



## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2011 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 31 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 6 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 4 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 41 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, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	9	12	21
<b>K</b>	28	40	68
<b>1</b>	30	25	55
<b>2</b>	35	27	62
<b>3</b>	51	35	86
<b>4</b>	34	29	63
<b>5</b>	29	31	60
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	216	199	415

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 96 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 2 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 12%

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	34
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	52
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	423
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.123
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 21 %  
88 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: 64 %  
Total number students who qualify: 266
8. Students receiving special education services: 5 %  
19 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.

- 4 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 10 Mental Retardation
- 2 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 5 Other Health Impaired
- 4 Specific Learning Disability
- 14 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 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: 10
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 20:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	97%	98%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**  
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2016.

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

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

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

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

Jefferson Elementary provides a challenging curriculum that is meaningful and engaging to prepare students to become life-long learners in an ever changing society.

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

Jefferson Elementary is one of four magnet schools for Gifted and Talented (GT) students in the Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District (ECISD). Students are nominated for the GT program at their respective home campuses by teachers and/or parents starting in kindergarten. Once these students are nominated they are tested based on district criteria. The district sets a schedule for nomination and testing for each school year. The students that meet eligibility are labeled GT and are given the option to remain at their home campus or feed into one of the four magnet schools in ECISD. Jefferson Elementary has 20.29% of its students in the GT program. One hundred percent of the teachers are GT certified, meaning they have received 30 GT Institute hours and attend a six hour update on a yearly basis.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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“Be Kind! Be Kind! Be Kind!” is what is heard down the hallways as the Jefferson Cowboys begin class each morning! Jefferson Elementary, one of the oldest schools in the community, was the fifth school built in the Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District. A community school located in the heart of Edinburg, Texas, Jefferson Elementary was built in 1950 and named after the renowned third President of the United States and legendary key author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson. The city of Edinburg is part of the beautiful, rapidly growing Rio Grande Valley located along the US-Mexico border, and is rich in cultural history. Jefferson Elementary school is centrally located in Edinburg nestled in one of the oldest neighborhoods in Edinburg. The Jefferson community is a diverse one with students of varying socioeconomic backgrounds serving generation after generation of families. Many of these parents, and grandparents were once students at Jefferson themselves. This community is proud to have Jefferson Elementary as a symbol of family tradition. The Jefferson Cowboys are renowned for their hard working character and ethics.

Thomas Jefferson Elementary believes that education is the greatest equalizer. Every single Jefferson student is valuable and will leave increased in value. Thomas Jefferson is one of 31 elementary schools in the Edinburg school district and serves about 415 diverse students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth, including a special education unit serving children with special needs in grades kindergarten through fifth grades. Of these students, 64% are economically disadvantaged, 21% are limited English proficient, and 38% are identified as academically at-risk. Although Jefferson is considered to be one of four Gifted and Talented (GT) magnet campuses in the district, only 86 students are identified gifted and talented. Jefferson Elementary is the home to many in-district transfer students whose parents have requested to attend Jefferson due to the many accomplishments the campus has earned.

The Jefferson Cowboys have received numerous recognitions from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Most recently, the school has earned the high recognition of 6 out of 6 distinctions which include distinctions for Academic Achievement in Reading/ELA, Math, Science, Top 25%: Student Progress, Top 25: Closing Performance Gap, and Postsecondary Readiness. Previously, the school earned 5 out of 5 distinctions from TEA. Also from TEA, Jefferson repeatedly earns the honor of Title I Reward and High Performing School.

Jefferson’s continued traditions build a strong foundation in character and self-awareness for students, staff, and community. Jefferson Cowboys work as a family to embrace one another's unique strengths. During the annual Veteran’s Day Program, students take great pride in honoring family and community members that have bravely served their country. The entire Jefferson student body and staff gather to celebrate past and current United States Veterans followed by a great picnic celebration with food and fellowship.

The Jefferson Cowboys honor Dr. Seuss as a favorite during Read Across America activities. Annually, families and community members are invited to attend Jefferson’s Dr. Seuss family picnic. Families spend quality time together reading books while leisurely picnicking throughout the school grounds sitting on blankets, and enjoying one another’s company. The Jefferson Cowboys have had special speakers such as Lily Eskelsen Garcia, the president of the National Education Association and other school leaders during Read Across America. The Jefferson student body gathers to listen and participate in interactive presentations.

Jefferson Elementary's motto is “United to Make a Difference”. Jefferson strives to meet the student's academic, social, physical, cultural and emotional needs. Jefferson Cowboys create a culture of positive behavior by practicing respect, honesty, integrity, compassion, humility, and kindness. Jefferson Cowboys begin with words of wisdom shared during morning announcements followed by a self-reflection in their personal journals. Every Jefferson student and staff member is reminded to follow the Golden Rule and repeat aloud “Be kind!, Be kind!, Be kind!”

Jefferson students participate in daily activities that allow them overall physical well-being. Jefferson parents are invited to participate in physical education classes throughout the year to promote healthy living

and exercise at home. The Jefferson Fit Club is an afterschool program that promotes extended physical fitness activities such as aerobic exercise, Fuel Up to Play 60 and community events like fun runs and walks at local parks.

The Jefferson Student Council commits to visiting local nursing homes and oncology centers during the Christmas holidays. The residents enjoy carols and gifts from the Jefferson students and staff. During the year, the students work diligently to raise money for local and national organizations such as the American Heart Association, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, and Nevaeh's Haven, a local organization that supports children with cancer. The Jefferson Cowboys proudly participate in Autism and Down Syndrome Awareness activities sponsored by the City of Edinburg.

Jefferson Elementary highlights the importance of student culture by making available materials and resources in their native language. For example, students are able to find Spanish books in the library and classroom. Authentic meals are served throughout the school year in the cafeteria. Jefferson Cowboys are encouraged to participate in family projects that are culturally diverse. Through the social studies class, students follow a campus based curriculum in which their culture is explored and the end product is the student presentation. This is a practice in grades pre-kinder through fifth every six weeks.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

The Jefferson Elementary Cowboys understand great character develops their gifts and talents in order to positively “give back” to the community. It is not by chance that the students at Jefferson belong to such a loving place of learning. The Jefferson staff ensures student achievement by following the Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District (ECISD) curriculum for Reading/English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. All are aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The curricular approach at Jefferson Elementary includes both teacher centered and learner centered instruction for all students in grades Pre-kinder through fifth. It benefits all learners and encourages the most student learning in all subject areas. Jefferson teachers use the 5E Model of Instruction as a resource to prepare classroom lessons. This model includes engage, explore, explain, extend/elaborate, and evaluate components of learning. The model defines in simple terms the behavior for teachers and students in each category. Purposeful enrichment opportunities provide the Jefferson Cowboys with differentiated instruction through the use of shared inquiry and in-depth and complexity skills, deepening conceptual understanding of all subjects. In addition, Jefferson students engage in instructional groupings targeting concepts and skills through the use of journals, graphic organizers, foldables, research projects and oral presentations in all the core areas. Jefferson students still developing and not yet on grade level are provided an intensive individualized student plan based on formative and summative evaluations. Jefferson Cowboys have the opportunity to take advantage of before and after school tutorials, and enrichment opportunities to develop their skills.

Jefferson Cowboys develop critical thinking skills through the ECISD reading and writing program. Jefferson boys and girls are exposed to literacy skills in a print rich environment of word walls and anchor charts. During the reading instructional block, all Jefferson student practice phonemic and phonological awareness, fluency passages, sight words, and vocabulary development in order to improve comprehension and writing skills. In addition, Jefferson boys and girls acquire a passion for reading by engaging in novels and basal stories. The Jefferson Cowboys are inspired to read library books and reach a variety of individual goals based on points, reading average, and word count for the school year. This computerized reading program allows for all the boys and girls to participate daily. The entire English Language curriculum empowers the students to grow socially, emotionally and academically, leading them to a higher level of development.

The Jefferson math program begins with a daily routine that applies mathematics to everyday life challenges reflected in society and in the workplace. Jefferson Cowboys are encouraged to use problem-solving methods that incorporate analyzing, formulating, determining, justifying, and evaluating solutions and processes. Jefferson teachers incorporate learner centered activities to extend or reteach concepts via traditional methods, the most current technology programs, or learning games. Jefferson Cowboys are given access to math online resources to enrich and extend the development of their math skills at home.

Jefferson Cowboys are taught early to be curious scientists and explorers! Jefferson incorporates the district science curriculum along with a variety of instructional tools to enhance class instruction. Interactive science labs, science fair investigations, anchor charts, instructional videos, and depth and complexity are some of the few resources Jefferson teachers use to maximize student achievement. Additionally, Jefferson teachers attend authentic, research-based training and professional development to improve best student learning practices.

Jefferson Cowboys systematically acquire the knowledge, processes, attitudes, and skills necessary to be active and engaged learners through the use of the ECISD social studies curriculum. These Cowboys value history and respect their country, its people, and adapt to their roles in society. In other words, Jefferson Cowboys' character traits emphasize good morals, hard work, and community unity. These concepts are brought to life through leadership projects highlighting past and present persons that are widely known for perseverance, compassion, respect, patriotism, courage, strength, determination and love. Jefferson students proudly display these projects every six weeks throughout the school hallways. School projects consist of

independent research depicted through charts, graphs, models, timelines, advertisements, flipbooks, plays, and songs reinforcing social studies key concepts.

In addition, Jefferson teachers integrate rich content through video streaming and interactive lessons stimulating students' understanding of historical events and culture of the nation. Jefferson Cowboys are provided with multiple resources, visual aids, timelines, and maps in order to facilitate the understanding of abstract concepts.

The Jefferson Pre-kinder program at Jefferson Elementary is a federally funded half-day program. The core curriculum areas taught are Reading, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science with emphasis on language acquisition, phonemic and phonological awareness, social and emotional skill development, and gross and fine motor skill development. Academic standards are vertically aligned from grades kindergarten through third to set the premise for academic success. The Pre-kinder district standards are aligned with the state standards to ensure a smooth transition from one grade to the next. School readiness standards are evaluated throughout the year and once data is collected the teachers interpret the data and modify instruction according to the results.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

The teachers and staff at Jefferson Elementary are committed to guiding, inspiring, and educating all students in grades pre-kinder through fifth in the areas of visual and performing arts, health, nutrition, and physical education.

Jefferson Elementary, in accordance to the ECISD curriculum and state guidelines, provides physical and nutrition education classes to students in grades pre-kinder through fifth grades, to maintain healthy minds and bodies. The Jefferson Physical Education Program provides the Jefferson Cowboys with skill-based games and activities embedded with good morals and healthy habits. Jefferson boys and girls in grades Pre-kinder through fifth participate in health and nutrition presentations from local agencies to promote healthy lifestyles such as Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Nutrition Lessons.

Physical education teachers at Jefferson Elementary keep students physically active for at least 50% of the class time with moderate to vigorous activities. This is achieved by implementing daily exercises during class that are developmentally appropriate and provide equipment items during class and recess so students can be both physically active and engaged. Jefferson Cowboys in grades third through fifth are assessed with fitness tests to determine their healthy zones. Components of the fitness test are incorporated in daily exercises and physical conditioning in order to ensure individual success. Jefferson Cowboys are provided opportunities to participate in the ECISD Track & Field Meet to introduce and expose them to middle school athletic events.

These initiatives extend beyond the regular school day as well. After school hours, students are encouraged to participate in health initiatives such as The Jefferson Fit Club. The Jefferson Cowboys remain physically active by participating in aerobic exercises, innovative games, tennis, zumba, individual sports, and team sports. Jefferson Elementary promotes community-based activities such as Edinburg All America City 10K/2Mile Fun Run, Jump Rope for Heart, Fuel Up To Play 60 and Let's Move Active Schools.

Jefferson Elementary follows the ECISD music and performing arts curriculum aligned with the state standards. Students in grades pre-kinder through fifth engage in various activities for 45 minutes weekly. Jefferson Cowboys engage in practical music making with instruments, singing, and performing arts. The Jefferson music teacher incorporates the process of learning universal aspects of music teaching to help harness student creativity and ability to recreate music. Jefferson Cowboys build a strong foundation in musicality to prepare students pursuing music programs in middle and high school.

Jefferson Elementary promotes the appreciation of performing arts throughout the school year. Jefferson boys and girls have an opportunity to join the school choir, musical guitar ensemble, dance teams, Destination Imagination, and school plays. These Jefferson clubs meet once a week for 60 minutes to prepare for school performances such as: Meet the Teacher Night, Veteran's Day, Christmas Nutcracker,

Open House, Read Across America performance, city parades, school pep rallies, awards ceremony, and end of the year Jefferson Spring Show.

The Jefferson Elementary staff and administration know the emphasis technology plays in today's society. Hence, Jefferson Elementary follows the ECISD's technology curriculum aligned to the state standards in grades pre-kinder through fifth. Every classroom is equipped with a minimum of four computers for student use, a mounted projector, and a document camera. Teachers and students have access to tablets used for classroom instruction. These resources allow students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to become digital citizens. Jefferson teachers incorporate technology applications to execute classroom lessons fostering creativity, innovation, critical thinking, and decision making in the daily lives of the students. In addition, grades Pre-kinder through fifth attend computer lab classes to engage in reading and math computer lessons daily for 30 minutes. Jefferson Cowboys work on individual computer strands that allow them to progress at their own pace. Jefferson students use of technology is a constant variable in their everyday learning experience.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

Jefferson Elementary staff is committed to the advancement of all the Jefferson Cowboys. Jefferson boys and girls have learning environment that meets their academic, physical, and emotional needs. This is the driving force behind Jefferson's dedication and love in all that they do!

Each week, the Jefferson Cowboys engage in the use of differentiated instruction strategies such as choice boards, tiered assignments, multiple intelligences, inquiry-based learning, and self-paced strategies as part of the Jefferson Elementary based curriculum. Choice boards allow Jefferson boys and girls to choose the level of rigor for their learning from a variety of options targeting the multiple intelligences and different learning styles. Tiered assignments allow for the Jefferson Cowboys to practice multilevel activities of complexity.

Jefferson Elementary Staff ensures high levels of learning and achievements for the Jefferson Cowboys by providing effective instructional methods and interventions. Jefferson visitors may walk into any classroom and see Jefferson boys and girls engaged in learning with instructional foldables, anchor charts, and interacting with their peers in cooperative learning centers. Learning is consistently monitored by the Jefferson staff to address the diverse needs of below level as well as, above level learners. Student progress is monitored by Jefferson teachers and staff through the use of observations, formal and informal classwork/assessments, conferences, meetings, and technology based evaluations. As the data is collected and analyzed for each Jefferson Cowboy, teachers and staff collectively meet to determine additional support. Most importantly, our Jefferson teachers and staff enrich instruction with hands-on activities, small group instruction, cooperative learning, and peer interactions to engage the learner. The instruction is personalized for each student to ensure mastery of the objectives targeted.

Students at Jefferson Elementary maintain a high level of academic standards and achievement as evidenced by the summative reports Jefferson obtains from TEA. Grades kindergarten through second are assessed with Star Early Literacy, an online adaptive assessment program approved by TEA. Grades third through fifth are assessed with the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test. Jefferson staff consistently maintains the areas that reflect high achievement by designing instructional plans that address individual student needs in order to close the gap in performing standards across grade levels. Jefferson teachers closely monitor targeted subgroups to modify and personalize student learning. Jefferson Elementary continues to maintain high levels of achievement due to a highly qualified staff that has been trained on implementing various instructional best practices to meet the needs of all students. The Jefferson Cowboys have received high honors with exemplary status and all distinction designations from TEA. Jefferson Elementary assessment data is a vital tool for teachers in setting individual and subgroup student goals for the Jefferson Cowboys!

Jefferson has "rounded up" the best staff to ensure student success in all core areas. Jefferson teachers and staff enrich and reinforce learning so that all Jefferson Cowboys attain academic progress, understanding, and mastery.

An example of Jefferson teamwork is the library program. The librarian is an additional administrator on campus along with the curriculum assistant and counselor. He provides daily data to reinforce reading and math in the classroom for Jefferson teachers and parents. The Jefferson librarian is seen up and down the hallways lassoing individual Jefferson Cowboys that need to increase their reading levels and/or math skills. The Jefferson librarian is resourceful and builds students' knowledge through technology, direct instruction, and tutorials! In addition, the Jefferson librarian provides trainings for the Jefferson teachers in such areas as accessing electronic books, using online resources & databases, running reading data reports, and finding resources to reinforce classroom instruction.

An instructional strategy utilized to provide additional, daily in-class support for students is to include the Jefferson physical education coaches, music teacher, and resource teacher with individualized instruction for Jefferson Cowboys. Students receive instructional support according to the data collected, and analyzed every six weeks. The campus counselor and the curriculum assistant organize presentations for Pre-kinder through second grades on social and emotional topics with assistance from the professional licensed counselors from the local Behavioral Health Solutions Center. These 45 minute, weekly lessons promote coping skills and healthy solutions for conflict resolution.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

“United to Make a Difference,” is the motto the Jefferson Cowboys live by! Jefferson staff and community strive to create a unique reputation of open mindedness, nurturing, hard work, kindness, and forgiveness. Jefferson Cowboys try their best to have an inviting family atmosphere. Dedication is evident throughout the Jefferson hallways where anyone can count on the Jefferson parents, teachers, and staff, including coaches, paraprofessionals, office personnel, nurse, officer, custodians, cafeteria workers, and the administration to “Cowboy up” and be ready to serve, support and provide one another with a safe and positive learning environment. Jefferson students and staff know the importance of their presence and being at school daily is a crucial part of learning and being successful. As part of the emphasis on attendance, Jefferson Cowboys are rewarded for attendance by six weeks, semester, and for the whole year. Attendance rewards include field trips, movies, lock-ins, special snacks, free play, and a variety of games. The Jefferson Cowboy staff enjoys extended lunches, extrinsic incentives, and special breakfasts.

Students at Jefferson have the opportunity to join and be part of various clubs such as Chess, Robotics, Destination Imagination, Dance team, Choir, Guitar, Technology club, and one of the most popular clubs - Fit Club. These clubs give the students a chance to grow in social skills, responsibility, making choices, and expanding their knowledge in their choice of clubs. All students are encouraged to always show their best behavior and utmost pride when representing their school at any function.

The Jefferson Cowboy administration ensures all staff members have a voice. The Jefferson doors are always open for all staff members in order to share ideas and concerns. Weekly meetings provide for great communication with all staff. Every morning begins on a positive message for all Jefferson students and staff. The Jefferson principal speaks to all Jefferson Cowboys about the importance of having a positive character. These words of wisdom are heard throughout the intercom in every Jefferson classroom and hallway. It keeps the Jefferson Cowboys focused on doing what is best for each other and those around them; teachers, students, and all Jefferson employees carry this daily morning message throughout the day. The Jefferson Cowboy campus thrives because of the daily communication “round ups” with one another, the support with one another, and most of all, having fun while learning together.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

The Jefferson Elementary staff prides itself on providing the Jefferson Cowboys with a challenging curriculum in a positive environment preparing them to be life-long learners in an ever-changing society. Jefferson family and community involvement plays a fundamental role in the overall success of Jefferson Elementary. Throughout the year, the staff, students and parents build a sense of unity through various social, academic and philanthropic activities.

One example is the Jefferson Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) that raises funds throughout the school year to provide resources and incentives for the Jefferson students. Jefferson’s PTO recently built a covered outdoor walkway to keep the Jefferson Cowboys protected from the sun and rain. In addition, PTO meetings include educating Jefferson parents about the Title I programs and Texas Student Initiatives as per TEA. The Jefferson teachers and staff inform all parents and community members through monthly calendars, automated phone messages, daily notes, and communication displays located throughout the school in reference to all Jefferson Cowboy activities.

Parent Involvement is a key component to the success of Jefferson Elementary. Parents are recruited at the beginning of the year as volunteers to help with various events and activities. Jefferson hosts several events in which parents are invited and welcomed to attend and become involved in their child’s educational development. These events include Meet the Teacher Night, Veteran’s Day Program, Vocabulary Parade, Leadership Project Nights, Dr. Seuss Picnic, Thanksgiving Family Luncheon, Christmas Nutcracker Performance, Bring Your Parents to P.E. Day, Kindergarten Graduation and Grade Level Award Assemblies.

Jefferson Elementary promotes community involvement by hosting numerous events such as Career Day in which guest speakers include local community leaders. Jefferson has engaged the community and parents by providing classes that teach Spanish-speaking parents how to read, write, and speak English. These classes help close the gap between the non-English speaking parents and the staff.

The Jefferson Cowboys are encouraged to “give back” to the community throughout the year. Some of these are a few of the Jefferson student and staff activities such as oncology, heart disease, autism, Alzheimer’s fundraisers that allow for community awareness and activity. In addition, Jefferson Cowboys give towards food pantries, toiletries, and clothing for the less fortunate throughout the year.

Jefferson Elementary is committed to ensuring that every student has the necessary tools to reach their full potential. It is important to the Jefferson family that every child feels comfortable and is provided an opportunity to shine in school. Therefore, assistance with clothing for students is offered to parents that are in need of help during difficult times. The parental program facilitates this commitment and is an essential part of the reason why Jefferson has been effective with academic student success.

### **3. Professional Development:**

The Jefferson professional development is an essential tool in guiding staff to meet individual student needs. Jefferson teachers and staff meet the state and district-mandated requirements through continuous and meaningful professional development throughout the year. All Jefferson teachers attend a district curriculum and instruction training before the new school year focused on the scope and sequence. The campus follows the K-12 core subject area manual aligned to the updated TEKS. Jefferson teachers and staff meet weekly with campus administrators to discuss professional development ideas through grade level meetings, staff meetings, and individual teacher conferences. Jefferson teachers attend a variety of professional development sessions throughout the school year as well as during the summer. Along with district-mandated trainings, Jefferson teachers and staff are able to choose from a variety of trainings available at the district level and at the local Region Education Service Center. Some of these trainings include classroom management, closing the gaps, special education, math, reading, science, writing, social studies, differentiated instruction, healthy minds and bodies, data disaggregation, and sheltered instruction.

The Jefferson instructional staff implements the state and district mandated required essential knowledge and skills for each category in all content areas. During Jefferson training, the school principal and administration disseminates testing data and distributes to staff accordingly, thus creating classroom instruction plans and timelines. These plans serve as individual student models, classroom instructional goals, and grade level blueprints.

Jefferson administration is proactive in keeping all staff informed on current research, best practices, and trainings. For example, the principal and curriculum assistant attend an annual leadership academy at the beginning of each school year. In turn, the administration delivers this information to all staff in order to be the driving force behind the success of all Jefferson Cowboys. All staff members are given opportunities to add to their pool of knowledge by selecting areas of professional development of their choice. Teachers then reflect and review the academic needs of the individual students and monitor progress.

In addition, Jefferson staff participates in the trainings and attend the weeklong Innovate Technology Conference where a variety of sessions are offered bringing the latest technology integration to the classrooms. Many of the instructional staff have received various trainings on technology in the classroom, and differentiated instruction strategies to meet the needs of every Jefferson student, and ensure their academic success.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The Jefferson Cowboy leadership consists of the principal, curriculum assistant, counselor, and librarian. The Jefferson Cowboy administrative team works daily to ensure the success of every Jefferson student, as

well as the success of the entire campus. As the day begins, the Jefferson administrative staff greets students, parents, staff, and community as they enter the school. The staff at Jefferson works diligently to establish positive relationships with parents and community. Everything is done prescriptively for the benefit of the Jefferson Cowboys! It is often during the daily morning routine that parents approach the administrative staff with questions, concerns, issues, or campus compliments. The Jefferson Cowboy parents are made to feel just as at home as the students.

The Jefferson leadership team sets the tone for the entire staff with the primary belief that before all else, the students' character must be built. It is through good character that a child becomes a well-rounded, successful member of the community. Daily, the administrative team at Jefferson instills the philosophy of student pride in their work, displaying best character, and showing kindness to one another. Because of this philosophy, of focusing on students' characters, students at Jefferson regularly remind each other to be kind to one another.

The leadership team meets weekly to plan for upcoming events and activities. As decisions are being made, the administrative team works collaboratively with the school staff and teachers to ensure that every decision made is for the benefit and success of the students. Jefferson teachers and staff are encouraged by the administrative team to take leadership roles by promoting various extracurricular activities, leading campus staff development, participating in district committees, participating in summer curriculum writing as well as in summer enrichment student camps.

The belief of the Jefferson Cowboy students and staff is that the greatest success is achieved through collaboration and communication between the school, home, and community. The Jefferson Elementary team prides itself in having open communication with one another. Every staff member and parent at Jefferson knows that the administrative team has an open door policy, and that all decisions made are in the best interest of every child.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Jefferson Elementary strives to develop well-rounded individuals who will succeed as positive contributing citizens of the Edinburg community. In addition to academics, the entire staff focuses on character-building and the social-emotional well being of each Jefferson student and staff member. The goal for every Jefferson Elementary Cowboy student and staff member is to brand hearts with the Golden Rule without any exception. All Jefferson Elementary Cowboy staff is reminded of physical and mental well-being so that positive energy is projected to the Jefferson Cowboy students. Jefferson Cowboys feel inspired to come to school. The teachers emphasize hard work and set individual goals for the students so each Jefferson Cowboy is successful. Students are able to participate in clubs that will showcase their individual talents. These clubs include University Interscholastic League, Technology, Robotics, Spelling, Destination Imagination, Guitar, Dance, Chess, Pop Quiz, and Fit club.

Along with academic success, the students at Jefferson Elementary are afforded the opportunity to participate in character-building activities. Every morning the students are given a “Words of Wisdom” message. The principal shares the words of wisdom message encouraging everyone on campus to do and be their best. Students and adults are reminded daily to be kind, to make goals, to be responsible, helpful and honest. Students reflect on their character and express their ideas in their personal words of wisdom journal.

Jefferson Elementary has dedicated teachers and staff that are constantly learning new techniques and practices to assist in offering students the best education possible. Jefferson Cowboy staff members ensure daily success in classroom lessons. Jefferson teachers and staff provide activities and strategies for differentiation of instruction. It must be deliberately designed for Jefferson Cowboys to feel and be successful. Jefferson teachers and administration continuously analyze assessment data to find out how to reach each student. Jefferson staff emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving for all the Jefferson Cowboys.

Parental involvement also plays a key role in the success of Jefferson Elementary. Constant communication with the Jefferson parents, to inform them of their student’s needs and successes, strengthens the spirit of community. With a click of a button, any Jefferson parent is able to communicate with a Jefferson staff member via technology.

A positive learning environment, character-building goals, extracurricular activities, staff collaboration, a continuous analysis of data, and a strong parental involvement program are vital components in achieving academic excellence for all stakeholders at Jefferson Elementary. Students always come first at Jefferson, and because of that, the whole school shares the Cowboy victory.