

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Lisa Campbell M. Ed.

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

Official School Name Northwood Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 14100 Northwood Drive

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

City Piedmont State OK Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 73078-8833

County Canadian

Telephone (405) 373-5151 Fax (405) 373-5375

Web site/URL http://www.piedmontschools.org/vnews/display.v/SEC/Northwood%20Elementary E-mail lisa.campbell@piedmontschools.org

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/NWPiedmontCat Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. James White Ph.D. E-mail james.white@piedmontschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Piedmont Public Schools Tel. (405) 373-2311

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

Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

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

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

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	38	39	77
1	58	37	95
2	59	43	102
3	49	43	92
4	57	42	99
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	261	204	465

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 7 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 6 % Asian
 - 4 % Black or African American
 - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 68 % White
 - 6 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 8%

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	27
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	35
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	438
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.080
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 8%
35 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Yoruba, Arabic, Bangladesh, Bagalee, Spanish, Swahili, Chinese, Vietnamese, Malayalam, Urdu, Hindi, Japanese, Thai, Punjabi

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 25%
Total number students who qualify: 116

8. Students receiving special education services: 17%
80 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	23
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals	4
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 20:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	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.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No X

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

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

Northwood Elementary School is committed to educating the whole child while providing a safe and nurturing environment that promotes a passion for life-long learning, respect for self and others, and an appreciation for individual differences.

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

Many families move to Piedmont, Oklahoma to take advantage of the opportunities at Piedmont Schools, which are consistently rated among the top in the state, with strong test scores, impressive graduation and attendance rates and a plethora of extra-curricular sports and activities for students to participate in. The Piedmont School district covers 96 square miles. While considered a suburb of Oklahoma City, our boundaries reach west to rural Okarche, south to suburban Yukon, north to rural Cashion and east to the metropolitan Oklahoma City. In addition to the impressive school system, families enjoy the bonus of the small town atmosphere of town festivals and parades, tight-knit community organizations and that “everybody knows your name” feel.

Northwood Elementary School serves students in grades kindergarten through fourth grade. We are completing our sixth year, since opening in the fall of 2010. Northwood has the most diverse population of the three Piedmont elementary schools, as our school attendance area pulls from the poor rural areas and the moderately-valued neighborhoods in close proximity to the school, which borders the Oklahoma City metro. While our enrollment has grown consistently over the past six years; so has the diversity of our population and our free and reduced lunch count numbers. With this significant growth, new challenges have come.

During our opening year, the student body was a fairly homogeneous group—middle-to-upper class (mostly Caucasian) families, many with stay at home moms, who strove for academic excellence. These students had involved parents who pushed their students to succeed. Over the past six years, our demographics have changed. Our most-recent free and reduced count is twenty-five percent, and now almost one-third of our students are non-Caucasian. On the first day of school this year, three of our students spoke no English. Currently, we send thirty-eight backpacks of food home with students to help keep them from being hungry on the weekends.

At Northwood Elementary School, our mission is simple: Northwood Elementary School is committed to educating the whole child while providing a safe and nurturing environment that promotes a passion for life-long learning, respect for self and others, and an appreciation of individual differences.

We know that in order to reach students academically, we must first take care of their basic needs. For example, our school nurse schedules free immunization vans twice each year to make sure students receive necessary vaccinations—including influenza and meningitis vaccines. All office staff employees are CPR and First Aide certified, and receive annual training in regards to allergies, diabetes management and other specific student health needs. The school counselor coordinates our Food Backpack program. Students experiencing traumatic situations at home, such as divorce, death or other loss are provided support through our school counseling program, Calm Waters groups and individual counseling. Also, we connect families to outside resources—optometrists, dentists, food subsidy programs, counselors, etc. We know that healthy children are better able to engage in the learning process.

Our student body represents many different cultures—Hispanic, Vietnamese, Middle Eastern, to name a few. At least thirteen different languages are spoken in our families’ homes. We have worked very hard to build strong relationships with our diverse families. Teachers have participated in professional development opportunities to better understand cultural differences. Our families are encouraged to share their languages and cultures with us. This year, our school-wide theme has been “Oh, the places we’ll go . . .” Each month we “travel” to a different part of the world to learn about the geography, customs and the people who live there. These “travels” have allowed our children from diverse backgrounds to feel valued. This has proven to be a powerful bridge between their home environments and the school community.

Students are encouraged to develop socially through organized peer interaction. We know that recess is one of the most important parts of the school day. Our students learn team building, problem solving and conflict resolution on the playground and in group activities. Our school is built on the premise that everyone is important and brings necessary attributes to our team. Students are given leadership opportunities through service learning, volunteerism, student council and leading portions of our morning assembly. Students who struggle socially are supported through small group social skills groups and individual assistance.

Student Intervention Teams, made up of the principal, counselor, classroom teacher and reading specialist, meet bi-monthly to review data, discuss concerns and implement interventions. Our meetings are a balance of looking at individual student data and discussion of the child's strengths, needs and unique circumstances. That balance is key. With intentional and data-driven decisions, the best course of action for a student with needs becomes evident.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The district and school's overarching goal for curriculum and instruction is to provide students access to a high quality, rigorous curriculum that is standards-based, relevant, and engaging. Northwood Elementary's core curriculum is based upon the Oklahoma Academic Standards. Using the standards as a foundation, teachers and leaders have worked collaboratively to map out the curriculum to facilitate learning for students. In reading/English language arts, the curriculum is built upon key literacy skills to ensure that important connections are made across reading texts and writing in response to texts. An analysis of the main purposes for writing was used to ensure that instruction includes narrative, informative, and opinion writing, and that components of each are vertically aligned in grades K-4. Many different types of progress monitoring tools are used to determine literacy proficiency. DIBELS is the district-wide assessment tool used to measure the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through fourth grade. The data from this assessment are used to differentiate reading experiences for students in the classroom to meet students where they are and to build their skills. Remediation efforts are coordinated through the principal and reading specialist, and collaboration with the classroom teacher is important to provide the targeted assistance that all students need to achieve success. Acceleration opportunities for students are also incorporated into classroom instruction. In addition to the DIBELS assessment, the STAR Early Literacy and STAR assessment programs are used to further diagnose specific skills that are strengths and weaknesses for students. Ongoing formative assessment in reading and English language arts takes place to continually assess what students know and are able to do.

In mathematics, Northwood utilizes EnVision math, which is our district-adopted curriculum. In addition, in grades K-2, teachers supplement their instruction with the Developing Number Sense to target the number sense strand and build a solid foundation of number and operations among our students. Other supplemental programs include online fluency-based mathematics games and problem-solving experiences. Number Talks have been included as a regular part of instruction in grades K-4. Number Talks are short, ongoing daily routines that provide students with meaningful ongoing practice with computation. They are powerful tools for helping students develop computational fluency because the expectation is that they will use number relationships and the structures of numbers to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Number Talks rely on mental math opportunities to help students learn to work flexibly with numbers as they acquire strategies over time. Formative assessments are utilized in math to identify target skills for students and to develop small guided math groups designed to focus on specific concepts and skills.

Over the last year, our school has been committed to our SMART goal that was established at the beginning of the year. With last year being an adoption year for science, our team of leaders across the district determined that a purposeful focus on science would be beneficial for our students, and it would also provide teachers with the necessary support to implement revised science standards, a new science curriculum, and new laboratory materials. Our SMART goal for grades K-4 is: By May 2016, all elementary students will increase their scientific reasoning skills as evidenced through journaling, observations, discussions, and participation in at least four science explorations during the school year. With an intentional focus on science integration and designing high-quality, inquiry-based explorations, we have worked toward building scientists among our students. Our elective program includes a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) course to further emphasize real-world connections in science and beyond.

Social studies and history at Northwood move far beyond the traditional scope of the discipline and include a variety of experiences in our curriculum which allow students to see meaningful social studies in action. Using the Oklahoma Academic Standards as a guide, teachers have integrated technology-based instruction and virtual field trips as a supplement to their instructional materials. These extensions allow students to experience different time periods and other geographic locations without leaving the classroom. Additionally, through incorporating children's literature into social studies instruction, student engagement increases, and important literacy skills are expanded in the content area. Teachers continually analyze formative and summative assessment data to make curricular and instructional adjustments. Exit tickets,

technology-based games and questions, and Kagan structures are just a few examples of formative assessment strategies that are commonly used.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to core curriculum, students at Northwood Elementary are given additional learning opportunities in other curriculum areas. Professor and writer, Mark Van Doren, said, “The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery”. We believe that arts, physical education, foreign languages and technology support core curriculum and are integral to our students’ success. All students, kindergarten through grade four, attend a specials’ class each day, for 50 minutes, on a rotating basis.

All students attend General Music throughout the school year. Our music program is aligned to Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS). Each class session includes vocal music, movement and instrumental music. Students begin reading music in kindergarten, with basic exposure to playing instruments, such as the xylophone, cymbals and rhythm sticks. Puppets, costumes and multi-media are used to engage students. Third and fourth graders learn to play ukuleles. Throughout the year, students study different countries and their cultures, including a folk song each month. The music teacher collaborates with grade level teachers to support core curriculum learning in the music classroom. Learning centers provide opportunities for students “practice” what they’ve learned and supplement the whole group instruction. Every grade level performs at least one concert or program each year for the school community and families. Third and fourth grade students have the opportunity to join Northwood Sound, our school’s honor choir. These students perform concerts throughout the year. A select group of students participate in Circle the State With Song, a collaborative effort of area schools.

All students receive a minimum of 90 minutes of physical education each week. Physical Education classes begin with cardiovascular activity—engaging, exciting songs paired with dancing and exercise. PE classes, including warm-up times, are also used to practice a variety of motor skills and movement patterns, such as throwing and catching in a developmentally appropriate pattern. Multiplication and math facts are often integrated into games. Thematic units provide the basis for stations and rotations that include a variety of whole body movement and specific skill practice. All lessons are aligned with OAS. Students receive implicit health instruction over a variety of topics including healthy choices, personal safety and nutritional information. Students participate in games and activities to develop physical fitness, team-building, sportsmanship and fundamentals of sports’ movements.

Technology is embedded into our classroom curriculum, across all subject areas. Each classroom has a SmartBoard, i-pads and ChromeBooks for students to use to access information, develop presentations, utilize supplemental curriculum supports and play learning games/applications. Computer banks are located in each hallway for student use.

The Piedmont School District implemented a rotation of STEM, Art and Spanish two years ago. These programs rotate through the elementaries for one-third of the year and become part of the specials’ rotation in the school. This allows our students to have further exposure to a variety of concepts. Students are encouraged to “think outside the box” and see common things in a new way.

All grade levels participate in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math—also known as STEM. Lessons, experiments and projects are designed for each grade level, aligned with OAS and Engineering Practices, and supportive of core curriculum. The STEM teacher collaborates with classroom teachers to address specific needs to supplement classroom learning. The STEM program focuses on a variety of units such as weather, motion, coding and architecture.

All grade levels participate in Spanish, our foreign language program. The Spanish teacher aligns lessons to OAS. The primary focus of elementary Spanish class is to provide students with an appreciation for learning new languages, an understanding of culture, geography, customs and basic vocabulary. Older students also learn to conjugate verbs and use basic conversation. As Oklahoma has a significant Hispanic population and history, students are also taught the connections between Oklahoma history and the impact Hispanics have made. The Spanish teacher collaborates with grade level teachers to reinforce and align

curriculum learning. Technology is utilized in whole group and center rotations. Centers also include hands-on activities, movement and listening activities.

All grade levels participate in Visual Arts. Art lessons are aligned with OAS and follow a vertical continuum. Students are exposed to art mediums that are indicative of current lessons being taught in the regular classroom. Fourth graders also have the opportunity to participate in Honors Art, an after-school program to learn Art theory and practice at a deeper level.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

At Northwood, we strive to meet the diverse needs of all our students. The Response to Intervention process is in place at Northwood. The students move through the tiered process based on the progress they make during interventions and their performance on weekly or bi-weekly progress monitoring which is based on their tier. Interventions are provided for reading and math. These include techniques from our reading and math series, The Six Minute Solution which is the companion book to DIBELS which provides specific interventions based on skill, Imagine Learning a computer based reading and language program, the website - The Florida Center of Reading Research and math games from Kathy Richardson math program, Making Words by Patricia Cunningham and Richard Allington, Words their Way by Shane Templeton and an enrichment vocabulary program by Steck-Vaughn. Interventions are tailored to meet the demonstrated need for individual children. Interventions are charted and progress is demonstrated through student growth on progress monitoring probes from DIBELS, STAR Literacy test and AIMSWeb Math.

In the classrooms, teachers use small group instruction based on student's needs for both literacy and math. While reading groups have been a staple in the school environment, we have made the shift to utilize small group math instruction as well. The small group format allows teachers to remediate or challenge for each student as appropriate. Teachers have shared that they feel having both reading and math small groups has provided them a greater opportunity to observe student learning and to see areas that need to be retaught or perhaps provide a completely different learning method or strategy for a student. The whole class format does not allow teachers to see student's learning processes at the same depth that small instruction provides. We see this shift as a real strength at our site as it empowers teachers in their decision making and instruction. Furthermore, students are the ultimate winners as their achievement is realized at a greater level.

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

Annually, the students are screened for basic reading skills using DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators in Basic Early Literacy Success). This screening takes place in the fall, winter and spring for every student. This instrument allows us to see if the student is demonstrating overall literacy health as it screens all aspects of reading. This includes phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Students who score below benchmark, are given diagnostic reading tests which include the Developmental Reading Assessment-2 and the STAR Literacy test. All of this testing is used to create an intervention plan for the student. After each screening takes place, the Student Intervention Team meets by grade level to review the results and determine the best course of action for each child. Results from screenings are shared with parents at parent-teacher conferences. Furthermore, students who score below benchmark are placed on an Academic Progress Plan. This plan is created with the parent present and outlines the specific roles of the teacher, interventionist/reading specialist and the parent. All forms of testing are shared to ensure that parents have a more complete picture of the child's specific areas of need. The Student Intervention Team meets bi-monthly to review all data and student needs. This has been a powerful opportunity for collaboration and allows for the best decisions for student success.

The Oklahoma Core Curriculum tests provide our third and fourth grade families with information showing how their students performed based on the curriculum in reading and mathematics. We use this information to form tutoring groups for fourth graders who have exhibited an area of weakness on the test the previous year. This intentional forming of before and after school groups has been a great success for our students and allowed a more focused, intentional direction for each student based on their individual strengths and weaknesses.

High achieving students are serviced in multiple ways. Our school is fortunate to have a part-time Gifted and Talented teacher that services students in a variety of ways. Small group enrichment classes are provided for second, third and fourth graders that meet the state and district criteria for the gifted and talented program. Furthermore, our gifted and talented teacher provides higher-level thinking and enrichment classes at the first grade level. She is a willing resource for all students and has created interest groups for our school community as a whole. These include small groups with kindergarten and first grade students and enrichment clubs such as Chess Club.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Northwood Elementary School has created a nurturing, positive, family atmosphere. Students are greeted each morning by staff and Paw Pride (student council). Every student stepping off the bus, every student exiting a car, every student walking through our doors are met with a smile, a “good morning”, or a fist bump—something to say we’re glad they’re here! We begin every day with an opening assembly, Wildcat Wake-Up. All students and staff gather in the gym to dance and sing (led by students), recite our school creed and fight song, the Pledge of Allegiance and the pledge to the Oklahoma flag. Also, we celebrate staff and student birthdays and accomplishments, whether from school or home.

School-wide procedures provide consistency and safety for students. Hall procedures, cafeteria procedures, arrival and dismissal procedures are posted, discussed and practiced throughout the school year. Students understand the expectation and feel secure in their school environment.

Our school community operates with a climate of mutual respect. Teachers and staff model respectful behavior and understand Debbie Silver’s comment in Education Week Teacher, “Students work hardest for teachers they like and respect. When I’m asked, ‘How do I get the students to like and respect me?’ my immediate response is, ‘Like and respect them first’”.

Teachers feel valued and supported because their ideas and opinions matter. Teachers are encouraged to take on leadership roles, try new strategies and approaches and voice their concerns. Teacher accomplishments are celebrated—new degrees, grants received, awards are all celebrated with personal notes, breakfasts, special days . . . Teacher time is important and appreciated. Processes are stream-lined to ensure that teacher time is valued. Teachers are treated as professionals, with autonomy to make decisions and problem-solve.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We know that students experience more success when educators work together with the family and community. Therefore, we encourage active participation by all stakeholders. Our school has a strong Parent-Teacher Organization. Teachers and parents work side by side to support the educational process. The WatchDOGS program—Dads of Great Students improves our school environment by having dads (or other adult males) volunteer in our classrooms and throughout the school for a day at a time. The bonus is all of our students spend quality time with a male role model. Helping Hands, parent/grandparent volunteers, make copies, laminate and help in a variety of ways. Parents are invited to serve on many school committees including our Discipline & Safety committee, Fit & Healthy Kids committee, Reading Sufficiency committee, Native American committee and Gifted and Talented committee. Many parents, grandparents and retired educators from the community serve as Reading Mentors—reading and working with students who need additional practice and assistance. Each year, Northwood Elementary partners with community businesses to cultivate a positive relationship between school and business. For two years, we have partnered with the Scottish-Rite to provide after-school tutoring for students with reading needs. We invite outside organizations to provide enrichment opportunities for our students after school, such as American Sign Language and Theater.

3. Professional Development:

Northwood Elementary is intentional in regards to professional development. Teachers complete surveys throughout the year, in order to meet the needs of teachers at this site. A professional development committee, composed of teachers, makes decisions on professional development opportunities. Staff members may request to attend outside training opportunities, on an as needed basis. Four early-release days are embedded in the school calendar to facilitate ease of professional development scheduling. This year, teachers have participated in professional development sessions to learn strategies for Science instruction aligned to the new state standards and Engineering practices. Our specific school site had a

need for English Language Learner strategies, as we have a continued increase in our ELL population. Therefore, students enjoyed a fun-filled day of “Around the World” activities with the help of parent volunteers, while teachers attended an all-day ELL training. Teacher feedback indicated that this was a much-needed and much-appreciated day of instruction. Twice this year, teachers have had the chance to learn from their colleagues with a professional development smorgasbord—teachers presenting on a variety of topics! Professional development at Northwood is always tied to specific needs, based on data and teacher input.

4. School Leadership:

The goal of leadership at Northwood Elementary can be summed up with the quote by General Douglas McArthur, “A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent.” The school principal wears many hats—providing consistency and clarity of expectations and procedures, motivating and encouraging the team, being knowledgeable about best practices and current educational research and topics, serving the staff and students in a variety of ways.

Northwood’s School Leadership Team is comprised of grade level representatives, a specials’ representative and the school principal. This team, after taking suggestions and ideas, makes decisions in regards to school policy and procedures. This team also serves as a cheerleading squad, at times. Motivating and encouraging colleagues during stressful and difficult times, such as state testing and budget cuts. Each member of the School Leadership Team also presides over a committee. They take on the responsibilities of the committee meeting schedules, record of minutes and reporting duties. Committees include Reading Council, Safety/Discipline, Fit & Healthy Kids, Professional Development, Character/Citizenship, Native American, Curriculum, Technology, Gifted Education, Partners In Education, Student Recognition and Anti-Bullying. All teachers are encouraged to lead initiatives, programs, events, etc. There is much truth in Jean-Paul Sartre’s quote, “Only the guy who isn’t rowing has time to rock the boat.”

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The Student Intervention Team is the one practice that makes Northwood so successful. The Student Intervention Team, comprised of the building principal, the classroom teacher, the reading specialist and the counselor, meet bi-monthly. The team reviews assessment data, progress monitoring data and intervention strategies being used for each student identified as at-risk. The team discusses strategies for instructional delivery of math and literacy. The team follows a three-tier Response to Intervention model.

The Universal Screener, Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills, is given within the first three weeks of school. This data is brought to the first Student Intervention Team Meeting. Students who score “benchmark” continue on Tier 1, receiving 90 minutes of effective Literacy Instruction in the regular classroom. Students who score “below” or “well below” benchmark on the DIBELS are given additional diagnostic assessments including the DRA-2 and STAR online assessment. The team analyzes this data to determine necessary levels of support. Students who are moved to Tier 2 continue with quality literacy instruction (90 minutes per day) in the regular classroom and also receive daily interventions and weekly progress monitoring by the classroom teacher. Students who are moved to Tier 3 have data that suggests more significant deficits in reading. These students also receive supplemental instruction from the reading specialist. A conference is held with the parents to create and Academic Progress Plan to address the needs and supports that will be provided for the student.

Each time the Student Intervention Team meets, the progress monitoring data is graphed and analyzed. Adjustments are made to the intensity of intervention, number of interventions, the intervention itself and the frequency of progress monitoring. The data determines the plan.

While the universal screener provides important information, it is not the sole resource. Often our best resource is the teacher. Teacher observation brings many concerns to light—is a student hungry, are they suffering emotional trauma, do they have weak number sense, are they experiencing a family crisis? All of these might lead to a student needing additional support.

At Northwood, every decision comes down to “Is this what’s best for kids”? The Student Intervention Team allows us to answer the question for each and every student.