available to the press.

33) School Summary Narrative: Structure the school summary narrative as follows:
- Include the school name, city, and state in the first sentence.
- State the school's vision, mission, and values. Briefly describe the process used to develop the school's vision, mission, and values and related goals.
- Summarize the strengths and accomplishments of the school, focusing especially on what makes the school a unique and successful place for learning and what makes it worthy of recognition. Emphasize the key initiatives and accomplishments that distinguish the school.
- Describe major challenges the school has faced in the past five years, how the school and community have successfully managed them, and what the school and community have learned from them.
- Discuss anticipated future challenges and the school's plans to address them.
- Conclude the summary with a strong statement about what makes the school an excellent place for students to learn, grow, and thrive.

1,000-word limit*

SECTION 4: EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS EVIDENCE

34) Demonstrate your school's academic excellence through indicators of success. Upload a one-page document that includes data other than AZ Merit that demonstrates significant student academic growth and/or high student achievement over time. *Note: Reviewers will have your school's most recent AZ Merit scores so do NOT use this space for AZ Merit.* Other data examples may include *but are not limited to*:

- Charts and/or graphs depicting quantitative and/or qualitative data
- Quantitative data that reflects evidence of excellence in academics (for example: Benchmark assessments, DIBELS, AP Placement, AzCCRS, etc.)
- Quantitative data from unique programs that you are highlighting in your A+ application.
- *Note: Attendance and behavior data can be included to support overall excellence of the school but should not be the single indicator.*
- *Tip: While teacher-created assessment data can be used, it should not be the only data used to show excellence.*

*This is not a text field. This is a one-page document that is uploaded with the application

35) Explain additional qualitative and/or quantitative ways your school measures success outside of achievement data. Provide an analysis of the data and tell how the data demonstrates excellence. Examples may include *but are not limited to* benchmark assessments, parent surveys, engagement surveys, teacher and/or employee satisfaction surveys, etc. *Tip: Consider how the data you are sharing supports programs or activities that you are discussing in your A+ application.*

600-word limit*

SECTION 5: STRONG INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

36) Describe the leadership structure, roles, and functions that are important at school. Specifically:
- Describe the role and style of the principal and/or administrative team as visionary leader(s), instructional leader(s), and lead learner(s).
- Discuss how key stakeholders within the school have a voice in decision-making. Detail how other leadership roles and positions held by stakeholders ensure a shared responsibility for the common good of the community. Talk about how these roles and positions are formed, selected, and structured.
- Describe the process in place for leadership to create, promote, support, measure, and sustain specific, concrete goals to guide teachers' efforts and support students' needs.

1,000-word limit*

37) Describe how the school improvement process or strategic plan is organized and managed to ensure continuous growth and improvement. Specifically:
- Explain how research findings and data analysis (both qualitative and quantitative) inform policies and practices, programs, relationships, and use of resources to establish priorities and prompt school improvements.
- Describe the school's collaborative school improvement or strategic planning process and how major stakeholders are involved in school-wide and classroom improvement initiatives.
- Explain how professional development and collaboration support and sustain staff efforts, commitment and involvement related to the school's improvement process.
- Discuss how data analysis and interpretation are used to identify, develop, implement and assess the effectiveness of improvement or strategic planning. Give examples of specific changes that have been implemented as a result of the school's improvement or strategic plan.

1,500-word limit*

SECTION 6: SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND CULTURE

38) Explain how underlying school values, beliefs, and traditions ensure that people work together to solve problems and confront challenges.
Specifically:
- Describe how the school communicates and monitors the culture and values of the school to all stakeholders.
- Detail how the observable behaviors and actions of all stakeholders reflect a positive climate at the school.
- Describe the activities and celebrations that are routinely practiced to build positive relations among students, staff, parents, and the community.

1,000-word limit*

39) Explain how the school environment or climate is conducive to learning for all.
Specifically:
- Discuss how the school creates, monitors, and sustains a collaborative, cooperative, safe, and orderly environment for all stakeholders.
- Provide specific examples of how non-teaching staff members (i.e. counselors, administrators, paraprofessionals, transportation, maintenance, support, cafeteria, nurse, crossing guards, etc.) support and affect the school culture.
- Describe how the school fosters positive interactions, respect, cooperation, and collaboration between and among students and adults, and promotes a healthy peer climate among students.

800-word limit*

SECTION 7: GUARANTEED, VIABLE CURRICULUM, MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT

40) Describe how the school's curriculum reflects the use of best practices across all grade levels.
Specifically:
- Detail the school's implementation of clear curriculum articulation as well as authentic teacher collaboration across and within grade levels and to and from feeder schools. Share how essential content (knowledge and skills) is defined, sequenced, and organized to maximize student learning. Include descriptions of policies and procedures that protect instructional time.
- Discuss the procedures and tools used to monitor the consistent implementation of essential curriculum including how curriculum is attained by different groups of students across grade levels.
- Detail the processes that are in place to review the curriculum. Highlight how these processes reflect a school wide commitment to continuous improvement.

13

- Reference research base(s) as appropriate.

1,000-word limit*

41) Choose one unique program to discuss. Consider the following:
- What sets your school apart in your district and/or community?
- Do you have a signature program or another unique initiative that may drive enrollment or support a need unique to your school or surrounding community?
- How does your school shine?
- *Tip: Avoid discussing programs that are commonplace or foundational among all schools. For example, all schools use some form of RTI. Highlighting RTI would not be unique unless your school is using it in a truly innovative and groundbreaking way.*
- *Tip: On questions 34 & 35 you were asked to share qualitative and/or quantitative data. Consider using this space to elaborate on that data.*

1,000-word limit*

42) Describe how all students, including learners with unique needs, have the opportunity to learn challenging content and achieve at high levels.
Specifically:
- Describe the process for identifying and placing students in various programs. Tell how student progress is monitored and adjusted to ensure success.
- Tell how programs for diverse learning groups relate to the overall curriculum and how students are integrated into the mainstream classes and activities of the school when appropriate.
- Discuss what strategies are used to address different learning styles and needs. Provide specific examples and outcomes. Examples might include: expansion and modification of instructional time; double blocking; regrouping; co-teaching; flexible grouping; and other diverse instructional practices.
- Explain how these offerings relate to the overall curriculum and provide examples of their success.
- *Tip: Do not limit your response to just special education students. Include gifted, ELL students, etc.*

1,000-word limit*

High Schools Only) *This question will only show up on the online application for schools that have indicated they teach 9th-12th grade students.* Describe curricular offerings that provide rigorous educational opportunities that transition students to post-secondary education and/or careers.

Specifically:
- Describe outside and honors curricular offerings and programs such as International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, dual credit courses, online learning, CTE, AVID, etc.
- Explain how these offerings relate to the overall curriculum and provide examples of these programs' success.

1,000-word limit*

SECTION 8: ACTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT SUPPORT

43) Describe what administrators and visitors at your school would observe on any given day. Specifically:
- What might they see and hear teachers and students doing?
- What evidence of student learning would be visible?

1,000-word limit*

44) Explain how your school is helping students understand they are citizens of the world. What types of opportunities and resources are available both inside and outside of the classroom? How are students engaged in service learning or similar type collaborations with local groups that help them connect to the world beyond their schools? What resources are provided to support these efforts?

1000-word limit*

45) Share how the non-academic, social-emotional, and cultural needs of the student population are addressed and responded to through a network of cohesive and integrated programs and services.
Specifically:
- Describe how the school identifies, assesses and meets the specific needs of all its students as defined by its population.
- Describe the non-academic services and programs that are available to support students and detail how they relate to student needs and school goals.
- Describe how all students are encouraged to build sustainable, caring relationships with each other, teachers and other adults on campus.
- Describe systems in place to help students learn to handle frustration, anger, teasing, bullying, and other negative interactions (e.g. counseling, character education programs, health services, student intervention assessments, etc.).
- Articulate school-wide systems in place to address and minimize the effects on school climate of factors such as absenteeism, serious discipline problems, high turnover of students or staff, or other negative factors.
- Discuss the strategies in place to ease transitions and provide support for transfer students, first-year students, family moves, etc.
- Provide specific examples of student success as a result of student interventions.

1,000-word limit*

SECTION 9: PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOVLEMENT

46) Articulate the role that families, partnerships and the community play in supporting learning.
Specifically:
- Describe the goals and priorities of school, family and community partnerships and how those same goals and priorities are communicated to stakeholders and aligned with school priorities.
- Describe challenges, if any, the school faces in developing partnerships.
- Describe how partnership goals are collaboratively developed with all stakeholders; detail what strategies are used to involve people from all segments of the community in supporting education. Provide examples of community partnerships that resulted in the school being a respected and valued partner.
- Cite ways in which the school involves all families in school initiatives and programs to build a shared commitment to student success; reference participation rates and give evidence of success. Provide specific examples of how the school supports and enhances the parenting role and involves families in decision-making. Tell how the school establishes two-way communication and ensures authentic involvement of families from all segments of the school community in a way that respects diverse backgrounds and challenging needs of the families.
- Detail how volunteers are recruited, trained, and made to feel like an integral part of the school.

1,000 word limit*

47) Explain how educational resources in the school and the community are used to extend learning opportunities for students, teachers and families.
Specifically:
- Describe if and how the school partners with outside entities (e.g. museums, public libraries, community enrichment programs, performing arts institutions, nonprofit organizations, etc.) to provide extended learning opportunities for students and/or professional development opportunities for staff.
- Provide an example(s) of an extended learning opportunity that demonstrates a positive effect on relationships, student learning, and/or improved student performance.
- Detail services, if any, that are provided at or through the school in the areas of health and social services, adult education or referrals to community agencies.
- Describe relationships with outside agencies that utilize school facilities outside of regular school hours.

800-word limit*

Signatures

All applications must include a signature from the school's principal. The principal must certify that they have notified the superintendent (and if necessary, the school's Governing Board) of the school's intent to submit an application.