U.S. Department of Education
2017 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 Mr. Darren Craig Nelson
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Westwood Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 502 South Kings
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Stillwater   State OK   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 74074-2822

County   Oklahoma

Telephone (405) 533-6370   Fax   (405) 533-6328
Web site/URL
              http://www.stillwaterschools.com/S
chools/Westwood   E-mail   dnelson@stillwaterschools.com

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

                                Date
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Marc Moore   E-mail mmoore@stillwaterschools.com
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Stillwater Public School District   Tel.   (405) 533-6300
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 Ms. Debra Vincent J.D.
(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. 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 2017 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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.

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 (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district   6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   2 Middle/Junior high schools
                                         2 High schools
                                         0 K-12 schools

                                         10 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
   [X] Suburban
   [ ] Small city or town in a rural area
   [ ] Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	38	43	81
K	32	47	79
1	46	33	79
2	49	41	90
3	48	28	76
4	35	41	76
5	43	49	92
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	291	282	573

4. Racial/ethnic composition of   2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
    the school: 8 % Asian
                                           3 % Black or African American
                                           6 % Hispanic or Latino
                                           0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
                                           70 % White
                                           11 % 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 2015 – 2016 school year: 7%

    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 *to* the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	25
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	14
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	39
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	571
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.068
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
                                                      26 Total number ELL

    Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
    10-Arabic, 3-Chinese, 1-Hindi, 2-Sinhalese, 6-Spanish, 2-Telugu, 1-Turkish, and 1-Vietnamese.

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 27 %
        Total number students who qualify: 156

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
                                                      59 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 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deafness	4 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	5 Specific Learning Disability
0 Emotional Disturbance	1 Speech or Language Impairment
2 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
2 Mental Retardation	1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0 Multiple Disabilities	43 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4

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 including those teaching high school specialty subjects	25
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1   23:1

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

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	95%	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 2016.

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

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

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

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

Westwood School Community will provide a safe, nurturing environment committed to achieving academic success and social excellence, allowing all children to reach their fullest potential.

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

Westwood Elementary is one of six elementary schools in the Stillwater Public Schools located in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Stillwater, a college town, is home to Oklahoma State University (OSU), and it sits geographically in north central Oklahoma. Being an hour's drive west of Tulsa and north of Oklahoma City, Stillwater could best be described as a blended rural-suburban area. Stillwater has a population of approximately 50,000, but that ebbs and flows with the enrollment at OSU.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Core Curriculum:**

At Westwood Elementary, our core curriculum finds its base in the Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS). In our district our teachers have created curriculum maps that ensure all standards are covered at the appropriate scope and sequence. We have district adopted curricula, but no curriculum or series is perfect at teaching every standard. Our teachers are provided the autonomy to supplement the curriculum whenever they see a gap exists. They have done an exceptional job of making sure standards are covered, gaps in adopted curriculum are filled in, and students are provided with rich learning experiences that help them meet the state adopted learning standards. Most of our district adopted curricula are intended for K-5 students. However, there are OAS for pre k. Our pre k teachers pull from a variety of resources to ensure they help our youngest students have the skills they need to transition to kindergarten and have success.

The learning and teaching of Literacy Skills/English Language Arts (ELA) is preeminent in our school. As such, a significant amount of our school day is devoted to ELA learning time. The learning of reading in our school is based in the foundational elements of reading: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. In our district, we have adopted the McGraw-Hill's Wonders curriculum to teach ELA standards to help us teach and meet the OAS.

In our state, the English Language Arts (ELA) standards for Pre K-5 revolve around 8 standards. The standards are:
Speaking and Listening - Students will speak and listen effectively in a variety of situations including, but not limited to, responses to reading and writing;
Reading Foundations/Reading Process and Writing Process - Students will develop foundational skills for future reading success by working with sounds, letters, and text. Students will use recursive processes when reading and writing;
Critical Reading and Writing - Students will apply critical thinking skills to reading and writing; Vocabulary Students will expand their working vocabularies to effectively communicate and understand texts;
Language - Students will apply knowledge of grammar and rhetorical style to reading and writing;
Research - Students will engage in inquiry to acquire, refine, and share knowledge;
Multimodal Literacies - Students will acquire, refine, and share knowledge through a variety of written, oral, visual, digital, non-verbal, and interactive texts; and
Independent Reading and Writing - Students will read and write for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, academic and personal, for extended periods of time.

Additionally, we devote a significant amount of time and resources to math instruction. Overall, our philosophy as it relates to math instruction is that it is most effective from an inquiry approach. Our district adopted curriculum is Envisions by Pearson. However, our focus is on the Oklahoma math standards. The Oklahoma Academic Standards for Mathematics are developed around four main content strands: Algebraic Reasoning and Algebra, Number and Operations, Geometry and Measurement, and Data and Probability organize the content standards throughout PK-7 and Pre Algebra.

Like the teaching of reading and math, we follow the OAS for social studies. In our upper grades, this most often occurs as a stand alone learning experience. In lower grades, it is not uncommon for the teaching of social studies to occur within literacy learning activities. Social Studies instructions is happening consistently at our school thanks to the curriculum maps the teachers within our school district have created over time. Like all the curriculum maps, the one for social studies is grounded in the OAS. The standards are conveyed as Coherency Storylines. The coherency storylines are utilized to tell a curriculum story. According to the director of Social Studies for the State of Oklahoma: This Coherency Storyline could function in the lower elementary level to introduce early learners to American civics and history topics like notable Americans, to guide the selection of high-interest nonfiction reading series of foundational, formational, and transformational events in American history, or even the selection of basic domain specific vocabulary terms. Additionally, this Coherency Storyline could guide the selection in the lower elementary grades of national symbols, national historic landmarks, national parks, patriotic music, and national holidays/observances. Most of our district adopted curricula are published by Pearson with the exception of

our 3rd grade curriculum which is The Oklahoma Story published by Gibbs Smith.

Finally, like math, we approach our science instruction from an inquiry perspective. Our district has adopted curricula created by FOSS for all grades except 5th, and that publisher is Pearson. Here are the OAS for science for elementary: Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions, Energy, From Molecules to Organisms: Structure and Processes, Earth's Systems, Earth and Human Activity, Waves and Their Applications in Technologies for Information Transfer, Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits, Matter and Its Interactions, Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics, Biological Unity and Diversity, Earth's Place in the Universe, From Molecules to Organisms: Structure and Processes.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Thanks to the willingness of committed adults within our school community to teach classes and the financial support of parents, we are able to offer a variety of after school elective classes. These extended learning opportunities support the learning that is going on in our Pre K to grade 5 classrooms. These opportunities include art, running, technology, music and gardening clubs.

All of our students are able to participate in visual and craft art on a regular basis. The state of Oklahoma has Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS) for visual arts starting in grade 1. Our teachers teach to these standards in grades 1-5. Additionally, we offer an after school art program to students in grades 1-2. These are 6 weeks courses in the fall and spring semesters in which students explore different aspects of visual art and follow with the creation of weekly art projects.

Another outlet in which many of our students express their artistic talents is the annual PTA sponsored Reflections Art contest. We have several students who participate in this annual event. There are multiple media in which students can participate.

Our students in grades 2-5 attend physical education for 40 minutes per day two days out of every six. Our students in grades 1-2 attend physical education class at least once per week, and some weeks twice. Our pre k students attend physical education class once per week. Recess time supplements the required physical education time. Students in grades K-5 have two recess periods daily, while our full day pre k students have three.

We also offer a six week after school running club to students Pre K to grade 5 once each semester. This club has really grown thanks to the help of a committed parent volunteer. Nearly half our students enrolled at our school participate. Students earn weekly tokens for laps completed and there are end of session recognitions for top performers in each grade level. The Running Club is very popular in our school!

All our students have access to technology in varied forms. Each classroom is equipped with two networked student computers. Additionally, we have have a classroom set of iPad Minis that can be checked out by a teacher. We also have three carts stocked with classroom sets of Chromebooks. We have two computer labs, as well. This year we have added by way of grants to our Pre K and Kindergarten classroom 3 iPads.

With most grade levels, students are using the technology for applications that support learning in literacy and math. In our upper grades, our students are using computers to conduct research for special projects and for word processing.

We offer an after school technology class to 4th grade students. This six week program educates students about using Google applications, as well as, some introductory coding. Also, students learn about online research and safety precautions when attending a 40 minute library session one out of every six days.

Our students in grades 2-5 attend music class for 40 minutes two out of every 6 days. Students learn basic music reading and develop an understanding of music. Additionally, they have access to playing xylophones, drums and recorders.

Once each semester, our music teacher offers an after school ukulele club to students in grades 4-5.

We are piloting an after school gardening club this semester. We have opened it up to students in grades 1-5. It is going to be taught by a grandparent volunteer. The students who participate will be gardening in our newly created outdoor classroom. In it, there are 6 raised beds in which students will be able to plant.

The after school art, running, ukulele, technology and gardening clubs all support the learning standards our students are held to. They all extend and support the learning in these disciplines.

Finally, student access is not limited thanks to financial assistance we are able to provide when it is needed.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Our classroom instruction of units starts with assessment to determine where students are performing. This is followed by instruction, assessment and response. After this, the cycle restarts.

Assessments
We use a variety of assessment to inform us of student learning. Our primary assessments are: those administered by teachers, whether teacher-made or from a curriculum; STAR assessments, and Literacy First Assessment, Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Skills, and Bear Spelling Inventory.

PLC
We require our grade level teams to meet at a minimum of twice per month for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). It is during these meetings that teachers discuss student performance and what intervention, reinforcement or enrichment a student needs. This is primarily for ELA and literacy, but it can include math, as well. We ask grade levels to meet at a minimum of once a month with our reading interventionists as they are key tier II interventionists.

WIN
Our daily time set aside to meet the unique literacy needs of all students is referred to as What I Need (WIN). Our WIN time is a daily segment of time dedicated to intervention, reinforcement and enrichment. Our special reading, gifted/talented and special education teachers partner with grade level teachers to differentiate the literacy instruction of all students in grades K-5. During WIN time students are moving to different teachers to receive instruction on the skills they need. It allows us to make the groups smaller for intervention purposes, but it also allows us to provide reinforcement and enrichment. And with all the students moving to different teachers for instructions, it reduces the stigma that our students feel who are pulled from class for direct instruction in the special education classroom. This is due to the fact that during the WIN time segment, most students in the grade level are going to a different classroom and teacher to receive the literacy instruction they need. It has proved to be a great tool with ensuring we are meeting the unique needs of all students. I also believe the success we have had to narrow the achievement gap of our bottom quartile performers is directly related to our consistent implementation of our daily WIN time segment.

Reading Groups
Another strategy our teachers use within grades 4-5 is to create literature circles so that students are engaged in reading books at their grade level while still working on the skills they need to be covering based on curriculum maps and standards. In our primary grades, many teachers utilized a "teacher time" in which students are placed in small grouped according to the skills they need to work on with their teacher. Both of these strategies have proven successful as it relates to student learning.

Data Review Team
We benchmark our students five times during the school year using the STAR assessments in reading and math. Following the assessment windows, we meet with grade levels teachers, along with our counselor, special education teachers, reading interventionists, gift/talented teacher and school psychologist to discuss the progress of students. When it is determined that a student is in need of intervention, it is discussed during these team meetings.

We take student learning data and place it on cards then display them on a cardboard foldable to display how students are performing at different levels. We refer to these as data boards. These serve as visuals that make it easy to see how students are performing and whether they are in fact receiving the intervention they need.

Our school community is completely committed to the highest learning for all students. We take to heart that "All means All." Of course, the most impactful element of our instructional methods, interventions and assessments are the educators carrying executing them. However, these are many of the strategies utilized to ensure student academic success.

1. **School Climate/Culture:**

The school climate and culture at Westwood Elementary is derived from our mission: Westwood School Community will provide a safe, nurturing environment committed to achieving academic success and social excellence, allowing all children to reach their fullest potential. As a school we know student learning is central to our responsibility as a public school. However, we believe student learning happens best when students feel safe physically and emotionally while at school. This does not necessarily happen by default. Similar to the way we work to improve our pedagogy and practice to ensure high learning for all students, we have to devote ourselves to understanding the importance and practices of creating a climate of mutual respect in our school.

As a school we rely on the principles of Responsive Classroom to help us create and maintain the climate and culture of our school. According to Responsive Classroom, Responsive Classroom is an evidence-based approach to elementary and middle school teaching that focuses on the strong link between academic success and social-emotional learning.

Many of our faculty members have completed formal training in Responsive Classroom. However, our staff has seen changes over the recent school years. In order to support the practices of Responsive Classroom, we have relied on two of our veteran, master teachers to provide in-service training on Responsive Classroom practices the last two school years. Specifically, they have reviewed how to handle classroom discipline and how to facilitate Morning Meeting.

As a school we want to approach classroom management and discipline from a positive approach. We believe this is best accomplished by helping students take responsibility for their actions, empowering them to problem-solve and look for the logical consequence. The Morning Meeting is the time set aside to get to know one another and build relationships. We believe this is critical to student experience.

Additionally, our faculty has engaged in book studies that have targeted Responsive Classroom practices. Last school year, we read Teaching Children to Care by Ruth Sidney Charney, and for the current school year, we are reading The Power of Our Words by Paula Denton, EdD. Teaching Children to Care helped us reflect on our practices as it related to working with children when they did not follow the rules. The Power of Our Words has supported us by helping us reflect on and refine our "teacher language."

2. **Engaging Families and Community:**

Engaging our families and community is critical to the life of our school. When families feel connected and welcomed to their child's school, an instant partnership is forged. When community members are engaged in your school you not only benefit from what they offer, but they become advocates for your school in your community. The power of strong relationships with families and community cannot be underscored enough.

One critical way we engage our parents is through good communication. We communicate with our parents in a variety of media: print in weekly folders or notes home, emails from teacher or administrator, weekly newsletters, website, Twitter and Facebook. Communication is one variable that can be easily controlled, and committing the time to doing it well allows you to keep parents informed. When parents are informed, they naturally feel better about the experience of the child at school. Our lines of communication also allows us to connect with parents when we are in need of help, support or volunteerism.

We welcome our parents to enter our school in the morning during drop off. They are required to sign in at the office and put on a visitor's badge, but they are welcome to walk their child to class anytime they choose. Our office staff has a critical job in kindly welcoming parents, and treating them with patience and respect.

We have a host of times throughout the school year we engage our parents. In the fall and spring semesters, we have sit-down parent-teacher conferences. We have nearly perfect attendance at these, and a large part of that success is due to teachers following up with parents. Additionally, our teachers know they can invite parents to come serve as volunteers in their classroom whenever they see a need.

We have a very active PTA which offers a host of opportunities for parents to volunteer. These opportunities include helping with special events or assisting with special projects around school.

We engage our community by accepting help when it is offered and asking for help when it is needed. Currently, we partner with our local neighborhood association to read with some of our 3rd graders who are struggling academically. This is been such a mutualistic relationship. Also, being in close proximity of Oklahoma State University (OSU) we solicit or are offered the help of different student groups throughout the school year.

3. Professional Development:

Professional Development is the vehicle by which our practices as educators can be shaped. In Oklahoma, teachers are required to attain 15 professional development points annually or a total of 75 over 5 years. Most of our teachers far exceed this minimum. In our school and district, educators earn professional development credits by attending offerings from 1. Our central office Educational Services department, 2. School site or 3. Out of district.

Our district's Educational Services department provides a variety of professional development opportunities, especially in the summer months. There are trainings offered on a regular basis on our district adopted curriculum. This empowers our teachers to use the tools at their disposal. However, Educational Services also surveys our teachers to see what they are interested in learning. After reviewing the responses, a list of opportunities are posted in which teachers can register. This summer, based on teacher responses, a math instructional specialist will be visiting our school district for a full-day training. Additionally, there will be a four-day class offered on literacy. These trainings can be attended at no cost to teachers.

As a site, we are surveying teachers as we have our end of year evaluation conferences. These responses will be considered as a plan is developed for site professional development for the coming school year. Once we have completed our conferences, we will see what commonalities exist. Our hope is to tailor our in-service to meet the needs/interests, if possible. Also, administrators consider the needs of the school, and will work to communicate with site teacher leadership teams to gather input on possible professional development for in-service days.

Also, teachers are free to attend professional development that is personal to them. At times, our school is able to provide the funds for some registrations. Our school is also afforded 9 Administrative Absence leave days that teachers can request. This allows them to attend professional development and have a day off from school to do so. Our district has allowed for some Flexible PD hours over the last few years. This means the PD teachers attend on their own can count toward their annual PD required hours.

Administrators are provided with monthly professional development during executive team meetings. During these monthly meetings a variety of topics are covered. There is also a summer administrators' conference they can attend.

In our school and district, the connection between professional development and student success is known and valued.

4. School Leadership:

The school principal has two hopes for each child each day. The first is that the child learned at her highest level, and the second is that the child had a good day at school while doing it. Over time he has reconciled these two hopes into what he believes school is about: "Student learning and student experience." As he

leads our school, he filters decision making through the lens of "Student Learning and Student Experience."

The principal has a personal statement as it relates to accountability and his personal responsibility as a school leader. That is "Leadership equals results." This understanding has freed him to make decisions that he believes are in the best interests of students and the school. Also, it made him stop making the excuses he had made earlier in his career when desired results were not achieved.

The principal also believes in collaborative leadership. This plays itself out in allowing teachers to serve on interview committees for new hires. Also, it manifests itself in a monthly advisory time with a school teacher leader team, referred to as Professional Learning Community (PLC) Leadership Team. It is during PLC Leadership team that the principal can work with teacher leaders to solve problems, plan for future events and get input on decision making. It is a critical time.

The principal loves the students, staff and families of Westwood Elementary. He considers it one of the great blessings in his life to serve as principal. His hope is to be be a courageous leader, ensuring that student learning remains a central focus, while ensuring students love their experience at Westwood Elementary.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

We have a very successful school thanks to a lot of hard work by our students, staff, parents and community. We are fortunate to have a number of practices that lead to success for our students. However, if there was one practice that had to be identified as helping us realize growth in student achievement, it would have to be our daily time set aside to meet the unique literacy needs of all students. This time is referred to as What I Need (WIN). Our WIN time is a daily segment of time dedicated to intervention, reinforcement and enrichment. Our reading interventionists, gifted/talented resource coordinator and special education teachers partner with grade-level teachers to differentiate the literacy instruction of all students in grades K-5. With the added help of non grade level teachers, it allows the group sizes to be smaller so more focused instruction can take place. During WIN time students are moving to different teachers to receive instruction on the skills they need. It allows us to make the groups smaller for intervention purposes, but it also allows us to provide reinforcement and enrichment. And with all the students moving to different teachers for instruction, it reduces the stigma that our students feel who are pulled from class for direct instruction in the special education classroom. This is due to the fact that during the WIN time segment, most students in the grade level are going to a different classroom and teacher to receive the literacy instruction they need. It has proven to be a great tool for ensuring we are meeting the unique needs of all students. I also believe the success we have had to narrow the achievement gap of our bottom quartile performers is directly related to our consistent implementation of our daily WIN time segment. We started WIN time in the Fall of 2014. Since that time, our state report card has gone up three points per year. We first had the idea of WIN when we attended a four day workshop put on by Solution Tree in the Summer of 2013. At that time, we learned about Professional Learning Communities, as well as, the importance of intervention time. I would say the original intent of the intervention time was to target the struggling learner, however, we have shaped it so that it has become a targeted instruction time for all our learners.