# *U.S. Department of Education*
# *2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program*

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name  Talkington School For Young Women Leaders
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 415 North Ivory Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lubbock                State TX                Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 79403-3411

County Lubbock County

Telephone (806) 219-2213                Fax

Web site/URL https://www.lubbockisd.org/o/tsywl    E-mail kathy.rollo@lubbockisd.org

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.  Kathy Rollo_____E-mail kathy.rollo@lubbockisd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Lubbock Independent School District            Tel. (806) 219-0000

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. Zach Brady
(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, leave blank.*

# 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. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.

2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 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.

3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.

4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.

5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.

6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.

7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

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.

**The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.**

# PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

**Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.**

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district       <u>28</u> Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):              <u>10</u> Middle/Junior high schools
                                            <u>5</u> High schools
                                            <u>0</u> K-12 schools

                                            <u>43</u> TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district**.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/ (Find your school and check "Locale")

   [X] Urban (city or town)
   [ ] Suburban
   [  ] Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

| Grade | # of Students |
|-------|---------------|
| PreK | 0 |
| K | 0 |
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 |
| 4 | 0 |
| 5 | 0 |
| 6 | 91 |
| 7 | 67 |
| 8 | 99 |
| 9 | 56 |
| 10 | 61 |
| 11 | 45 |
| 12 or higher | 50 |
| Total Students | 469 |

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of     0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
the school (if unknown, estimate):   2.8 % Asian
                                    11.3 % Black or African American
                                    45.2 % Hispanic or Latino
                                    0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
                                    36.9 % White
                                    3.4 % 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 2021 - 2022 school year: 5%

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 **to** the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year | 6 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred **from** the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year | 15 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 21 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021 | 439 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.05 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 5 |

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

Spanish, Tagalog, Bengali, Arabic

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school:     3 %

                                            15 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals:     45 %

            Total number students who qualify:     209

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP:     0 %
                          Total number of students served          0|

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

| | |
|---|---|
| 0 Autism | 0 Multiple Disabilities |
| 0 Deafness | 0 Orthopedic Impairment |
| 0 Deaf-Blindness | 0 Other Health Impaired |
| 0 Developmental Delay | 0 Specific Learning Disability |
| 0 Emotional Disturbance | 0 Speech or Language Impairment |
| 0 Hearing Impairment | 0 Traumatic Brain Injury |
| 0 Intellectual Disability | 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504:     0 %
                          Total number of students served:          0

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 6

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

| | Number of Staff |
|---|---|
| Administrators | 4 |
| Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 21 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc. | 11 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 1 |
| Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 4 |

12. 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

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

| Required Information | 2021-2022 | 2020-2021 | 2019-2020 | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Daily student attendance | 96% | 97% | 98% | 97% | 97% |
| High school graduation rate | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

14. **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 2022.

| Post-Secondary Status | |
|---|---|
| Graduating class size | 32 |
| Enrolled in a 4-year college or university | 84% |
| Enrolled in a community college | 16% |
| Enrolled in career/technical training program | 0% |
| Found employment | 0% |
| Joined the military or other public service | 0% |
| Other | 0% |

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
    Yes <u>X</u>        No

    If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.        <u>2016</u>

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

Our mission is to empower young women leaders through rigorous college preparatory experiences, health and wellness, commitment to service, and personal accountability for lifelong success.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

shorturl.at/mqrEK

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

Talkington School for Young Women Leaders is a single gender magnet campus in the Lubbock Independent School District (LISD) where students who desire to attend a rigorous college preparatory campus must apply. To apply to any campus in Lubbock ISD one must complete an online transfer request. In addition to this online application, students applying to Talkington have an added requirement that includes two teacher recommendations, a student-written letter of interest, a recent copy of the report card reflecting current grades, the most recent copy of the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) scores, as well as discipline and attendance records. We strive to level the playing field for underserved students, and therefore preference is given to economically disadvantaged students who meet the criteria. Administration and student ambassadors visit every elementary campus in the district as a recruiting tool for our school. The majority of students apply and enroll after their 5th grade year; however, applications are accepted for all grade levels.

# PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Talkington School for Young Women Leaders (TSYWL) is a 6th through 12th grade all-girls college preparatory magnet school which opened in the fall of 2008. Talkington's mission is "to empower young women leaders through rigorous college preparatory experiences, health awareness, commitment to service, and personal accountability for lifelong success." Talkington accepts applications from students in Lubbock Independent School District (LISD) as well as outside of our district. Our families span the spectrum of socio-economic status and we especially seek to recruit first-generation college-going students, providing multiple platforms of support up to and after graduation, so that these students are successful in their college careers. Talkington is one of only ten schools in Texas operating in partnership with the Dallas-based Young Women's Preparatory Network (YWPN) using this model and this makes our school very unique in our area.

Talkington students are exposed to a rigorous, advanced curriculum starting in the 6th grade. College-level coursework begins in 9th grade with the first of up to 21 Advanced Placement (AP) or dual-enrollment courses. The high level of work students are expected to master teaches them to think critically and become problem solvers. Our close-knit student body and dedicated faculty provide a safe space for students to stretch beyond what they believe possible in an atmosphere of consistently high expectations, a combination not often found in public education. Each student has attention and support from their current and past teachers, their alpha administrator, their counselor, the college-success advisor, and the community liaison to guide them through the process of becoming not only scholars but well-rounded women and leaders.

Talkington's mission is to graduate 100% of students not only from high school but from college as well. After graduation students are tracked and offered similar levels of support as they received in high school. We value our alumni and ask for their feedback regarding their educational experience as a guide to improvement. For example, several alumni mentioned they would have liked to have had additional social/emotional instruction in high school as this would have been helpful in their college transition. With this feedback we implemented a teacher-facilitated curriculum called School Connect with the goal of improving social, emotional, and academic skills. Students are immersed in lessons in social awareness, self awareness, self management, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. Students have learned about having a growth mindset, how to prioritize, work collaboratively, and build rapport with teachers and adults. By teaching these coping and life skills we have seen considerable growth in our students.

Talkington is uniquely able to employ both a full time College Success Advisor (CSA) and a Community Liaison, each of which play a vital part in the success of our students. The CSA helps students and parents overcome college barriers common to underserved students through college awareness activities. He manages each student's college application process, including help with essays, letters of recommendation, and resumes, and provides comprehensive financial aid counseling, advocates for students with college admissions departments, and coordinates college readiness workshops for students. Our CSA models the College Success Initiative (CSI) provided by YWPN by providing personalized and age-appropriate college advising services to all students with the goal of placing each student in a best-fit college where she will thrive and graduate with as little debt as possible. This support empowers students to achieve and grow into well-prepared, experienced, and capable students in local and global communities. The CSA also maintains contact with alumni, providing support during their college years as needed.

Talkington's Community Liaison offers a distinctive approach to engaging our students with the community. The Community Liaison works with local schools, community agencies, and businesses to offer volunteer opportunities for our students, arranging over 35 events in this past Fall alone, to help students meet the community service requirement. She facilitates the recognition of a volunteer of the month and presents the Talkington Service Award to one deserving student at the end of the year. She also works collaboratively with Texas Tech University and YWPN to schedule opportunities for all of our students to attend academic and enhancement summer camps that serve to further the students' experiences and have a lasting impact on our students.

Talkington was awarded National Blue Ribbon School (NBRS) status in 2016 and this award has been the

impetus for a process of continuous improvement in every area including curriculum implementation, resource stewardship, leadership development for students and faculty, conversion to standards-based learning, and emphasis on mental health and wellness throughout the pandemic and beyond. The interest in our campus generated by the NBRS designation is used to showcase our student-centered, caring approach to learning that considers all aspects of student needs–physical, mental, and emotional. The recognition has also given us additional exposure in our community which has helped to recruit and retain students, further cementing our reputation as an education leader in our community.

# PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**.

**1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

All Talkington teachers, including Reading Language Arts (RLA) teachers, instruct students in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, or TEKS, which comprise the required Texas curriculum. Talkington students are provided with advanced English courses in every grade level–Honors English in middle school grades, Pre-AP (Advanced Placement) in 9th and 10th grades, and AP English 1 and 2 for 11th and 12th grades, which add the AP standards to the required TEKS. The English teachers implement a variety of research-based, effective instructional methods, such as Lead4Ward and Marzano Research, and make minute-to-minute instructional decisions that keep students engaged and motivated to take ownership of their successes and their growth opportunities.

The RLA department utilizes a combination of Amplify Texas, SpringBoard, and College Board programming, as well as teacher-made supplementary materials to ensure that all TEKS are learned. Teachers use a balanced literacy approach, focusing on reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills throughout all units of instruction so that students graduate ready to actively participate in college courses and provide critical input in professional settings. Writing and grammar are infused with reading instruction in order to facilitate mastery of standards while fostering a lifelong love of reading. Students are exposed to a variety of texts and genres, for example through "Speed Dating" with books, including cross-curricular topics such as science and history. Students complete required readings as well as self-selected texts and participate in silent sustained reading, which improves comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary skills. Student-led book talks and teacher-led reading conferences engage students and allow teachers to monitor reading progress.

RLA teachers strive to use innovative, collaborative learning opportunities and technology to create positive and productive classroom cultures. Programs such as Istation, Edulastic, GoFormative, PearDeck, and FlipGrid are innovative ways to build student mastery while allowing students creative options for providing evidence of learning.

Vertical teaming from 6th through 12th grades promotes a high level of instructional accountability among teachers and ensures a common goal of student mastery of standards at each level. Weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLC) meetings allow RLA teachers opportunities to plan, assess, and compare data to ensure that students receive instruction that seamlessly addresses student needs from middle school through high school. Teachers across grade levels analyze data from formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments are varied and include exit tickets, group discussion, essays, quizzes, comprehension checkpoints, tests, and projects, and serve to adjust unit plans, create targeted re-teach lessons, design challenging classroom stations, and build tutoring groups. The only assessments that are truly summative, in that there is no re-teach/re-test, are the Texas STAAR/End-of-Course (EOC) exams and AP exams at the end of courses.

In alignment with the best standards-based learning practices, teachers are implementing proficiency scales for instruction at all grade levels. Students track their own progress using student data trackers and are able to articulate their own learning progress as well as their next steps toward mastery.

Talkington students matriculate out of high school with valuable experience in reading, writing, and speaking skills that enable them to flourish in the post-secondary environment.

**1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Talkington's math department provides challenging courses for all grade levels from 6th through 12th grades. All middle school students receive advanced math instruction in 6th and 7th grades. Eighth graders are enrolled in Pre-AP Algebra I, and 9th graders are enrolled in Pre-AP Geometry. Upper level courses

include Dual Credit Algebra II and Dual Credit Pre-Calculus, AP Statistics, AP Calculus, and Financial Math. As with English, students are tasked with learning the mandated state TEKS for each course as well as the additional standards required by the AP Curriculum. The math department is innovative and responsive to student needs by moving students to the next level in math based on their achievement rather than their grade level. For instance, there are 8th, 9th, and 10th graders in On-Ramps Precalculus and in both levels of Algebra II along with the juniors and seniors.

Teachers use direct instruction strategies in math classrooms, including unit pre-assessments, the necessary chunking of content with provided examples, and collaborative processing time, which might include think-pair-shares, concept attainments, and summaries as well as other strategies. Direct instruction is followed by as much practice as is needed for mastery by all students, both during class time and at home. Homework is considered practice and is checked to provide feedback to students but is not entered into the gradebook since it cannot be considered an authentic assessment. Daily formative assessments, both formal and informal, are used to determine students' level of understanding and to adjust instruction. Real-world applications of math are emphasized and include building rockets, banking and personal finance, and architecture and design. Formative assessments include quizzes, exit tickets, individual white board responses, teacher/student conversations, student polling, Know,Want, Learn (KWL) charts, tests, and more. As with English, summative classroom assessments are relatively rare since teaching to mastery requires allowing as much time or as many opportunities as an individual student needs to be able to provide evidence of learning. Summative assessments include required district assessments and the Texas state STAAR/EOC tests (6th through 8th grades).

Students use an online data tracker to chart their progress and determine their need for re-teaching, tutoring, or additional practice. Students are taught math processes and strategies for problem-solving which benefits them as they move into post-secondary education with even more rigorous courses.

The Math PLC is divided into middle school and high school and each group meets at least once weekly, with the entire group meeting as needed. The middle school group was tasked by the district this year with implementing a new math program (Carnegie Math) that has required many hours of teacher training. The teachers have compared student achievement so far this year using the new program with student achievement data from the last five years and have decided to supplement the curriculum with teacher-made lessons that have been successful in the past in order to best serve their students and provide the most effective and efficient learning experience possible.

**1c.  Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Middle school students at Talkington take Honors Science in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Ninth and tenth graders take Pre-AP Biology and Pre-AP Chemistry, respectively. Upper level offerings include AP Physics 1 and 2, AP Chemistry, AP Biology, and Forensics. Students participate in collaborative inquiry and discovery learning through hands-on modeling, student-centered activities, and experiential learning. These approaches to learning encourage college and career readiness and real world problem-solving skills, and foster a lifelong curiosity and love of learning.

Students rank their understanding of learning objectives at the beginning and end of each class period using proficiency scales that scaffold the progression of learning from lower to higher depths of knowledge (DOK) levels. This has built their confidence in advocating for their academic needs and strengthened the relationships between teacher and students.

Students are formatively assessed using performance assessments, open-ended response questions, common formative assessments, teacher observations, and authentic task assessments. Some examples include creating models of scientific phenomena, constructing labs based on student inquiry and experimental design, and analyzing lab data to draw conclusions for future experimentation. Summative assessments include Texas STAAR (8th grade) and End-of-Course (9th grade) assessments and College Board AP exams.

With the combination of data trackers and proficiency scales, students are able to articulate what they know

and what they don't know. Students record their progress on each learning target and track their progress towards mastery. This allows students to determine their needs for additional practice or reteaching. Students are able to set personalized learning goals based on the data acquired on their data trackers. Science teachers use students' data to plan instruction and analyze data as a department in PLCs. During Science PLCs, teachers also write positive postcards to parents and look for other faculty members to celebrate and share professional development videos and activities that they have benefited from with their colleagues.

**1d**. **Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The Talkington Social Studies department offers a curriculum that seeks to engage students in rigorous learning while providing a culturally inclusive environment for all types of learners. Students are presented with rich content in world history (6th grade), Texas history (7th grade), and US History (8th grade) in middle school. High school offerings include AP Human Geography, AP World History, AP US History, and AP US Government/AP Economics.

Talkington's unique and dynamic approach to social studies instruction encourages students to think creatively. AP Human Geography students participate in a project in which students are immersed in various languages, cultures, and religions to understand diverse perspectives. In 7th grade, students participate in National History Day by collaboratively researching a topic of their choice. They present their research exhibits to a judge at the campus level with opportunities to advance to the state competition. These experiences provide essential skills to empower girls to be successful citizens to strengthen the democracy of the future.

Instruction is aligned from 6th to 12th grade to develop relevant skills students will need. Students are consistently presented with primary and secondary sources and thematic maps that require them to analyze the larger cultural context and landscape. Writing skills are taught at a foundational level beginning in 6th grade and reinforced and built upon at every grade level. Students are also engaged with many interactive simulations that make them responsible for learning from diverse perspectives and challenge them to tackle the complexity of historical situations.

Talkington students track their performance through collecting assessment data from 6th grade through 12th grade. Students are encouraged to self monitor and be aware of what areas they are proficient and deficient in. Students consistently monitor their data on assessments through various protocols that encourage them to master the content and standards of the Texas curriculum and the College Board.

**1e.  For schools that serve grades 7-12:**

College and career readiness is the foundation on which Talkington is built. All middle schools courses are advanced which builds the groundwork for students to be successful in all advanced level classes in high school. Students at Talkington take Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, and Dual Enrollment courses starting in the 9th grade. This exposure to rigorous coursework helps equip every student for success in college. Students are educated about college in each grade level with college visits, presentations, and college readiness lessons.

Starting in the 10th grade, all students can enroll in courses at Lubbock ISD's Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center (ATC). The ATC serves all of the district's students with a large variety of career and technical courses in thirteen different programs, many containing apprenticeships, such as in electrical work, or resulting in industry certifications, such as Certified Nursing Assistants.

During the 2021-22 school year, Talkington students were able for the first time to enroll in agriculture classes. The leadership opportunities and agriculture education parallels the priorities of our community. We received our official Future Farmers of America Charter in 2022 further solidifying the work of our students in this area.

Another area of growth is in business education. We launched an entrepreneurial course in 2022 using the award-winning curriculum, INCubatoredu. Student teams identify a problem and then develop a product or

service that solves the identified problem. With the support of industry mentors, students are exposed to all aspects of creating a viable business. A culmination event is held where student entrepreneurship teams present their final business concepts before a panel of industry experts in a competition for funding. This year-long course offered to high school students is building leadership skills, presentation skills, and community relationships alongside business education.

**1f.  For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

**2.   Other Curriculum Areas**:

**2a.  Arts (visual and/or performing)**

Talkington offers orchestra, choir, and piano for all grade levels to students with all levels of experience. These classes develop proficiency in music literacy and students experience interpretive and creative modes of expression, both in the classroom and on the concert stage. Students in performing arts also develop skills in short- and long-term goal setting, critical and honest self-evaluative practices that focus on steady and consistent personal improvement and responsibility toward and reliability within the ensemble, the music program, and the school. Students in all three programs have multiple opportunities to showcase their talents and receive feedback through concert performances and contests. Talkington consistently has students competing at the state level. In addition, Talkington piano students are the only students in the world to experience grant-funded remote lessons and concerts from piano masters through our internet-enabled Steinway Spirio piano.

Talkington visual arts program focuses on both two-dimensional and three-dimensional study from beginning to advanced levels serving 6th through 12th grades. Our classes require students to think creatively through innovation, effectively collaborate with teachers and students on personal and group projects and push themselves by thinking critically through higher level problem-solving skills. The focus is on student-centered learning with hands-on applications which allow students to fail, reflect, rebuild, and succeed.

**2b.  Physical education/health/nutrition**

Talkington's physical education program is aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and supports our mission of health and wellness. Through physical education, students develop teamwork, strategic thinking and learn to overcome obstacles. Students starting in 6th grade are enrolled in a general physical education class where they are taught proper warm-up, stretching, and cool-down techniques in addition to many sports and games, including bowling and golf, hoping to promote a healthy, active lifestyle and a lifelong love of sports. Students in grades 7-12 can opt to participate in our athletic program and compete in volleyball, basketball and track. Students not interested in athletics are enrolled in physical education classes. These yearlong courses work to build students physically and mentally. Talkington does not compete in University Interscholastic League (UIL) sporting events but instead has a full schedule of games with small surrounding school districts and private schools. In addition to physical activity, the PE teacher uses a character development curriculum and delivers a lesson each week on topics such as Redefining Failure, Be Excellent on Purpose, and Stop Dreaming-Start Doing. These lessons support physical, emotional and mental health by developing a healthy mind with strategies for reducing stress and anxiety.

**2c.  Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)**

Talkington students can enroll in Spanish starting in the 6th grade with a course progression from Beginning Spanish through AP Spanish V (Spanish Literature).The World Language curriculum is based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills as well as College Board standards. The Spanish classrooms are equipped with interactive language labs which enable students to develop a strong foundation by listening to the

language and to practice speaking by having conversations with classmates through the headset with the teacher providing live feedback. The Language Lab is also an integral part of the assessment process and is used on AP testing. Talkington's Advanced Placement (AP) students are successful on the AP Exam to receive college credit. All Spanish courses ensure that students are learning connections between communication and complexity of culture through reading, listening, speaking and writing. Spanish students have the opportunity to compete in regional UIL competitions in Spanish Poetry and Prose. Learning Spanish helps students gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures. Students enrolled in Spanish complete projects that reinforce their understanding of Spanish culture, customs, traditions, and history as well as develop an appreciation for the diversity of the Spanish-speaking world.

## 2d. Technology/library/media

One-to-one chromebook technology has increased collaboration at school and home by providing all students with research and communication platforms. Absent students are able to continue their learning with posted assignments, videos, and other materials.

Talkington offers Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes to both middle and high school students. Middle school students have course offerings in Technology Applications, College and Career Readiness, Robotics, and Coding where they can improve their keyboarding and technical skills in various Microsoft and Google applications. High school students can enroll in Digital Interactive MultiMedia where students are introduced to graphic and video design skills, coding or advanced graphic design. Students who choose a career pathway in Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communication are able to enroll in classes at the Byron Martin ATC (see above). This unique Lubbock ISD campus is the hub of all Career and Technical Education courses for all 5 of our high schools.

Our very successful robotics program offers opportunities for students in grades 6-12 to learn an array of skills that greatly prepare them for their future. Through the engineering design process, valuable problem solving skills are developed. Students learn the value of teamwork and how to solve problems with a team. This year several robotics teams advanced to the state competition.

## 2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

Talkington Seniors take a capstone course, known as Senior Seminar, as a requirement for graduation. The yearlong course is a great transition to college as students continue to develop and refine the skills of researching, writing, developing a product, presenting orally, collaborating, and time management. Students conduct research on a topic of their choice with a product developed and executed in collaboration with a community mentor with expertise in the area of study. Time is also set aside in class for the college advisor to work with students on college essays and applications in addition to completion of financial aid information. Senior Seminar develops life skills and is a crucial component to the work that is done around college readiness.

For students interested in law, Talkington offers a Mock Trial course where students prepare and argue a fictitious criminal case, playing the roles of the defendant, witnesses, prosecuting and defending attorneys. Mock Trial provides a range of valuable skills and experiences that can be applied to many areas of life, including law, business, and public service. It also develops critical thinking skills, teamwork, problem-solving, and public speaking abilities.This year, Talkington's Mock Trial team advanced to the state competition.

## 3. Academic Supports

## 3a. Students performing below grade level:

Students can perform below grade level for many reasons so working with these students requires a targeted and individualized approach. Assessment data, targeted instruction, intervention and positive reinforcement are several strategies used to support these students. Before students are even accepted to Talkington, parents are informed of the expectation for students to attend tutorials when needed. It is important for

students working below grade level to believe that asking for help is the norm and is part of the TSYWL culture.

Talkington uses a 9-week grading system. Data from 3 week, 6 week and 9 week grading reports are used to help teachers identify students' strengths and weaknesses. This information is then used to tailor instruction and develop a plan for intervention. Progress monitoring is put in place and students who are not improving have a scheduled conference with an administrator where students reflect on their grades and learn strategies for study skills, organization, and how to ask questions in the classroom. Goals are set and monitored at weekly check-ins. Student improvement is acknowledged which helps build confidence and motivation. Additional support and continued monitoring is put in place when needed. Parents are informed and conferences are held to ensure a school/home partnership.

Students and parents are given teacher tutorial times at the beginning of the school year. Teachers frequently remind students that tutoring is an opportunity, not a punishment. Students are taught to advocate for themselves and ask for help. Mandatory tutorials for students who are performing below grade level are held before and after school and are assigned based on information from formative assessments.

The culture of high expectations, mastery learning, student goal setting, and standards-based grading practices has taught students to have a true understanding of what concepts they are struggling with and how to ask for assistance.

**3b. Students performing above grade level:**

With an advanced course load and high academic expectations, Talkington girls are all pushed to work to their highest potential and most of our courses are defined by the district as being above grade level. However, we provide enrichment opportunities for students who have mastered the learning objectives in each class in a timely manner in several ways.

Proficiency scales define the enrichment opportunities for some courses and this allows students to work independently or in collaboration with other students without relying on their teachers. Some enrichment opportunities are student-generated projects that expand on current instructional units. Some students choose to be mentors or peer tutors within the classroom, supporting other students who are struggling with content. Students can also choose topics of interest to pursue. For example, one of our students has used this time to perform an ongoing, multi-year scientific research project that she was able to take to the state science fair this year.

Teachers can generate enrichment opportunities for students as well. Some provide choice boards that list many options, allowing students to choose one or more and work individually or collaboratively. Some choice board options could include research papers, student presentations, technological products, such as websites or app design, business creations, drama, and poetry.

Another strategy for serving above grade level students is advancing in course work independent of their grade level. This is especially true in the math course sequence as mentioned above (see Section 4, 1b) where an 8th grader is enrolled in PreCalculus, normally a junior or senior level course.

Students that are working above grade level often choose to be more involved in enrichment activities outside of the regular classroom. Some of these include music performances, mock trial competition, Teen Court participation, DI competitions, academic UIL teams, and community volunteering.

**3c. Students with disabilities:**

Throughout the application and selection process, Talkington promotes its rigorous curriculum and standards to all students of Lubbock ISD including students with disabilities. Talkington has served students identified as needing special education services, 504 plans, or Student Support Team plans. The campus has procedures and processes established to both ensure students receive the appropriate support and that their plans are annually reviewed by a committee that includes the parents and the student. Students with an

Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 plan are provided their necessary accommodations during class time, before- or after-school tutoring, and during all assessments including state testing and AP tests. In both math and English, Talkington has interventionists who are able to work in small groups with students during class periods as well as in before- and after-school tutoring.

Teachers provide feedback regarding the students' progress during Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings held each year. Students are encouraged to attend and use their voice to advocate for their own learning needs. Teachers are provided with each student's learning plan at the beginning of each school year, are trained in the use of the accommodations, and are monitored for compliance in the provision of accommodations throughout the year.

Dyslexic students are given support during the Language Live Program that meets daily as a scheduled course. During this time students work on word recognition, reading fluency and comprehension. This specialized program has been very successful as evidenced by all of the students exiting the program by the end of their 8th grade school year.

By using a range of strategies and working collaboratively with families and other school professionals, students with IEP, 504, or other individualized  plans can be assured that their needs for support are met and that they will be prepared to succeed beyond high school.

### 3d.  English Language Learners:

Talkington's Emergent Bilingual (EB) students include native Spanish speakers as well as students from the Philippines and the Middle East. These students are monitored throughout the year to ascertain their improvement in the use of the English language for both Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (social language) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (academic language). All core Talkington teachers are ESL-certified and use strategies daily to strengthen the four domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills of English language learners. Emergent Bilingual students that request it are provided with an English-to-native-language word-to-word dictionary that they may use at all times and on all assessments except reading.

Emergent Bilingual students are assessed at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year for progress updates through teacher reports and grades. A Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) is convened every three weeks to monitor students that are struggling. In addition, an LPAC representative meets individually with teachers to monitor the implementation of the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) and the use of effective instructional strategies and resources such as iStation and IXL (online programs).

Identified EB students are required to sit for the online Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System exam (or TELPAS) annually until they demonstrate proficiency in all four domains at a sufficiently high level for two consecutive years. The support Talkington provides varies annually with the needs of the students. For example, last year's TELPAS testers struggled the most with the speaking portion of the test, and so this year a consultant came in to work with the students on how to plan, write out, and practice their speaking responses to prompts. In addition, the students were tested individually so that they would be more comfortable recording their speaking responses during the test.

### 3e.  Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

# PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

## 1. Engaging Students:

Talkington's dedicated staff truly believes in the mission of the campus. A staff who believes that every child can reach their full potential sets the tone for a positive environment which keeps students engaged and motivated. It promotes academic success, gives students a sense of belonging, and fosters a desire to succeed.

Students are motivated by meeting emotional needs. Since our entering students come from all over the district, we begin building a positive, cohesive culture at the annual Warrior Welcome held in August prior to the start of the school year. This camp-like orientation gives students the opportunity to meet their peers and teachers and to become familiar with the building and expectations before the first day of classes, alleviating many sources of anxiety for students.

Students are motivated by meeting social needs. Developing the social skills of every student is a firm campus goal. The counseling and administrative team have an open door policy for students and parents. Guidance lessons and small group sessions are used by the counseling team. Incoming 6th graders are matched with a high school student as part of the Big Sister/Lil Sister Program with the goals of giving the incoming students a mentor and role model, promoting sisterhood, helping adjust to the middle school environment, and building positive relationships. This program is a benefit to the younger students and also to the big sisters as well who enjoy helping a younger student the way that they were helped in their 6th grade year.

Students are motivated by recognizing achievements. A large bulletin board near the front entrance contains pictures of all the seniors and all of the college acceptances they have received. Announcements are made weekly to celebrate students' acceptances and scholarship awards (more than $8 million so far this year). Students are recognized for their academic accomplishments through the presentation of letter jackets, honor sweaters, and AP Scholar sweatshirts. Students sign letters of intent with their respective colleges in front of a cheering crowd on College Signing Day. These traditions in our high school help build the foundation and culture of excellence for our middle school students.

Students are motivated by having a voice. Student input is solicited through Student Council meetings and events as well as student surveys. We have plans to implement an additional student leadership opportunity next year that is student-led and contributes in a more meaningful way to the decision-making process in our school.

## 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Family and community support are crucial to the success of our students. Talkington has several levels of support. Not only do we have the support of our school district but also the YWPN board as well as our Talkington Advisory Board, consisting of community members. The extra support allows us to level the playing field for our students and is a big part of our success.

Beginning in March, Talkington engages families in every aspect of the acceptance process. The transition from elementary school to middle school is seamless. Parents and students are provided with a website specifically created to engage parents in every decision-making step students will take. From the Warrior Welcome to Open House, everyone has the opportunity to ask questions and gather information from leadership and staff that will support a smooth transition into Talkington. The leadership team and staff collaborate on a monthly campus newsletter that is sent to families in order to keep all critical dates and reminders at the forefront. These are shared through email, campus communications program, and on our social media accounts.

Talkington prides itself on having an active, growing Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA). PTSA arranges opportunities for parents to be on campus and participate in learning activities with students..

School-wide events such as the Homecoming Tailgate, Parent Education Nights, Blood Drive, Father/Daughter Dance, and the Mother/Daughter event build relationships and a sense of community within our school. This is especially important in a school with no defined feeder pattern or geographical neighborhood.

Each 9 weeks, Talkington hosts a day of enhancement filled with activities that support our goals of college readiness, health and wellness, leadership, and community service. With the help of our community we are able to plan a full day of learning. Examples include: financial literacy taught by a local bank; Texas Tech University conducted seminars on college success, scholarship writing and navigating college life; life skills such as changing a tire, oil changes and car maintenance have been taught by a local oil change business; self defense instruction and safety lessons have been presented by community partners as well. These and many other opportunities are made available through the community partners we have been able to establish. These community partnerships are so beneficial to our students and have the added bonus of allowing community members to witness the excellent work taking place at Talkington.

## 3. Creating Professional Culture:

Talkington's motto is "Reject Average, Embrace Excellence." This is a reminder to each faculty member and student to undergo a continuous process of reflection and improvement with the individual goal of becoming excellent, which is then transformative for the entire organization.

The Talkington Professional Development (PD) calendar is built around campus needs as defined in an annual needs assessment as well as annual individual teacher goal-setting conferences. Talkington then plans to provide whatever PD is not offered district-wide. We often use the "train the trainer" model where small teams of teachers attend outside training and return to campus to turn it around to the rest of the staff. For example, a teacher group recently attended the High Reliability Schools Summit and is now sharing their learning with the rest of the faculty both formally and informally.

Our teachers are empowered through their weekly Professional Learning Communities  (PLC) meetings and they value the time to grow as reflective practitioners to strengthen their pedagogy (see PLCs in School Leadership below).

When a new staff member is hired we conduct formal and informal onboarding to ensure that they are assimilated into our culture and understand our mission. Mentor teachers check in with new teachers to ensure the campus functions effectively as well as to provide support for their personal well-being. Teachers new to the profession attend Lubbock ISD's New Teacher Academy (NTA) monthly to receive classroom management support, student motivation resources, relationship-building tips, technology support, strategies to increase rigor, and more. Even experienced teachers that are new to Talkington have reported that they have experienced phenomenal growth by being a part of our culture of high expectations and continuous feedback.

Organization health is an important measure of the school leadership, and each year faculty take part in an organizational health survey. The information received is used to build upon the school's strengths and improve weaknesses and is shared with the faculty at the beginning of the school year. The faculty then collaborates to revise any systems as needed. Talkington's two top strengths as indicated by the 2021-22 survey are communication and problem solving adequacy.

Talkington teachers report that they feel supported by the administration and are often recognized for the work they do through nominations for local and state awards. The leadership team shows appreciation through luncheons, personal handwritten notes, recognition in the weekly newsletter and on our social media pages and other events.

## 4. School Leadership:

Talkington's core leadership team is composed of the three administrators, two school counselors, college advisor, and academic dean. In addition, there are teacher leaders for every department (called Campus

Academic Leaders, or CALS). The leadership team has a philosophy of shared leadership and is flexible, responsive, and forward-looking, seeking to grow faculty members and systematize our successes so that a change in leadership does not derail the school's processes and commitments. The Talkington principal's vision of excellence for all is seen throughout the building as we work to ensure that the academic needs and emotional well-being of every student are met.

The administrative team meets weekly to reevaluate action steps, professional development needs, and morale, and to review various campus data points to ensure we are aligned with our Campus Improvement Plan and the vision we put forth for the school year. The collaborative work and strong work ethic of the administrative team is modeled daily and has been an inspiration to our teachers and staff.

In order to maintain such high standards and build leadership capacity among teachers, the master schedule was designed to allow all members of each core department to have a common planning period daily to encourage collaboration and teamwork. This sacrifice of class size and instructional time is vital to the work of the campus. An administrator is assigned to oversee each department and attends these teacher-driven meetings as needed. The CALs set the agenda in collaboration with the administrator and report back the celebrations, concerns, and innovative ideas shared during their meetings. Teachers use PLC time to disaggregate data, vertically plan, share instructional strategies, discuss curriculum updates, effectively implement standards-based learning, create interventions and action plans and celebrate faculty and student successes.

A high level of trust has been built among students, teachers, parents and the community. Teachers are empowered to lead school-sponsored organizations and committees that promote volunteerism, social equity, and family and community engagement, and this in turn promotes leadership skills among our students from 6th through 12th grade. Students advocate for student-led groups and a strong Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA) has been built to support our school.

In addition to the administration and campus leadership teams we have a Campus Performance Objective Council made up of administrators, teachers, parents and community members, along with the Young Women's Preparatory Network and theTalkington Advisory Board who all have a voice and are involved in the decision making process to ensure all students are successful.

5. **Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

Student leadership is essential to our school. Our Student Council advisor and officers take advantage of celebrating diversity throughout the school year. Students have the opportunity to celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Women's History Month, International Women's Day, Mental Health Awareness Week, and many more. These celebrations are student-led and involve the entire school. Activities include Advisory presentations, dress-up days, research and presentations, and securing dancers, speakers and artwork to visit our school to depict cultural differences and relevancy.

We continuously have a faculty member serving as a member of YWPN's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Committee. This representative has assisted in creating cultural competency modules for teachers and students which are instrumental in developing well-rounded students and providing our teachers with relevant cultural material to use in classrooms for our diverse population. Teachers are planning culturally responsive lessons by incorporating opportunities for students to use their voice and have choices in their learning. Using diverse texts, literature, and historical narratives has helped to promote inclusivity, understanding, and respect for different cultures. In addition, campus administrators participated in a year-long book study of Sharroky Hollie's Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning in order to better guide culturally responsive teaching on our campus.

Promoting diverse universities and colleges is an important part of our mission. As a college preparatory campus, we represent all types of public and private colleges and universities. Our campus is draped with college flags, posters, and door signs from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Predominantly White Institutions, Liberal Art Schools and STEAM Universities, among others. College shirt days, college visits, door decorations, posters, pamphlets and resources about a variety of

colleges help to raise awareness of all the options available to our students.

We provide opportunities for our students to hear from women of color in various STEM fields. We are fortunate to partner with the Women in STEM organization who provides monthly interactive webinars featuring diverse women who are working in STEM fields. Past speakers include a machine learning scientist at Impact Observatory, a PhD Fellow at Fox Chase Cancer Research Center, and a manufacturing engineer from Deloitte Consulting.

# PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Talkington faculty and staff are extremely proud of the achievements and successes of all of our students. We have now had nine graduating classes at Talkington and all of our students have been deemed College, Career, and Military Ready by the guidelines of the state of Texas and all have been accepted into 4-year universities.

We have always credited our dedicated staff, small-school atmosphere, and high standards for these victories. However, we are restless in our quest for improvement and we recently examined our school through the lens of the Marzano Resources' High Reliability Schools framework. This framework has prompted us to delineate the evidence for the strategies we believe have been the most important in our students' success. After examination, we determined that a multi-year school-wide shift to standards-based learning is largely responsible for our continued growth. This shift, comprising several strategies, creates teacher and student clarity in the desired learning outcomes, eliminates behavior from student grades, continuously assesses student progress, and produces grades that represent standards rather than assignments. The results of these shifts have been nothing short of dramatic. The already-positive relationships between teachers and students have improved, student confidence has increased, classroom conversations have become focused on learning rather than grading and points, and each student, for the first time, truly is aware of their progress on the learning trajectory–they know what they don't know and are able to choose what their next steps should be.

This realization has prompted Talkington to transition further into the evidence-supported instructional practices to implement the use of proficiency scales in some of our classrooms this year and all of our classrooms next year. Each course has proficiency scales for each unit of instruction that detail the expected learning outcomes, the prerequisite knowledge and skills, and the enrichment opportunities students have once they have mastered the learning goals. Students have routinely expressed a sense of gratitude and peace of mind to teachers and said how thankful they are to be able to see what they need to work on–a skill rather than a grade.

For years, we lamented that "students don't know what they don't know" and worked to remedy this educational shortcoming. Now we have student-provided evidence that our improved practices are bringing about amazing improvement in our students' attitudes towards learning and are developing our school into a true culture of shared responsibility for the fullest potential growth and achievement of every student, every day.