

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 Ms. Sarah Richmond

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

Official School Name Pittsburg Intermediate School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 209 Lafayette Street

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

City Pittsburg State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 75686-1629

County CAMP COUNTY

Telephone (903) 855-3395 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.pittsburgisd.net E-mail srichmond@pittsburgisd.net

Twitter Handle _____ 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*Mrs. Judy Pollan E-mail jpollan@pittsburgisd.net

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

District Name Pittsburg ISD Tel. (903) 856-3628

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

Date

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Jack Arnwine

(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	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	87	85	172
6	98	88	186
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	185	173	358

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 20 % Black or African American
 - 38 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 39 % White
 - 3 % 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: 9%

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	15
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	32
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	364
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.088
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 21 %
75 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: 78 %
Total number students who qualify: 284
8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %
23 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11
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	2
Classroom teachers	19
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals	9
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

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 19:1

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%	97%	97%	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

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.

The mission of Pittsburg Intermediate school is to meet the diverse needs of all children and to empower them to become competent, productive contributors to a democratic society and an ever-changing world.

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

“Hand in hand, together we can!” was the original motto of Pittsburg Intermediate School. Through years of educating the school children of Camp County, Texas we have whittled our staff and beliefs in such a way we felt the need to include something in our motto about the most important part of our campus...the kids. We feel that we do everything in our power to educate every child, so our motto became “Giving our all for all our kids!” By giving our all we intend that to mean we include parents, community, staff and any other resources we see fit to help all our students succeed in becoming the best they can be academically, socially, culturally, and physically.

Pittsburg, Texas is a small town of roughly 5,000 people in the Northeast corner of Texas where U.S. Highway 271 and State Highway 11 intersect. Located near the border of the Piney Woods and Lakes and Prairies regions of Texas, we can travel an hour in three different directions and be in three different states. Our town is named after William Harrison Pitts, a Georgia-born plantation owner who settled in the area in 1854. Pittsburg is the home of former poultry producing giant Pilgrim’s Pride(now JBS), race car driver Carroll Shelby, western wear giant James Cavender, and Tennessee Titans wide receiver Kendall Wright, as well as the Ezekiel Airship. Pittsburg also shares Northeast Texas Community College, which was established in 1984, with the surrounding communities.

Pittsburg Intermediate is a fifth and sixth grade Title I campus that is dedicated to all students through hard work, high expectations, relationships, and collaboration among all teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals. Although our town is small, we have a very diverse population with regards to race, religion, and socioeconomic status. There are a limited number of job opportunities in this rural area. Many of our students come from low income homes, and great number come from Mexico. We think a lot of our success is based on the expectations we have for these students and the plan that we put in place to meet their needs. At the Intermediate School, our student population is 359 and is comprised of 39% white students, 38% Hispanic students, 20% African-American students, and 3% other. Our student population also includes 81% low socioeconomic students. The percentage of English language learners at Pittsburg Intermediate is 22%. Our Special Education population is 6%. Our attendance rate is 96%. These numbers have held steady for the past several years. Pittsburg Intermediate addresses the unique and diverse population with designated times built into the day for intervention and small group instruction. Also there is a designated time for GT students and students with dyslexia to attend the appropriate programs.

As a Title I school, Pittsburg Intermediate has earned many academic honors. In 2008-09 we were awarded a Texas Education Agency Gold Performance Award for commended performance in TAKS Math. In 2009-10 we achieved Gold Performance Awards for commended performance in TAKS Science and for comparable improvement in Reading and Math, as well as being named an Exemplary School by the TEA. In 2010-11, our awards included Gold Performance Awards for commended performance in Science and comparable improvement in Math, as well as a Title I, Part A Distinguished Performance Award from TEA. That year we were also named a Higher Performing School by the National Center for Educational Achievement. In 2013, the Texas Education Agency’s new accountability system awarded Pittsburg Intermediate a Met Standard campus with Distinction Designations for Academic Achievement in Reading/ELA, Academic Achievement in Math, and Top 25% in the state of Texas for student progress. In 2014, we once again Met Standard with Distinction Designations for Academic Achievement in Reading/ELA, Math, Science, Top 25% in Student Performance, Top 25% in Closing Performance Gaps, and Post-Secondary Readiness. In 2015, the TEA awarded Pittsburg Intermediate with Met Standard with Distinction Designations in Academic Achievement in Math, in Science, Top 25% in Closing Performance Gaps, and Post-Secondary Readiness. In May, 2015 TEA conducted a Reward School Case Study Project where they visited the school and published a report about our strategies and successes. This report is a best-practices guide for other school districts in the state. Our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) also traveled to Austin to present at the Advancing Improvements in Education (AIE) conference.

At Pittsburg Intermediate, improvement in academic performance is a continual, data-driven process with deep roots in high expectations. We are committed that all students will succeed. Regular classroom visits by all administrators are conducted to recognize positive behavior and academic success. Teachers also

recognize positive behavior and academic progress with several different approaches including reading reward days such as popcorn parties, trips to local food fast-food restaurants, trips to movie theaters, and tug-of-war days. Other motivational rewards are positive trips to the office for “cheerleading” from administrators, extra recess time, benchmark success reward days, and positive calls home. Administrators also plan a “work hard play hard day” to celebrate to students’ progress and hard work for the school year where the administrators cook lunch for the students and staff, and the students enjoy games and bounce houses. All the staff express these high expectations on a daily basis and work diligently to build relationships with students. The Instructional Leadership Team, or ILT has been in place for eleven years and there is not much teacher turnover in either fifth or sixth grade. The leadership style at Pittsburg Intermediate is to hire good staff, make them happy so they stay, and get them all the resources they need to be successful in their job. The teachers are highly competitive and want their students to achieve on a higher level than any other class or campus. We not only strive to meet the standards set forth by TEA, we challenge all our students to achieve advanced performance on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). We feel that this competitive nature really puts our students over the top.

Moreover, the upper administration at Pittsburg ISD is very committed to providing all of our five campuses with the best information and resources to ensure all our students have the best chance to be successful. In the ever-changing environment of accountability, our Deputy Superintendent does an amazing job of keeping campus administration abreast of all the standards and new procedures.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Pittsburg Intermediate is continuously seeking ways to better serve our students. With regards to curriculum, our line of work seems to be inundated with products and services that claim to be aligned with the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Our staff, throughout the district, work collaboratively to align our curriculum, both vertically and horizontally in order to meet the specific academic needs of every content and grade level of our diverse student population. The task of finding ways to teach and challenge all our students is probably the toughest thing we do on a daily basis. In Texas, our foundation for instruction is the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Covering the TEKS effectively seems like hitting a moving target with the state standards becoming more and more stringent with each legislative session. At Pittsburg Intermediate School, we use a variety of supplemental materials in order to deliver instruction in a differentiated manner for our students, from the Gifted and Talented students to the students who struggle the most. Some of the materials are company-based, while a great deal of what we use are things we have found work with our students over the years and we just tweak them in order to enhance learning and cultivate student growth.

The students at Pittsburg Intermediate follow a modified block schedule. In 5th grade, all students have a silent, sustained reading time for the first 30 minutes of their home-room class. We have three teams of teachers, with three teachers in each team. Each team has a Math, Reading, and Science teacher. Each team shares the duty of teaching Social Studies. Each Math, Reading, and Science class is 90 minutes long every day and Social Studies is 45 minutes long. In 6th grade, students are double-blocked in Math and Reading for a total of 90 minutes a day and single-blocked for Science and Social Studies for 45 minutes a day.

Pittsburg Intermediate has high expectations for all mathematics classrooms. Each day our students begin with problem solving. Skills vary and are spiraled accordingly as outlined by readiness TEKS with an emphasis on skills that must be learned and mastered. In this component the emphasis is on basic understandings in number, operation, and quantitative reasoning; patterns, relationships and algebraic thinking; geometry and spatial reasoning; measurement; and probability and statistics. This is also a time where other TEKS, as determined by the teacher using the student performance data from the previous six weeks assessments, or weekly assessments, can be reviewed and differentiated. Process Standards are woven together within multiple representations and multifaceted story problems that lead students to build logical reasoning that allows them to make mathematical connections to real life situations. All process standard TEKS are practiced with embedded dual coded skills to ensure students are prepared to work at the highest levels of mathematical reasoning. Teacher-taught strategies are an integral part of giving students the confidence they need to tackle state-mandated testing.

The ELAR classrooms use four integral parts to teach our TEKS-based curriculum. These four parts are word study, independent reading, shared reading, and writing. The independent reading portion of the curriculum is a daily part administered through an accelerated reading program. Goals are set for each student on an individual basis using a fluency screener that we use three times a year. The word study portion uses weekly vocabulary lessons that spiral throughout the year, as well as using authentic texts in many different genres. Word walls are also an important part of delivering the vocabulary lesson. Vocabulary quizzes are administered each week. Students work on vocabulary, reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills through shared reading and discussion of different genres of literature. Struggling readers attend small group intervention to improve fluency and comprehension, and these students are progress monitored on a weekly basis. ELAR teachers believe one program or approach does not meet the needs of our diverse population, or state mandated TEKS. Combining the four integral parts using different materials and teaching styles helps reach every student.

The Science teachers use a variety of methods to cover the TEKS. The science department uses a variety of TEKS based curriculum programs and materials to pull from and create one curriculum. Teachers feel that one program does not cover all K-5 TEKS well enough to use one sole curriculum. Teachers like to use different applications and approaches to teach one concept to ensure mastery. The year is broken down into

Physical Science, Earth Science, and Life Science. Vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of each of the divisions of science. The vocabulary is spiraled throughout the year with weekly quizzes given on Friday. Teachers also use married words to teach certain concepts. For example, thermal and heat are two words that are closely related, so we call them married words. The use of experiments and field investigations, as well as mixed practice using a variety of sources add to the Pittsburg Intermediate Science experience. Students struggling with science concepts and vocabulary attend intervention with a science specialist and progress is based on unit test and benchmark assessments. While struggling students are attending intervention, teachers work with a small group of students to increase our Level III advanced numbers.

Social Studies emphasizes acquiring knowledge of American History and World History in a hands on manner. Students are expected to understand how past events have shaped our history and how they affect current events. Teachers use a variety of methods to teach the Social Studies TEKS; for example, textbooks, power points, and videos. Teachers use map skills and online library of educational hip hop songs and videos to teach vocabulary. Teachers use project based learning to address the student expectations. Social Studies teachers engage students in a researched based black history play to address black history month and historical figures. Teachers use unit test or projects and benchmark assessment to address mastery of TEKS and progress. Social studies is also integrated in the Reading curriculum.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Pittsburg Intermediate, we do our very best to form our students into well-rounded individuals. Although academic areas are of utmost importance, we believe that students that acquire a thirst for knowledge in all areas become better students at the junior high, high school, and college level, and ultimately become better citizens.

In 5th and 6th grade our students rotate between Art, Technology, and Physical Education. Our students go to PE for 135 minutes a week and to Art and Technology for 45 minutes a week. In 6th grade, we also offer Beginner Band for students who plan to be in the Jr. High and High School Pride of Pittsburg Marching Band.

Technology is a very vital part of our curriculum. Our students use the latest software to produce spreadsheets, slide shows, word documents, and research projects to address technology TEKS. Our technology class also works cross curricular with math and reading to enrich what students are doing in class, such as certain new concepts in math. ELAR teachers use the mobile computer lab to help students create a research plan and process the data and communicate those results with their peers. Teachers use a mobile lab to use various strategies, to research. We incorporate technology into the classroom by using IPODs in math class to do activities with math facts and flash card applications. Each classroom is also equipped with an interactive whiteboard.

Our Physical Education program follows the TEKS guidelines and is a multi-faceted program that helps teach our students various ways to stay physically fit. The physical education departments teams with the school nurse and cafeteria to develop a good health and nutrition program. The café workers and nurse help present this information to the students through meetings and posters in the cafeteria and gym. Pittsburg Intermediate also follows recommendations from the school health advisory committee that meets quarterly to made decisions on school nutrition and health. Each year our students participate in a program called Fitness Gram. It measures flexibility, strength, and endurance and is put into a program that follows each student through high school to track their progress. Our PE program also participates in the Hoops for Heart program and has raised thousands of dollars over the past few years to help with heart disease research.

The Pittsburg Intermediate School's Gifted and Talented class is composed of fifth and sixth grade students who meet from 7:50 to 8:45 each morning. These students study major ideas and events of the world and demonstrate skills in thinking, research, and self-directed learning. They deliver performances and develop products that are a result of their studies. Three of the major studies at PISD are the Holocaust of World War II, Greek mythology, and King Arthur. They learn to think creatively, to research, to learn the craft of

analytical writing, and to speak in front of peers. Our students have field trips to the Sixth Floor Museum in Dallas, the Dallas Holocaust museum, and the Perot museum of Math and Science.

Our Art class is TEKS based and covers the four basic strands: foundations, creative expression, historical and cultural relevance, and critical evaluation and response. The students rely on personal observations and perceptions as sources for thinking about, planning, and creating original artworks. A great deal of these art works coincide with certain holiday times during the school year and serve as decorations for our campus. These students communicate their thoughts and ideas with innovation and creativity. Our 6th grade Art students are also involved with the Christmas parade each year. All the classes unite as one to construct a Christmas float and costumes so that they may enter the float contest to win prize money that goes into the budget to buy art supplies.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

The success of Pittsburg Intermediate is a result of great classroom teachers and excellent interventionists that work as a team to provide each student with a variety of instructional methods. Data driven instruction is provided in each classroom, small group, and one on one teaching by teachers that demand excellence from their students. Data driven decisions are reached after students are evaluated through benchmark assessments, universal screenings, progress monitoring, and teacher observations. The success of student progress and achievement is a result of Pittsburg Intermediate following the Response to Intervention model. Good Tier I instruction is provided in the classroom and meets the needs of every student. Interventionists as well as classroom teachers provide Tier II and III instruction during small group strategies. Interventionists work with small groups to provide intensive intervention through a variety of instructional methods and techniques. Classroom teachers also provide small group instruction to help students reach new academic achievements; therefore, more students reach the Level III advanced. Classroom teachers plan and work with interventionists to provide each student supplementary and intensive instruction that flows from Tier I instruction to the small group Tier II consistently. Students identified as gifted and talented (GT) work with the GT teacher daily to provide enrichment and critical thinking skills. GT utilizes writing, researching, and problem solving to ensure these students are enhancing their critical thinking skills and earning high achievement on standardized tests. Students identified as dyslexic receive instruction in the classroom and also through a small group pull out program that provides intensive instruction through a trained professional. Students identified under special education are monitored through his/her IEP in which the appropriate modifications and accommodations are provided. The special education teacher and the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) closely monitor and assist classroom teachers to ensure each special education student is successful and meets his/her IEP goals. Teachers also follow 504 plans to meet the needs and accommodations of those students identified with a 504 plan. English Language Learners have full access to the Tier I instruction with ELL strategies designed into each classroom lesson. Vocabulary is reinforced in each classroom by pictures, word walls, and kinesthetic learning. Pittsburg Intermediate teachers provide before and after school tutorials for struggling students. Pittsburg Intermediate demands excellence from teachers, staff, and students, and excellence shines through instructional methods and interventions.

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

Pittsburg Intermediate consistently scores well on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Several factors contribute to consistent math, reading, and science scores. Subject weekly planning meetings are data driven and concise. Each of the subject areas follow the same TEKS based lesson plans and strategies in the classroom. Teachers leading the planning are seasoned teachers who have remained on campus for several years and have the knowledge to prepare lessons guaranteed to gain mastery. To ensure data driven instruction and no 10% variance between groups, we track student progress through data boards. These data tools track students by sub-pop, special service groups, and progress to mastery. This system allows classroom teachers, interventionists, and school leaders to have a clear picture of mastery by each group and each classroom. The data tools allow the teachers and leaders to pinpoint exact students or classrooms that are not achieving mastery levels. The appropriate instructional method can be addressed, and the tool needed to make improvements in that specific area can be put in place. SIT and

504 committees meet regularly to discuss student progress and to develop a plan for the targeted weakness and instruction to improve that weakness.

Pittsburg Intermediate uses specific screeners and assessments for students in 5th and 6th grade. A universal screener is given at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year to track reading progress throughout the year. This allows the teachers to have a clear picture of reading levels and levels of comprehension. Benchmark tests are given twice a year to assess student mastery and help with data driven decisions in the classroom. Pull out interventions and small group planning in the classroom are based on these assessments. Because Pittsburg Intermediate is a Title I school, the results from these tests are recorded on the data boards and then also discussed with parents through teacher/parent conferences during Report Card Pick-up night in October or other scheduled meetings. Our parents are informed of progress through conferences, report cards every nine weeks, progress reports every three weeks, and end of year STAAR reports. Pittsburg Intermediate also host a STAAR night for parents and community members to ask questions, and allow educators to inform stakeholders of the blueprint of the STAAR and importance of the test and the accountability system. The Pittsburg community is made aware of score results through school board meetings, the newspaper, district webpage, and district site based committees. The process of assessing and tracking student progress is a community, district, and school team effort that allows this school to be successful.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Having high expectations is essential to creating a positive environment and encouraging and motivating our students. Each year, we make the new students on campus aware of our successes and encourage them to help us to continue the tradition of excellence. We believe that we shouldn't be satisfied in just "passing" or "getting by", but for every student to give his absolute best in everything he does. Our goal is not just to prepare our students for a test, but to instill in them a sense of pride in a job well done and confidence to know that they are capable of meeting the challenges that lie ahead of them. These traits can be taken with them throughout their entire lives.

Building that confidence and pride within them starts by finding out where they are and taking them where they need to be. As a district, we have more interventionists than we do coaches. This ensures that every child in our school gets the individualized attention and instruction that they need to be successful. Success at Pittsburg Intermediate truly is for every student.

Achieving these successes is rewarded on a daily basis in many different ways. Students are often seen with graded papers in hand traveling down the halls being cheered on by staff members all the way. Students are also rewarded at the end of every week and each nine weeks based on individual reading goals that are set according to their reading abilities. At the end of the year, our administrators put together a Work Hard Play Hard Day for students that have given their best all year. School attendance is also encouraged and rewarded. Nine weeks perfect attendance awards are given and students with perfect attendance for the year are taken to a Texas Rangers game. Last year eighty-five students attended the game, giving them an opportunity that many would not receive otherwise.

In addition to our students' academic growth, we also strive to help them grow emotionally and socially. One of the ways we do this, is by bringing our students together as teams led by a teacher where everyone feels accepted and cared for. We also provide a character building program where positive behavior is reinforced and moral standards are taught.

The high expectations are not just for our students; our administrators hold our teachers to the same high standards. This is accomplished in a way that brings our teachers together as a team. Our success is dependent on the support we receive from our administrators and each other. Teachers are observed and evaluated, but it is done in a way that allows them to grow and do what they know is best for their students. Our administrators provide us with the materials and access to professional development to be successful. Teachers do not doubt that they are appreciated. Whether it be a positive note, a piece of candy, or lunch, we know that our administrators are there for us.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Pittsburg Intermediate School is part of a small, rural community where "everybody knows everybody." The school is not viewed as the single source of student success. An active engagement between school, families, and community boost student achievement. PIS starts the year off creating positive relationships with parents by participating in Back-to-School Tailgate Party. The atmosphere is relaxing, as educators and community come together to start the new school year as one team. This also creates a shared expectation that will extend outside of the classroom and into the community. The school also hosts Meet-the-Teacher Night where students and parents meet in a friendly atmosphere to go over class schedules, procedures, and expectations.

Student success has occurred at Pittsburg Intermediate in part because teachers and parents communicate in a variety of ways: such as Campus Improvement Plan where the school, parents, community members and business representatives meet throughout the year to be involved in decision making process of the school. Our local grocery store partners with the school and provides hot dogs and buns to help celebrate Work Hard Play Hard Day. Local churches provide school supplies for economically disadvantaged students to

ensure they have the materials they need to help them be successful in school. The local community college holds Career Day for the 6th grade students on our campus. Students are given the opportunity to experience how college works and also gives them a glimpse into the future as to what career they might enter after graduating from high school.

Report Card Pick-Up takes place each semester; it is from 1:00 PM -6:00 PM. Students are released early and parents come to school to pick up their child's report card and be involved in face-to-face academic discussions with teachers about the student. This is also a time where information and resources are shared. Because this is an informal event, parents get off work and come to get the report card. We have over 95 % participation rate each time.

Pittsburg ISD has a diverse population with many parents that speak Spanish. Phone calls and visitors are greeted by a bilingual receptionist, and there are bilingual teachers, support staff and custodians. Technology is used to inform parents through the online text messaging software, school website, and online grade book. Administrators have an open-door policy – parents feel welcome, and know they don't have to have an appointment to conference about their child education.

3. Professional Development:

Staff development at Pittsburg ISD and Pittsburg Intermediate is driven by ongoing teacher requests, student data disaggregation, and the results of an annual comprehensive needs assessment. The annual needs assessment identifies campus-wide initiatives that are used to develop staff development plans for the campus improvement plan and the district improvement plan. This ensures that campus and district staff development is aligned with continuous teacher and school improvement as its goal. Teacher requests for professional growth and data disaggregation are ongoing throughout the school year. At Pittsburg Intermediate, all staff members take ownership of success for all students. Staff development is never planned in isolation but is an evolving mechanism used to provide a well-planned, cohesive, ever-improving teaching and learning environment.

Peer coaching and meetings for professional learning can be seen almost daily at Pittsburg Intermediate. A shared trust and mutual respect between teachers and administrators allow staff members to freely share their teaching strengths and content knowledge with peers. Sustained training in the implementation of Professional Learning Communities strategies, has led to collaborative planning that includes integration of subject matter across content areas. A wide range of resources aligned with the TEKS, both printed and online, are incorporated into that content integration. With 81% of the student population identified as economically disadvantaged, all staff recognizes the need for a repertoire of student engagement strategies. To this end, rotating staff members attend teaching strategy workshops at Region 8 Education Service Center that focus on increasing student engagement and a plan providing for "share time" with all staff when they return is in place on the campus.

The recent revisions to the Texas essential knowledge and skills for mathematics prompted a series of events which serves as an example of how staff development is used at Pittsburg Intermediate to increase capacity for teachers and administrators. With some math skills taught at upper grade levels moving to lower grades, the district's vertical and horizontal math teams began meeting more frequently. As discussions about effective teaching strategies ensued and additional student performance data was disaggregated, an outline for staff development that would allow math teachers to work together to seamlessly incorporate their new TEKS into their classrooms began to emerge. Developed by teachers and supported by the district, these opportunities ranged from planning time for peer sharing between campuses, to revisiting math content at all grade levels, to use of an online district-wide shared folder. 96% of the students on this campus passed the 2015 STAAR math assessment.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership in Pittsburg ISD is defined by the actions of Pittsburg's superintendent and deputy superintendent. Each of these leaders asks and inspires us to do our personal best as educators, to love and inspire and require students to excel. These high expectations and a desire to fulfill all that is asked of us as

teachers has created an incredible school district, one with many strengths and successes. These two leaders are fierce in their belief that everything in our schools is done to nurture and educate our students. This philosophy permeates our entire district and is definitely found in Pittsburg Intermediate.

The Pittsburg Intermediate Leadership Team is the framework of our success. The three members of our ILT work with the teachers to provide instructional leadership, guidance, encouragement, and all the tools necessary for student and teacher success. The basis of our philosophy is high expectations, and this is communicated by our three leaders and executed by the teachers and students. Pittsburg Intermediate has achieved success for several years because of the trust and camaraderie among the teachers and administrators who create a positive learning climate for our school. Everyone in our school is expected not only to meet standards, but to exceed them. To this end our leadership team is skilled in curriculum, RTI, testing coordination, testing accommodations, 504, and special education. Our leaders are always available to everyone on a daily basis to solve any problems which might impact learning. Each of our leaders and teachers works together to ensure that our students are learning and excelling in all areas of their education. They study data and curriculum which guide our students to excellence. Our leadership team has a hands on approach to the students that motivates, rewards, and inspires our students to reach their full potential. In addition to the principal, assistant principal, and director of intervention, we have grade level leaders who disseminate information to the teachers and assist in the hiring of new staff. We also have teachers who are leaders of the various disciplines and meet with their peers once a week to plan the week's lessons and to share the strengths of each teacher. These teachers discuss curriculum and instruction as well as intervention to strengthen student performance. This sharing of ideas and strengths impacts our students in a positive way and enriches the teachers.

We can honestly say that our leaders, teachers, and other staff members are so intricately woven together that it is difficult to delineate the separate duties of each. We join together in our desire to truly educate our students for now and for life.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Passionate, desire, excellence, driven, supportive, fierce, and motivated are the words that illustrates the demand for which excellences that Pittsburg Intermediate holds their students accountable. The teachers and administrators will not accept failure from any student. The one best practice that makes Pittsburg Intermediate successful is the demand for excellence from every student, every day. We feel that we do everything in our power to educate every child academically, socially, and physically to the best of our abilities. The idea that students have of “just getting by” is not acceptable here at Pittsburg Intermediate. Teachers will not allow students to accept failure. They nurture, tutor, discipline, and teach their students until they exceed expectations. Administrators support the teachers in the never ending battle for excellence. The ILT team is readily available at all times to help with students that are not reaching their best in academics, behavior, or social issues. Pittsburg Intermediate also involves parents in the road to excellence. Parents hold their children to the same high standards in the areas of academics and behavior. They support the school with the “no fail attitude” and are a vital part of our school team. Our goal is not just to prepare our students for a test, but to infuse the sense of pride and excellence in themselves, in their school, and in their community.

The high expectations are not just for our students; our administrators hold our teachers to the same high standards of excellence. The ILT team creates a climate of teamwork and trust; therefore, teachers are self-motivated to be excellent teachers. These high expectations and a desire to fulfill them has created a school where everyone can feel successful. It is a positive learning environment where administrators, teachers and students feel they can blossom and become extraordinary. Everyone in our school is expected not only to meet standards, but to exceed them together as a team. We at Pittsburg Intermediate feel that students, and adults, for that matter, will always live to up the expectation that has been set for them. With the right leadership, teachers, and tools we can help our students achieve those high expectations. Failure is not in our vocabulary, and we teach our students to replace that word with hard work, confidence, and excellence.