



# ASHLEY

## ELEMENTARY

DREAM ★ BELIEVE ★ ACHIEVE  
SUEÑA ★ CREE ★ LOGRA

### INNOVATION PLAN

**Submitted to:**

State Board of Education Office

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Denver Public Schools School Board,

After engaging in the hard work of school turnaround over the past three years, we have learned many lessons, seen many successes, experienced challenges and are excited about the future of our school community, and quest to provide a great school to the students of the East Montclair community.

Innovation Status will continue to allow Ashley Elementary to build a culture of high achieving students who engage in and contribute to culturally diverse community. With autonomy over people, time and money, Ashley Elementary will be able to create a school that prepares elementary students for middle school, high school and beyond.

Innovation Status will continue to support the Ashley Elementary model and will directly lead to improving student outcomes by providing the best instruction possible for the students. The direct effect of the waivers will occur in a variety of ways, including:

- Autonomy to focus on professional development in order for teachers to have the knowledge and skills to ensure the development of internationalized curriculum, critical thinking and collaboration skills.
- Autonomy from the DPS school calendar to better meet the needs of students and staff. By providing a longer day and allowing specific days for reflection and planning for staff members, students will benefit from strategic planning and targeted professional development.
- Autonomy will allow for an open timeline for hiring exemplary teachers internally and externally, who are invested and believe in the vision and mission of Ashley Elementary.
- Autonomy to substantially increase financial resources into our school budget for allocation towards strategic goals, priorities and values of the school community, especially as we move out of turnaround status.

Our school community is excited to put this renewal plan forward as we believe that in order to have transformational change in a school, we must always do what is best for our students and having the status of being a school of innovation will ensure that all students at Ashley Elementary are receiving the highest quality education and enhanced opportunities.

Thank you,



Zachary Rahn  
Principal

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## ***Executive Summary Narrative***

### **Culture:**

*Dream – Believe – Achieve / Sueña – Cree – Logra*

Ashley Elementary School's mission is to provide all students with a rigorous literacy, mathematics and science curriculum while nurturing the confidence and character needed to achieve their goals and succeed in the 21st century, positively impacting our community through excellence in thought and action. Preparing students for success through middle school, high school and college, Ashley Elementary School is a diverse community that embraces academic achievement as well as culture, language, arts & athletics.

Through innovation status, Ashley Elementary has provided a more rigorous curriculum in literacy and mathematics, technology-based teaching and blended learning and iPads for every student, second language development, a full range of electives including music, art, physical education, and science/sustainability.

In the spring of 2013, Ashley Elementary School teachers and community members were notified that due to the persistent low performance of its students, the school underwent a strategic school planning process to improve student performance. Teachers and community members were invited by the DPS Office of School Reform and Innovation to participate in: 1) the selection of a new school principal, and 2) a strategic school design process. The outcome of this work was the creation of an innovation plan and a vote to pass it in the fall of 2013. Since that time, the Ashley community has worked diligently to implementing the original vision outlined in the plan, making adjustments along the way to best meet the needs of teachers and students. The second version of our school plan was presented in February 2017, with updates that represent our learning over the past three years and voice of our families and faculty.

### **Leadership:**

A Principal Selection Committee composed of Ashley Elementary teacher leaders and community members chose Zachary Rahn to be the school's new principal as of June 2013.

The Ashley Elementary school leader requires excellent leadership skills appropriate for an innovative elementary school undergoing significant educational reform. The principal is academically and instructionally focused, a proficient thinker and problem solver, culturally aware, a collaborative leader, an effective user of technology, responsible and ethical.

### **Education Plan:**

Ashley Elementary will develop curricula and assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards, using research-based materials and proven practices from a variety of sources, and will implement these in place of DPS adopted curricula and assessments.

Ashley Elementary School will implement a liberal arts and innovative blended learning instructional approach which will include a blend of teacher-led direct instruction and

technology-based instruction employing digital and online resources. Pillars of blended learning at Ashley Elementary will be 1:1 technology for students and daily integration of technology in instruction.

Proposed changes to the district calendar include: changing the dates of planning and assessment days to match the school's assessment cycle, adding professional development days for teachers prior to the start of the school year. The school calendar will be developed annually by the school administration, with approval by the School Leadership Team.

### **Teaching:**

The Ashley Elementary School innovation plan includes changes to hiring, employment terms, staff member schedules and assignments to ensure: 1) commitment to the implementation of the school's vision, mission, and strategic plan, and 2) effective teachers in every classroom. By ensuring that Ashley Elementary students have more and better instruction from teachers who are committed and capable, the innovation plan will result in significant increases in student academic achievement and a culture of excellence.

The school will recruit from sources beyond the DPS system, will hire when positions are open, not necessarily on the district hiring cycle, and will not accept direct or temporary placements from the district. Ashley will provide teachers and staff members with professional development to support their individual professional growth as well as the school wide implementation of the innovation plan.

Annual Contracts and an Annual Commitment to the Ashley Strategic Plan will be used to ensure that every staff member is committed to the implementation of the school's vision, mission, and strategic plan. Staff members hired after the innovation plan is approved will be hired on annual contracts. Founding staff members will retain their existing employment terms and years for reaching probationary or non-probationary status with the district and will make an annual commitment to the implementation of the innovation plan.

### **Governance:**

Ashley Elementary believes that by revising the typical governance structure, the School Leadership Team (SLT) takes on a new and innovative role that will best meet the needs of Ashley's students. The School Leadership Team will provide a collaborative decision-making structure that involves parents, teachers and community representatives. The School Leadership Team will also have increased responsibilities within Ashley Elementary. The goal of the School Leadership Team is to unite Ashley's stakeholders, including its principal, parents, teachers, support staff, and community members around the common goal of planning and implementing strategies in a collaborative method to significantly increase student achievement.

The CSC will be replaced with the Ashley Elementary School Leadership Team (SLT). The SLT will comply with State Law on School Accountability Committees. Information from the SLT will be presented monthly to the Ashley Parent Organization, and posted on the school website to ensure timely, transparent conversation and decisions. Agendas for meetings will be sent monthly to the Ashley faculty and are set by the school leader. Should a family or faculty member like to add additional items to the agenda, they will approach the school leader or a member of the SLT with the school leader ultimately addressing the item in the most appropriate manner. The membership of the SLT will include 13 voting members determined through the following process:

Positions assigned by the principal:

- 1 Principal
- 3 Other Administrative Positions

Positions elected by majority vote (serving 1 year terms):

- 4 Teachers
- 4 Parents
- 1 Support Staff Member

The SLT shall have the following responsibilities:

- Meet in September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April and May
- Recommending final candidates to the LLN & DPS for the principal position when a vacancy exists
- Providing guidance and recommendations to the principal regarding all responsibilities of the CSC detailed in Policy BDFH in addition to the following:
  - Approving the school's annual budget
  - Determining and approving the school's master calendar and schedule
  - Making recommendations regarding the school's culture and behavior, services for special populations, and use of school facilities
  - Annual review of the School Innovation Plan using data to identify successes, challenges, areas for growth and changes in the coming year.
  - Directly communicate decisions and information to the faculty to ensure transparency and voice. All faculty are encouraged to talk with the school leader directly should a topic for discussion emerge.

**Finance:**

Ashley Elementary will strategically identify and allocate financial resources to ensure the effective implementation of its innovation plan. The school will use the difference between actual salaries and district average salaries to support additional positions and professional development time.

Ashley Elementary is a member of an innovation zone, the Luminary Learning Network (LLN). In alignment with the MOU between the LLN and DPS, The District shall provide to Ashley Elementary their pro-rata share of funds associated with District services to which they have opted-out, if such pro-rata share can reasonably be calculated and implemented, and if the withdrawal of such funds will not result in a long term measurable increase in cost to the District nor a long term measurable reduction in the funding available to other schools within the District.

In order to determine the pro-rata share for Ashley Elementary, the District will use the collaboratively developed School Based Budgeting + funding (“SBB+”) model for funding the IZone Schools. The BOE expects the District and LLN to continue refining in good faith the optional and required services list related to SBB+ and to review the overall funding model annually, in alignment with the District’s budgetary timeline. In alignment with the Innovation Schools Act of 2008, there is an expectation by the parties that a different funding model will be explored and implemented in the event that the SBB+ model is unable to allow the IZone schools the maximum flexibility over resource use. The BOE will balance the equity of allowing IZone Schools to use resources at the school-level to best serve its students and the District equity of serving all students across all District schools.

Ashley Elementary will receive the annual budget allocation based on the number of students enrolled on October 1. The budgeted funds provided by DPS will be supplemented by Ashley elementary fundraising and grants.

## Section I. CULTURE

### A. Mission Statement

*Dream – Believe – Achieve*

*Sueña – Cree – Logra*

Ashley Elementary School provides all students with a rigorous literacy, mathematics and science curriculum while nurturing the confidence and character needed to achieve their goals and succeed in the 21st century, positively impacting our community through excellence in thought and action. Preparing students for success through middle school, high school and college, Ashley Elementary School is a diverse community that embraces academic achievement as well as culture, language, arts & athletics.

Through innovation status, Ashley Elementary will provide a more rigorous curriculum in literacy and mathematics, technology-based teaching and learning with increased technology for every student, second language development, a full range of electives determined annually by the SLT, and extended time for academics, enrichments, and service learning. With an increased budget, Ashley Elementary when possible, will staff additional positions to support increases in differentiation and intensity of instruction. Partnerships with community organizations, such as those described in the supplemental programs section, can be used to expand enrichment and athletic opportunities for students.

### B. School Culture & Student Engagement

Ashley Elementary School's mission is to provide all of its students with a rigorous liberal arts education while nurturing the confidence and character needed for them to achieve their goals and succeed in the 21st century. Ashley's goals of increasing student achievement and preparing students with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills strategically align with the goals of the Denver Plan.

Research shows that students learn more successfully within a strong culture of achievement where there are opportunities to build relationships and celebrate successes. Ashley Elementary will create this atmosphere through consistent and clear expectations, regularly communicating pride in the school community and through Morning and Community Meetings where students will engage in the development of social and emotional competencies and come together to support the shared vision and mission of the school. All aspects of the Ashley Elementary culture focus on acknowledging and fostering excellence in thought, action and academics.

At the center of this culture are the Ashley Elementary Core Values currently framed as: *Responsibility, Achievement, and Perseverance*. The school culture team will meet regularly to monitor the implementation of our culture system and core values, adjusting as needed.



All Ashley staff will explicitly teach and reinforce behaviors related to the school's core values at all times as part of the regular academic program. Every portion of the educational plan, including class time, provide opportunities to support the Ashley Elementary Core Values.

### Social Emotional Learning

Ashley Elementary recognizes that the first step toward improving academic achievement is to improve the school culture and the social and emotional development of all students. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) involves the processes of developing social and emotional competencies in children. SEL programming is based on the understanding that: the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful; social and emotional skills are critical to being a good student, citizen, and worker; and many different risky behaviors (e.g., drug use, violence, bullying, and dropout) can be prevented or reduced when multi-year, integrated efforts develop students' social and emotional skills (CASEL.org). Research suggests that SEL improves student's positive behavior and reduces negative behavior, improves academic performance and attitudes toward school, and prepares children for adulthood.

Social & Emotional Learning Core Competencies



The definitions of the five competency clusters for students are:

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.
- **Self-management:** The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.

- **Social awareness:** The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
- **Relationship skills:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.
- **Responsible decision-making:** The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

## Greetings

The culture at Ashley Elementary school becomes palpable as soon as students arrive each day. Being greeted by school leaders and teachers, each student will be welcomed with a smile, a good morning and a handshake. This routine each morning will not only explicitly teach this skill, but, allow the school leaders to have a pulse on how students are doing and potential supports needed for the day. From the start, a purposeful school culture is being created.

**Morning Meeting** is a daily community gathering held at the start of every school day in classrooms or in a common space with breakfast provided. Led by administrators and teachers, Morning Meeting is an opportunity for scholars to focus on character education surrounding the school values outlined above. Students have the opportunity to participate through interactive discussion, games and role-plays. Time for student celebrations is also included in the Morning Meeting; and in doing so, students learn to notice and celebrate the values exhibited by one another.

**Community Meeting** will take place every Monday and Friday to build a sense of the whole school community, pride in the school, a sense of belonging, and an opportunity to celebrate successes. Each Friday, an Ashley Elementary “Leader of the Week” will be honored for demonstration of the school’s values and exemplifying excellence in thought and action by receiving a trophy to hold onto for the week and a unique uniform to keep which they can wear in place of the traditional uniform. Two students each week are identified as “Ashley Leaders” for living the school’s core values. The class with the highest weekly attendance will receive a banner to hang outside of their class. Each week a variety of awards will be given to recognize students, faculty and families.

In addition to daily morning meetings and weekly community meetings, school-wide pride will be a key component of the school’s culture. Occurring once a month, time will be allocated for students from an entire grade level, or whole school event to convene in a common location to engage in positive school culture-building activities. Examples of what

may occur during this time include: dancing, physical education games, or arts projects that all students complete. At the end of every academic cycle, the school will also host an after school community event to spotlight students' academic accomplishments and experiences.

In order to serve all students, we will have multiple structures in place for differentiation, support and involvement. English Language Learners are a large and valued part of our community and thus all oral and written communications with families will be translated into Spanish. In the classroom, English Language Development and Sheltered English Instructional strategies will be used to ensure all students are able to access the content and instruction.

Students with special needs and those in need of special education services will be supported through accommodations, modifications, and specialized instruction based on their individual needs. The special education teacher and the classroom teacher will meet weekly to collaborate on the needs of all students and plan strategies for future lessons. Both educators will monitor progress in order to ensure instruction and accommodations are successful.

Data analysis will be a critical piece of strong instruction, which will allow Ashley Elementary to observe trends in student successes and struggles. This analysis will be a driving point for a plan to remediate skills for students at risk of failure, as well as provide more challenging work for high performing students.



# THE ASHLEY WAY

RESPONSIBILITY ★ ACHIEVEMENT ★ PERSEVERANCE

CLASSROOM	HALLWAY	BATHROOM	AUDITORIUM	CAFETERIA	PLAYGROUND	MORNING & COMMUNITY MEETING
<b>S.T.A.R.</b> Sit up straight Track the speaker Ask questions Raise your hand	<b>H.A.L.L.</b> Hands at your sides All eyes to the front Lips zipped Legs walking safely	Clean up after yourself Be quiet Go quickly	Listen and remain silent Hands, feet and mouth are quiet Applaud when appropriate	Keep your area clean Stay seated Use your manners	Play safe and fair Show good sportsmanship Be active	<b>S.T.A.R.</b> Sit up straight Track the speaker Ask questions Raise your hand

## Section II. LEADERSHIP

### A. Leadership Team Personnel

The Ashley Elementary School leader will require excellent leadership skills appropriate for an innovative elementary school undergoing significant educational reform.

**The Ashley Elementary Principal is Academically and Instructionally Focused.** This Leader...

- Demonstrates a passion for preparing students to be successful in the global world of the 21st century.
- Has a deep understanding of the importance of instructional leadership and model the use of best practices in meeting the learning needs of all students.
- Engages the staff in shared study of the research to bring the best ideas to their learning community in order to support student success.
- Models a self-reflective, continuous improvement disposition for their own growth and value it for all members of the learning community.
- Understands and demonstrates the leadership skills necessary for effective planning and alignment of resources to meet academically and instructionally focused goals for all students as well as professional development for the staff.
- Utilizes a clinical approach to the supervision of instruction supporting all staff in reaching the highest levels of performance.
- Understands interdisciplinary instruction and support the teachers in creating cross-disciplinary connections that foster strong literacy and numeracy development as well as use the arts as a vehicle for learning.

**The Ashley Elementary Principal is a Proficient Thinker and Problem Solver.** This Leader...

- Uses creative problem solving skills and resourcefulness to act on the needs of individual students, colleagues and the school community.
- Utilizes current research and data, both qualitative and quantitative, for effective decision-making as part of a system of continuous improvement.
- Understands and engages complex problems, collects, analyzes and synthesizes information from a range of sources, tolerates ambiguity and uncertainty, and produces viable solutions as they relate to the success of the learning community.
- Advises and advocates for students to support their successes and help them overcome challenges.

**The Ashley Elementary Principal is Culturally Aware.** This Leader...

- Recognizes, values, and respects the broad spectrum of ethnicities and cultures represented in the school community, utilize these assets in further internationalizing the school culture, and assist members of the community in valuing each other.

- Recognizes her/his responsibility to encourage a continuing diversity in the recruitment and sustainability of a diverse faculty and student body.
- Intentionally creates and hones a school culture that supports the attainment of the goals of Ashley Elementary.

**The Ashley Principal is a Collaborative Leader.** This Leader...

- Is an excellent communicator, valuing her/his role as a listener, evidence gatherer, coach and supporter of high caliber learning for all students.
- Understands that change is a process not an event and allows time and provides support for innovation to be tested and developed into sustainable practice.
- Shares authentic decision making opportunities with members of the staff in order to build their capacity as teacher leaders.
- Builds the collective efficacy of all school community members to become purposeful in conceptualizing and achieving the goals of the school.
- Participates actively in DPS, collaboratively sharing ideas and searching for solutions to contribute to the field of education.
- Provides the necessary leadership, time and resources for job-embedded continuous, intentional professional development that meets the expressed instructional needs of the school community.

**The Ashley Principal is an Effective User of Technology.** This Leader...

- Models the use of technology to support her/his learning as well as the managerial functions of leadership.
- Uses technology to support data driven decision-making and facilitate ongoing communication with the school community.
- Provides the necessary training and resources for equitable access to technology and new media for all students to support their learning.

**The Ashley Principal is a Responsible and Ethical.** This Leader...

- Makes decisions that are fair and equitable and keeps the students and their learning in the center of all she/he does.
- Acts ethically and responsibly to support the school, its students, DPS, and the community.

The Ashley Elementary School principal is Zachary Rahn. Rahn has spent the last nine years working within Denver Public Schools as a successful 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA-S teacher, Assistant Principal at Denver's flagship innovation school, Cole Arts and Science Academy, and year-long residency at STRIVE Preparatory Schools through the Office of School Reform and Innovation's Residency for the Educational Development of DPS Intrapreneurs (REDDI) and most recently as the principal of Ashley Elementary since 2013. An alumnus of Teach For America and the Ritchie Program for School Leaders at DU, Rahn has a track record of success as a teacher and leader.

As a teacher he saw continually high growth from his students. As a leader supporting the turnaround efforts at Cole, he helped to turn a school from “red” or unsatisfactory to “green” or meets expectations on the School Performance Framework within three years. In the past year, Rahn has been recruited for leadership positions both locally and nationally and has decided that the opportunity at Ashley is the best fit. Through his residency at STRIVE Prep schools this year, Rahn has visited and worked in high performing schools across the country, collecting information on effective practices that has been used to inform the development of this plan.

### **Leadership Succession Plan**

By providing many leadership opportunities, Ashley Elementary School’s leadership pipeline expands the leadership capacity at the school and prepares multiple people to take on the role of the school principal, either at Ashley or another school. Teachers have opportunities to take on a variety of teacher leader roles. Teacher leaders also have opportunities to serve as a dean, taking on additional aspects of principal leadership such as teacher supervision and evaluation. Principal interns and residents will also be welcome to join the Ashley leadership team. Institutional knowledge will be passed from the existing principal to any new principal through school policies and practices and the distributed leadership approach.

The Luminary Learning Network, in collaboration with the Ashley Elementary School SLT will manage the principal selection process and will recommend two candidates to the district superintendent for hiring. Principal candidates will be provided to the SLT from the district’s principal hiring pool. The superintendent may redirect the SLT to continue the search for a better-qualified candidate but may not appoint a principal to the school without the approval of the SLT. The principal will assume the administrative responsibility and instructional leadership of the school under the supervision of the superintendent and in accordance with the innovation plan. In the event that the principal position is vacant, the superintendent shall hire an interim principal until such time that the district approves a principal candidate put forward by the SLT.

The selection process will include:

- A work group to identify characteristics and criteria of desired new leader that are consistent with the innovation plan.
- A parent/community meeting to identify characteristics and criteria of desired new leader that are consistent with innovation plan.
- Refinement of the job description based on faculty and parent/community input.
- Posting of position on DPS’s website and other external outlets.
- Development of interview questions and selection criteria rubric based on job description and key leader attributes.
- Application screening and scoring.

- Conduct interviews including performance tasks, such as classroom observations and feedback sessions.
- Reference checks on top candidates.
- Host a public symposium for finalists.
- Conduct site visits to finalists' current schools.
- SLT selects final candidates and submit recommendations to DPS Superintendent for hiring.
- Announce position acceptance to staff, students, parents, and community.

While the school will recruit principal candidates from a variety of national and local sources, the school's deans will be well-prepared candidates as they will have taken on multiple aspects of the school's leadership in their roles on the school leadership team, including teacher supervision and evaluation. In addition, they will already have relationships with the staff, students, and community members and will be well versed in the school's vision, mission, and goals as set forth in the innovation plan.

## **B. Leadership Team Coaching & Evaluation**

The Ashley Elementary Principal will report to the Board of the Luminary Learning Network. Leadership performance will be evaluated primarily on the effectiveness of the implementation of the innovation plan and the achievement of the innovation plan goals. The DPS Leadership Effectiveness rubric will be used to provide focused feedback to the principal on leadership competencies and to identify leadership goals and professional development needs.

The principal will also be provided with executive coaching. The focus of that coaching will be established at the beginning of each year through a series of meetings between the principal and the coach.

Professional development opportunities will include school visits within and outside Denver Public Schools, professional development opportunities offered by the district (when determined by the principal and his coach to be appropriate), and other leadership development aligned to the school's vision, mission, and goals (e.g. blended learning, literacy instruction, change leadership, etc.).

Twice annually, the LLN Supervisor will complete a formal evaluation of the principal using the DPS School Leadership Framework and the Innovation Plan. The Ashley Elementary SLT will also provide feedback to the principal related to the leadership responsibilities outlined in the innovation plan and will provide input into the principal's evaluation.

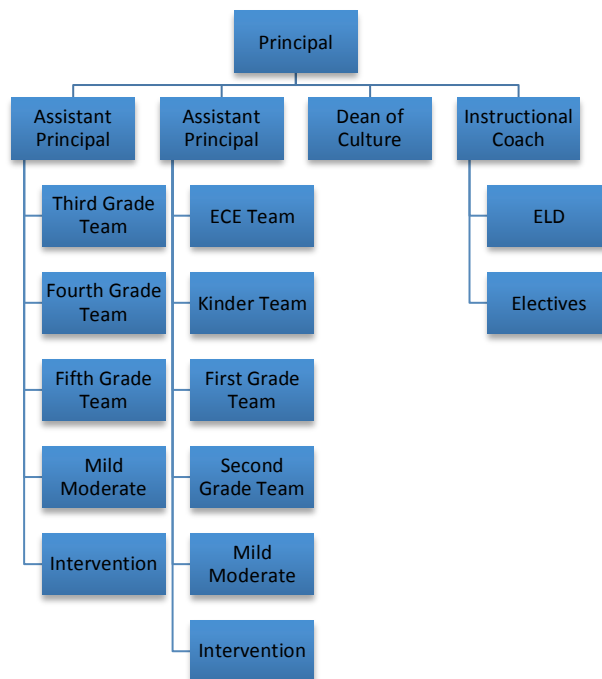
The principal, faculty and staff will engage in ongoing collaborative evaluation of the performance of the school. This evaluation includes an innovative school review process where two representatives of the LLN, the school leaders' executive coach and three external evaluators. This review team completes a minimum of two school reviews a year. Through SPF analysis, classroom observations, student, parent, teacher

and administrator interviews, the review team gathers a wide range of data and perform a SWOT analysis and work to assist school leaders in identifying clear action steps to address areas of growth. After each round of school reviews, school leaders present the review teams’ findings to the LLN Board, as well as the action steps their schools will be taking to address those findings.

LLN school leaders are evaluated under the DPS LEAD Framework. The LLN Executive Director will complete the evaluation based on observations, input from the school leader’s executive coach, input from school staff, and data focused on student achievement (including overall student performance and student achievement growth).

**C. School Personnel Structure**

Ashley Elementary will make several changes to personnel structures to effectively and efficiently implement the Innovation Plan. The staffing structure will be determined annually in consultation with the School Leadership Team with input from a survey taken by all staff. At the time of revising the innovation plan, the below structure best represents an example of possible staffing.





#### **D. Employment Policies**

Ashley Elementary School employment policies will remain consistent with existing policies, with the exception of the specific waivers to District Policies, State Statutes and Rules, and Collective Bargaining Agreements presented in Section VI below. Any Ashley Elementary Teacher, including teachers on annual contracts, may choose to join and be represented by the Denver Classroom Teachers' Association (DCTA).

The Ashley Elementary School innovation plan includes changes to hiring, employment terms, staff member schedules and assignments to ensure: 1) commitment to the implementation of the school's vision, mission, and innovation plan, 2) effective teachers in every classroom, and 3) expanded learning time for students. By ensuring that Ashley Elementary students have more and better instruction from teachers who are committed and capable, the innovation plan will result in significant increases in student academic achievement and a culture of excellence.

The school will recruit from sources beyond the DPS system, will hire when positions are open, not necessarily on the district hiring cycle, and will not accept direct or temporary placements from the district. Ashley will provide teachers and staff members with professional development to support their individual professional growth as well as the school wide implementation of the innovation plan.

Annual contracts and the expectation of an annual commitment to the Ashley Innovation Plan will be used to ensure that every staff member is committed to the implementation of the school's vision, mission, and strategic plan. Staff members hired after the innovation plan is approved will be hired on annual contracts. Founding staff members will retain their existing employment terms and years for reaching probationary or non-probationary status with the district and will make an annual commitment to the implementation of the innovation plan.

Ashley Elementary teachers employed after the adoption of the innovation plan will be hired on annual contracts and will not be considered probationary or eligible to earn non-probationary status. Years of service and formal evaluations using DPS systems will be tracked and monitored by the school. If the teacher accepts a mutual consent position at a non-innovation DPS school, the teacher's probationary or non-probationary status will be governed by the District's guidelines at that time. The District's guidelines are described in an FAQ on Probationary and Non-Probationary Status on the DPS Employee Associations website (under DCTA).

Teacher salaries and benefits will be based on the district salary scale and ProComp system. Teachers may be required to work an extended day schedule and will be compensated via a pre-determined stipend. Paraprofessionals working an extended day will also be compensated for the additional time at or above the district salary scale. ECE paraprofessionals will work the full student contact day. Stipends for extended time are pensionable earnings and will be included in the annual base pay.

The amount of time will be determined by the SLT annually based on student scheduling needs and availability of funding. The amount of compensation will be based on the amount of additional time and/or level of additional responsibilities and compensation for comparable

work. Teachers will also have opportunities to take on additional leadership and responsibilities and receive additional compensation.

Other non-teaching positions necessary to implement the innovation plan will have unique job descriptions and will be compensated based on competitive salaries for similar positions in other schools or organizations. Examples of other positions include: dean of culture, community/family liaison, office/business manager, enrichment instructors (non-licensed teachers), etc.

Placement of teachers will be based on teacher effectiveness and student learning needs to ensure that the most effective teachers are working with the students with the greatest needs. In addition, Ashley will expand the reach of its most effective teachers through a variety of strategies including reducing the amount of non-academic duties and increasing the amount of time that they are providing instructional coaching and feedback to peers.

Instructional support will be added to as many classrooms as possible via associate educators from a variety of pipelines (Denver Teaching Residents, fellows, interns, student teachers, and paraprofessionals) with priority given to K-2 classes. Ashley Elementary will research alternative licensure options to further support the development of an internal pipeline of teachers and leaders.

Partnerships will be forged with community organizations to provide supplemental programming, enrichments and extra-curricular activities. Instructors in these supplemental programs would not need to be licensed teachers but would be required to be fingerprinted and have background checks before supervising students.

The Ashley Elementary personnel policies are outlined in the replacement language in the waivers and in the employment policies section of the innovation plan. The employee handbook will be revised to reflect these waivers following approval of the innovation plan.

### **Section III: EDUCATION PROGRAM**

#### **A. Curriculum & Instruction**

The mission of Ashley Elementary is to prepare students for success in middle school, high school and college by providing all students with a rigorous liberal arts education and exposure to the arts, sciences, languages, and technology. The curriculum at Ashley Elementary is the cornerstone to carry out this mission successfully. The below discussed curricular materials are drawn from the best practices of schools across the country serving similar demographics and achieving excellent results. Ashley will use research-based programs that are proven effective working with similar student populations. All instruction at Ashley Elementary will be aligned with the Common Core State Standards and Colorado Academic Standards. Lesson planning will utilize a backwards-planning approach, implementing the *Understanding by Design* framework, shown to provide a deeper understanding for students.

Teachers will develop curricula and assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), using research-based materials and proven practices from a variety of sources. Waiver requests for the use of non-adopted curricular materials are included in Appendix D.

The following section describes the specific curriculum plan for each subject, the history of success with this approach and the materials and techniques that will be used to maximize learning and achievement. Ashley teachers need to internalize lesson objectives and curricular materials and be able to make the necessary data-driven adjustments to better serve their specific group of students. With that in mind, support around lesson plan development and curriculum implementation will be a focus of professional development. A substantial amount of time will be spent working collaboratively to develop lesson and unit plans that align with CCSS and draw from the research-based curricular materials. Teachers will collaborate to ensure that there is both horizontal and vertical alignment around their unit plans to best support student growth. This will be an ongoing conversation throughout the school year, where teachers are spending time together to assess progress on the curriculum and effectiveness of specific unit plans. Moreover, teachers will receive professional development for each of the various curricular materials with a focus on excellent implementation. The School Leadership Team will create or adopt lesson plan templates to provide teachers with a structure for how to develop their individual lesson plans. Teachers will receive feedback and support on the creation and implementation lesson plans. In order to support sustainability amongst staff, as well as best practices, collaboration will be fundamental to curriculum development. Daily Team Time will be used to collaborate on the development of lesson plans and evaluate the effectiveness of lessons on advancing student achievement.

#### **Instructional Leadership Team**

The purpose of the instructional leadership team is to include teacher voice in all instructional and academic decisions at the school. The ILT meets at least monthly alongside the coaching team.

**The Instructional Leadership Team will:**

- Analyze and Evaluate data to make short and long-term decisions.
- Plan and evaluate professional development.
- Recommend and design the school master schedule.
- Conduct classroom observations as needed to determine school-wide trends.
- Communicate recommendations and decisions to the faculty on a regular basis.
- Recommend, plan for and support in the facilitation of Ashley Institute.
- Collaborate with the SLT when needed and appropriate.
- Recommend the use of funds for curricular and instructional materials that support school priorities.

The Instructional Leadership Team is Comprised of the most effective teachers within the building as to ensure those with the strongest student academic data and overall LEAP ratings are recommending decisions around curriculum and instruction. Pending student data and/or LEAP Ratings, the ILT should when possible be comprised of a representative from each team across the school serving a one-year commitment. All efforts should be made to provide compensation for members of the ILT pending SLT approval of the budget. This potentially would look like:

- ECE Representative
- K/1 Representative
- 2/3 Representative
- 4/5 Representative
- Intervention Team
- Special Education Team
- Specials Team

The Administrative Team will use student data and LEAP ratings to determine who qualifies for this role. Should there be more than one faculty member within a band, the team will come to consensus on one representative. Should there be a problem with the composition of the membership, the current ILT will meet to help solve the problem and determine membership. The ILT could also indicate a desire to include a more novice teacher on the ILT for additional insight.

The Instructional Leadership Team will recommend decisions to the school principal for consideration. Whenever possible the principal will support the recommendation. If the principal does not support the recommendation, he/she will provide the ILT will rationale. The ILT will always move forward when decisions are made as a unified team. The monthly meetings will be co-facilitated by a member of the ILT whom is elected by consensus as the leader and the school principal or designee. Times and dates for these meetings will be determined at the start of the school year by the team and all Ashley staff are encouraged to talk with their representative directly should additional topics for discussion emerge. Agenda's for each meeting will be sent out to the faculty and set by the school leader and the ILT leader.

## **Blended Learning Approach**

Ashley Elementary School will implement an innovative blended learning instructional approach which will include a blend of teacher-led direct instruction and technology-based instruction employing digital and online resources. Pillars of blended learning at Ashley Elementary will be 1:1 technology for students and daily integration of technology in instruction.

The Blended Learning approach will include:

### 1) Technology Access

- 1:1 Technology for Students – (beginning with iPads in 2014)
- Computers in all Classrooms
- Mimeoos for Instruction

### 2) Blended Learning – Teacher Led Instruction / Technology Based Instruction

- Skills blocks in reading & math using digital instructional resources
- Digital portfolio and collaboration tools used across subjects

### 3) Learning Management System

- Assessing and tracking student progress, short cycle every 6 weeks
- Student collaboration and portfolio of work
- Digital Dictionary of digital lesson plans, videos, and other resources

### 4) Professional Development and Support for Implementation for Blended Learning

### 5) Technology Based Communications

- School and class communication tools and push communications
- Digital bulletin boards
- Facebook and other digital marketing and networking

Blended Learning time is built into the schedule within all content areas. In addition, blended learning will support the implementation of science, social studies, language, visual art, music, physical education, and enrichment classes through the use of digital texts and multimedia demonstrations of learning.

## **Literacy**

At Ashley Elementary School, students will engage in significant literacy instruction each day. Annually, the Principal, in collaboration with the SLT, will set the Ashley Schedule, including the number of minutes spent in all content areas, based on data and best practice. This schedule will be adjusted as needed, and as data confirms, throughout the year.

The literacy block will include: writing, direct instruction, guided reading and independent reading. As needed, phonics will also be an additional component, specifically in ECE-2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

Classrooms are grouped heterogeneously and aligned by parent preferred language of instruction, however all other small groups are differentiated based on student proficiency, reading level and need. Students will be grouped based on ability guided reading and small group time, ensuring that students' individualized needs are met. Reading groups will be fluid, and are re-grouped regularly based on student data. While based on data, most students will experience many of the below components:

**Direct Instruction:**

**Reading Mastery** is an effective, strategy-based, direct instruction program that is proven to help students decode and comprehend with fluency. This is a researched based, best practice program in many high performing schools that will be used for direct instruction within the literacy block. The Reading Mastery curriculum comes with a fully built out scope and sequence that is standards based and is designed to create strategy-based instruction with intensive, explicit, and systematic teaching that allows students to learn more efficiently and achieve a high rate of success. Lessons address the five essential components of reading; phonemic awareness, phonics and word analysis, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, and are carefully scaffolded to reach a wide range of academic levels and build confidence and independence. Lessons also provide word recognition and spelling instruction to help students make the connection between decoding and spelling patterns in English. Ongoing assessments that align to Common Core Standards create specific guidelines for remediation and informed instruction.

**Estrellitas** is a complementary, accelerated, beginning Spanish reading program for students in Bilingual and Dual Language classrooms. Based on scientific learning and reading principles, Estrellitas provides multisensory, in depth instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency. Because it was designed to meet the needs of children at all skill levels, layers of differentiated instruction are built into the program to accommodate Tier 1, 2 and 3 students.

**Small Group Instruction:**

**Guided Reading** is a research-based approach that allows children to develop as individual readers within the context of a small group. This approach is used at many high performing schools, such as Uncommon Schools, with positive results and can be implemented in both English and Spanish. The general philosophy for guided reading is built upon the work of Paul Bambrick Santoyo and the academic literature presented within *Great Habits, Great Readers*, a widely used guided reading framework within Denver Public Schools and around the country.

The approach places students in groups that are similar in their development of a reading process and are able to read about the same level of text. Guided reading

provides the opportunity to match reading instruction to the individual. Tailored small group instruction allows the teacher to model and prompt the student to think about the reading process supported by independent reading strategies. Teachers may begin a guided reading lesson by introducing the text, practicing unfamiliar vocabulary, or drawing the group's attention to the book's special features. Students then read on their own while the teacher moves from student to student listening to small sections of text read aloud. During reading the teacher is assessing progress, observing reading behaviors and further guiding students as necessary. After the students have read independently, the group returns to the text to answer questions as a group and explore the book's meaning together. Lastly, students summarize, extend meaning, and interpret the text, often with a thinking map graphic organizer or written response.

Ashley Elementary is committed to making cultural connections in all subject areas. In reading, teachers will draw from texts that are relatable for students' demographic and cultural backgrounds. Students will be grouped and regrouped in a dynamic process that involves ongoing observation and assessment. Teachers will benefit from a guided reading leveled library as well as lesson structure guidance.

**LightSail** is an adaptive literacy program that embeds engagement, motivation, assessment and student growth data into a digital reading experience that students, and teachers love. LightSail is used during independent reading and creates personalized libraries for students to access via their iPads. More than 1,800 texts are available with embedded assessments written across a variety of lexile measures on various subjects. Progress monitoring is embedded into daily practice in a natural way. Students answer multiple choice, written response and cloze assessments throughout each text. As student ability increases, LightSail tracks achievement and updates the personalized library within each student's iPad.

**Writing:**

Components of **Writer's Workshop**, and the district adopted curriculum, will be used during writing instruction. Similar to the guided reading approach, the writing workshop includes: mini-lessons, guided writing, independent writing, individual conferencing, and sharing. This approach allows for students to conference with a teacher and to get small group, and one-on-one attention. Ashley teachers can draw from multiple already established writing curricular resources and therefore can spend more time tailoring their lessons, responding to data, and planning for how to address individual student needs.

**Write from the Beginning...and Beyond** is a developmental writing program created by Jane Buckner that may be used to supplement the writing curriculum. *Write from the Beginning* includes narrative and expository writing utilizing *Thinking Maps*. Teachers build upon and extend student learning using Modeled Instruction, Analytic Rubrics, and Focused Mini-Lessons. Ashley teachers are piloting *Write from the Beginning* in the

coming year and will make recommendations for how the materials would fit best in the curriculum at the end of the year.

***Handwriting Without Tears*** is a research-based curriculum that provides developmentally appropriate, multisensory tools and strategies for teaching handwriting. It is crucial for academic achievement that Ashley Elementary students master handwriting effectively and efficiently so they can focus on the academic content aligned with the Common Core Standards as opposed to the mechanics of handwriting and note taking. In addition, there is research that correlates handwriting ability with achievement in other subject areas. The program follows research that demonstrates children learn more effectively by actively doing, with materials that address all styles of learning. Teachers will take full advantage of the workbooks and teacher's guides by grade that outline specific lesson plans, multisensory teaching tactics and student lead learn and check.

## **Mathematics**

The EngageNY curriculum modules in mathematics are marked by in-depth focus on targeted concepts for all of our Kindergarten-Fifth grade scholars. The curriculum integrates CCSS (Common Core State Standards), rigorous classroom reasoning, extended classroom time devoted to practice and reflection through extensive problem sets, and high expectations for mastery. The time required to complete a curriculum module will depend on the scope and difficulty of the mathematical content that is the focus of the module (first priority cluster area for a given grade level). This program develops a scholar's understanding of increasingly difficult math concepts throughout elementary, middle and high school years.

Engage NY includes four components in each daily lesson: 1) Daily fluency practice to strengthen computation fluency and strategies, 2) a real-world application problem 3) Concept development, the core instruction of the lesson which includes a problem set for gradual release, and 4) a student debrief to share learning, clarify misunderstandings, and reteach as necessary. The daily lessons are organized into modules, which in addition to the daily exit tickets include a mid-module and end of module assessment.

## **Science**

Students at Ashley Elementary School will engage in hands on science every other day for 45 minutes or the equivalent over the course of the calendar year. Using the ***Full Option Science System (FOSS)*** science curricular materials as a foundation, teachers will use an *Understanding by Design* approach to develop lesson plans that align to the CCSS. FOSS is a research-based science program for grades K-8 which was designated by the University of California at Berkeley in collaboration with the National Science Foundation. The FOSS program is focused both on science content and processes; builds critical thinking, literacy and inquiry skills; and has been shown to be effective with low-income students. The science curriculum scope and sequence will align to the CCSS and ensure that 5<sup>th</sup> grade students are well prepared for success on the state science assessment.



## **Social Studies**

Ashley students will explore the culture of others, relate to the cultures of study, and share their own culturally diverse backgrounds. A greater social awareness is key to the academic success and moral character that Ashley Elementary is committed to developing in its students. ***Social Studies Alive!*** is a theory and research based active instruction curriculum published by TCI. These curricular materials provide strong content and instruction balanced with hands-on-experiences to ensure students are building critical thinking skills, while mastering content that is aligned with the CCSS. *Social Studies Alive!* programs teach students about the world around them in ways that make them excited to learn every day. The curricular materials include resources such as Big Books (navigable text & instructional images), Lesson Guides that include assessments, Lesson Masters (reproducible student and teacher masters for activities), Solutions for Effective Instruction, Visuals, and Poster Placards (full-color picture cards that support hands-on activities), and Audio Tracks (musical recordings, dramatic readings, and audio effects), as well as Spanish translations of Student Handouts in all Teacher Editions. These and other materials will make up the Ashley Elementary social studies curriculum which will be delivered for 45 minutes every other day or the equivalent across the calendar year. The social studies curriculum scope and sequence will align to the CCSS and ensure that 4<sup>th</sup> grade students are well prepared for success on the state social studies assessment.

## **Electives**

Ashley Elementary School will provide a variety of electives and enrichment opportunities for students. Annually the school Principal, in consultation with the SLT will determine the electives offered. Additionally, a wide variety of enrichment classes will be provided by teachers and community providers to accelerate and expand student learning and expose students to a variety of academics, arts and athletics.

## **Scope/Sequence**

Curricula must be engaging, academically rigorous, and aligned with the Colorado Model Content Standards and the Common Core State Standards. In reviewing curricula, we will ask the following:

- Is it aligned with Colorado's Model Content Standards? It is aligned with the Common Core State Standards?
- Is it grounded in scientific research/methods successful with similar populations?
- Are other high-performing schools using it?
- Are the teaching materials well organized?
- Are the student materials well organized, engaging and easy to understand?

- Is the vocabulary developmentally appropriate and simultaneously demanding?
- For Science and Social Studies, does it reinforce grade-appropriate literacy skills?

In addition to the specific curricular resources outlined in the previous section, we will augment the curriculum with other resources as needed to meet the needs of our students. A full scope and sequence will be developed following the approval of the innovation plan. A sample scope and sequence for one grade level is provided in Appendix L.

## **B. School Schedule & Calendar**

### **Calendar**

Ashley Elementary School will develop a school calendar annually that meets or exceeds district and state length of time requirements and supports the implementation of the innovation plan. The plan will be developed by February of each year with the SLT of Ashley Elementary voting to approve the calendar.

The Ashley Elementary School Leadership Team will determine extra duty compensation for additional hours and additional roles and responsibilities based on the amount of additional time and/or level of additional responsibilities. The determination of this will happen annually during the budgeting and staffing period.

### **Student Schedule**

The first draft of the daily schedule will be developed in collaboration with the SLT by February annually, with input from parents and teachers. The schedule will continue to be modified and updated to reflect student and staff need.

### **Teacher Schedule**

Teacher schedules will be developed annually by February and approved by the SLT. The teacher schedule is created with a focus on meeting the needs of students coupled with the planning needs of teachers.

## **C. Progress Monitoring and Assessment**

### **Assessments**

At Ashley elementary, student achievement is our top priority. Therefore, regular student assessment is our biggest tool to ensure our students catch up and keep up academically. Ashley Elementary is planning to use an array of different assessments throughout the year to evaluate the progress of students and the performance of the school. We believe in continuous and varied forms of assessment to best understand the unique strengths and opportunities in every student. Formal and informal assessments are implemented daily to monitor student

progress and develop a body of evidence. Teachers meet as teams regularly to analyze student data and plan upcoming instruction to meet the needs of students. Formal assessments at Ashley Elementary include:

- ✓ ANet – Interim Assessment for Math and ELA (2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade)
- ✓ iStation – Benchmark and Progress Monitoring Assessment for ELA (1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade)
- ✓ WIDA ACCESS for English Language Development
- ✓ CMAS for Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies (varies by year) – also known as PARCC

Ashley Elementary will adhere to the district recommended timeline for PARCC and WIDA-ACCESS testing as an absolute bar of progress and point of comparison with other schools.

### **Progress Monitoring**

Performance goals for the school will be established by the school principal and clearly communicated to students and staff at the beginning of the year. Individual growth targets will also be set for students. Progress monitoring data will be used to implement corrective actions for under-performing students and teachers as necessary.

Ashley Elementary is committed to frequent assessment of students because it allows us to intervene with struggling students immediately and frequently. Interventions will include close parental communication and using the Response to Intervention process to troubleshoot.

As indicated in the previous section, classroom assessments and progress monitoring happens on a weekly basis and data is used constantly to inform instruction and better hone educational practice.

### **Response to Intervention**

The core elements addressed in each classroom are: instructional coherence across grades, implementation of sound instructional practices, progress monitoring standards based education, and prompt referral to MTSS when lack of progress is indicated. Data driven instruction is an essential component of the RTI model, where the use of common language and expectations horizontally and vertically are implemented. The goal is to support, critique, and improve quality, assessment driven instruction. Intervention teachers provide a continuum of support including both pull out and push-in models. Additionally, intervention teachers gather, organize, track, and share student data with core teachers. Based on data, in partnership with the core classroom teachers, the intervention teachers establish the type of support that is needed for each individual student.

### **Promotion & Retention Policies**

Retention decisions for students performing below grade-level in core content areas will be made based on reading and math achievement levels as determined by multiple metrics. The principal, assistant principals, teachers, and parents will confer prior to the end of the school

year about the student’s progress. If students are making insufficient progress, an academic plan will be prepared and grade retention may be recommended. Parents do not have the ability to override the decision of the school principal around retention, except as required by the READ Act, c.r.s. 22-7-120 through 1213. Parents will be made aware of this policy at orientation, at the time of registration for all mid-year enrollees. The school will regularly communicate student performance to parents/guardians.

**Performance Goals**

Reaching the following performance goals will ensure that Ashley Elementary School meets or exceeds district and state expectations for school performance, resulting in significantly increased academic achievement and growth for students and a rating of “meets expectations” or “green” on the School Performance Framework (SPF).

Type of Assessment	2015-2016 Baseline	2016-2017 Goal	2017-2018 Goal	2018-2019 Goal	Innovation Plan and Status Alignment: Why the Innovation Plan and Status can be expected to support progress towards this goal
PARCC ELA	44.5 MGP, 19% meets or exceeds expectations, 11 <sup>th</sup> of 17 in similar schools cluster	55 MGP or greater, 29% meets or exceeds expectations, top quarter of similar schools cluster	55 MGP or greater, 39% meets or exceeds expectations, top quarter of similar schools cluster	55 MGP or greater, 49% meets or exceeds expectations, top quarter of similar schools cluster	The Ashley Innovation plan increases resources for professional development, and ensures a high level of flexibility. These areas coupled with staffing flexibilities will ensure we meet our annual targets.
PARC Math	41.5 MGP, 4.8% meets or exceeds expectations, 16 <sup>th</sup> of 17 in similar school clusters	55 MGP or greater, 20% meets or exceeds expectations, top quarter of similar school clusters	55 MGP or greater, 30% meets or exceeds expectations, top quarter of similar school clusters	55 MGP or greater, 40% meets or exceeds expectations, top quarter of similar school clusters	The Ashley Innovation plan increases resources for professional development, and ensures a high level of flexibility. These areas coupled with staffing flexibilities will ensure we meet our annual targets.
ACCESS	56.5 MGP	60 MGP or greater, exceed the district MGP	60 MGP or greater, exceed the district MGP	60 MGP or greater, exceed the district MGP	The Ashley Innovation plan increases resources for professional development, and ensures a high level of flexibility. These areas coupled with staffing flexibilities will ensure we meet our annual targets.

## **D. English Language Acquisition**

### **ELD Curriculum**

The EL Achieve is a curriculum is used to provide systematic English Language Development instruction to all English Language Learners. The EL Achieve curriculum requires a dedicated block of time daily coupled with targeted language instruction. Instruction is organized by English proficiency level that follows a continuum of linguistic skills. There is an emphasis on oral and written language in grade-appropriate and relevant tasks, as well as ample opportunities for structured and purposeful interaction and collaboration. The two ELD teachers at Ashley provide the instruction and regularly use data to inform groupings of students, working in conjunction with the classroom teachers to ensure targeted instruction to student need.

### **ELA Strategies**

Ashley Elementary School will use a significant number of whole-school strategies that strongly support the English Language Development of its students. These strategies are supported by the SIOP model and best practices in sheltered English instruction:

- Reading comprehension activity from the previous day, and it serves as both an anticipatory set and scaffold for new learning. Literary texts selected for their ability to create an immediate connection to the language and cultural experiences of our EL students.
- Flexible student groupings and opportunities to collaborate and cooperate in small groups.
- L1 (native language instruction) used to supplement direct instruction for content skill and concept recognition.
- Oral fluency and expression and reading comprehension skill development through modeled, shared, interactive, and guided instruction.
- Four separate literacy blocks for forty minutes each.
- Extended school year & day.
- Consistent school culture that maximizes time on task in each class.
- Strong vocabulary instruction within the reading blocks.
- Regular direct instruction in reading and writing content.
- Strong visual culture (word walls, picture-rich packets, etc.).
- Goal of every student speaking in every class every day.
- Safe space to learn (no making fun of others or fear of being mocked).

The principal of Ashley Elementary will be responsible for overseeing the ELA program in conjunction with the ELD teachers. The ELD team will lead professional development for all staff regarding appropriate assessment and implementation of the ELA program focused explicitly on techniques for building language development with individual students, when and how to provide native language supports, and understanding the SIOP model. All teachers must have an endorsement in linguistically diverse education.

**Monitoring Exited/Redesignated ELLs.** Monitoring is required for two years after a student exits ELL program services and appropriate records of student progress will be maintained by the ISA Team. Monitoring may include any or all of the following:

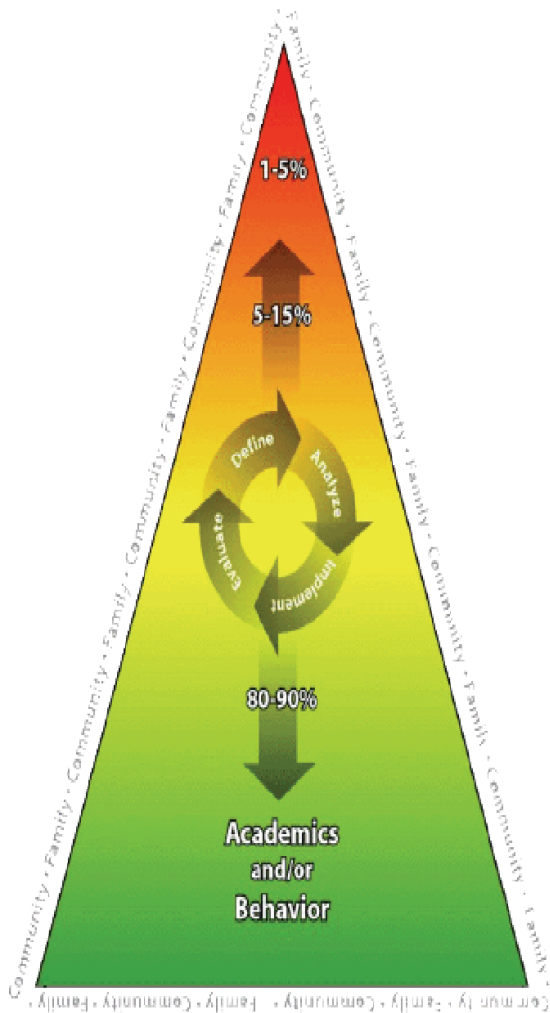
- Trimester review of grades
- Local and interim assessments
- Required state assessments
  
- Teacher observation
- Teachers may offer support to monitored students as they would for any student seeking additional assistance with classroom work, instruction, or assessment.
- Monitoring is not an extension of the language instructional program.
  
- Students who are monitored will not be counted as ELLs in any state or federal data collection systems for the purpose of acquiring state or federal funding.

#### **E. Academic Intervention & Acceleration**

Ashley Elementary School is committed to the academic achievement and growth of all students. The data driven instructional model will ensure that students with special needs as well as students that require academic acceleration receive the appropriate instruction. The weekly assessment and data analysis cycle allows for immediate feedback on student performance levels and determination of specific academic strategies to be employed in the week to come. Ashley Elementary will differentiate instruction to meet these individualized needs through the following: small groupings, specialized instruction, and varied academic activities so each student is challenged according to his/her skill level.

In addition to special education services provided to student with IEPs, Ashley Elementary will implement Multi Tiers systems of Support (MTSS) to help meet the needs of all students with the goal that every student will be given the instructional supports they need to succeed. The purpose of MTSS is that of a proactive prevention model to limit or prevent academic failure for students who are having difficulty learning by providing scientific research-based interventions, to bring students up to grade level achievement, as well as to identify Gifted and Talented students so they can achieve their potential.

Each tier provides increasingly individualized instruction, continuous monitoring of progress to calculate gains, and criteria for changing interventions and/or tiers through a regularly-scheduled, and systematic team decision-making process. Ashley Elementary plans to implement the Colorado Multi-Tiered Model of Instruction and Intervention as outlined by the Colorado MTSS Framework provided by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE):



- **Tier I** – for all students - high quality instruction, regular assessment and behavioral supports provided in general education classrooms that incorporate universal screening, progress monitoring and prescriptive assessment to design instruction. Expectations are taught, reinforced and monitored in all settings by all adults. Discipline and other data inform the design of interventions that are preventative and proactive.

- **Tier II** – targeted small group instruction - intensive specialized interventions for students identified as at-risk of academic, social or behavioral challenges or identified as underachieving who require specific supports to make sufficient progress in general education. This also applies to students who are in need of gifted and talented supports. Supports are provided with consistency by highly trained teachers and include progress monitoring and assessments presented at students’ instructional levels to measure growth towards benchmarks.

- **Tier III** - individualized intervention by specialists and/or referral for special education or gifted programs based on ongoing progress monitoring and/or diagnostic assessment.

A variety of interventions will be offered by teachers to support academic needs. Leveled Literacy intervention is provided one-on-three to students K-3, as needed as the proven, research-based program used for struggling readers.

There will also be multiple support systems built into the school to ensure student’s mental, emotional, social, developmental, and health needs are met, and both health and mental health personnel will be assigned to the school to coordinate these services. Student needs will be assessed and appropriate support will be scheduled in collaboration with the classroom teacher and support staff.

Ashley Elementary will use an MTSS team to work with all general education teachers to support differentiation and Tier II & II interventions. The MTSS team will implement a universal screening using normative data tools and other curriculum based measures to identify students for Tier II interventions that target specific areas of need. These Tier II interventions include, but are not limited to, small group instruction within the general education classroom, ELL supports and programming, affective education, and research based programs. The progress of students receiving Tier II interventions will be monitored weekly by the MTSS team. If students aren’t achieving their aim-line or responding to these Tier II interventions (6 week

period), they will be referred for Tier III interventions and the MTSS team will work to identify a root cause of the academic struggle and create a full MTSS plan to address this need. All Tier III interventions will be research proven. These interventions may include, but are not limited to, Wilson Reading System, Foundations, Spellography, ALEKS and Why Try. All MTSS plans will be closely monitored and measured for efficacy; the team will make alterations when necessary and give referrals to Special Education when appropriate.

## **F. Gifted and Talented Students**

The blended learning design, data-driven instructional grouping, and enrichments offered at Ashley Elementary School are uniquely suited to challenging and empowering of gifted and talented students through differentiated curriculum and assessments, enrichment, and advanced learning opportunities. Collaborative projects will also encourage students to take action on real world problems and to make their work public in meaningful ways. Because students identified as gifted and talented (G/T) will not be isolated in classes with others identified as G/T, they will learn to work in diverse groups and to collaborate with students who have other talents and interests.

Ashley Elementary School employs a centrally hired GT specialist. The GT specialist is responsible for GT assessment and identification, developing and monitoring progress on Advanced Learning Plans, consulting with teachers on curriculum extensions, and providing direct support to students. The GT teacher is evaluated jointly by the school and the district GT Director.

The top performing students at Ashley will receive advanced learning opportunities such as curriculum compacting or acceleration, clustering of high performing students for instruction, and enrichment opportunities even if they are not all identified as gifted and talented.

A nomination form describing the district HGT magnet program and information about the nomination process will be distributed each fall to all students in the Denver Public Schools. This district HGT magnet program is available for all students who qualify based on demonstrated achievement, tested potential, teacher recommendations, identifiable characteristics and/or demonstrated need. These students make up approximately 2% of the student population.

Each identified gifted and talented student will receive an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). Gifted and talented students often have unique social/emotional needs coupled with advanced intellectual abilities. Advanced Learning Plans can provide avenues for gifted students to realize their potential and experience success. The ALP will provide documentation for gifted education services in the student's areas of strengths, the student's yearly growth, and the ways that the student's academic, social, and emotional needs will be addressed. This establishes a partnership among the gifted student, the classroom teacher, the parent/guardian, and the gifted education specialist at the school.



Student progress toward ALP goals will be monitored throughout the year and goal attainment will be documented at the end of each year in collaboration with the classroom teacher, parent/guardian, and GT specialist. GT student achievement data and growth will be reviewed throughout the year and adjustments made according to the ALP and the student instructional levels indicated in student achievement data.

## **Section IV: TEACHING**

### **A. Teacher Recruitment, Hiring, & Retention**

At Ashley Elementary we know that good teaching matters. Research consistently shows effective teaching is the single most important school-based factor that advances student learning. Therefore, Ashley will aggressively recruit top candidates for based on our primary criteria for hiring teachers; mission compatibility, demonstrated student achievement with a similar student population, the capacity to communicate and work effectively across differences of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation (among others), communication skills, and work ethic/resilience. In addition, the hiring team will screen deeply at every stage for cultural competence, specific experience with the target demographics and review a variety of factors and experiences that predict authentic relationships and success with students.

Ashley Elementary will not adhere to the district staffing cycle; it will post vacancies when they become open. The school will work with the district HR office to post positions through the district website. In addition to this posting, the school will engage in independent outreach efforts to recruit candidates outside of the centralized recruitment channels. Recruiting efforts will take full advantage of our local and national partners and online job boards. Some of these include: Teach for America, Denver Public Schools and a variety of local and national universities and schools of education.

Ashley elementary school classroom teachers will be required to hold a Colorado license. Students will receive core academic instruction by teachers who meet the qualification criteria of the Elementary and Secondary School Act (ESSA). Licensed or non-licensed personnel may be hired to provide supplemental instruction and enrichment. Finger printing and background checks will be required for anyone who supervises students.

The school will consider all eligible applicants, including district teachers who apply to transfer for vacancies. Transfers will not receive priority consideration. Ashley Elementary will not accept direct placements from the district or assignment of unassigned non-probationary teachers. The Ashley Elementary principal, in consultation with the SLT, will make decisions related to Reduction in Building Staff (RIBS) and selection of candidates for vacancies.

A temporary hiring committee will be constructed for each vacant position. The hiring committee will make recommendations on candidates with final determination to be made by the school principal. To the extent possible, the hiring committee will include representatives

from all staffing areas that will be affected by the new hire, such as the teaching team, an administrator, special education, and support staff. Applicants with promising resumes complete written questions, and then will be called for 30-minute phone screens, and applicants that pass this screen will be invited for in-person, full-day interviews that involve teaching a sample lesson, observing a lesson and meeting with members of the hiring committee. All candidates will be required to pass a DPS background check, which will be conducted through the district HR process.

Ashley Elementary focuses on cultural competence at each stage of the hiring process as well as in professional development of new and existing staff. Through written questions, phone screens, and in-person interviews, staff members are asked to demonstrate cultural competence, as defined as the capacity to work effectively across differences. Examples may include positive experiences across lines of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation among colleagues, knowledge of privilege and racism and a commitment to anti-racist teaching and actions, and effective coalition building among families and community. Once a part of the team, all Ashley Elementary staff members will participate in cultural competence training sessions at multiple times throughout the course of the year.

### **B. Teacher Coaching**

Feedback, coaching, and professional development are an integral part of the success of the Ashley Elementary innovation plan. Administrators support teachers by reviewing student academic data, supporting management, and supporting implementation of school-wide cultural and instructional norms. Ashley Elementary will use the LEAP teacher effectiveness rubric as a framework for prioritizing growth goals and providing professional development, coaching, and support.

Teachers will receive feedback at least every two weeks. The principal, assistant principals and teacher leaders will be the assigned evaluators conducting formal observations and providing feedback throughout the year. Teachers will receive frequent informal observations and feedback as well as coaching and support from the principal, assistant principals, and teacher leaders. Review of instructional plans and student achievement data will be a regular part of the supervision and coaching conversations.

### **D. Professional Development**

Ashley Elementary is committed to offering comprehensive professional development to staff prior to the academic school year. The professional development topics will be determined based on school-wide goals, individual teacher goals, and student achievement data identified throughout the year.

### **Weekly Observation and Feedback**

Teachers will be provided with frequent feedback on instruction through a weekly observation and feedback cycle with their assigned evaluator and teacher leaders / coaches. Individualized professional growth plans will be guided by information from observations, analysis of lesson plans, and student progress data.

### **Weekly Early Release Time**

One afternoon a week, students will be released early. This early dismissal for students will allow for educators to analyze data, meet in grade level groups, and participate in workshops led by the principal, teacher leaders, district staff, or outside experts.

### **Additional PD Options**

Additional professional training and development opportunities will be offered outside of the regular calendar and schedule. These classes will align to the innovation plan priorities and will offer staff options for expanding their expertise to new areas or deepening their learning. Examples include Spanish classes for educators and more in-depth technology integration classes.

### **Evaluation of PD**

The professional development program will be evaluated regularly by the School Instructional Leadership Team. The evaluation of the professional development program will include analyzing its impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement. If teacher effectiveness and/or student achievement are not increasing at an adequate rate to reach the school's goals, the ILT will determine necessary changes to the professional development program.

## Section V: GOVERNANCE & FINANCE

### A. School Governance

Ashley Elementary believes that by revising the typical governance structure, the School Leadership Team (SLT) takes on a new and innovative role that will best meet the needs of Ashley's students. The School Leadership Team will provide a collaborative decision-making structure that involves parents, teachers and community representatives. The School Leadership Team will also have increased responsibilities within Ashley Elementary. The goal of the School Leadership Team is to unite Ashley's stakeholders, including its principal, parents, teachers, support staff, and community members around the common goal of planning and implementing strategies in a collaborative method to significantly increase student achievement.

The CSC will be replaced with the Ashley Elementary School Leadership Team (SLT). The SLT will comply with State Law on School Accountability Committees. Information from the SLT will be presented monthly to the Ashley Parent Organization, and posted on the school website to ensure timely, transparent conversation and decisions. Agendas for meetings will be sent monthly to the Ashley faculty and are set by the school leader. Should a family or faculty member like to add additional items to the agenda, they will approach the school leader or a member of the SLT with the school leader ultimately addressing the item in the most appropriate manner. The membership of the SLT will include 13 voting members determined through the following process:

#### Positions assigned by the principal:

- 1 Principal
- 3 Other Administrative Positions

#### Positions elected by majority vote (serving 1 year terms):

- 4 Teachers
- 4 Parents
- 1 Support Staff Member

#### The SLT shall have the following responsibilities:

- Meet in September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April and May
- Recommending final candidates to the LLN & DPS for the principal position when a vacancy exists
- Providing guidance and recommendations to the principal regarding all responsibilities of the CSC detailed in Policy BDFH in addition to the following:
  - Approving the school's annual budget
  - Determining and approving the school's master calendar and schedule
  - Making recommendations regarding the school's culture and behavior, services for special populations, and use of school facilities
  - Annual review of the School Innovation Plan using data to identify successes, challenges, areas for growth and changes in the coming year.

- Directly communicate decisions and information to the faculty to ensure transparency and voice. All faculty are encouraged to talk with the school leader directly should a topic for discussion emerge.

When significant changes are being proposed to the calendar, schedule, or educational programs, the school leader and the SLT will seek input from teachers and parents. In addition to its other duties and responsibilities, the SLT will provide input on the evaluation of: the educational programs, the SLT, the principal, and the innovation plan. Evaluations will include an annual, formal review focused on accountability for implementation of the innovation plan and progress toward achievement goals. Annually, the Ashley staff will receive a survey from the SLT which asks them to provide feedback on core components of the plan. This feedback will then be used by the SLT in their decision making as they evaluate the implementation of our school plan. The Ashley SLT believes that review of this feedback and data will guide the continued evolution and implementation of the plan.

In the event that an annual review of the innovation plan surfaces a needed change that requires a substantive revision to the innovation plan, including a change that would require additional waivers, the SLT will make the decision to go forward and will lead the revision process. The revision process would include: researching the proposed changes; gathering input from stakeholders; obtaining consent from the majority of teachers, administrators, and the school leadership team; documenting support from other school employees, students and parents of students enrolled in the school, and the community surrounding the school; submitting the revisions to the district for review, and obtaining approval from the DPS and state boards of education.

The **School Principal** is the Instructional and Administrative Leader at Ashley Elementary and oversees the day-to-day operations of the school. The principal, working collaboratively with the SLT and with input from faculty, staff, parents, and community representatives, is responsible for decisions on curriculum, instruction, assessment, the selection, assignment and evaluation of all faculty and staff, development of the budget and compensation system, as well as general administrative duties. The principal's responsibilities are to the students and faculty of Ashley Elementary School. In order to be an effective leader, the principal, with input from the SLT, must be able to make full use of the school's resources (time, money, and people) to implement the innovation plan and reach its goals.

## **B. Budget and Policy Narrative**

Ashley Elementary will strategically identify and allocate financial resources to ensure the effective implementation of its innovation plan.

### **Salaries**

Ashley Elementary will budget based on actual v. average salaries. The current difference between Ashley Elementary salaries and the DPS average is estimated by the DPS budget office

to be \$300,000. This amount is included in the proposed innovation budget as revenue and is reduced each year to reflect the potential diminishing of this revenue source if the school does not experience staff turnover and the actual school salaries increase over time. Ashley Elementary will adopt a salary schedule that will meet or exceed the district's. Teachers will be provided with additional compensation for additional time, additional responsibilities, and/or additional level of performance as determined by the school SLT consistent with the innovation plan and available funds.

### **District Goods and Services**

Ashley Elementary will annually select district services that align to the innovation plan. Ashley will opt out of central services when those services do not align or when more efficient and effective options are identified by the SLT.

Ashley will opt out of the district's literacy and mathematics curricular materials, interim assessments, and related professional development. The associated cost savings will be used to purchase and create new curricular materials, 6 week short-cycle assessments, and related professional development. The shortfall of will be covered using funding allocated to the school for this restructuring via a school improvement grant.

Ashley will purchase and maintain its own iPads and instructional technology. In addition to technology funding provided by the district, private donations have been identified and will be secured for purchasing the technology necessary to implement the 1:1 initiative outlined in the innovation plan. Technology maintenance and support will be provided by a dedicated staff member.

### **Other Revenue**

Ashley Elementary leadership will work with the School Leadership Team to identify and pursue other grants, donations, and fundraising opportunities.

### **C. Facility**

Ashley Elementary School will remain in its current facility. Facility renovations, as outlined in the budget section, may be necessary if increased student enrollment is realized as a result of effective implementation of the innovation plan.

## Section VI: WAIVERS

### A. District Policy Waivers

Ashley Elementary School requested and received waivers from DPS district policies. Below is a summary of the existing policy as well as replacement language for each of the policies that Ashley has been approved by the DPS Board of Education to waive out of.

### B. State Statute & Rules Waivers

Ashley Elementary School is requesting waivers from state statutes and policies in accordance with the Innovation Schools Act.<sup>1</sup> Below is a summary of the policy along with replacement language for each of the statutes Ashley seeks to waive out of.

### C. Collective Bargaining Agreement Waivers

Ashley Elementary School requested waivers from district negotiated collective bargaining agreements. Below is a summary of the article along with replacement language for each of the articles Ashley has waived out of. Ashley's teachers voted via secret ballot on Monday December 2<sup>nd</sup> to waive provisions of the DCTA Collective Bargaining Agreement detailed below. The vote passed 18-5 exceeding the 60%+1 super-majority required to approve these waivers.

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<sup>1</sup> See 33-32.5-108 (1) and (2), C.R.S. for specificity on state statutes that cannot be waived out of using an innovation plan.