

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 [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Jason Powell

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

Official School Name Sundown Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 605 South School Street PO Box 1110

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

City Sundown State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 79372-1110

County Hockley County

Telephone (806) 229-3021

Fax (806) 229-2004

Web site/URL <https://www.sundownisd.com>

E-mail alan.berry@sundownisd.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* Mr. Brent Evans E-mail bevans@sundownisd.com

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

District Name Sundown Independent School District Tel. (806) 229-3021

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. Delwin Britton

(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 (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
2 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 4 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”)

- ☐ 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	33
K	34
1	33
2	31
3	36
4	35
5	46
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	248

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 60 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 37 % White
 - 2 % 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: 2%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	5
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	245
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
13 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 38 %

Total number students who qualify: 94

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 11 %
Total number of students served 27

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.

<u>1</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>8</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 5 %
Total number of students served: 12

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 8

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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 11:1

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	97%	99%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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	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%

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

Yes X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2012

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

Sundown Independent School District's vision statement reflects our heartfelt desire to inspire lives and transform the future. Our mission statement accomplishes our vision by instilling knowledge, empowering learners, and strengthening our tradition. Our bold value statement challenges us to love others, work hard, and embrace excellence. By achieving all these we have what is known to be called the "Roughneck Way".

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

<https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=667&code=FB>

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Sundown has a long history of success. That success is carried into today with their high-performing, A-rated elementary school. Their students have been successful with University Interscholastic League (UIL), state mandated tests, and college and career readiness, amongst many other areas. Students have a track record of carrying that success into their adult lives.

Located 40 miles southwest of Lubbock, Texas in Hockley County, Sundown is an oilfield community. The town was laid out in 1928 and major growth came in 1937 following successful oil drilling operations. Present day, there are approximately 1,400 citizens, and the town's main industry is oil and gas. The community is active during normal business hours, but many commute back to their homes in surrounding areas after 5:00 p.m. when businesses close. The school district is the town's largest employer. Sundown's economy is very dependent on dangerous and challenging work in the oilfield. They have 95 years of strong tradition, despite ever-changing economic challenges due to the fluctuation of the oil and gas industry, and the new landscape for school funding. Because the town is predominantly made of blue-collar workers, students come to school engrained with a strong work ethic and eager to learn, which ultimately leads to success.

Sundown Elementary School (SES) has supported programs that give every student the opportunity for success. SES is a Title I campus and uses those monies in unique ways. The school offers small group instruction to the lowest performing students, not identified as Special Education, in third through fifth grades. This has brought immeasurable benefit. The campus has a high number of students who qualify for free or reduced lunches. All students on the campus are provided free breakfast, and the district offers very affordable lunches for those who may not qualify. Another program, the School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC), helps in this area as well, providing food, monetary donations, and gifts for the less fortunate families in the school. SES has a high percentage of minority students whose families are first generation citizens working extended hours, predominantly early mornings. "Bear Den" is something this campus has implemented to help parents. There are certified teachers in the library, beginning at 7:00 a.m. Students can be dropped off early and spend some time with these teachers working on various things like homework assistance, tutorials, reading, etc.

SES staff spends a good amount of time on curriculum alignment. Teachers have a day allotted to them in the spring semester to meet with the teachers in the grades above and below them. During this time, they discuss the nuances of curriculum, in general, and what worked and didn't work for their current class. This allows teachers to make the changes necessary for each unique class. Teachers are also given two conference periods each school day so that they have plenty of opportunity to meet with other personnel, district-wide, as needed. Collaboration is a strong part of their success. As a campus, SES sets very high standards for students and staff. This takes precise planning, targeted instruction, and thorough follow-through, which the students and teachers are committed to.

SES was a 2012 National Blue Ribbon School recipient. This honor has been heavily celebrated. This accolade sets a high standard for upcoming classes to carry on with the Roughneck tradition. SES been able to leverage this award most notably by attracting families to the community in order to be part of the exceptional school system. They have seen this honor proudly displayed throughout the hallways, in newspapers, and on the radio and want to offer their children access to the best possible education. There is a sense of pride, in receiving this award, that keeps everyone committed to doing what it takes to be set apart.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has made some policy changes that have impacted this campus directly. Over the course of the last few years, Sundown ISD has seen funding reduction totaling into the millions. This reduction of budget has translated to a necessary reduction of teaching staff. SES has had to come together as a staff and do extra in certain areas in order to maintain the integrity of the high standards.

Overall, the day-to-day activities would seem normal. Daily announcements are made to set the tone for the day. The lower grade levels are self-contained classrooms, and there is block scheduling in the upper grades

with rich and diverse special population rotations. Extra-curricular activities are offered to meet a variety of interests and skill levels. The staff is diverse in areas of education and teaching experience, which offers the ability for both new and seasoned teachers alike to learn from each other. SES differs, however, in culture, thinking, and expectations. That is what sets SES apart when compared to the average elementary school. SES embraces excellence and refuses to settle for anything less.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The Reading/English language arts instruction at SES takes place in blocks of time varying from 90-110 minutes per day. The foundation for reading success begins in kindergarten and goes through second grade with students mastering phonics using the McGraw Hill Wonders program. Third through fifth grades also use the McGraw Hill Wonders series, promoting vertical alignment of reading skills. This curriculum offers instruction in vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and comprehension. The comprehension component focuses on a variety of genres, literary elements, and comprehension skills.

Third through fifth grades receive specialized, direct intervention instruction in a small group setting through the Title I program. Fourth and fifth grade students utilize the Mindplay program. This program provides differentiated instruction in comprehension, fluency, phonics, vocabulary, and listening comprehension. Students can track their progress in each area and earn certificates and classroom rewards for completing lessons. This program aids in closing any learning gaps in each area that an individual student may have and assists in bringing each student up to grade level expectations in each area. This program gives valuable feedback on students' reading levels. Students are also pulled for individual or small group direct instruction from their teacher based on gaps or weaknesses highlighted by the Mindplay program.

First through fifth grade students utilize the Scholastic Reading Counts (SRC) program to track reading progress throughout the school year. Students are able to read books of their choice, or on their appropriate reading level, from the library and take a comprehension test on that book. Students are rewarded for reading a certain number of words every six-weeks and are encouraged to increase their number of words read each six weeks of the school year. Community members volunteer to read to students during their weekly library time to foster a love of reading and community connection. Fourth and fifth grade classrooms complete novel studies of various high-quality literature that is appropriate for each grade level. Fourth graders have options such as book club and a book tasting to help foster a love of reading and expose students to various genres.

In writing instruction, students begin with basic word and sentence writing skills in primary grades and progress to writing multiple paragraph research papers by fifth grade. Students are explicitly taught spelling and grammar rules and are given ample opportunities to practice and refine writing skills.

Sundown teachers strive to make the state requirements a bare minimum and not the goal. Young children are sponges, and teachers take full advantage of this period in their development while staying aware of what is age and developmentally appropriate. Teachers use two primary types of assessments—formative and summative. Classrooms utilize game-based learning and review of vocabulary and comprehension skills, which provide formative assessment data, as well as engaging students throughout the learning process. Teachers also have technology-based weekly/bi-weekly formative reading assessments that direct instruction throughout the six-weeks sessions. Summative assessments include unit tests that occur once each six-week grading period.

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

Vertical alignment throughout the SES campus is one strength and a predominant reason for success. The primary grades (K-1) use Saxon Math and Go Math, by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, as their central curriculum. This curriculum builds strong foundational skills and contains hands-on learning. The intermediate grades (2-5) begin using Sharon Wells as their core curriculum. Sharon Wells allows teachers to ensure that there are no gaps between grade levels. It provides an abundance of vocabulary, critical thinking strategies and follows state and national standards. Supplemental curricula include Midget Digit, Education Galaxy, and Learning Farm.

Instructional decisions are based upon the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), along with the National Curriculum Standards. Teachers use the state requirements as a minimum standard for instruction, not the final target. The primary grades emphasize concrete concepts and hands-on learning using manipulatives. The goal is to transition students' knowledge from concrete concepts to abstract concepts. A major emphasis in the primary grades is vocabulary. Each grade level consistently uses the same "math talk." Another concrete way of learning in the primary grades is through centers, small groups, songs, videos, books, and acting out/role playing. These types of activities make learning in the math class memorable and helps them remember the math concept being taught. In their experience, some students learn better with this type of differentiation.

The intermediate grades (2-5) benefit from the math curriculum's step-by-step instruction. Sharon Wells offers problem solving strategies, spiral review, and critical thinking. The teachers provide the needed routine and repetition each day in these areas, which deepens the students' learning. The use of games, songs, hand movement, group discussions, group activities, and creative technology allow teachers to reach students through many different avenues.

Technology plays a vital role in the educational process of the students. Each classroom has a Clever Touch Board that teachers use to display the lessons. Students enjoy interacting with the math lesson on the board. Each student has a Chromebook that teachers can use to assign interactive activities and group work. It is also a great resource for students to use at home to complete assignments/homework. With the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test now being strictly online, technology is not just for added entertainment. It is now mandatory for student success. Teachers utilize Texas Formative Assessment Resource (TFAR) reviews created through the TEA website. The students participate in these reviews to become familiar with the new online testing forum. The teachers go above and beyond to incorporate this into their daily lessons.

Assessments are done on a weekly basis using each respective curriculum. The results of the assessments let teachers know which students understand the concept being taught and who needs tutorials, response to intervention (RTI), or different approaches to classroom learning. Through these different means, teachers gain a variety of data pertaining to student success. Summative and formal assessments are computer-based and have multiple tools to assist in delivering students' individual needs and help in students' understanding of the content.

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

SES's science foundation begins with the three-year-old program. The teacher provides the students with beginning oral vocabulary with photographs. Students do many hands-on activities, such as mixing primary colors, weighing items for comparison, float/sink activities, weather, and predictions.

In the pre-kindergarten classes, the teacher continues that strong foundation with a weekly project that blends Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM). These projects allow students to work as a team to build and present their projects.

Kindergarten, first, and second grades use Nancy Larson Science. These three grades support a growth mindset with experiments, hands-on activities, vocabulary walls, writing booklets, and field trips.

Kindergarten teachers use hands-on experiments of the life cycle with butterfly hatching, praying mantis, and chicken and duck eggs hatching.

First and second graders do research and inquiry consisting of technology and literature on different science topics to create projects to present.

Third, fourth, and fifth grades use the curriculum STEMscopes. STEMscopes Streaming offers a media library of world-class footage, current events coverage, and integrated activities. The curriculum ensures relevant material is taught and monitors student progress.

Cooperative group work is an integral part of how teachers instruct. Students engage in processing skills, problem-solving, and management skills. Students are given roles within groups, so every student is accountable for learning.

In one of the unit studies, students adapt a camel to live in the Arctic. They use a graphic organizer to record their research. Students must research and use their creativity to assess survival needs, habitat, four physical adaptations, and interesting facts. Students then present their findings to the class.

In addition to group projects, students are involved in many different learning activities to meet the needs of each student. Some assessments used are Generation Genius which includes activities, videos, online games, experimental labs, independent exit tickets, and organized, interactive spirals.

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

Texas Studies Weekly is the curriculum used for social studies in all grades. It has Texas specific content, grade level articles, and vocabulary that focuses on English, Language Arts and Reading. Additionally, the curriculum spirals, scaffolds and intertwines with other core subjects. Many of the students don't have the opportunity to travel beyond Sundown. This curriculum allows them to broaden their horizons. Texas Studies Weekly covers the TEKS, however, teachers strive for more with their instruction. The goal is to make history come alive through fun projects like dress up days, field trips, mock events, and various projects that are woven through each level.

The foundation for social studies begins in kindergarten through first grades. Teachers focus on vocabulary with the use of pictures in addition to giving the basics of Texas history. There are a few fun field trips that help solidify social concepts. For example, the students ride the bus around the community. They locate transportation used by the city, such as fire trucks or trash trucks to make a concrete connection to community government. Additionally, they learn economics through a field trip to the bank where they trade coins for dollar bills. They are then able to spend these bills at the local stores. Assessments for these grades are given weekly through tests accompanying the curriculum.

Second through fifth grades focus on teaching the students social studies with more rigor. Students are taught the lessons in a way that creates opportunities to make inferences, find causes and effects, draw conclusions, and make predictions. These grades also participate in fun activities like making and delivering things to the local nursing home to lay a foundation for citizenship. SES hosts mock elections each year to teach the students democratic values. Assessments are given weekly for these students in various ways, including multiple choice exams or through project rubrics.

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

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

SES provides a half-day, bi-weekly 3-year-old program, and a full-day, pre-kindergarten 4-year-old program.

The 3-year-old program is a great way for children to ease into the school setting. Through play, students learn colors, shapes, fine motor, and pre-writing skills. They also learn social skills for school readiness.

The full-day pre-kindergarten 4-year-old program uses Frog Street in conjunction with learning centers and small group instruction to teach letters, sounds, math, science, social studies, letter formation, and pre-reading skills. In order to promote an early interest in STEAM, students conduct experiments, projects, and introductory lessons in the early concepts of robotics and coding. In addition, children attend Music, Library, and Physical Education (PE). Weekly guidance lessons from the elementary counselor help students learn about self-regulating their emotions. Educators work daily on building executive functioning skills and

helping children learn to solve problems independently.

The early childhood teacher communicates with the kindergarten through second grade teachers regularly and has vertical planning meetings once a year in order to align or adjust pre-kindergarten teaching to their TEKS. The skills acquired in pre-kindergarten create an excitement for learning and gives them a head start in the social skills needed to be a successful learner. Teachers can see a difference between children that went through the early childhood program and those who did not. Kindergarten teachers appreciate that students who have completed our program have a readiness to learn academically, socially, and emotionally.

The Early Childhood program uses various assessments to track students' growth throughout the year. This year, teachers chose Circle Progress Monitoring Pre-K through Children's Learning Institute Engage for the assessment tool. It gives a good snapshot of how a child is progressing. In addition, teacher-created assessments and daily observations are supplemental tools used to get a bigger picture of students' progress.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Pre-kindergarten through fourth grade students attend music classes daily. The TEKS for elementary music education are taught through a blended curriculum, including "Quaver Music" and "Gameplan, An Active Music Curriculum." A wide variety of activities, lessons, and performances enrich the music experience, facilitate deeper learning, and meet the needs of all students. Vocabulary and cultural enrichment are a focus and are applied in singing and movement activities. Music theory is incorporated early, by singing, games, and by playing a variety of instruments - pitched and unpitched. Students showcase their learning and self-confidence at school and community performances. First through fourth graders perform musical plays to cross the curriculum to include reading, math, social studies, science, and social and emotional concepts. Fourth grade students spend time learning to play the recorder, and this pre-band unit eases their transition to fifth grade band. Students become more advanced at music reading and rhythms through performance on a band instrument. Second through fifth grade students participate in UIL Music Memory to increase appreciation of major composers, their musical compositions, and the historical connection to the times in which they lived. Fifth grade students are active in an instrumental band, furthering their musical skills by participating in public performances, group ensembles, and solos.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Physical Education is a vital aspect toward the enrichment of not only increased gross and fine motor skills through activities structured to enhance these objectives, but also an integral part in improving a student's social behavior. This is accomplished through a forty-five minute daily scheduled class in all grades that involve rigorous activities, games, and free play. In addition to our PE classes, SES also offers swimming lessons and water safety instruction on a rotational two- or three-week interval for first through fifth grades. The techniques learned in the pool setting can prove to be an invaluable tool in a real-world setting. The confidence and self-esteem that these two programs instill in the students by helping them gain and develop valuable skills can only be outdone by the fun they are having while doing all of these activities. It is a strong belief that these programs go hand-in-hand with the classroom setting to help enrich the students' physical, social, and academic success. It is a goal of SES to have the students take lessons from these two programs that will help them to become lifelong learners and achievers in all areas of their lives.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

Molding confident lifelong learners, the SES library encompasses a growth mindset. Learners are welcomed with joy, excitement, and encouragement. Every student has a 30-minute visit weekly. With flexible seating

options, they enjoy group interaction during book readings. Teachers encourage oral expression, comprehension, response, and inferencing by reading various genres of books out loud.

Since students often read about things they have personally experienced, or have recently studied in class, they make connections and create mental images that deepen understanding. The preschool and pre-kindergarten students enjoy retelling stories while independently interpreting illustrations. Kindergarten through fifth grade students check out books from the exciting new selections and timeless treasures.

The librarian provides support in finding books of interest and encourages students to surpass reading expectations set by classroom teachers. Contests motivate the students to go above and beyond their goals. Students are rewarded with prizes and incentives such as lunch in the library and recognition at the school-wide assembly.

Technology TEKS are addressed in each grade level using 1:1 iPads and Chromebooks. Teachers also use Clevertouch boards in every classroom. Instructors use programs and tools like Mindplay, Reading Counts, Starfall, and Study Island to enhance students' learning. Teachers use technology to engage kids and to improve instruction with great success.

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

While SES does focus on academic growth and performance, teachers also strive to educate the students beyond academics. They place an emphasis on ways to encourage the students to build strong character traits. The value statement, "Love Others - Work Hard - Embrace Excellence" is stated daily in the announcements, and is exemplified through grade level projects, bake sales and fundraisers for those in need in the community. Each six weeks, the counselor does guidance lessons with all classes and tasks the students to work on a particular character trait. This trait is regularly reinforced by staff, and at the end of the six weeks, there is a Character Counts assembly that not only features the students' service projects, but also gives fifth grade students an opportunity to present a skit that highlights the character trait for that six weeks.

Another special program offered is the pullout Gifted and Talented (GT) program. This program serves qualified students 30 minutes a day, 4 days a week. GT classes offer extended learning opportunities for students who have mastered basic grade level skills. Developing creativity, problem-solving, leadership, and research skills are all a focus of the GT program. These students are regularly provided opportunities to collaborate with peers in challenging teamwork and problem-solving activities.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

SES provides an enriching approach to all students, including those performing below grade level. They use audio, visual, and tactile reinforcement to ensure the students' potential to meet educational goals at each grade level.

When a student struggles to perform on grade level, help is offered by making adjustments, such as having them sit in closer proximity to the front of the room, offering hands-on manipulatives, oral test administration, extra time to complete work or shortened assignments, note-taking assistance, clarification or rewording of instructions, small group tutorials, and reducing stimuli for overwhelmed students.

Teachers focus on students' strengths and build their zone of proximal development. With guidance and encouragement from teachers and classroom aides, students are provided hands-on activities such as creating word squares to match up with vocabulary skills. Mindplay is used to provide differentiated instruction specifically tailored to students' weaknesses and strengths. Generation Genus is one of the many online tools used to help students connect with videos, activities, and quizzes to check for understanding.

Teachers reiterate topics where the students show weakness as a whole body, through small groups, and

individually. Underperformers practice with and learn from their classmates in group settings, reinforcing areas where students are struggling. Teachers give students the freedom and tools to achieve while being there to support them. Students are challenged to explain how they arrived at their answers by allowing them to demonstrate their learning process. Students are presented with different outlooks, inviting them to find an alternative way of viewing the material.

While peer activities have proven successful, teachers also offer students individualized interventions and extra practice in tutorials.

At SES, each child receives the support that gives them a fair chance to succeed. Teachers walk the distance with them and make every minute count.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

SES encourages students performing above grade level to strive for more. To guide their endeavor, they are provided math skill challenges and brain teasers for vocabulary, science, and social studies.

Higher level students are grouped together within class blocks in third through fifth grades, allowing time for these students to participate in more detailed discussions and work on an elevated level. In preschool through second grade classes, high performers have opportunities in small groups where they are presented with different levels of questioning at a different pace than their peers. Additionally, teachers design practice centers to appeal to different academic levels and creative interests.

Through the curricula, teachers provide multilevel instruction and activities. At times, lessons are enhanced from their original form to include additional problems that model advanced skills, which these students can use higher-order thinking skills to solve.

Students are encouraged to find creative solutions with opportunities to fail and grow. Higher order thinking is promoted by giving analytical, synthesizing assignments. Teachers work with the students to discover and expand upon areas of interest and guide them at their own pace. Students are encouraged to ask questions and construct their responses in great depth and detail.

Mindplay creates an opportunity for the students to expound upon vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills. Fifth grade students are given the opportunity to create and submit SRC quizzes to the librarian. Book clubs meet after school to read and discuss books above grade level. Academic UIL events provide a sought-after challenge to many of these students. The high achieving students spend time before, during, and after school developing the skills UIL highlights. These high achieving students do not require less time; they require just as much attention as any other student.

With opportunities for challenge, expectations, and self-reflection, it is the belief that students are being set up for success.

3c. Students with disabilities:

SES's special education population experiences all things the regular education students do, and more importantly, they don't feel as though they are not part of the culture and climate offered at the school. The staff's communication across grade levels and content areas that the students with disabilities are a part of, offers an effective start to helping those students. Title I Reading, Dyslexia, and the Special Education program that houses an inclusion setting, as well as a resource setting, offers instruction based on student needs.

Differentiated instruction and RTI practices have a place in every classroom, beginning in the least restrictive setting. This helps to target strengths and weaknesses that enable teachers to determine what is needed for the student to be successful. This implementation serves as the baseline of data to determine whether a student can function within the general education setting with accommodations, or if indeed, special education services are warranted.

Time is valuable in every setting. Teachers learn so much from the students. When it has been decided that a student will be served with tailored services and instruction, progress monitoring is documented daily to show growth or lack thereof. The resource program is an intensive and integral part that is used to close the achievement gap and much success has been achieved through it. The teacher models expectations, facilitates group learning opportunities, and provides moments where students can shine individually every day. Sharon Wells curriculum aligns well with standards and has a breakdown component for students to learn at a reasonable pace. Small group reading instruction centers around students' instructional levels with sight word reading, decodable books, weekly running records, and book walks. If something did not work well in the general education classroom, a different approach is always taken in the resource setting.

3d. English Language Learners:

At SES, Emergent Bilinguals (EB) are usually identified when a home language survey is noted as "any language other than English" in pre-kindergarten. Students are then given an English Language Proficiency Assessment. A Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) meets to discuss information from the teacher and assessments to determine if the student qualifies for an English as a Second Language (ESL) program. An LPAC committee consists of an ESL certified teacher, an administrator, a parent representative (must have a child participating in the ESL program), and a coordinator. Once identified, a certified ESL teacher fosters oral language, vocabulary development, and processing time in the classroom with the student(s). Kindergarten through twelfth grade students participate in the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) every spring. The TELPAS assesses progress students make annually in acquiring the English language. TELPAS measures second language development in domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Kindergarten and first grade domains are rated holistically through observation and written language. Students are rated by performance in terms of beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced-high in each domain. The LPAC meets three times each school year - beginning of the year for students newly identified, middle of the year for students needing updated accommodations, and end of the year for every EB in preparation for the following year. Students have the opportunity to reclassify and exit the program. The decision to reclassify is not solely based upon success on TELPAS and STAAR assessments, though they are both requirements for consideration. Each student is considered individually in conjunction with teacher input. Once reclassified, the student is monitored for four years. If within those four years, the student experiences difficulties, there can be a recommendation that the student be placed back into the ESL program.

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

SES accommodates instructional services for students with dyslexia. Using the Scottish Rite's "Take Flight" program, students receive daily instruction from a Scottish Rite Certified Academic Language Therapist. For certification the teacher participates in a two-year course at the Scottish Rite Learning Center of West Texas (SRLCWT). This training includes onsite and offsite instruction. Teachers must also have taken the TEA Dyslexia course. This course was designed to equip educators to better identify, serve, and support students with, or at-risk for, dyslexia. Students are identified for the dyslexia program through parent and teacher input, along with data from scientifically proven assessments. A 504 committee consisting of the parent(s), a teacher, an administrator, and a dyslexia therapist considers all information and decides whether to identify a student with dyslexia. The "Take Flight" program is designed as a pullout program for first through fifth grades on the elementary campus. The highest student to teacher ratio is 3 to 1. Qualifying students receive instruction from a series of books building on each other. The "Take Flight" program gives students the ownership of applying the tools they are acquiring through their services in their general education classrooms.

Students in kindergarten and first grade are administered a dyslexia screening. The dyslexia screening identifies each student as high-risk, moderate-risk, or no-risk for dyslexia. A team consisting of the campus administrator, grade level teachers, and the 504 coordinator review each individual students' Dyslexia Characteristic Latest Add-On Report to determine what further action may be required. Teachers attend 504 meetings to voice concerns, give observations, and assist in designing a student service plan for classroom

modifications and state assessment accommodations. With the staff working as a team, students with dyslexia are better served, giving them tools and confidence to be successful in and out of the classroom.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

SES staff spends their days modeling the value of education. Students understand when they are willing to put in the work, the teachers will be there, even if that means before or after school. Teachers raise the bar by setting lofty goals for students. High expectations are welcomed by students who strive to surpass them. When goals are met, students are praised and rewarded for their efforts. Recognition at assemblies, with certificates, lunch in the library, and parent notification are a few ways students are able to celebrate success. Students are welcomed to the principal's office, so he can share in their celebration when they have shown an exceptional work ethic.

Kindergarten through fifth grade students compete academically in a UIL meet. SES students compete very well in all events and have a strong legacy of being district champions. Fifth grade students compete at a band festival, where they have won Outstanding Beginner Band for 23 consecutive years.

Students are nurtured socially and emotionally. From the moment they walk through the doors, they are met with people who make certain the students know they are loved and cared for. Staff members are not on their phones when they are around students. In a world where most people live with a screen in their faces, students are met with adults who express their care by giving their full attention to them.

Beginning in the preschool class, students are shown to listen to one another and show respect by supporting others, creating support among peers. Teachers refrain from raising their voices to deal with difficulties. Situations are dealt with calmly and with a positive outcome with a crucial lesson taught. Behavior expectations are firmly established, so the students are aware of and have the boundaries they innately desire and need to be positively productive.

At SES, students are given a glimpse of the realm of prospective careers their futures may hold. Young students participate in Cars and Careers, an event where they are able to explore the possibilities of many careers by experiencing kind volunteers who are willing to let them see, touch, and hear their intriguing work vehicles. Kindergarten students attend a local Kids College Day to learn about the opportunities colleges provide. Third through fifth grade students attend an annual Career Day. By exposing students early to endless possibilities, SES hopes to broaden their horizons and encourage them to pursue their field of interest when the time comes.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

SES offers many opportunities for families and community members to be involved in the education process. Communication and relationship building is of the utmost importance to the staff as they strive to make meaningful connections with parents, which also promotes parent engagement. To make sure that staff is effectively communicating with the parents, information including announcements, schedule changes, and upcoming events are sent out to families via ClassDojo app, Remind app, and the Sundown Roughneck Facebook and Instagram pages. The entire elementary staff uses ClassDojo to communicate with families and the community. This app provides a window into teachers' classrooms for all parents to see what students are doing in class through photos, videos, and texts. There is also a private message component where parents and teachers can converse directly with each other. Teachers and parents use this app constantly to communicate.

SES begins the year by hosting registration and "Meet the Teacher" night the week before school starts. These events give teachers, students, and parents the opportunity to meet each other and establish rapport before the school year even begins. There are also mandatory parent-teacher conferences twice per year. This provides parents and teachers the chance to discuss concerns, student successes, and any other issues the child may be having. Teachers also create opportunities for parents to serve and be involved through various volunteering opportunities. Parents are invited to help with Book Fair, class parties, Career Day, class musicals, and UIL academic meets. SES also has several activities that parents are encouraged to

attend such as Muffins with Mom, Donuts with Dads, Goodies with Grandparents, Family Thanksgiving Meal, Christmas Feast, Parent Day for Swimming, Character Counts, Coffee with the Counselor, grade-level musicals and Field Day.

SES engages families and our community by completing service projects. Each grade level chooses a project that somehow benefits the community. These service projects range from collecting snack items for local nurses to bringing food items and money to donate to the school's SHAC pantry. The food collected for SHAC provides meals for local students and families who are struggling. Money collected is used to provide less fortunate families with Christmas gifts. Other activities, such as bake sales and fundraising events, are organized at school to help families with health issues or other crucial situations. Overall, the school and student service projects truly are the backbone of the community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

SES's energy is supplied by high professional expectations, coupled by an atmosphere of freedom and pedagogical risk taking. SES creates a professional culture through collaboration within the elementary school, as well as collaboration districtwide. At the end of the year, teachers have a time of reflection on the previous year and to plan for the upcoming year through grade-level meetings. Each grade level meets with the grade level below and the grade level above. Curriculum, programs, and specific needs of children are discussed and evaluated. This time spent at the end of the year saves precious time at the beginning of the following school year by ensuring teachers are prepared for what to expect.

The district's mission statement is "Love Others - Work Hard - Embrace Excellence." Each part of the mission statement drives the local professional development throughout the school year but finds its ultimate expression in the annual Ruach Days. Ruach, a Hebrew word meaning breath or spirit, equips the staff to begin the year refreshed and renewed. Each summer, teachers come together for three days of local professional development. Instead of bringing experts from outside the district, individual teachers and community members present a myriad of topics. Who better to know what the teachers, students and district need? Topics range from content instruction ideas, to quality-of-life issues, to wellness because to teach well, one must be well. Campus principals use this time as a springboard for yearlong discussions and classroom observations. When a teacher overcomes a struggle with a unique classroom challenge, the principal encourages that teacher to consider speaking at the next Ruach, having traveled through the learning curve. The message: take risks and allow everyone to learn from your experience. Camaraderie develops amongst the entire staff through this vulnerable involvement. Ruach not only serves as the annual professional development, but it also follows teachers throughout the school year as they attempt to implement best practices based on local needs. Ruach provides the necessary connection, both in relationships and follow-up.

The administration treats teachers as professionals by giving them freedom within the boundaries of the curriculum to craft lessons that fit the individual personality of teachers and students alike. Although expectations are high, people are always valued over outcomes. This environment allows a safe place for teachers to flourish and not become stagnant, robotic, or burned out. In turn, instruction becomes fluid and reflective. This benefits coworkers, and most importantly, the children of SES.

4. School Leadership:

SES leadership includes caring, encouraging, respectable, firm, loving, honest, and approachable servants who form a team of strength and integrity. Communication between the superintendent, principal, staff, students, parents, and community has allowed them to ensure the policies and programs are in place and resources are used in ways best suited for this campus.

Leading by example, our principal sets clear expectations of hard work. He never asks anything of his staff that he is unwilling to do himself. Putting his heart and soul into every action he takes, he helps tutor students, substitute for teachers, and even humbly scrubs toilets when the campus is short-staffed.

Staff members go the extra mile because they are valued. The principal encourages staff to attend family

events, even if that means him covering a class for them. Since staff members are valued and respected, they do not miss their assigned duties without communicating. Leadership has high expectations, which staff continues to surpass by teaching creatively within the boundaries set by the adopted curricula. Staff members are trusted as professionals and are given room to grow and try new avenues to reach success.

The SES principal is approachable in situations needing his attention. Concerns presented to him are addressed completely and in a timely fashion. As the direct leader on the campus, the principal is present and gives every situation his undivided attention. With a door that is always open, he excels at making every student and staff member feel they matter.

The school leadership expands beyond the principal. By holding his staff accountable to uphold the standards of SES, he has cultivated a rich environment where they take ownership in leading the school. Staff know the expectations and rise to meet them. Support for the students is visible every day in classrooms, hallways, the cafeteria, on the playground, and interactions in pick-up and drop-off times. Close attention is paid to every student, considering their hardships, when planning with their educational team. The principal and staff take the time to know what matters to the students and show them they are valued. The camaraderie between the leadership and students is genuine.

When students make poor decisions, or their work ethic is lacking, the principal goes above and beyond by having very beneficial character-building discussions before resorting to discipline. He allows a safe space to work through challenges, whether they are behavioral or academic, while helping students build character and rise to the SES standard of excellence.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Sundown, Texas, is a culturally diverse community, especially within the school system of Sundown ISD. There is a mixture of ethnicities, socioeconomic levels, and diverse backgrounds. SES applauds diversity and embraces all cultures along with cultural religions, holidays, and beliefs. The staff is also made up of a variety of cultures with different beliefs that are similar to the students served. This brings a unique level of diversity that intertwines the students and staff. SES respects all the differences and values that this distinctive school community consists of. The staff participates in cultural awareness training each year through the local professional development time, Ruach Days. With a variety of cultures comes a barrier to communication at times. Several SES staff members are bilingual. The campus has also invested in translation technology that makes the barrier seem nonexistent, especially with languages that are not as common in the community. The population consists of first-generation immigrants that play a huge role in creating the diverse student body. These students are given every opportunity educationally, socially, and emotionally to succeed in the classroom and outside of school. Teachers' structure, differentiate, and scaffold to meet students where they are, educationally, so that they can build on their strengths and weaknesses. The language barrier does not hinder the instruction because staff does not allow it to. The immigrant population has the staff's full and immediate support. In the school district, there also families that are financially unstable. The students come from a variety of homes. There are dual income homes, single income homes, and in some cases, little, to no, income homes. SES does their very best to provide meals and services to struggling families through the SHAC program. SHAC items are purchased by the school and/or are donated by the community members. Each week, those less fortunate families get a bag full of snacks and meals to ensure that they are fed nutritious and filling meals. This service also participates in holidays, such as Christmas, for families to have a happy and healthy holiday. SES thrives in every aspect of helping families because the students are always the primary focus. The diversity of the campus makes it a blended family that opens opportunities for students in any situation. New students, current students, and former students will always be welcome, regardless of ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, or background.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

“The Roughneck Way” sets SES apart from others because it is not just what the SES family does or how they do it. Rather, it is who they are. An oilfield roughneck works tirelessly until the job is done. They work together, as a team, with unmatched camaraderie. You will see them lending a hand where the opportunity presents itself. They work until the job is complete, regardless of expectations. They take pride in their work and showcase their skillful expertise. SES’s mission, as a campus, aligns seamlessly with “The Roughneck Way” and the students are taught to personify that the moment they enter the doors.

SES took this example in the life of a roughneck and created a three-line mission statement: “Love Others - Work Hard - Embrace Excellence.” Everything that is done to bring out the best in the students can be distilled down into the three lines of that mission statement, and that is the one thing SES does that is most instrumental to the school’s success. The staff teaches their students what it means to embody each line of this statement, and then practices it daily.

Students learn to love others and what it means to work together to solve problems. They learn to be good citizens by helping those less fortunate through service projects. Each grade level organizes one annually, and students learn that there is more to gain from giving than receiving.

Students are taught what it means to work hard. Because staff views the standards that the state has set as a bare minimum achievement, students on the campus are challenged beyond that. Through this, they develop a great work ethic that will serve them in years to come. They can celebrate the success that comes with working hard, like 23 consecutive years of division 1 ratings for the 5th grade band students and 39 years of being district UIL champions.

SES’s ability to embrace excellence is beyond that of any school. The students and staff have learned to settle for nothing less than their best. They strive to be exceptional, and students are taught to embrace success. It has been said that students will rise to given expectations of them. SES has witnessed that, firsthand, through clear intent and high standards.

Being a Roughneck means being held to a higher standard than all the others. They model and teach this through their mission statement, which leads to them being set apart.