

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. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. 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 2012 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: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
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 has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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 (2017-2018) 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

| Grade | # of Males | # of Females | Grade Total |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| PreK | 12 | 20 | 32 |
| K | 22 | 7 | 29 |
| 1 | 11 | 12 | 23 |
| 2 | 7 | 12 | 19 |
| 3 | 12 | 9 | 21 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 11 |
| 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 | 69 | 66 | 135 |

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 97 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 1 % White
 - 0 % 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 2016 – 2017 school year: 8%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

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, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year | 9 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year | 7 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 16 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016 | 191 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.08 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 8 |

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 79 %
107 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: 100 %
Total number students who qualify: 135

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %
4 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.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>10</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
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 including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 10 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc. | 3 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 1 |
| 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 14:1

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

| Required Information | 2016-2017 | 2015-2016 | 2014-2015 | 2013-2014 | 2012-2013 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance | 98% | 97% | 96% | 97% | 97% |
| 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 2017.

| 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.

Establish a safe and student-centered environment where knowledge and literacy are encouraged through learning activities that are developmentally appropriate, individually paced, and attuned to each student's academic performance and interests. Honor and respect the cultural and ethnic differences of the students served by the school. As students develop the problem-solving skills needed for the 21st century, they will be encouraged to live, study, and strive together to be effective and productive citizens in the diverse and technology-driven global economy.

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

Each year we have an open enrollment, where the parents of community may apply for enrollment for their children. We take applications on a first-come, first-serve basis until the open slots in each grade are filled. At that time students are placed on a wait list.

PART III – SUMMARY

Sunnyside Elementary is located in the small city of Cockrell Hill, Texas which has a population of about 4193. The school rests in the heart of one of the most socially economically challenged areas within the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. The city was established by the pioneer Brentwood Allen Cockrell and his son Woodard in the late 1800's and encompasses less than three-quarters of a mile. Sunnyside is the only public charter school within the city limits. Sunnyside gets its name from the street on which it is located.

As a public charter school, Sunnyside opened its doors in 2006 as an addition to the Golden Rule Charter School (GRS) district. The school started with both Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 classrooms and has grown to include all elementary levels through 4th grade. The current student population is comprised of approximately 135 students as of the 2017-18 school year of which 100% are economically disadvantaged students. The school presently serves a 97% Hispanic community. It is a Title 1 school whose population is broken down to 79.3% English Learners (EL) and 85.9% at-risk students. With parental support the students achieved a 98% attendance rate in 2016-17 and the prime objective is to promote and encourage the goal reaching for post-secondary education.

As part of the Golden Rule family, Sunnyside's mission is to establish a safe and student-centered environment where knowledge and literacy are encouraged through learning activities that are developmentally appropriate, individually paced, and attuned to each student's academic performance and interests. Golden Rule Schools seek to extend the skills and concepts taught in the classroom for use beyond the school environment. The students have the capacity to make a difference in their school, community, and beyond through active service. As students develop the problem-solving skills needed for the 21st century, they will be encouraged to live, study, and strive together to be effective and productive citizens in the diverse and technologically-driven global economy. In serving the students, the staff employs a philosophy of servant leadership to enrich the lives of the students by helping them achieve success academically, emotionally, physically and socially.

Sunnyside is proud of the school culture of inclusion with a specific focus on teamwork. The day starts with live morning announcements where students gather in the cafeteria to recite the pledges to the flags and a pledge to themselves and their teachers to do their best by reciting the school creed every day. Part of the positive reinforcement model includes adopting the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Kids where students are encouraged to be proactive not only just at school but in their daily lives. The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system has helped to develop positive behavior in the common areas of the school through a consistent and well-designed reward system. These two programs nurture character development and provide the students with a positive social culture that integrates personal responsibility and individual accountability for themselves and the school in both social and academic situations.

Golden Rule fosters family involvement in school activities that enhance student development. Multiple activities encourage family members to visit the children on campus. Some of the most successful activities include Muffins with Mom, Donuts with Dad, Reading with Grandparents and a campus-wide Cinco de Mayo extravaganza with regional folk dancing from Mexico. Culturally relevant cuisine provided by parents, engenders pride in both the parents and students and sets a positive tone for the involvement of parents in the school.

Sunnyside's focus as a school, is to develop the whole child which encompasses the academic development of the student body. For that reason, the tutoring program begins right after the first 6 weeks of school and does not conclude until a week before STAAR (State of Texas Assessments and Academic Readiness) in May. GRS has implemented a multi-tiered Response to Intervention (RtI) model targeted for students that require intensive instructional intervention and support. The school's curriculum is aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in combination with research-based textbooks and supplemental materials that have been adopted by our district in order to provide our students with the best possibilities for achieving success. For 2 years in a row, Sunnyside's 3rd and 4th graders both achieved 100% passing grades in Math and 93% (2016) and 94% (2017) in Reading on the state mandated STAAR tests. As a result of these scores, the campus received an award for outstanding demonstration of STAAR Performance

presented by the Texas Charter Schools Association (TCSA) Quality Services Team in October 2016. Being the only charter school in Texas to receive this prestigious award was a great honor.

The recognition the school has received from the community, the district, and students' families for the nomination for the National Blue-Ribbon Award has given the school a deep sense of pride that will continue to influence the dedication of the teachers and staff in their never-ending pursuit of student success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Golden Rule curriculum requirements come directly from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) established by the state as official guidelines for Texas public schools from kindergarten to 12th grade. They detail the curriculum requirements for every course. State mandated standardized tests measure acquisition of specific knowledge and skills outlined in this curriculum. The TEKS are taught to the students and within the end of the year, they take the standardized test based on the TEKS called the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR).

As part of the district's strategy for curriculum management GRS utilizes the TEKS Resource System (TRS) to provide content and support. The content includes curriculum components and sample unit assessment items aligned to the most current versions of the State Board of Education adopted standards. TRS outlines in pacing tools what is taught in each grade level and defines the rigor and expectations within and across grade levels, integrating the curriculum with other schools within the district and the state. The teachers develop lessons that are focused and structured that align horizontally within the district and vertically across grade levels as a way to determine the readiness skills needed by the students in their educational progression. The instructional framework is based on a gradual release model (I do, we do, you do) which provides modeling, guided practice and eventually independent work.

As the cornerstone of any educational system, English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR), is central to the development of any successful student. The focus beginning in pre-K and continuing through 2nd grade, is to provide intensive phonics instruction as well as decoding skills to build a strong foundation in phonemic and phonological awareness which in turn supports fluency. Comprehension skills outlined in the TEKS referred to as Figure 19 or Metacognition skills are critical for students to use as they develop a greater depth of understanding complex texts. The Meta cognition skills include drawing conclusions, using background knowledge, summarizing, making connections, and inferencing. In addition, our classrooms are print rich and expose our students to an expanded range of vocabulary that is content related. Guided reading is used to help students decode and comprehend leveled texts in a small group setting that with support from the teacher. Students are assessed at the beginning of the year to establish their reading level and are monitored throughout the year utilizing resources that include computer software and reading assessment system that can evaluate student progress.

Sunnyside's math curriculum provides students with instruction focusing on problem-solving skills that meet the TEKS standards specified in their grade level. By applying mathematical process standards, students justify and display different abilities to solve a variety of real life scenarios that involve the use of math in both academic and everyday situations. During a 90-minute block of math instruction, teachers provide hands on learning activities along with whole group and small group instruction with a strong emphasis on academic mathematical vocabulary. Teachers use a variety of resources including district adopted textbooks, manipulatives and teacher-created material to develop engaging lessons. This varied approach allows students the opportunity to master the TEKS in real life situations. Math centers offer students the opportunity to independently practice concepts previously taught without teacher support allowing the teacher to work with struggling learners in small groups while above level students can benefit from enrichment skills involving higher order thinking problems. Students are assessed with district created unit assessments throughout the year to ensure mastery of the content.

In addition to using textbooks and technology to present science instruction in the classrooms, science kits in each classroom, which are aligned to the TEKS, provide activities and engaging hands-on experiments. These tools help deepen student knowledge and understanding that allows them to make connections to both the content, and the real world. The curriculum is divided into four units: life science, physical science, nature of science, and earth and space. Lessons promote opportunities for students to collaborate and record observations in science journals. Non-fiction texts are utilized to support instruction and vocabulary is explicitly taught to ensure that students in all grade levels are provided with the knowledge needed to understand and comprehend the content.

Social Studies is also TEKS-based where the students learn appropriate behaviors and character traits that are exemplified by good citizens. This not only helps the students but adds to the positive cultural environment of the school. The students grow as not just spectators but contributors to and critical thinking problem solvers in our diverse and complex society. Civics learning is present in the classroom through the use of grade-level classroom economy system. Students are given classroom jobs which allow them to earn salaries and create a budget to pay rent and utility bills. The students learn about saving and spending and how to be responsible for their decisions and actions. Classroom elections also offer them real world scenarios to better understand current political and social issues.

Sunnyside follows the Texas Guidelines for pre-kindergarten that align to the TEKS. The domains include social and emotional development, language and communication, emergent literacy reading and writing as well as math, science and social studies. Lessons are designed to include skills the students need for success in kindergarten including basic knowledge of math, letters, vocabulary, phonological awareness, following directions, all of which are fundamental concepts the children need to manage when they start kindergarten and continue onto subsequent grades. Early Education affects the school readiness of the child, being able to socialize, to work independently and in groups, and to develop their language, especially if their first language is other than English.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The Golden Rule School district understands the importance of providing opportunities for the students to have access to other curriculum areas that help them develop into well rounded citizens. A large part of this development comes from non-core curricular areas such as physical education (PE), computer skills and character education. Instruction in these areas are TEKS driven and research based.

Sunnyside is moving the students into the 21st century by providing a full inclusive computer lab with 22 desktop computers, a full-time computer technician, and an array of instructional rich and content-based software. All grades rotate every other day between computer class and P.E. The students practice the technology applications outlined in the TEKS which has six strands based on the National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NETSS) and include creativity and innovation; communication and collaboration; research and information fluency; critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making; digital citizenship; and technology operations and concepts. In addition to the computer classes, each class throughout the school is equipped with tablets or iPads that include grade appropriate curriculum enhancing software. Grades 2-4 are provided with Chrome books for students to use in the classroom. To improve student outcome, projectors are installed in each classroom to provide the students with an enhanced audio-visual experience that appeals to our different types of learners. Document cameras are a resource used to add visual support and modeling for our students. At the beginning of the school year each teacher is issued a laptop computer on which grades, lesson plans and different related academic activities are kept. To improve academic performance, the 4th graders are invited into the computer lab for 20-30 minutes every morning as an extension of learning time in the areas of ELAR and Math.

All students participate in Physical Education classes every other day as we rotate between computer lab and P.E. For 55 minutes our students develop and maintain skills related to strength, agility, flexibility and stamina as well as learning to eat nutritious foods as part of a healthy lifestyle and personal well-being. Physical education focuses on the physical/mental health of the students. The goal is to motivate the students to reach their full potential and to be able to meet the TEKS standards specified in their grade level. Students must identify and demonstrate a variety of movements Kindergarten must demonstrate clear contrasts between slow and fast movements when traveling. Grades 1 and 2 focus on: demonstrating skills of chasing, fleeing, and dodging. They work on proper foot patterns in hopping, jumping, skipping, leaping, galloping and sliding. Third grade must demonstrate mature form in jogging, running, and leaping; participating in appropriate exercises for developing flexibility; and lift and support his/her own weight in selected activities that develop muscular strength and endurance of the arms, shoulders, abdomen, back, and legs such as hanging, hopping and jumping to improve their physical health. Fourth grade must identify and demonstrate a variety of exercises that promote flexibility; and participate in activities that develop and maintain muscular strength and endurance. Traveling in different levels of speed and practicing different

movement helps students identify what happens with the heart rate.

In conclusion our P.E program helps to round out the academic curriculum of Sunnyside.

Sunnyside offers students a full Dewey Decimal categorized library as well as individual carted grade level libraries in each classroom that teachers can use to enhance instruction and offer students DEAR time (Drop Everything And Read). Reading and teaching the fundamentals of reading have become a cornerstone of what they do here at Sunnyside.

Three to four times a year the school body celebrates the different holidays of the Mexican culture. At these times the music and dance of the culture are studied and practiced, then performances are scheduled for the stakeholders to enjoy. The art works of all grades are on display during these times of celebration.

As previously mentioned, we place a strong emphasis on creating a positive school environment. We use a school wide system of support referred to as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). It focuses on proactive strategies for defining, teaching and supporting appropriate positive social behaviors. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for the misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of school wide PBIS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm. This system of positive reinforcement has been very effective in creating and maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment for our students and teachers alike. The positive climate of Sunnyside is in fact, a major contributing factor to our success as a school. Each student is valued and respected for their individual contributions to the culture of Sunnyside. PBIS has many levels of rewards so that the students are always challenged to be their best. The higher the level the more valuable the reward.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

The learners at Sunnyside receive purposeful instruction in reading skills and strategies, motivation to read and access to a wide variety of texts. The instructional strategies include small group instruction, differentiation and a Response to Intervention which are outlined below.

Small group instruction is one of the most efficient ways to increase the intensity of instruction for struggling readers. The instruction is targeted to the specific needs of the student and it allows them to have more opportunities to respond and receive constructive feedback. The intensive interventions work best when small groups are kept to no more than 3-5 students. The instruction is properly paced and focused with regular progress checks to measure students' performance and growth. The goal of all of the interventions used is to accelerate students' performance and growth by giving them tools and strategies they can use such as decoding, chunking, context clues, and text evidence. Small group instruction may happen at the teacher table or on the carpet. The teacher at this time pulls a small group of students 3-5 and works with them on a specified lesson, which is a guided reading or a math strategy.

Differentiated instruction strategies allow us to engage each student by accommodating their specific learning style. Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory states that every person has a different mind and therefore learns and understands information differently. Differentiating the instruction offers a way to meet all students' needs. Incorporating learning stations into the core content blocks of instruction offers student the option to work at a level and style that is specifically designed for them. Students are able to work independently on tiered assignments that are challenging and engaging especially for the on or above grade level students. Differentiated instruction is taking the lesson plans, student expectations, and the TEKS, and adjusting them to meet the learning needs of each student in your class. As an example, if a second grade TEKS is too rigorous for a second grader in the class. The teacher could teach the student the same TEKS, but on the first-grade level. Therefore, staying within the lesson plan, yet it would be differentiated for the student.

Another strategy used when planning instruction is the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (GRR). It shifts from teachers assuming all of the responsibility for performing a task to a situation in which students take over the responsibility. A focus and learning objective is stated and then the teachers start with

modeling a lesson or concept. They verbalize their thinking and understanding of the content for students referred to as think alouds. The next step is guided instruction where teachers question, facilitate and lead their students through tasks that increase their understanding of the content. The independent phase is where students can practice independently applying information in new ways and solidifying their understanding. The lesson plans are designed around this model and referred to it as 'I do, We do, You do'. It is very effective especially with all of the EL students. GRR ensures that they are supported in their acquisition of the skills and strategies necessary for success. A strong emphasis is put on staying vertically aligned so that instruction is targeted and content redundancy is reduced keeping the curriculum rigorous and challenging for above and below grade level students. Teachers communicate with upper and lower grade level teachers and look at the TEKS that students should have mastered in the previous grade and more importantly where the students should be in order to be prepared to advance to the next grade level.

Students are assessed at the beginning of each school year to get a benchmark on their reading level and math skills. This information is also used to identify at risk students or students who are below grade level. Sunnyside follows the Rti (response to intervention) process, a multi-tiered approach to identify and support students who are struggling. They use a progress monitoring system that assesses students' strengths and weaknesses and provides them with data that is used to modify and adjust instruction. Interventions are based on students' individual needs and varies in levels of intensity to aid their progress.

GRS is fortunate to have a team of instructional coaches who provide the campuses with district assessments that are given to students at the end of each unit. These assessments in combination with informal classroom assessments are used to create a data wall. The data provides valuable information on TEKS that may need to be retaught and is another tool used to identify struggling students as well as students who are above grade level who could benefit from more rigorous instruction. In addition to the beginning of the year assessments and regular progress monitoring, the 3rd and 4th grade students participate in mock STAAR days where a released STAAR test is administered and all formal protocol that is observed on the actual test day is in place. The school is closed to visitors and uses the timed tests for benchmarks on students' progress and readiness for the actual STAAR test.

To close achievement gaps, district wide assessments are used as benchmarks. They are administered at the beginning of the year, the middle of the year and at the end of the year. The data from each assessment is collected, analyzed and placed on a data wall. To help give the teachers more in-depth picture of their student's gaps, data from I-Station and six weeks tests are collected and the data is placed on the data wall. At that point the principal meets with the grade level teams to target students and their gaps. After the students' gaps have been identified, targeted tutoring session of 35 minutes are established for afterschool on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Every six weeks the new data for each student is re-evaluated and new targets are established for the student.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

While small in size, Sunnyside prides itself in providing an intimate and comfortable setting for the students where they can feel safe and advance their learning. The staff supports both academic growth and social development of all the students as well as making sure that everybody from the students, their families and staff members feel at home as part of the Golden Rule family. From the principal to the office staff, to the classroom teachers and support staff, students receive the knowledge, attention and enrichment needed to attain individual social, emotional, and academic success. A team approach to learning is a part of what makes the school successful.

Leadership is important to a successful school climate. The principal is out in the street every morning directing traffic and greeting students and parents, as well as teachers and staff. His presence is out there in the afternoon as well doing the same. Teachers are on duty to open car doors and escort students into the building and make sure they feel welcomed and are motivated to learn. The principal and staff create a positive school culture that promotes and encourages learning which in turn improves student achievement in the school. The principal also has an open-door policy, so that not only staff and parents can voice their concerns or suggestions anytime, but students have access to their principal whenever they need him. The principal makes the teachers, students and parents feel at home, by being friendly and moving around the school, making his presence known and felt. The principal walks through the classrooms voicing his praise and appreciation for the teachers in front of the students on a regular basis, giving the students a deep sense of pride for their teacher and their school which in turn motivates the teachers to do their best.

Sunnyside and the leadership make the teachers feel valued by providing support for them, by walk-thrus and encouraging the teachers on a daily basis. The school during teacher's appreciation week serves the teachers breakfast for the week. On the last Friday of each month the teachers are given donuts and coffee. At the beginning of the year a special lapel pin is given to all the staff. The pin represents a theme that will be lived out that year. There is a Teacher of the Year award. The principal about three to four times a year will have lunch catered in for the teachers. This is a great of food, fun, and fellowship. Each teacher is valued for their individuality, their gifts and talents are celebrated. The principal will leave thank notes on the teachers white boards, as he checks of the campus early in the morning once or twice a month.

To engage with the student population and encourage active participation, Sunnyside provides special opportunities every six weeks for students that have achieved perfect attendance. They are treated to a small celebration that includes watching movies and eating popcorn. Another reward comes for those students who have surpassed expectations in good behavior. They are treated to pizza or ice cream parties in a friendly competition every six week where each group is encouraged to monitor its own behavior in public areas or the school. The students participate in School Choice celebrations that include writing an essay about why they chose their school. Winners of the essay contest are treated to lunch with our superintendent. As part of our school culture we also engage in fundraising activities for our community in programs like Pennies for Pasta or Cockrell Hill's Trunk or Treat candy donation program.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parental involvement is crucial as part of a child's educational development. Sunnyside invites parents to participate in many activities provided to visit the school and interact with their children and staff. Families are welcomed to the school for events such as Grandparent Reading Days, in which students' grandparent will come to the classroom and read books to the students, and Doughnuts with Dad or Muffins with Mom, activities that are both engaging and fun for everybody and that bring together the families within the school. Parent volunteers are also encouraged to volunteer in the school and participate in activities such as field days, field trips, and petting zoo activities. Students are more highly motivated when they witness their parents getting involved in their school and having an active role in their academic success.

Teachers keep an open line of communication with parents as well as an open-door policy. They host two

formal conferences a year with parents to discuss assessment performance results and student progress. Parents are encouraged to be an active part of instruction at home in order for our students to reach their fullest potential. Homework folders are sent home daily to reinforce the learning that has taken place that day with a note to parents about what they can do to help their child. Graded weekly papers are also sent home on Fridays to keep parents informed of their child's academic success. Informational forms are sent in both English and Spanish. The majority of the staff is bilingual and can make sure that the lines of communication are open and accessible. The principal has built a working relationship with the two businesses in front of and beside the campus. He has done this by having coffee with the owner of the sign company and taking donuts to the auto parts shop. The principal keeps the stakeholders in the business community in the know by sharing with them the vision of the school as he visits their places of work. The sign company designs and makes all the schools signage. The auto parts store gives the staff of the school a 10% discount because of the relationships the principal has developed.

One of the biggest celebrations at Sunnyside is the big Cinco de Mayo celebration, in which students as well as teachers dress up in traditional costumes. The whole school participates in a daylong event marked by parties and folk dances that each classroom performs. Parents are encouraged to visit and share this day with their children, many of which provide traditional Mexican dishes to be shared at lunchtime.

Sunnyside's relationship with its community extends beyond educating its children. The school participates with the neighbors in community-centered activities, including visits by the local fire department's trucks for educating the students about fire prevention. They help needy families by providing backpacks with a variety of food items they can use to feed their children over the weekends. Whether Sunnyside is participating in a food drive or helping students with their learning development, the community is there to help. The community shares a bond with the parents of the students who trust the school to provide a safe, fun, and exciting place for their children to learn and grow.

3. Professional Development:

The Golden Rule Charter School district hosts an annual convocation before the beginning of each school year to welcome teachers back and outline the various educational development opportunities that will be available in preparation for the new school year. Careful thought is provided by the district instructional coaches in planning current, relevant and applicable strategies to assist teachers in meeting the ever-changing needs of our students.

Last year our district provided a heart wrenching gaze into the world of poverty with a 4-part series called 'A Framework for Understanding Poverty. Our students reside in a city with a 28.9% poverty rate, so this training was especially poignant and was a direct portrayal of the students at Sunnyside. By understanding how poverty can affect students both behaviorally and academically, teachers were equipped with strategies to help students achieve success in the classroom and beyond. This training was a very powerful time for the leadership and teachers to come together and revisit why they in the teaching profession. It helped to bring a clarity of the school vision for the stakeholders we serve and the children we teach.

Sunnyside is highly data driven. The ultimate goal and heading on the data wall is 'GROW GREEN.' The administration holds monthly data meetings to analyze and desegregate grade level data collected from a variety of sources, in order to create effective instructional strategies and interventions to increase student achievement. The leadership and teachers attended a training from Region 10 on how to collect and track data for our students. This gives the teachers a plan and program for using data to drive instruction. The lead teachers also mentor and guide the teachers in using data to help them improve their instruction. Teachers incorporate this information when preparing lesson plans and differentiating instruction tailored to the needs of each student. This data is also shared with the RtI team to monitor student progress and prescribe effective targeted instruction to meet each student's individual needs. Additional opportunities provided to teachers include webinars to train teachers on district-provided resources including phonics and writing, Guided Reading and Writers Workshops, Admission, Review, and Dismissal meeting requirements, math content training, Strategies for Creating Effective Math Centers and Developing Critical Higher Order Thinking in our students. Our instructional coaches make themselves available to visit our classrooms to enhance our instruction and learning. They provide guidance and insight into the

latest instructional methodologies and practices and share with teacher's hands-on resources and strategies for the best student outcome.

Grade-level teams meet weekly to create effective lessons and share instructional resources. Mentor teachers collaborate with new teachers to ensure that they have the resources and tools they need to provide engaging and rigorous lessons. At Sunnyside we foster a love of lifelong learning for both new and seasoned teachers in this continually evolving profession. We embrace the chance to grow as educators and be the best that we can be. Successful teachers create successful students.

4. School Leadership:

Everything rises and falls with leadership, and so it is with the success of Sunnyside. The leadership team practices a style of leadership that puts our students and their needs at the center of every decision made. Servant Leadership is the driving force behind Sunnyside. From the Superintendent to the teachers' aides each adult is motivated by the simple belief, we are there to serve. Putting others first is the theme in which GRS was named. The Golden Rule is the leadership model. The leadership works in teams so that no one person must bear the load for the success of the school.

The superintendent is the leader of the district. This person sets the vision and the pace of the vision. The superintendent is the vice and face of the district, overseeing the day to day running of district wide events and activities. The responsibilities include but are not limited to hiring the district leadership team and, the curriculum coaches. The hiring and firing of all personal needs the superintendent approval. There is a direct link from the superintendent to the building principals.

The principals make-up the district leadership team. The team meets monthly to be updated and make some decisions concerning the district and its direction. The building principals are over the day to day management of the school building, including the teachers, the teachers aids, and the support staff. One of the main focuses of the campus principal is to oversee the maintenance of the campus proper. The buildings, the playgrounds, the classrooms, and the other faculties. The principal is responsible for the hiring and firing of teachers, the training of teachers and the instruction of teachers. The campus principal is the main person in charge of instruction and testing. As the leader of the campus the principal is in charge of all training and PDs. The campus leader must be the person who enforces the federal, state and district policies and programs for the campus. The campus leader must be the face and voice of the local campus, meeting and building relationships with the stakeholders for the enrichment of the learning experience the students. The building principal is responsible for creating a safe and happy learning environment for not only the students but also the teachers as well. The campus leader must carry out the behavior model for the student body as well as a role model of proper ethics for the teachers.

The campus principal as a part of the district leadership team must carry out the district vision in the school that they serve. One example of this is the campus leader networking with the local businessman by having coffee in their stores and shops. Sharing the vision of the school and district with the city mayor and council. Going before the city council and asking for help with the flow of traffic at arrival and dismissal. The principal at Sunnyside has all of this, as he builds relationships with the stakeholders around the school. The school helped the city by having a candy drive to collect candy for the cities big Halloween candy give away to the low-income children. The teachers donated over \$150.00 worth of candy to the city to help.

As the leadership serves the student body, the students in turn learn that in serving each other the greater good is reached. In this way the students are learning to be leaders on the campus. One of the ways the student body leads, is each morning at arrival, the fourth graders wait by the front door and as the PreK-4 and kindergartners arrive the fourth graders escort the smaller children to the cafeteria. This is a very powerful example for the whole school. As the other students see the older students in action this creates a desire in the younger students to want to serve. The fourth graders really enjoy the experience and it helps them to take ownership of their school and their education.

The fourth graders on the campus are called, “seniors” and the school’s leaders. Often, they are called upon during morning assembly to model good behavior for the school. The younger students have learned to depend on the fourth graders for leadership and guidance. Again, this reinforces the ownership of both the younger students and the seniors on the campus.

Servant leadership is not just a catch phrase, it is, for the leadership team of Sunnyside a way of life. We serve each other as we work to reach the common goal of creating a safe and exciting environment for the students of Sunnyside. Servant Leadership is being taught at every level of our district, so it is being modeled and expected at every level in our school. The staff of Sunnyside is leading by example. In turn, this has created a place of great expectation both for the staff as well as the students. If there is one major theme that has created the excitement and our expectation for greatness for our school, it would be, we are all servant leaders.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At Sunnyside, the academic success is directly linked to the contagious, positive atmosphere that is created for the students. Every single one of the teachers are committed to planting the seed in each student that; college is not a dream, it is a plan, and that they can be anything they want to be if they set their mind to it. The relationship between students and teachers is a special bond. Class sizes are kept small which allows the teacher to invest more quantitative instructional time to each student.

Mornings start with live announcements in the cafeteria where after the flag pledges students and staff recite the school creed. There is a wall that illustrates the path to college that is referred to and talked about every morning. Students are encouraged to believe in themselves which is the first verse of the creed: “I believe in myself and my ability to do my best....” Our students know that the teachers believe in their success and are dedicated to making it happen. Morning announcements end with a question they look forward to answering every morning; “What are you going to give yourselves and your teachers today?” They answer in a resounding, almost deafening yell, “Our Best!!!” It’s truly amazing to witness. Students also participate in other learning opportunities such as using the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Children as a template for their behavior. This is done by the student recreating situations and discussing the best possible ways of resolving them by applying their knowledge of specific habits learned previously.

Commitment to the academic success of the students does not end just within each classroom. The mindset is of the philosophy that it takes a village. Kindergarten teachers mentor and tutor 4th grade students, 2nd grade teachers administer accommodations to students during STAAR benchmark assessments and the computer lab coordinator comes in early to give 3rd and 4th grade students extra study time on the computers in the morning before school begins. The coach organizes and plans dances and skits that the teachers perform to pump the 3rd and 4th graders up before the STAAR test and teachers assist the students in each class to decorate banners to place all over the school with words of encouragement.

Sunnyside does not have a magic bullet or a big secret to its success, it just has a professional staff who love to inspire their students to dream big and who celebrate each and every one of their students’ accomplishments. They create a safe learning environment where students know that a loving family community awaits them as well as a staff who pours their hearts into each and every one of them.