

U.S. Department of Education
2017 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. Sterling Dwane Haskell

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

Official School Name Stanton-Smith Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 500 Zavala Trail

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

City Whitehouse State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 75791-3124

County Smith County

Telephone (903) 839-5730 Fax (903) 839-5744

Web site/URL http://www.whitehouseisd.org E-mail haskells@whitehouseisd.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Christopher Moran E-mail moranc@whitehouseisd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Whitehouse Independent School District Tel. (903) 839-6100

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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
PreK	11	10	21
K	49	37	86
1	50	38	88
2	52	52	104
3	56	37	93
4	57	47	104
5	52	53	105
6	1	0	1
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	328	274	602

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 16 % Black or African American
 - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 67 % White
 - 4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 18%

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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	51
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	53
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	104
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	590
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.176
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	18

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
26 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 44 %
Total number students who qualify: 264

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
74 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	39
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	14
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 15:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	96%	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.

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

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

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 educational philosophy at Stanton-Smith is "every interaction matters and every moment is an opportunity". Through building positive and trusting relationships, staff members are deeply invested in the

success of every student all day every day. Stanton-Smith strives to reach student's hearts in order to teach their minds.

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

At Stanton-Smith Elementary School the educational philosophy is “every interaction matters and every moment is an opportunity”. Through a well-balanced curriculum, students become self-assured and knowledgeable young adults competent to meet the challenges of life and the future needs of society.

Stanton-Smith is located in the small community of Whitehouse, Texas. Nestled in the Piney Woods of East Texas and less than nine years old, Stanton-Smith is known as the sole neighborhood school in the district. Whitehouse Independent School District is recognized for high student expectations and small town values.

Stanton was the K-12 school for black students prior to integration. Mr. Stanton donated land, and Mr. Smith, principal at Whitehouse High School, often spent Saturdays doing repairs on Stanton. Thus, the name, Stanton-Smith, honors two culturally diverse men who had a vision and dedication to making the lives of children better through their generosity and hard work. The school family continues to develop unique traditions that define Stanton-Smith in the community. Traditions include rodeo day at the saddle club, a fifth grade trip to a local amusement park, bounce house bash, nine week celebrations, spirit days, school-wide one hour reads each nine week period, and college Wednesdays which promotes the importance of higher education. Positive behavior and citizenship are encouraged and expected throughout each grade level with incentives, assemblies, model student awards, and weekly blue ticket prize drawings.

Stanton-Smith Elementary School’s success is due to a sense of urgency. Every moment is an opportunity to create strong relationships within the student body, staff, and administrators. All staff takes responsibility in helping students thrive. It is not uncommon to see teachers acting as crossing guards, principals playing basketball with students, or custodians encouraging students to read. The goal is to forge a deeper bond and sense of trust between staff and students. Strong leadership is key and breeds an environment conducive for learning. Stanton-Smith offers a safe caring environment which allows students to reach their highest potential. Teachers see their role as a calling more than a job and are passionate about creating a student-centered learning environment.

This quaint neighborhood school serves approximately 600 students ranging from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade and includes self-contained Life Skills and Transition classes for Special Education. As a Title 1 school with a mobility rate of 17%, the staff must be diligent in meeting the ever-changing physical, emotional, social, and academic needs of students while remaining respectful of cultural differences. The campus is rich in cultural diversity. Unique traditions are celebrated through Christmas around the world rotations, Black History month, and Cinco de Mayo activities. The belief is that teachers must reach a child’s heart before they can teach his/her mind. The staff is committed to maximizing the potential of every learner from the struggling student to the gifted and talented. Teachers are held to a high standard but given freedom to execute learning objectives in a manner that engages each student.

Stanton-Smith uses key strategies that encourage and challenge students to develop their full potential. All students are given the opportunity to grow in leadership and citizenship skills through involvement in student council and student action committee, mock elections, campus clean-up day, parent communication tools that monitor student behavior, student led announcements, and the Gang Resistance Education and Training program (G.R.E.A.T). This program was developed to provide character education and peer pressure resistance strategies to students prior to entering middle school. This program is supplemented weekly with bully prevention and character building audio lessons.

Academic instruction is the key component of the school’s success. Every staff member understands the importance that every minute matters. Class begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. Teachers are aware of individual learning styles and develop the curriculum accordingly. At Stanton-Smith the staff values diverse instructional opportunities for students to achieve personal goals through athletics, computer based reading point system, math club, art club, local academic competitions, brain stimulation activities, multisensory literacy and math stations, outsourced publishing of student narratives, fourth grade business convention, fifth grade Stanton-Smith invention convention, and a regional poetry contest. The Whitehouse Education Foundation has funded multiple grant proposals submitted by teachers to enhance classroom instruction.

These instructional materials, along with a built-in daily study hall and before and after school tutorials, have aided in bridging the gap for struggling learners.

Active community involvement is instrumental to the school's accomplishments. Stanton-Smith's Parent-Teacher Organization offers opportunities for parents and community members to be involved. Activities create a welcoming environment with fundraisers, fall festival, spring round up, field day, breakfasts honoring veterans and family members, programs involving fathers, and heroes in the hallway. Other community involvement includes adopt a football player, tunnel cats, letters to soldiers, fire fighter visit, cards to community workers and nursing homes, angel tree, and canned food drives. These activities create a culture of collaboration between students, staff, parents, and community members.

With the commitment that every interaction matters and every moment is an opportunity, Stanton-Smith strives to reach students' hearts in order to teach their minds.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Whitehouse Independent School District follows the state adopted curriculum known as Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in each grade level subject area. In addition to the TEKS, Stanton-Smith Elementary teachers meet both vertically and horizontally to develop strategies, organize materials, and align curriculum accordingly. At the end of each nine week period, teachers analyze data from the previous benchmark exams. This data aids in providing specific strategic instruction to improve student understanding and performance.

Stanton-Smith is committed to developing independent life-long readers and proficient writers. Beginning at the primary level, a balanced literacy instructional approach is utilized. The research based components include read-alouds, guided reading, shared reading, literacy stations, interactive writing, shared writing, reading workshop, writing workshop, and word study. There is a strong focus on phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, and written conventions. Read alouds foster an enjoyment of multiple genres of literature while teachers model valuable reading strategies. Guided reading offers individualized instruction at the child's zone of proximal development. Interactive and shared writing allow teachers and students to collaborate in the writing process. Scaffolding skills at the primary level yields independent readers and writers in fourth and fifth grade. Students become immersed into a departmentalized English Language Arts Reading (ELAR) program through commercial reading inventories, a computer based reading point system, literacy circles, book clubs, and reading responses. The fourth and fifth grade teachers have come together to develop a writing program that edifies the love of writing at Stanton-Smith. Fourth grade students eagerly anticipate outsourced publishing of their narratives. The ELAR program is enhanced through a literacy library which contains over 8,000 books and manipulatives available for teacher check-out. Through diligent efforts and TEKS based instruction, the goal is that all students perform at or above grade level.

Math instruction spirals and moves from concrete to pictorial to abstract. Beginning at the pre-k and kindergarten level, students explore math concepts through the use of manipulatives in math stations. Concepts such as patterning, graphing, number sense, and shapes develop the foundation for future mathematical understanding. Each is introduced through developmentally appropriate TEKS centered activities such as music, movement, art, and literature. Math stations continue in the primary grades so that teachers may utilize small group instruction for reteaching and enrichment. Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through fifth grade, interactive math journals are used as a reference for future instruction, to aid in metacognition, and as a resource for parents. Students learn how to visualize problems in the real world. They are encouraged to act out word problems, use manipulatives, and engage in peer tutoring which ties into their multiple intelligences. Third through fifth grade students continue working in math stations with M.A.T.H. (M-Math facts, A-At your desk, T-Teacher's table, H-Hands on) instructional management system. Additional materials are available for teacher check-out through the campus math lab. Local and state test scores prove the effectiveness of these strategies.

The 5-E Model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate) is used in science to guide TEKS driven instruction and the inquiry process. Students in all grade levels receive three to five hours each week of science instruction. Lessons are supported and monitored by weekly meetings and/or classroom visits by the district Instructional Consultant (IC), regular vertical alignment meetings, and campus and district horizontal collaboration. Students are instructed using the Texas required time for hands-on lab inquiry for each grade level. A fully functioning science lab with inventory appropriate for kindergarten through fifth grade is utilized. Students know how to use the materials, where to store items, and how to clean up. They are instructed in all safety and field investigatory procedures. This inquiry approach prepares students for secondary lab use when they leave Stanton-Smith.

Social Studies TEKS are integrated into reading and writing using concepts in a structural, coherent way in each grade level. These themes include economics, civic learning and engagement, and history. Field trips to local government offices and businesses, city modeled classrooms, and mock elections introduce and promote civic learning. Weekly news articles engage students in current events and its relevance to their

daily lives. Leveled readers are integrated into the curriculum to hold interest and reinforce knowledge through primary sources. Teachers use project based learning and technology to encourage creativity, critical reasoning, and collaboration among students. Fourth and fifth grade students use real-life business scenarios to develop and market products through business and invention conventions.

A four year old full day pre-kindergarten program is available to qualifying at-risk students. With a goal of promoting school readiness, students are immersed in a language rich, researched based learning environment. These young learners are taught through both explicit instruction and play based learning centers with a focus on hands-on experiences. Teachers serve as facilitators of the Texas Pre-K Guidelines which are aligned to the elementary TEKS and provide developmentally appropriate activities for social/emotional development, language and communication, reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. Progress is assessed through beginning, middle, and end of year testing. Test results in the primary grades support the effectiveness of the pre-k program.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Physical education and health is an integral part of the overall education at Stanton-Smith Elementary. All students participate in a physical education program three times per week for a total of 135 minutes in addition to a daily recess. The P.E. Department aims to provide students with the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities that will foster their competence and confidence to take part in a range of physical activities and understand the value of leading healthy, active lifestyles. This is accomplished by planning a curriculum that is TEKS based and follows a scope and sequence that is developmentally appropriate. Students learn positive social behaviors in an authentic setting through the use of collaboration, cooperative games, team activities, and conflict resolution. Technology is used to monitor physical activity through the use of uploadable pedometers that track moderate to vigorous physical activity, step count, and physical activity time. Teachers and students participate together in a three month fitness challenge. A projection system is also utilized to enhance a dance unit, multi-media exercise experiences, and playback of recorded student performances and skills. Core curriculum areas are supported and enhanced by providing students the opportunity to use their knowledge in a different context through math and literacy games. Fitness levels of third through fifth graders are assessed using a fitness testing tool. The University of Texas at Tyler uses the district P.E. programs as a training ground for aspiring physical educators. Nutrition education is taught through understanding and choosing healthy lifestyle habits.

The music department at Stanton-Smith allows every student to shine in their own unique way. The music TEKS are learned through creative expression. All students attend a weekly forty-five minute class. In order to promote a love of music, students are exposed to the use of instruments, puppets, dancing, performing arts videos, games, and stage performance. Themed units are used to tie music into the general education classroom and reinforce the core subject TEKS. An emphasis is placed on American history and patriotism in addition to the study of different cultures. Every grade level including Life Skills and Transition classes have an opportunity to perform for the school, families, and community each year. Each student grows to understand the importance of music. Music is considered to be the universal language loved by all.

As part of weekly enrichment rotations, Stanton-Smith's library generates an inviting atmosphere for reading and research. Integrated TEKS based lessons are taught to all students including self-contained special education classrooms. The librarian serves as a valuable resource for students, teachers, and parents. Due to grants, fundraisers, and district and state funding, the library has acquired a plethora of online resources available to students, teachers, and parents. Basic computer skills are taught to navigate these online resources. Third through fifth grade students begin preparation for a computer based reading points system by searching the library database for books that correlate with their reading level. The library collaborates with home and community by participating in annual book fairs and read-a-thons. Because research shows that a majority of students may lose up to two months of reading skills over the summer break, the library has implemented a summer reading program as well as giving families access to online books.

Technology plays an integral role in the success of the curriculum and is offered to pre-k through fifth grade students. A scheduled weekly computer lab time monitored by the computer teacher introduces and

reinforces the technology applications TEKS while teaching basic computer and keyboarding skills. Additional research times are available to all students and teachers as needed to aid in creating products using technology. Every classroom is equipped with interactive boards, teacher and student computers, projectors, and tablets provided by campus funds, donations, and PTO. Technology grants submitted by teachers have furnished resources such as additional classroom tablets, gaming accessories that allow hands-on learning, streaming software, navigation trackers, and microscopes. Many of these devices provide acceleration in S.T.E.M. (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics). In preparation for junior high, fifth grade students begin supervised use of personal technology devices for research, classroom projects, test review, and small group collaboration. Teachers utilize social media and personal classroom web pages to communicate with students and parents regarding accomplishments, classroom assignments, and school events.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Stanton-Smith Elementary strives to meet the individual needs of all students in its diverse population. All staff members take ownership in the process of student achievement. By modifying and adjusting the curriculum accordingly, teachers have accomplished this goal using multiple instructional methods, interventions, and assessments.

Stanton-Smith uses a variety of methods to assess students. These assessments drive the instruction, so time with students is utilized efficiently. The assessment process begins in pre-k with a technology based progress monitoring system which shows growth in skills over time. This system provides snapshots of student skill levels for grouping in targeted areas. Kindergarten through fifth grade students are assessed using an additional computer based progress monitoring program. This assists in the early identification of at-risk students using reading and math screeners. Not only is it used for needs identification, but also for monitoring and reporting on progress at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. In addition, specific interventions are developed for individual students using data collected from running records, commercial reading inventories, TEKS based assessments, and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) data. Formative assessments and teacher observations are also instrumental to this process.

After gathering and analyzing assessment data, teachers work diligently with response to intervention specialists to devise an instructional plan that will best serve the needs of each at-risk student. The tiered process begins in the classroom with differentiated instruction documented in weekly lesson plans and anecdotal records. Teachers conduct small group instruction, reteaching strategies, before and after school tutorials, math club, and collaborate with parent and community volunteers. Math club was formed with a desire for third, fourth, and fifth grade students to master multiplication facts at a proficient level of speed and accuracy. Thus allowing the students to solve math problems at a complex level and moving them beyond focusing on basic computation. Two part time staff members are provided for sixteen weeks to supplement accelerated reading and math instruction. If a level of success is not attained with Tier 1, intervention specialists will provide additional support in a Tier 2 pull-out environment. Tier 2 eases the learning challenge by stressing the importance of clear, conceptually-oriented instruction while intensifying the value of drill, practice, and review.

One effective approach for kindergarten through second grade students is the use of a leveled literacy intervention system. This supplementary intervention system turns struggling readers into successful readers with fast-paced, systematically designed lessons. For students who need further support, Tier 3 is implemented to reach desired outcomes. The staff recognizes that some students require unique and intensive instruction not offered to the general student population. These children are served through the dyslexia learning lab, speech therapy sessions, resource class, and transitional and life-skills classes. The dyslexia learning lab utilizes a multi-sensory teaching approach with an alphabetic phonics program which emphasizes the science of written language and addresses reading, handwriting, and spelling.

In Special Education Transition and Life Skills classes, students receive enrichment and instruction with community-based experiences, activities of daily living, and participation in Special Olympics. Other services available for eligible students include occupational therapy, physical therapy, behavioral support,

and assistance for the visually and hearing impaired.

Not all students who need specialized instruction are low performing. English Language Learners (ELL) are involved in full language immersion in the regular classroom and are monitored through the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). Summer school is offered to pre-k and kindergarten Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Language learning software is incorporated in all English as a Second Language (ESL) certified classrooms, and teachers are provided a personal laptop for student support. The gifted and talented program serves students who exhibit high performance in qualitative and quantitative measures. For two and one-half hours each week, students are engaged in enriched curriculum units in the four core areas as well as leadership and creativity. Field trips, academic competitions, and open houses further expand and enrich the minds of the gifted and talented students.

Attention to the individual needs of each and every student combined with a wide variety of instructional supports offered by highly qualified and caring staff members, Stanton-Smith Elementary School has continued to close performance gaps among these special populations.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

School climate is bigger than any one person's contribution. The staff at Stanton-Smith works together to create an environment where everyone feels safe, connected, and engaged in learning. The positive school climate fosters social, emotional, academic, and cultural development that lays the foundation for a productive life. Even small successes are celebrated with trips to the principal's office for positive recognition, the display of student products and awards, and weekly blue ticket winners. Nine week celebrations recognize student and staff attendance, academic milestones, and a model student from each grade level who exhibits leadership, citizenship, and academic responsibility. Individual learning styles are respected and accommodated through flexible seating, lighting preferences, background music, and diverse teaching strategies. Because every interaction matters, teachers greet their students every morning at the door and often have lunch with them. It is not uncommon for teachers to fill student backpacks with necessities for home and school and care for personal hygiene needs. Stanton-Smith goes above and beyond to provide a safe, clean, and welcoming environment for students, staff, and parents.

Teachers enter the classroom with a positive attitude that motivates students to learn. This positive attitude is a product of the support and care that teachers receive from administrators, parents, and each other. Teachers are included in the decision making process of hiring and developing campus goals. The camaraderie among staff members is strong due to mentoring, grade level and department sharing, and teacher led staff development. Every staff member feels comfortable going to any other staff member for assistance. Off campus planned activities boost the morale and strengthen the bond among staff members. Monthly luncheons with prize drawings, birthday celebrations, popcorn Fridays, and holiday dinners increase the feeling of family among staff members. A graduation breakfast celebrates the accomplishments of the staff's graduating seniors. Life events are recognized with baby and wedding showers, support through meals for families in times of illness, and dedication books placed in the school library in honor of a deceased family member. Teachers feel valued and appreciated by small acts of kindness and inspirational words left in their boxes by PTO members. A "shout out" board is featured in the teacher's lounge for staff members to leave encouraging comments. This flow of support has constructed a positive environment that makes the school successful.

Students and staff members at Stanton-Smith feel a sense of purpose and kinship. A positive culture and climate has been created where everyone feels valued, supported, and respected.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

A partnership between parents, students, educators, and the community is essential to the success of Stanton-Smith Elementary. The Whitehouse Education Foundation has played an integral role in generating community support and funding for teacher written grants. Parents are aware of upcoming classroom and school-wide events and areas of study through weekly newsletters, teacher websites, assignment books, automated phone messaging, and text communication tools. Parents and community members are given the opportunity to participate in annual school-wide activities including fall festival, fun run, field day, spring rodeo, and a silent auction of classroom created products. Stanton-Smith hosts quarterly breakfasts honoring veterans, fathers, mothers, and grandparents.

The campus has implemented a program that models the importance of a father in a child's education. Fathers are invited to attend classroom activities with their child and participate in training sessions to equip them with strategies to effectively facilitate their child's education. To further provide strong male role models, Stanton-Smith has created a "heroes in the hallway" program. Fathers and other community members serve as crossing guards, greeters, and playground monitors. At the end of each nine week period, mystery readers from the community are invited to participate in the school's one hour read. The Whitehouse fire department volunteers each year to conduct a fire safety program for pre-k through first grade students as well as the Life Skills and Transition classes. The pre-k class adopts a police officer who makes monthly visits to the classroom to build trust between law enforcement and families in the

community. High school students share their talents, serve as role models, and encourage goal setting. At the start of each school year, classrooms adopt a varsity football player. In this reciprocal relationship, students encourage their adopted player with weekly cards, posters, and treats. In return, these high school athletes reinforce the importance of hard work, commitment, and school pride during monthly visits. Second through fifth grade model students attend home football games and run through the tunnel with football players. Drumline members kick off an annual drug awareness week with a high energy performance that builds excitement. Drill team members join students for breakfast and invite them to attend their semi-annual dance clinics.

When the school, community, and families actively work together, it creates a network of shared responsibility for student success.

3. Professional Development:

At Stanton-Smith professional development is driven by data analysis and the campus improvement plan. Multiple approaches for professional development have made a positive impact on district curriculum alignment, administrator and teacher effectiveness, and student achievement. Administrators attend annual conventions and planning retreats along with weekly goal setting meetings led by the superintendent. The Region 7 Education Service Center is utilized by teachers year round for training that is aligned with and designed to support the TEKS. District-wide professional development offers specialized break-out sessions that foster the individual needs of each staff member. Prior to the start of school, Whitehouse ISD provides staff led and outsourced training sessions in a flexible format that allows for staff choice based on subject area content and self-assessment. District instructional consultants offer on the spot support as well as aiding in the planning of staff development in language arts, math, science, social studies, and physical education. Specific scheduled training for gifted and talented, special education, response to intervention, and ESL services aid in meeting the needs of diverse learners. Throughout the school year, campus based staff development encourages teachers to share their expertise in specific content areas. An example is a recent staff development led by the dyslexia designee to help bring awareness of the characteristics of dyslexia, screening methods, and classroom interventions. Teachers have also received training in an instructional model which allows students to activate prior knowledge, construct meaning, become mentally engaged, and assess their own understanding. After administrators and teachers at Stanton-Smith recognized a need for vertical and horizontal alignment in the writing curriculum, pre-k through fifth grade language arts teachers attended a nationally recognized research based writing academy. Due to the ever changing population of Stanton-Smith, the staff has participated in a poverty simulation which has impacted, inspired, and helped teachers become aware and understand the diverse needs and home life of low-socioeconomic students. Mandated state training for privacy and safety are completed via technology in an interactive format. In order to stay on the cusp of technology, staff members have attended technology based state conventions as well as ongoing training offered by the district technology department. When desired training is not available through the regional, district, or campus level, outside conferences and book studies are employed to meet the needs of staff. A robust staff development program is a key component to optimize student success and cultivate lifelong learners.

4. School Leadership:

The philosophy of leadership at Stanton-Smith is based on a supportive environment consisting of a sense of urgency and high level of accountability for students and staff. The leadership structure consists of a principal, assistant principal, and counselor. Administration meets monthly with grade level team leaders as well as grade levels as a whole. Communication is a vital collaborative effort among the administration, team leaders, and other staff members. Through the use of online calendars, text messaging applications, and email, the staff stays well informed. The leadership is visible on campus through greeting students, ensuring punctuality among teachers and students, and daily visits to classrooms by administrators. A state-mandated teacher appraisal system gives administrators the opportunity to provide specific feedback for improving performance. Strong discipline promotes high expectations for behavior which leads to fewer interruptions of teaching time. The ultimate goal is for students to not miss instructional time in the classroom, therefore discipline issues are effectively handled in a timely manner. In order to promote high expectations with a high level of trust, staff members are allowed the flexibility to make decisions

concerning instruction in the classroom. Staff members are treated as professionals and encouraged to use their knowledge, expertise, and experience to make critical choices regarding programs that impact student success. An open door policy encourages students, staff, and parents to ask questions, share concerns, and celebrate accomplishments. Administrators actively listen and value input from the school community. They involve teachers in school policies and procedures, the hiring process, curriculum decisions, professional development, and campus activities. Although the school budget is tight, the leadership team actively seeks ways to allot a portion of the budget to be used for individual teacher resources and specialized training. Administrators are constantly striving to motivate and encourage staff and students. With a hands on approach, they involve themselves in the lives of students by reading one on one, practicing math facts, participating in musicals, playing sports, administering tests, and eating lunch with them. In order to promote school pride and unity, a Stanton-Smith shirt is purchased for every staff member by administrators. A supporting and encouraging environment is modeled by the leadership at Stanton-Smith. Innovation and hard work are recognized on campus and in the community. Because of the positive support from the campus administrators, teachers are empowered and feel extremely passionate about their role in student success and academic achievement.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The educational philosophy at Stanton-Smith is “every interaction matters and every moment is an opportunity”. Through building positive and trusting relationships, staff members are deeply invested in the success of every student all day every day. Stanton-Smith strives to reach students’ hearts in order to teach their minds.

The essential ingredient of educational success begins with everyday interactions between the staff and children at Stanton-Smith. When children feel valued, they have an insatiable desire to learn. From the moment students enter the school and again at their classroom door, they are greeted enthusiastically and sincerely. In order to aid in their social and emotional development, opportunities to connect with students are sensed and embraced. From something as simple as hitting a homerun in last night’s baseball game to a student’s favorite book series or genre, teachers are able to personalize conversations and integrate them into classroom instruction. These interactive moments affirm the relationship between teacher and student. There is considerable evidence that promotes the idea that if students feel anxious in the classroom setting, their brains cannot form the neural connections necessary for learning. When students feel safe and secure, connections are formed. By adding a personal touch, students feel more engaged in learning. At Stanton-Smith students have a sense of belonging, feel secure, and are self-confident. The classroom setting provides the scaffolding that supports the foundation for increased learning, motivation, self-discipline, responsibility, and the ability correct and learn from mistakes. As a teacher cultivates these relationships, students feel rooted in their learning environment and are able to bloom.

Positive relationships between staff members and parents are also critical to student success. Staff members work diligently to ensure that parents feel welcome at Stanton-Smith and keep open lines of communication. Parents are encouraged to share their time and talents by working side by side with teachers and students. Multiple opportunities are available for parents to interact with students, teachers, and staff. Stanton-Smith offers parent training sessions that provide basic parenting skills and tools for assisting their child with academics. Creating that effective partnership between parents and teachers is essential to the students’ academic achievement. Another key to success is the staff to staff relationships at Stanton-Smith. On-going interaction and support between staff members ensures that effective teaching methods are shared. The staff becomes stronger and more effective by analyzing data, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and adjusting curriculum accordingly. Having respect and a shared vision bonds staff, parents, and students in the pursuit of a successful learning environment at Stanton-Smith.

Every interaction matters and every moment is an opportunity. If you love a child today, you can teach them tomorrow.