

U.S. Department of Education
2016 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. Bart McMeans

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

Official School Name Borden County School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 240 West Kincaid Street

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

City Gail State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 79738-0095

County Borden County

Telephone (806) 756-4313 Fax (806) 756-4310

Web site/URL http://www.bcisd.net E-mail bmcmeans@bcisd.net

Facebook Page
https://facebook.com/Borden-
Twitter Handle County-ISD-392673270787158 Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Billy Collins E-mail bcollins@bcisd.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Borden County Tel. (806) 756-4314

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr John Anderson
(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.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	10	7	17
1	12	5	17
2	10	8	18
3	6	13	19
4	8	13	21
5	7	8	15
6	5	10	15
7	15	12	27
8	10	12	22
9	7	13	20
10	11	9	20
11	12	5	17
12 or higher	9	8	17
Total Students	122	123	245

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 17 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 77 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 3%

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	245
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.033
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
1 Total number ELL

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

Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 24 %
Total number students who qualify: 60

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %
17 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 12
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	13
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals	3
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 13:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	14
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	43%
Enrolled in a community college	43%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	7%
Joined the military or other public service	4%
Other	0%

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

Yes No

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

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

The mission of the Borden County Independent School District is to prepare all students to function effectively, successfully, and productively in society.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Borden County ISD (BCISD), the only school district in this rural West Texas county, is located in a community of Gail (the only township within the county). The 2010 census listed the county population at 641; the school's enrollment grades K-12 is 245. Needless to say, these unique demographics lend themselves to interesting school dynamics.

This area of Texas is primarily centered on agriculture or energy (farming, ranching, and oil); many of our students' families are involved in one of these three areas. As the county seat, Gail also has government employees at the courthouse and the lone post office. There is no service station or grocery store, but we are fortunate to have two locally-owned cafés. This county maintains a remarkable museum, which houses many artifacts reflecting the pioneer spirit of this area.

From the pioneer days, there were expectations for a good education, even when the students had to receive instruction in a dugout or a one room schoolhouse. Since the consolidation of the county's many small schoolhouses in 1952, BCISD has employed only five superintendents – a sign of long term commitment and job satisfaction. School board members consistently serve long terms as well. Borden County's community has trusted the system; consequently, the dysfunction that plagues many schools has not been a thorn for BCISD.

The school is the hub of this county. People whose children have already graduated continue to attend school activities, be it football games, basketball tournaments, school banquets, or band concerts. Their presence is a living legacy – the present being encouraged by the past, and this is the hallmark of BCISD. The community holds the school (students, teachers, administrators, school board) to a high standard, and yet the community is just as willing to provide the support and encouragement to facilitate this environment.

Traditionally speaking, graduating seniors along with their teacher sponsors and administrators continue to take a Senior Trip each year after commencement exercises. The students do the fundraising work – not their parents. Inevitably, each year some students are able to go on a trip of a lifetime to (places like New York City, Chicago, or Florida) that these individuals may never get the chance to do so again.

Future Farmers of America (FFA) is another tradition in Borden County. The FFA program is multi-faceted, not just about animals. Students are involved in stock shows certainly, but they also compete in skills contests such as Public Relations, Radio Broadcasting, Extemporaneous Speaking, and Parliamentary Procedure. Several students have qualified for national competition in these events.

Another source of great pride for the school is the speech and debate program. BHS has eight state championships in debate (Cross-Ex and Lincoln-Douglas combined), more than any other school of similar size and more than most schools who are substantially larger. The school recently achieved Charter Chapter status in the National Speech and Debate Association, the highest school membership honor in the league.

In addition, Borden County athletics have experienced a tradition of success. Three state championships have been won in the Six-Man classification. Because of our small high school enrollment, we play six-man football (something very important in Texas, as most people probably know.) Basketball, track and field, golf, softball, cross-country, baseball, and tennis are also offered to students.

All of these programs academic or athletic – impact BCISD's overall philosophy of curriculum and initiatives. This is fairly simple to do logistically because grades K-12 are all located in the same building. For example, when students in high school participate and when they succeed, the younger grades are involved in the process through observation and recognition (pep rallies or assemblies to honor students). Seniors are often seen working with elementary and middle school students, sometimes in peer tutoring or in purely social interaction by eating together or riding the bus together. For rare instances of discipline issues of bullying concerns, many times students themselves step up and handle the situation but feel comfortable approaching the principal or school counselor.

The curriculum is largely based on the State of Texas's directives; however, because of the familiarity with faculty, the administration allows teachers some creative control over their classrooms. It is not unusual to walk into a classroom and see a teacher engaged with students about a current events situation that has generated questions from the students. Micro-managing is not necessary; BCISD's test scores consistently prove that learning is taking place. Learning is also taking place in many ways that are not test driven: field trips to the nearest city in our area are frequent, such as visiting museums of IMAX learning centers of symphonic concerts.

Our goal at BCISD is to not just prepare students for an Ivy League school, although we have, but to achieve the district's educational philosophy of preparing all students to function effectively, successfully, and productively in our society.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The core curriculum is the foundation on which Borden County ISD builds their educational success. It is their mission for each student to reach his or her highest potential.

The district implements state-adopted curriculum in core subjects to successfully address the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Research based supplements are incorporated appropriately. Teachers give benchmark assessments to monitor a student's growth or lack of growth. A daily tutorial period is offered for every grade and subject. Elementary teachers work in small groups or with individual students to improve skills, while other students are involved in enrichment activities. A daily Response to Intervention (RtI) program is provided for elementary students in math and reading. Secondary students who have an average below 75 in any subject attend a daily tutorial period where concepts are reinforced and progress is monitored.

A strong reading foundation is a key factor in having success across the curriculum. The Reading/ELA curriculum was chosen because it focuses on the foundational skills of phonics and phonemic awareness in kindergarten and first grade. Second and third grade students focus on reading fluency, vocabulary, and handwriting while fourth and fifth graders read for comprehension and knowledge. Students with adequate skills are encouraged to apply these skills through our Accelerated Reading program. In junior high, the students have separate courses in English and Reading to enforce skills previously learned. The junior high and high school ELA curriculum utilizes a variety of approaches to address reading and writing skills. Teachers use videos, cartoons, movie clips, on-line resources, as well as traditional novels and textbooks to apply skills in writing, evaluating, compare and contrasting, and comprehension. Junior and senior students have the opportunity to enroll in dual credit English courses to obtain twelve college hours which are funded entirely by the school.

The mathematics curriculum underwent some changes several years ago when test scores revealed several weaknesses. As basic as it sounds, a curriculum was implemented across the board to create vertical alignment. It was chosen because it incorporates the new advanced TEKS and incorporates the use of manipulatives at all levels. Elementary students learn new math skills but continue to practice previous learned skills. Manipulatives are used to teach counting, addition, subtraction, and fractions. Junior high classes were divided to create smaller math classes. A double block of math – algebra I and math models – was created for freshmen. Most juniors take algebra II and most seniors take pre-calculus. Due to these changes, our math scores greatly improved. For students performing above grade level, they are given the opportunity to expand their skills through the University Interscholastic League (UIL) math competition and in high school they are allowed to take College Algebra for dual credit.

The science curriculum was chosen because it uses a hands-on approach. Students in K-6 use a curriculum that addresses the TEKS by incorporating lab experiments along with reading and vocabulary. The foundational vocabulary and structure of the lessons build on each other every year. Secondary students keep journals, participate in on-line activities, and spend time in the science lab completing experiments and projects. For students performing above grade level, they are encouraged to participate in UIL science competitions which include biology, chemistry, and physics.

Recent modifications in the Social Studies TEKS prompted teachers to select a curriculum that covers updated historical figures and events. The elementary social studies curriculum provides engaging newspapers that entice the students to participate in learning. Early elementary students focus on the concept of community and the place it has in their lives. Upper elementary students learn historical concepts by researching and writing about key historical figures. In junior high and high school, the curriculum is more reading intensive and requires note taking from lectures as well as time for research and writing. They study historical periods, key figures, countries and cultures, and geography. Secondary students who show an interest in obtaining more knowledge related to current events and history are encouraged to compete in UIL Maps, Graphs, and Charts, Social Studies, and Current Issues and Events. Dual credit courses are offered in history, government, and economics.

1. a. For secondary schools: college and career readiness

Beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through the senior year, Borden County's curriculum is focused on preparing the student for college or career readiness and success. A strong emphasis on reading, writing, and math, along with high expectations and rigor, ensures that the students are prepared to take the ACT, SAT, or other college or career entrance exams the student may face. In addition, in their junior year, students may begin taking dual credit classes in conjunction with a local junior college. These are offered at no cost to the student. Dual Credit classes are offered in English, History, Government, Economics, Psychology, and Math. A majority of the students graduate high school with 30 college credits. Students not interested in the college route can select a curriculum pathway that gives the student the ability to become career ready by receiving an endorsement in Business and Industry. This endorsement can have an emphasis on the Agriculture Sciences or Business.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Borden County ISD offers a variety of courses outside the core curriculum areas. Students can pursue their interests in areas such as fine arts, physical education, agriculture, technology, and foreign language. Each class meets on a daily basis.

The fine arts program consists of music and band. Students enrolled in kindergarten through the fourth grade participate in music class. The TEKS are addressed as students learn to read music, clap rhythms, play instruments and sing songs. Beginning in fifth grade, students participate in band through the ninth grade. All musical instruments are provided to the student at no cost. Although we do not offer a theater class, our high school students participate in the U.I.L. One-Act Play competition. Students learn acting skills, lighting and sound techniques, as well as stage management.

Physical education TEKS are addressed through physical fitness activities which encourage an active lifestyle through movement and activity. It is required for grades K-6. Secondary students may participate in athletics or P.E. These classes are required until the completion of ninth grade. P.E. becomes an elective for grades 10-12. Extracurricular athletic competitions are an extension of our P.E. program. Athletes must maintain a passing grade in all of their classes to participate competitively in athletics.

The district is located in a farming and ranching community. Due to the rich heritage in agriculture, it is no coincidence that our agricultural science classes are very popular. The freshman students take Principles of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. This course allows students to develop knowledge and skills regarding career opportunities, personal development, industry standards, practices, and expectations. Livestock Production is offered to sophomores during the fall semester. Animal species addressed may include beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, sheep, goats, and poultry. In the spring, the class is Agricultural Mechanics Metal Technologies. The students develop an understanding of agricultural mechanics as it relates to safety and skills in tool operation, electrical wiring, carpentry, fencing, concrete, and metal working techniques. The juniors take courses in Wildlife, Fisheries, and Ecology Management during the fall semester and Horticulture in the spring semester. Our campus has a greenhouse where the students get hands-on experience in planting, growing, and cultivating flowers and produce. The students have an annual sale where they sell their products to the community. The seniors take Agricultural Facilities Design and Fabrication. This course covers the principles of facilities design and fabrication, planning, constructing and maintaining fencing, corrals and other agricultural enclosures.

Spanish is offered as a foreign language credit. Most students take three years of Spanish. Spanish offers a foundation in the form of basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Culture and language learning skills are also provided. Cultural emphasis is on Mexico and Central America. The class is required for graduation and is offered at the sophomore level. Spanish II is a continuation of the previous skills. More complex structure and verb tenses are introduced. Hispanic culture and history are explored. It is required for students who wish to graduate on the recommended plan and is offered to juniors. Spanish III is offered to our students who desire to graduate on the distinguished plan. Emphasis is placed on listening and speaking on an intermediate ability level.

The other major elective area is Business and Technology. In these classes, students implement personal and interpersonal skills to strengthen performances in the workplace and in society and to make a successful transition to the workplace and post-secondary education. The freshmen take Principles of Business. Students gain knowledge and skills in economics and private enterprise systems, marketing of goods and services, advertising, and product pricing. Sophomores can take Accounting I. This course introduces double entry accounting procedures. Students learn to keep financial records for a service or retail business. All sophomores take Business Information Management where they learn to apply technical skills to address business applications of emerging technologies, create processing documents, develop a spreadsheet, and formulate a database. The juniors are offered Accounting II. It is an advanced study of concepts, principles, and techniques used by businesses to maintain electronic and manual financial records. The seniors can take Digital and Interactive Multimedia. Through the study of digital and interactive media and its application in information technology, students analyze and assess current and emerging technologies.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Believing all students can perform at a high level is what drives the instructional methods and intervention programs at Borden County ISD. The teachers provide whole class instruction, small group instruction, and individual instruction as needed.

The teachers use a variety of methods which address the visual, auditory, and tactile modalities of learners. For example, kindergarteners learn letters by writing them in the sand or with shaving cream. They say the letter, sing the letter, whisper the letter, and think of words that start with each letter. Older elementary students work on comprehension through Venn diagrams, graphic organizers, guided imagery, and cooperative learning.

Each classroom is equipped with a Promethean Board and the campus is equipped with two computer labs. The Promethean Boards allow our teachers to provide interactive lessons for the entire class, show educational videos, attend virtual field trips, and watch live-stream events from a number of locations. As a rural school district, this use of technology provides the students opportunities they may never experience first-hand. The computer labs provide programs that can be tailored to the individual need of each student and allows them to progress at their own pace but at an increasingly difficult rate. Another use of the computer lab is to offer dual credit courses to the junior and senior students. Students use the computers for research, completing assignments, and taking examinations.

The campus implemented an intervention program based on tiered instruction for elementary students in math and reading. Students who do not respond to tier I intervention attend the intervention class. The intervention teacher can zone in on areas that are difficult for the student and provide instruction to “fill in the gap.” This program utilizes direct teaching methods, manipulatives, as well as technology. The goal of intervention is to help students perform at grade level and catch up with their peers. Lack of progress in the intervention classroom assists the school in identifying students who may have learning disabilities that need to be addressed through the special education program.

Some students receive modified or supplemented instruction. This is accomplished through mainstreaming, pull-out programs, and differentiated instruction. Instruction includes extra guided practice, questioning, and small group tutoring. Computer programs and iPad activities supplement the curriculum and allow students to learn at different levels.

Another area of intervention is the dyslexia program. This intervention is provided in an individual or small group setting. Students are taught compensatory strategies to help them cope with their reading difficulties.

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

The district uses a variety of assessment data to analyze and improve student and school performance. Students in grades K-5 use a computer program to improve math and reading skills. This program provides ongoing data and allows the teachers to monitor student progress. All of the elementary teachers use informal benchmarks to assess a student’s skills. For example, the kindergarten teacher may use alphabet

flashcards to determine which letters a student knows. The third grade teacher may give a timed test over math facts to see where her students shine or struggle.

Secondary students use a computer program to improve their math skills. Teachers can determine a student's weaknesses and use the program to fill in the gaps and determine instructional needs for tutoring. The ELA teachers implement a computer program for reading skills and monitor strengths and weaknesses of each student. STAAR benchmarks are utilized to look at test readiness and areas to improve in classroom instruction.

Once the yearly state assessment results arrive, the district uses a systematic approach to dissect information from the results. The entire district meets to review the overall test results. Strengths and weaknesses are noted. Each test subject is then picked apart to determine which concepts are not being taught effectively as a whole and which concepts individual students are struggling with. These results help teachers improve their instruction which increases student learning. Students who fail the test attend summer school and receive intensive instruction.

The Borden County community takes a keen interest in the school's ratings. These results are published in the local newspaper, "The Borden Star", as well as in a neighboring town's newspaper, "The Lamesa Press Reporter". The results are accompanied with comparisons to overall state and region results. Parents receive a copy of their child's test results and an explanation of the results either via mail or they are sent home with the child.

If there is an achievement gap of more than ten points between any subgroup, the affected students receive small group or one-on-one tutoring. Tutoring occurs during the school day or after school if necessary.

Borden County ISD is traditionally a high ranking school based on state testing data. The number one driving force for our success is high expectations of our students, teachers, and administrators. Our district never loses sight of this. There is continuous tweaking and monitoring of curriculum, instruction, and intervention programs to achieve this.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The school climate/culture of Borden County ISD is based on the premises of respect, character, teamwork, and support. The climate of the district is crucial for student motivation, teacher satisfaction, and community support. The positive school climate in Borden County ISD fosters an attitude of “going beyond” and excelling, as opposed to minimum effort.

Every staff member of BCISD makes important contributions to student success. Respect and appreciation for teachers and staff constitutes a “core belief” among the administrative team and school board. When staff are appreciated and respected, the practice is passed down from staff to students. Class disruptions and discipline referrals are at levels far below other schools. The bottom line of this philosophy is that students conduct themselves in an exemplary manner, show respect for others, and excel in every facet of our academic and extra-curricular activities.

Another aspect of Borden County culture that stands out is the relationship between older and younger students. The school enjoys a built-in “mentor program.” Since the campus contains Kindergarten through 12th grade in one building, much interaction takes place between older and younger students. Students of all grades routinely socialize and engage in activities, both formal and informal. Older students, from years of tradition, treat their younger peers with respect and inclusiveness that helps build a school climate conducive to learning and high self-esteem. This comradery also promotes emotional growth among the students.

Facilities also contribute immensely to the positive, learner-centered climate at Borden County ISD. In 2009, the voters in Borden County approved a \$25,000,000 bond referendum to build an entire new campus with the needed extra-curricular facilities. Teachers, including the campus improvement team, had extensive input in the design of the new facility to include the latest innovations suited for student learning. The campus has conference rooms and technology upgrades to promote teacher training and development. These facilities play a large role in creating and maintaining a positive climate and advancing academic growth.

Another unique characteristic of Borden County ISD’s school culture is the communities that it serves. BCISD is a county-wide school district that welcomes students from five communities within the county boundaries. The communities have long held the values of hard work, respect for your neighbor, and love of family. These values naturally became a part of the school created within those communities and those values remain strong today.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

As mentioned previously, Borden County ISD serves students from several different communities within our school district and a number of communities in our surrounding area. Our small school is truly the heart of all the communities within the school district. It is a family atmosphere, in which every child is valued, and pushed to excel. Lifelong relationships exist between students and teachers, parents and teachers, and members of our communities who vigorously support all of Borden County School activities, whether they have children in school or not.

The keystone of successful parent engagement in Borden County ISD is the belief that all parents and community members are to be treated with respect and courtesy, welcomed to the school and school activities, and appreciated. Parents allow us to educate their most valuable asset and the taxpayers of our community provide the financial resources necessary for our success for many years. A very common saying in Borden County is “The school IS the community.” Most of the “entertainment” and other activities in our community arise from the school. Our public eagerly attends all school activities, from athletic contests, to awards assemblies, to banquets, to music concerts. All of our staff, throughout the district, know this and take pride in keeping the facilities prepared and make sure people feel welcome.

The attitude of the administrators and teachers no doubt initiates the parent and community engagement that keep these relations positive in our school district.

What is truly at the heart of our daily community and parent engagement is our communication skills and abilities. Our school district creates, publishes and edits a newspaper for citizens of our school district. The Borden Star is written, published and distributed by the school district. This weekly paper contains positive news about all the school activities in Borden County ISD. It serves to inform the parents and community about upcoming events. It provides needed notifications for parents, schedules for all types of activities, and relevant information important for parent such as academic requirements, testing dates, sign-ups, as well as deadlines and other important dates.

In addition to the Borden Star, Borden County ISD uses a daily text messaging service to regularly remind parents and communities of important dates as well. Parents can also reach the school using this as well. Daily schedule changes or additions, weather alerts and other information which needs to be sent in a very timely manner is sent this way.

Our parents and community have given us very positive feedback from these two communication media.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development at Borden County ISD does not incorporate a top-down approach but rather a collaborative effort between the principal and the teachers. The campus site-based committee surveys teachers regarding topic selection. The teachers review the past academic year and select one topic based on annual need. The principal chooses one topic based on need and the third staff development is selected together. This system is successful because it addresses challenges the teachers are experiencing, and ultimately improves their instruction and enhances the students' learning.

In recent years, professional development has focused on assessment and technology and has utilized various vendors as well as the region education service center to provide training. In the realm of assessment, teachers have been trained to dissect student achievement based on scores from state assessments. They have learned to break down each subject into individual concepts and can look at students' strengths and weaknesses as a class and as individual students. Teachers study the weak areas and look at the TEKS to improve any deficient instruction.

Technology has been a challenge for the district. With new facilities and upgraded technology, the district has focused on technology related in-services. In relation to student assessment, a computer program has been utilized that has proven to be a big asset when analyzing data, directing instruction, and assisting students. Each teacher has attended professional development in order to utilize this program. Teachers use this program to access assessment results for their class as well as each student. The teacher can develop lessons to address single or multiple concepts for one student or for the entire class. Practice tests can be downloaded as well as benchmark tests. Additionally, teachers have been trained in various computer programs that enhance the reading and math curriculum. Teachers are trained to use the programs to assist their struggling students and challenge the advanced students.

Another challenge the school faces as a rural district is access to medical care. To address this challenge, each summer the district offers a course for CPR and first aid certification. Teachers are permitted to count the course as professional development. All athletic coaches, cheerleading sponsors, class sponsors, and day care personnel are required to complete this course every two years. All faculty and staff are offered this certification free of charge. Many of the teachers and aides choose to become certified to improve and promote safety in their school.

4. School Leadership:

Borden County ISD holds the philosophy that school administrators should function as a well-informed and enthusiastic team in promoting and developing all phases of the educational process. As a Kindergarten through 12th grade campus, the administrative team consists of the superintendent and one campus

principal. The superintendent oversees all school activities and specifically manages the budget, and directly supervises the central office staff, maintenance department, transportation, and food service. The principal manages teachers, instructional aides, and students. Duties specifically performed by the principal include teacher appraisal, student discipline, master class schedule, and curriculum director. The superintendent answers to the school board. The principal answers to the superintendent. The superintendent and principal work closely together to plan and execute operations with the common goal of doing what is best for the school, and Borden County School being the best school in the country.

Two of the most important concepts practiced daily by the Borden County ISD leadership team are those of visibility and support. Both administrators are highly visible during the school day and during school activities. The principal's presence throughout the school prevents many discipline issues and promotes informal visits with students creating positive rapport and building personal relationships. The principal has constant interaction with his teachers to keep abreast of how policies and programs are working in their classrooms and how they are affecting and promoting student achievement. The superintendent is also visible throughout the school and takes opportunities to interact with students, teachers, and other school staff. Having a leadership team that is visible at school and at school activities is a crucial part of maintaining a proper climate for education and excellence for both the students and the teachers.

A crucial phase of leadership planning is budget development. Careful budget planning and communication with the staff must occur to ensure teachers have the resources they need in order to educate their students. The administrative team believes teachers who are provided the proper materials and are empowered to make instructional decisions can provide the best education and advance student achievement.

School administrators also promote school safety. The team follows a safety plan to keep students and faculty safe, utilizing interior and exterior cameras, controlled access doors, and emergency preparation drills. The team also provides faculty and staff with training opportunities and responsibilities. A safe learning environment is crucial to student achievement.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Academics is the one practice that makes Borden County ISD so successful. High academic standards are expected not only within the school family but from the community as well. The ultimate goal of the academic program is to prepare the graduates for the next level; whether it be college, trade school, or the military. On average 80% of graduates are “college ready.”

In the 2003-2004 school year, Borden County received an “Acceptable” rating from the Texas Education Agency based on standardized test scores. This rating was not acceptable to the school district or to the community. A new philosophy was adopted and changes were made to shift the focus back to academics. Immediate changes included vertically aligning the curriculum, reassigning the subjects that upper level teachers were teaching, adding a tutorial period to the daily schedule, and splitting junior high classes to allow smaller class sizes in 7th and 8th grade math. By the 2008-2009 school year, Borden County reached “Exemplary” status and maintained the rating until the system was changed.

Professional development returned to the basics twelve years ago. Teachers were instructed on learning styles, the importance of immediate feedback, the importance of tutoring, and a reminder that every child can learn. As the academic foundation was rebuilt, professional development expanded to analyzing test data to improve daily teaching. When their new school facility was completed four years ago, they were able to upgrade their technology. Staff development in recent years has focused on the use of technology and how it can improve instruction via the Promethean Board and use in computer labs.

A vital component of their academic success is participation in the academic and speech/debate competition sponsored by the University Scholastic League. Students from kindergarten through eighth grade participate at the district level. High school students participate at the district level with the opportunity to advance to the regional and state levels. In the last twelve years, Borden County ISD can boast of state champions in Spelling & Vocabulary, Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Cross-Examination Debate, Social Studies, Science, Ready Writing, Poetry Interpretation, Congressional Debate, and Extemporaneous Persuasive Speaking.

At the end of each semester, an awards program is held to recognize the students who have achieved placement on the honor roll, acquired perfect attendance, and received UIL honors. Articles are printed in the local paper to inform the community of the academic achievements.