

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Kristine Ann Walker

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

Official School Name Stapleton Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 702 6th Street P.O. Box 128

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

City Stapleton    State NE    Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 69163-5364

County Logan

Telephone (308) 636-2252    Fax (308) 636-2618

Web site/URL http://www.stapletonschools.org/    E-mail kris.walker@stapletonschools.org

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/spsbroncos    Facebook Page http://www.facebook.com/StapletonPublicSchools    Google+ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Name of Superintendent\*Mr. Clayton Waddle    E-mail clayton.waddle@stapletonschools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Stapleton Public Schools    Tel. (308) 636-2252

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)    Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Joshua Allen  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)    Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

### DISTRICT

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

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

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	9	10	9
K	3	5	8
1	5	6	11
2	7	6	13
3	8	7	15
4	6	13	19
5	13	8	21
6	3	10	13
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	54	65	119

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 95 % White
  - 1 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 6%

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	121
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.058
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %  
1 Total number ELL

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

Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 42 %  
Total number students who qualify: 49

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %  
18 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 0 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 4 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 0 Other Health Impaired
- 7 Specific Learning Disability
- 7 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	8
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	3
Paraprofessionals	2
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 15:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	95%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**  
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.  
Yes    No X

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

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

Learners Today. Responsible Citizens Tomorrow is the mission of the Stapleton Public Schools. It was adopted in January 2016.

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

## PART III – SUMMARY

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Imagine a small village in Nebraska surrounded by farms and large ranches in the Sandhills. Here lies Stapleton, the county seat of Logan county, with a population of 307 friendly and honest people. It is a place where you will be greeted with a down home greeting and where everybody knows your name. A community rich in tradition, we are home to “The Biggest Little Rodeo in Nebraska”. Community members show integrity, a strong work ethic, and school pride. Tradition has shown education to be valued from the beginning in Stapleton. This is reflected in our mission statement: “Learners Today. Responsible Citizens Tomorrow.”

The town was founded in 1913, along with the first school, which was started in a two-room building. Enrollment increased making it necessary to build a brick school in 1914. The school has been expanded and updated throughout the years. The 1914 portion of the school is still standing and in use today. Stapleton Public School is the only school district in the County. The district consists of 596.8 square miles with land in five counties. The student body is drawn primarily from Logan county although 29.3% of our students option into the district.

The elementary school has adopted key strategies to improve our school system. Six years ago our school was in academic distress. We were ranked in the bottom 5% of the schools in Nebraska, which was not where we wanted to stay. We had to reconstruct our curriculum and many of our teaching methods. We reached out for help from the WestEd organization, a center for school transformation. They provided professional development for our instructors and administrators. Some of the key strategies they helped us to implement include: lengthening our day to allow more instruction time, identifying our essential curriculum, creating formative and benchmark assessments, developing a standards-based report card, designing an evaluation system based on the Charlotte Danielson model, designing a positive behavior system, forming data collection teams including students, stakeholders, and instructors, implementing parent nights, and adding interventions for students.

The dedicated staff showed great perseverance by putting in countless hours to rebuild the integrity of our school and the benefits have paid off. It took us over three years of meeting during and after school to implement our essential standards and change our curriculum and teaching methods. The faculty kept our focus on the students and how the process would benefit them. We now stand united in our efforts. Throughout this transformation the climate of our school has changed. Now we strive for student success and nothing less, with the school goal of 80% of our students scoring 80% or higher on all assessments.

We have celebrated many milestones. We are currently in our second year after completing the work with WestEd. We are maintaining our academic success and we continue to grow. We recently received an exceptional classification from the Nebraska Department of Education. We now rank in the top 10% of the state, rather than the bottom 5%. Once again, our students, parents, community, and staff can be proud of our combined efforts, as we continue to strive for improvement.

Our vision is to continue to be an academic leader where students discover and enhance their talents. We use many key strategies and programs throughout our school to encourage everyone to become the most successful version of themselves. We have a school-wide behavior plan. The students are rewarded for showing integrity, responsibility, respect, and being active learners. Our elementary values leadership through our student council. We host a spelling bee and a geography bee, and our students are competitive in academic quiz bowl. Excellence is shown in music, art, and athletics. Our coaches offer youth volleyball, football, basketball, track, and wrestling. Once a month we have our “Bronco Bash”. This celebration honors our elementary students for their outstanding efforts socially, behaviorally, and academically. At the end of the year we honor high achievers and those who show the greatest improvement at our Awards Program.

Stapleton Public Schools value learning, collaboration, commitment, engagement, excellence, and accountability. We care about the academic and emotional development of every child. We provide a safe, supportive environment for everyone to become successful. We believe that students can accomplish more

when all the stakeholders collaborate together. We are committed to leveraging school and community resources to prepare all students to be college and career ready. Our staff engages students in active, relevant learning experiences, guided by highly qualified educators and supported by an active, involved community network. We strive for excellence made possible through high expectations, hard work, discipline, strong academics, co-curricular activities, and character development. We use demographic, achievement, program and survey data to hold students, staff, and stakeholders accountable for the continuous improvement of the district. We strive for success and nothing less.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

Mathematics, science, social studies and English/language arts are taught in grades K-6. Each core utilizes a commercial curriculum but they are used as resources only. The curriculum is based on the Nebraska State Standards. All essential standards will be taught and mastered however not all textbook chapters will be covered. No core aligns 100% with any state's standards. Instructors have identified, modified, and created instructional materials that support student learning for every subject. One of the modifications is differentiated materials and instruction for students. Paraprofessionals work with students one-on-one and in small groups. The school goal states that 80% of students will score 80% or higher on all assessments. WIN (What I Need) time is scheduled for all grades. Students who do not meet the goal are retaught and reassessed during this time. WIN time is also used to challenge high ability students. Study Island is a web-based program used to allow students to work independently, to master state-specific and grade-level standards in math and reading. It is used to reinforce learning for students at all levels.

ELA (English/language arts) is emphasized. Reading and language arts are taught to all classes the first two hours of the day. Students are grouped by their ability within the classroom or by walking up or down a grade. Groupings are based on analysis of the following assessments: Reading Mastery Placement, STARS Accelerated Reading, DIBELS - Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills, teacher created formative & summative assessments, MAPS (Measures of Academic Progress Achievement Test), and NeSA (Nebraska State Assessment). Essential ELA standards are also taught during library instruction which is scheduled for at least thirty minutes, once a week, for all classes.

Reading Mastery was adopted six years ago because of the use of student ability grouping and explicit instruction. This curriculum is designed for struggling readers. Most of our students are no longer struggling. 94% of our students were proficient on the last state assessment. Language Arts and writing are not strong components in this program. Several programs are used to improve skills of students performing below grade level. Corrective Reading, a component of Reading Mastery, is used for SPED students. The Rewards program focuses on multisyllabic words. Read Live and RAZ (Reading A-Z) Kids are web based programs that are used to increase student's fluency and comprehension.

Writing is our weakest area. In 2012/2013 the state raised cut scores and 62% of our students scored proficient in writing. To address this weakness, writing was scheduled for at least thirty minutes a day for each grade. Writing and science is departmentalized for 5th and 6th grade students, which reflect the instructor's strengths. The 3rd, 4th, and 6th instructors have received NeSA Writing Rubric and Scoring training, provided by NDE (Nebraska Department of Education). All instructors, K-12, use Write Source as a resource and have been, or will be trained in Write Tools. All instructors, Preschool-12, read and score students writing during an in-service day. Common writing expectations were developed which are posted and incorporated in every classroom K-12. Students' writing has improved as reflected by the last NeSA Writing Assessment. 80% of students were proficient.

Kindergarten through secondary instructors are presently transitioning to the new College and Career Ready ELA standards that will be more rigorous academically. Essential standards have been determined and aligned, Preschool-12th grade. Curriculum materials will be evaluated to determine which core most closely matches those standards.

Math is scheduled and taught for one and a half hours in each grade. The core curriculum is Saxon Math. Our students score highly on all math assessments. The spiraling curriculum and constant reviews are very beneficial, however it has been the most challenging to adapt to the essential standards curriculum process. Students are able to walk up a grade if data on assessments support the move.

Essential standards were selected and aligned for science and social studies. Curriculum has been developed that aligns with these selected Nebraska standards. Grades K-4 use FOSS (Full Option Science System) Kits as a resource and curriculum and resources designed by instructors. FOSS is a research-based science

curriculum which focuses on active learning and discovery for students. Science Fusion was selected by 5th-8th grade instructors because it was designed for building inquiry and STEM skills. This is a digital curriculum which includes virtual labs, hands-on activities, leveled readers and write-in science textbooks. Studies Weekly is the resource used for Social Studies k-6. It was chosen because of its alignment with the state standards. It provides for the very difficult to find, up-to-date, Nebraska information.

Three and four year old students attend the all day, Stapleton preschool five days a week. The research based core curriculum used is Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum. It focuses on; letter knowledge, phonics, math, literacy, science, the arts and social, physical and,emotional development. The instructors are able to tailor the lessons and active engagement experiences to promote individualized learning. The corresponding GOLD assessment tool provides ongoing feedback that is provided to the parents, and is used to differentiate instruction. The preschool teacher participates fully in the selection of essential standards and the pk-12th grade alignment process. Teaching Strategies aligns with K-3 standards by preparing them for kindergarten through academics and life experiences. Students who participated in early childhood learning in previous years were better prepared for kindergarten than those who did not participate.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Stapleton Elementary non-core subjects include physical education/health, music, art, guidance and library/technology. K-4th grade students attend physical education/health for 27 minutes and music classes for 27 minutes, five days a week. 5th grade students attend music on odd numbered days and physical education on even day for an entire 55 minute period. 6th grade students attend music on even numbered days and physical education on odd numbered days for an entire 55 minute period. K-6th grade students receive art one day a week for 55 minutes. Guidance and library/technology is taught for 30 minutes one day a week. 100% of our students participate in these non-core subjects. Instructors who teach these classes are fully endorsed in their areas.

Non-core instructors have each selected essential standards based on Nebraska's State Standards and national standards. They have created formative assessments to check for learning and benchmark assessments which test for mastery of the content. Non-core instructors are participants in the curriculum alignment process and take responsibility for teaching and assessing core subject standards that apply to their subject area. There is not adequate time for core subject instructors to teach and assess all essential standards.

The guidance instructor is responsible for some social studies such as the kindergarten social studies standard which states, "Students will identify choices they have made and explain why they had to make that choice." A second grade standard states, "Students will identify characteristics of good citizenship such as establishing beliefs, justice, truth, equality, personal responsibility for the common good, and tolerance for diversity of opinions."

The library/technology instructor is responsible for teaching and assessing a portion of the 2014 College and Career Ready English Language Arts Reading and Multiple Literacy standards. She also teaches 5th and 6th grade writing standards such as research skills and how to cite sources using MLA. The library/technology instructor teaches the proper use and care of Chromebooks and I-Pads which are housed in the library. She collaborates with instructors on lessons and units using this technology.

The music teacher also collaborates with classroom teachers. He teaches syllables to the kindergarten students using rhythm to memorize their spelling words. He also teaches fourth graders the use of fraction with whole notes, half notes, and quarter notes.

The staff developed writing expectations which are posted in all classrooms, core and non-core, K-12. All instructors agreed to commit to those standards for all assignments. The preschool's curriculum, Gold Teaching Strategies, covers music, physical education, music, and art. These subjects are taught in the classroom by the preschool instructor, as directed by NDE, to maximize student learning time. The social/emotional curriculum component serves as guidance instruction. It teaches students to: regulate their own emotions and behavior, establish and sustain positive relationships, and to participate cooperatively and

constructively in group situations. The guidance counselor meets with students one on one. Preschool students visit the county library once a week for story time and to check out books. The music and industrial art instructors visit the classroom.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

At Stapleton Public Schools we practice fidelity to our standards and not to a particular curriculum. Our essential standards process defines what curriculum and interventions are used in the classroom. We begin with high quality instruction which includes student engagement strategies that bring energy into the classroom to benefit student achievement. Students are grouped based on ability and provide special education services. Students are given ample time to practice each standard and given additional resources to assist students in need. Cooperative learning provides a chance for students to collaborate about content that is being covered. Once students are ready, teachers administer a formative assessment to see if our students meet the school goal of 80% of our students performing 80% or higher on each standard. Based on the results of those assessments, teachers and support personnel provide interventions during our “What I Need Time.” So, students can be provided with one on one, small, or large group instruction. The students that have not passed continue working on that standard and students who have passed are given the opportunity for higher learning. Interventions are also determined based on teacher observations and other assessments administered throughout the year.

In reading, the main curriculum used is Reading Mastery, which provides ability based instruction. To cover each standard, the teacher uses direct instruction followed by cooperative learning. Accelerated Reader is used as a reading incentive to promote extra reading practice. Many different intervention resources are used. Reading A to Z, Read Live, and Study Island are just a few to name.

Continuing on, the main curriculum used in math is Saxon. In the primary grades, it emphasizes direct instruction. Teachers use the “I do,” “we do,” “you do,” instructional strategy when working on new examples. Additional practice and interventions are provided through cooperative learning, Study Island, math fact practice, and other math resources.

Science and social studies instruction continues to follow our essential standards. This instruction time includes many activities that call for cooperative learning across ability levels. FOSS kits, Studies Weekly, and Scholastic News are utilized during instruction.

In conclusion, Stapleton Public Schools uses essential standards and data to drive instruction. 80% of the students will perform 80% or higher on each standard influences the instructional methods and interventions of the school.

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

Stapleton Public Schools provides a variety of strategies and types of assessments for assessing student learning and teacher instruction to improve and maintain high levels of student and school performance. First, Stapleton schools uses many different types of assessment material to drive academic achievement. The types of assessments used are: NeSA, MAPS, Dibels, Benchmarks (formative and summative), placement tests, STARS, and AR (Accelerated Reader.) The data gathered from these assessments is used to create strategies that are implemented school-wide. These strategies entail: PLC time to collaborate over data, evaluate curriculum, discuss students who are struggling, meeting, or exceeding the standards, WIN time (What I Need), which is reteaching standards and small group work, goal of 80% or higher on each standard within the benchmark assessment, standards-based report cards, and provide clear expectations for students and teachers.

Next, overall student achievement is posted on the school’s website, newspaper, school celebrations; individual student achievement is sent home to parents, recognized at celebrations, reflected on standard-based report cards, and Powerschool. If students are consistently falling short of our expectations, their needs are addressed during WIN time (What I Need/intervention time), staff support including SAT recommendations, and differentiated instruction based on data. To maintain high levels of achievement,

teachers have monthly PLC (Professional Learning Community) meetings to discuss data. To maintain high levels of achievement by teachers and students the following programs are utilized: teacher mentoring is provided to new teachers, teacher workshops that address specific needs of our school, professional growth, new-teacher orientation, expectations are schoolwide, and positive reinforcements are provided through Quiz Bowl, HAL (High Ability Learners), and various other student activities to nurture and enhance academic growth and success.

In conclusion, assessment and data drive every facet of our school's academic growth, achievement, and success.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Stapleton Elementary School created a School Wide Positive Behavior plan. The purpose of the plan is to benefit children by: providing positive behavior support, increase positive behavior and rule-following, and reduce office referrals. Expected positive outcomes are that students would associate office visits with positive, rather than negative consequences and it would provide an opportunity for positive contact with parents. The committee knew that this plan would require the commitment of the entire staff, instructors, para-educators and administration. All staff members were trained initially and the plan is reviewed each year.

The plan is called “Kids of Character”. Overarching principles state that all students will act with integrity by being: active learners, respectful, responsible, and compassionate. A rubric was created that integrate these principles into the school culture. Posters of this rubric were created and placed in strategic areas in the school. We begin the school year by touring the school and explicitly teaching the rubric by stating what these principles look like in the classroom, cafeteria, hallways, bathroom, playground and on the bus. This tour is repeated after semester break. Students also recite the school pledge daily which reiterates these principles.

Staff members fill out a ticket when a student is “caught being good.” The student takes the ticket to the office. The first time they are caught the principal telephones the parents and shares the good news. In addition they receive a corresponding “Kids of Character” bracelet. A picture is taken of the student and posted on a bulletin board. A celebration is held once a month. Five “Caught Being Good” tickets are pulled out of a box and those students eat lunch with the principal in a special designated area. Students are also honored for mastery of standards and perfect attendance. Celebrations are also used as academic pep rallies and to reinforce academic and social skills.

A Stapleton Elementary Behavior Chart was created which outlines the roles of the teacher, principal and guidance counselor and the steps taken by each. This correlates closely with the Boys Town Behavior Classroom Management program used by the school. The administrator and teachers have all received this training.

Students receive guidance instruction from the counselor for 30 minutes once a week. She also meets with students and groups that have been referred to her by teachers or administrators. With these school supports there is a reduction in problem behaviors and office referrals. Students perceive school as a safer, more supportive environment. Academic performance improves and there is an increase in family involvement. It also benefits instructors and staff because there is improved consistency, more collaboration, improved classroom management, and classroom routines.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Six years ago WestEd conducted its initial survey of parents. One of the most glaring findings was that parents did not feel welcome, and in fact, felt that they were barred from visiting the school. It was necessary to build positive relationships with parents and the community. One of the components of our school’s turnaround was the creation of the community liaison position. The liaison function was to form a bridge between the school and the community.

Open houses were scheduled where parents could meet with the administration and the liaison. Discussions were held explaining new programs, questions were answered and parents visited their student’s classrooms. Next a volunteer program was created. Currently, each classroom has a “room mother” who plans parties, creates bulletin boards and works with the instructor. Four parent nights, one each quarter, were initially held. We now have two a year, which are very well attended. The first is a game night where parents and students play educational games. The second is a science/social studies fair where students show projects that they have created with their parent’s assistance. These were first attended only by

elementary students and parents but now 7-12 students and parents are participating. The community liaison also plans and publicizes the annual spelling and geography bee. They attend community meetings and meet weekly with our local newspaper to share news items. This will be the second year that the school will participate in the Community Clean Up Day. This year the community liaison worked with the guidance counselor to plan a Career Day where students visited community businesses. Our county librarian approached the community liaison to increase circulation of materials. The preschool now attends story time and checks books out weekly as do other classes. Library activities and check outs are also a part of our summer school curriculum.

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled to facilitate parent attendance. This schedule is mailed to the parent(s) before conferences. Instructors meet the school goal with 100% of the parents attending the conferences. The SPED teacher also attends the parent/teacher conference with the students in the program. The standard based report card more specifically communicates what students are learning in the classroom. Parents are also able to monitor grades using PowerSchool.

Parents receive school communication through the school website, Facebook, Blackboard twitter, and frequent teacher phone calls. The school web page has been improved and is better maintained than it has been in the past. Facebook is also used to communicate with the public. We have received 350 likes from a town with a population of 300.

### 3. Professional Development:

Professional Development is a vital part of our instruction and student achievement at Stapleton Public School. We have utilized WestEd, Nebraska Department of Education, and Educational Service Unit.

Our training began with WestEd, a turnaround school program, which provides professional development for struggling schools. Through WestEd we were able to prioritize our essential standards. Teachers and administrators were trained in teaching strategies to promote student achievement and school improvement. They were also trained in RTI, focusing on tier two and tier three interventions for academics. A positive behavior support model was adopted which focuses on behavior and school climate. What I Need (WIN) is a time for intervention, enrichment, reteaching and reassessing students who do not master the essential standards. Professional Learning Communities (PLC), introduced by WestEd, have allowed teachers and administrators to collaborate on student achievement and school improvement.

Through NDE we have implemented the Danielson Framework Model for Teaching. This framework has been the basis for our teacher and principal evaluations, classroom instruction, and classroom environment. Additionally our teachers have attended writing workshops to prepare our students for the Nebraska State Writing Assessment (NeSA). NDE has also provided training for the transition into the new College and Career Ready English Language Arts standards and assessments. The preschool teacher and paraprofessional have attended training for Creative Curriculum, GOLD, and Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS). Creative Curriculum is designed to interface with GOLD assessment to allow our preschool teacher to prepare students for kindergarten. ECERS training is designed to provide the highest quality environment for our preschool students, indoors and out.

The ESU provides continuous support for our staff. They play a major role in the area of special education providing the following services: speech, occupational and physical therapy, inclusion, behavior, transition, deaf and hard of hearing, and SPED consultants. A series of New Teacher trainings support first year instructors and provides collaboration with other area first year instructors. The administration and instructors attended Write Source and Six Traits training which prepares teachers to deliver high quality writing instruction to our students. A preschool PLC meets bi-monthly to allow area teachers to collaborate on new techniques, behavioral strategies, and classroom management. ESU16 tailors professional development to our teachers and administrators needs to facilitate the best educational experience for our students.

Professional development is valued at Stapleton Public Schools. There is no limit on the professional

development days for instructors or administrators. Professional development impacts staff capacity, student achievement and school improvement. It ensures a successful educational system.

#### 4. School Leadership:

After being placed on the PLAS (Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools) list a change in leadership and philosophy was required. A new K-6 principal was hired with PLC (Professional Learning Community) title and responsibility added to the position. The essence of the PLC process is now the guiding philosophy of the school. This essence is encapsulated in three big ideas. The purpose of our school is to ensure all students learn at high levels. Helping all students learn, and guiding and nurturing system change, requires a collaborative and collective effort between instructors, administration and stakeholders. There is a focus on results, rather than intentions. All instructors are encouraged to become leaders. There is a component in our evaluation tool which states that teachers will make a substantial contribution to the professional community and assume a leadership role among the faculty.

Leadership is distributed. A six member leadership team includes an elementary, special, and SPED instructor. It also includes the elementary principal, superintendent/7-12 principal and athletic/activity director. They guide the school improvement process and are preparing for the AdvanEd visit. There is one in-service day a month where the K-12 PLC and the four academic (English/social studies, math/science, vocational and SPED) PLCs meet to achieve the district goals. The first goal is that 80% of students will score 80% or higher on all assessments. The second goal states that each K-12 instructor will implement the essential curriculum process in one class per semester. This goal was created after the student success shown in the elementary. Elementary instructors, who were trained in this process, and have implemented it in all core subjects over the past five years, are placed on each academic PLC to guide and assist the 7-12 instructors. This method fosters continuous improvement and purposeful peer interactions in the pursuit of clear priorities within specific parameters; however instructors have freedom operating within the parameters. The administration assures that instructors have the time, resources and guidance to meet the goals.

The school board goals state that Stapleton Public Schools will ensure academic success for all students and that they will value and treat staff as professionals by allocating resources and providing meaningful professional development. This professional development includes a commitment that all instructors will attend a Professional Learning Community Institute.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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The most influential practice that led to our school's success is the essential standard process which is implemented in all subjects.

Instructors determine the essential standards based on endurance, leverage and readiness which are limited to eight to ten per quarter. This provides focus and deepens the level of instruction. Curriculum maps divide the standards into four quarters. All NeSA, Nebraska State Assessment standards, are taught before testing in the spring. Pacing guides, created at the beginning of each year, estimate the time needed to teach and assess the standards, and insure that all essential standards are taught.

Instructors create, post, and explain student friendly posters for each standard and for new vocabulary. They are referred to repeatedly during the lesson. Instructors state why it is important for students to master these standards. Student performance increases when students know the objective of the lesson and why it is being taught.

Instructors create formative assessments for each standard to gauge student learning. If a student scores 80% or higher they have mastered the standard. If they score lower they are retaught and reassessed during WIN - What I Need Time. At the end of each quarter a benchmark assessment for each standard is given. This is the only score that appears on the standard based report card. A score of 80%, results in a grade classification of Met, 80% or higher results in a grade classification of Exceeds, and a score lower than 80% results in a grade classification of Not Met. A celebration is held in each classroom when 80% of the students score 80% or higher on assessments.

There has been a continuous increase in students proficiency using this practice. In 2010, 75% of our 3rd through 6th grade student were proficient in reading. In 2011, the first year for the state math assessment 83% of our student were proficient in math. In 2014/2015, 94% of our students were proficient on the NeSA reading test, compared to 80% for the state. 97% of our students were proficient in math compared to 72% for the state. 93% of our students were proficient in science and 80% of our students were proficient in writing. These score correlate directly with the benchmark assessments. The 7th through 12 grade has now adopted the process.

Five years ago we ranked in the bottom 5% of Title One schools and were placed on the PLAS (Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools) list. Adequate yearly progress had not been met for three years in a row. Today the Stapleton Elementary School is classified as excellent and is ranked in the top 10% of Nebraska schools.