

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Woodrow Cummins Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1400 Padgett Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Conway AR 72034-3750  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Faulkner

Telephone (501) 513-4417

Fax (501) 513-0155

Web site/URL http://wces.conwayschools.org

E-mail lewisd@conwayschools.net

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. Greg Murry  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail murryg@conwayschools.net

District Name Conway School District Tel. (501) 450-4800

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. Andre' Acklin  
(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**

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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 2018 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 2012 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: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
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 (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 9 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 15 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
  - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	56	43	99
<b>1</b>	66	54	120
<b>2</b>	53	48	101
<b>3</b>	57	43	100
<b>4</b>	67	66	133
<b>5</b>	0	0	0
<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>	299	254	553

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 15 % Black or African American
  - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 73 % White
  - 2 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 10%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	30
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	23
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	53
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	553
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.10
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 29 %  
Total number students who qualify: 161

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %  
55 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.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>10</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>34</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 24:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	97%	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 2017.

<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.

The mission of Woodrow Cummins Elementary is to provide a safe and challenging learning community that empowers students for success.

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**

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Every Student Matters. Every Moment Counts. In all things we do, our students are the first priority. Every decision that is made is based on what is in the best interest of our students.

Woodrow Cummins Elementary opened its doors in 2008 as the eighth elementary school in Conway to serve the ever-growing population. As one of the fastest growing cities in Arkansas, Conway's rapid expansion and housing development led to the need for Woodrow Cummins Elementary school. Named one of the ten fastest growing cities in Arkansas, Conway has grown thirty-five percent since 2000. Since Woodrow Cummins' inception in 2008, Conway's population has grown by over 7,500 residents, which is also evident in our school's ever-growing population. With 550 students we are the second largest elementary school in our district. Twenty-nine percent of our students are economically disadvantaged, and seven percent are provided Special Education services. With growing educational and economic differences, our staff at Woodrow Cummins Elementary is dedicated to providing student-specific differentiation, with a goal to expand and grow the whole child by meeting our students' academic, social, and emotional needs for all of our 550 students in kindergarten through fourth grade.

Mr. Woodrow "Woody" Cummins, Jr., the school's namesake, began his teaching career in 1971 with the Conway School District. He served as principal at several Conway schools, and he continued with the district as assistant superintendent. He later became Deputy Director at the Arkansas Department of Education. Mr. Cummins continues to play a vital role in our school family, which exemplifies our community involvement and commitment of upholding high expectations for all stakeholders. He often attends Woodrow Cummins Elementary special occasions, assemblies, and school events; he will even surprise classes with a book reading.

Even though we serve a large, diverse population of students, Woodrow Cummins Elementary embodies a family-like atmosphere that is welcoming to all students, families, staff, and school community. This is evident each morning as our assistant principal greets each and every student with singing and dancing for our "Morning Musical Drop-Off." "The Dancing Assistant Principal" shared his motivation behind the theatrics of singing and dancing with CNN, Fox News, The Today Show, and People Magazine. If a student is having a rough morning he wants to be able to make them smile and laugh in an effort to prepare their minds for learning. He turns their frustrations into elation. Parents and families also enjoy and appreciate his excitement to lift everyone's spirits during "Morning Musical Drop-Off". Parents and students alike conclude that he "makes us have a great start to our day".

Our school mantra is, "We don't do bad days...every day is a good day!" This resonates with students everywhere as something that makes such a big difference in the lives of the families within the school walls and beyond. In 2016, our assistant principal was awarded the title of Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators State Assistant Principal of the Year, because of the inspiration and enthusiasm he has for meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of all the Woodrow Cummins Elementary Family. We have created a tradition of excitement and devotion for learning that will carry on for many years to come.

Woodrow Cummins boasts a dedicated faculty that ensures continued academic achievement and academic growth. Of the forty-eight staff members, fifty-four percent possess master degrees, while others are currently continuing their post graduate studies. Our skilled staff uses ongoing data collection, formative and summative assessment data, and feedback to drive our integrated curriculum as a way to meet the needs of all learners. Since 2014 and each year thereafter, Woodrow Cummins Elementary students have been recognized by the Arkansas School Recognition and Reward Program for achieving high student performance within the top five percent of the state and achieving student academic growth within the top ten percent of the state.

Although we have a growing need for intervention services with twenty-nine percent of students identified as economically disadvantaged, Woodrow Cummins Elementary does not qualify for federal assistance that would supply additional means to meet our academic areas of need. Woodrow Cummins Elementary dedication to students does not end with its faculty members, but extends to many community stakeholders

and a very engaged group of parents and families that share a motivation for student success. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) of Woodrow Cummins Elementary works in conjunction with the staff to provide many resources and assistance that would otherwise go unfulfilled. Woodrow Cummins' PTO helps sponsor fundraising efforts and provides support with our annual Community Basketball Jam, monthly Character Assemblies, Great Kindness Challenge, Backpack Program that provides meals to students over the weekend, WatchDOGS (Dads of Great Students), Lions' Running Club after school, Academic Family Nights, School Musicals, Dr. Seuss Week, and Read-a-Thon to provide our school with additional books, Chromebooks, iPads, and other needed instructional materials.

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

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

Woodrow Cummins Elementary School is dedicated to a future-focused approach of learning by providing students with the knowledge and skills to become engaging and successful members of society. Woodrow Cummins' goals not only target curriculum and instruction needed to be successful in elementary school, but also where that knowledge will take them in the future.

Woodrow Cummins implements a curriculum aligned with Arkansas State Standards to drive instruction and assessment. The standards serve as a guide as we plan for assessments, instruction, interventions, enrichment, and extensions. Teachers collaboratively discuss the significance of the standards with vertical and horizontal grade level members from across the district to determine Power Standards within each content area. We often refer to our Power Standards as a “safety net” of standards that all must learn prior to leaving their current grade.

Reading and English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum focuses on reading and analyzing literature and literary nonfiction, studying the English language, and writing about related topics. Teachers ensure that students gain adequate exposure to a range of texts and tasks and infuse rigor as students read increasingly complex texts through the grades.

ELA instruction is conducted in a small group setting, based on a multi-sensory approach using programs such as APPLE Seed Connections. These fundamental skills are taught with a spiraling approach that includes: concepts of print, phonemic and phonological awareness, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. These skills lay the foundation for future reading success. Our students have a variety of literary experiences for student support including Lexia, Scholastic, Readworks, Spelling City, and Benchmark Universe. Clever manages the student’s individual dashboard by making technology accessible in an age appropriate manner.

Teachers utilize Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), ACT Aspire, NWEA MAP, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and the Developmental Spelling Assessment (DSA) to organize flexible grouping based on students' individualized areas of strength and weakness. Differentiated groups are created to instill the ELA fundamentals in each of the following areas: vocabulary, fluency, predicting, comprehension, summarizing, and word analysis. Teachers administer progress monitoring assessments to make well-informed and timely decisions about the ongoing instructional needs of their students.

Arkansas Mathematics Standards, The 8 Mathematical Practices, and a focus on Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questioning guide math curriculum at Woodrow Cummins. Skills are taught using resources such as Engage NY, Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), Extending Children's Mathematics (ECM), hands-on manipulatives, cooperative group work, and number talks. NWEA MAP and ACT Aspire Interim and Summative assessment data are used to determine the instructional needs of all students. Daily core concepts and differentiation are also utilized through programs like Zearn and Moby Max that meet students’ needs at their academic levels and spiral to reinforce fundamental concepts.

Next Generation Science Standards provide the basis of science instruction by using weekly Scholastic News, Mystery Doug, Moby Max, non-fiction texts, and hands-on learning through labs. Teachers design lessons where students integrate STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) throughout the curriculum. Lessons are project-based and allow students to solve real world problems. In addition, local community members are brought in to teach the students about using science in the real world. Baptist Health Medical Center in conjunction with the Farm-to-School Initiative provided Woodrow Cummins a School Garden as a real-world approach to science. This onsite garden is used to teach students about soil and plants, and it helps promote healthy eating.

Social Studies content is built into the curriculum as students begin reading for understanding through such

modes as: historical documents, novels, and passages that highlight notable historical figures and events. Teachers incorporate historical engagement into their curriculum by providing students opportunities to engage in historical thinking from multiple perspectives and take virtual field trips to destinations of historical importance. Teachers also utilize Scholastic News magazine for their students to keep abreast of current world events and to learn about holidays and other cultural celebrations. Civic learning and engagement is evident at Woodrow Cummins through novel studies, guest speakers, and participation in mock elections. Civic studies continue monthly as students learn a new character word of the month and the importance of displaying that character trait in their daily lives. At the end of each month, students vote to determine which of their classmates gave their best effort in displaying the character word of the month.

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

Woodrow Cummins Elementary extends the future-focused mindset beyond the core content areas to fully engage students in various modalities of outstanding learning that includes: art, music, physical education, library, gifted and talented, and counseling. Specialty area classes support core content curriculum by integrating the Arkansas State Standards and through collaboration with core teachers to develop lessons that will enhance instruction.

Students participate in 60 minutes of art instruction weekly. Art lessons at Woodrow Cummins provide students with an art experience that allows for personal creativity and exploration. Students are provided opportunities to produce original artwork, research historical influences, and infuse geometry concepts from math content classes into works of art. Our students' artwork is often recognized throughout the community and the state. Woodrow Cummins students recently participated in a poster contest sponsored by Conway Electrical Corporation titled, "My Life, Powered by Conway Corp." Woodrow Cummins students took the top spots winning first, second, and third place in the contest.

Each week students receive 60 minutes of music instruction and theory. Students are exposed to various aspects of music through basic singing skills, exploration of various musical instruments, and listening stations that focus on musical patterns and rhythms. Grade level musicals are thoughtfully organized to ensure students the opportunity to showcase their musical talents and creativity. Families and community members are brought together on performance night to enjoy the entertainment and excitement each grade level has to offer.

Woodrow Cummins provides students with 60 minutes of physical education weekly, in addition to 30 minutes of daily recess. Physical education is focused on promoting healthy habits, active minds, and engaging students with real-world health, nutrition, and exercise experiences. Interactive lessons include: track and field activities, jump rope, basketball, volleyball, calisthenics, tennis, and archery. After school running club provides students a safe place for exercise and we even encourage family members to run or walk alongside their students for a fun-filled family experience. Our Annual WCE Mighty Lions 5K is also a great opportunity for students, parents, and community members to engage in healthy living.

Our library media center program incorporates STEAM activities as it seeks to blend the Arkansas State Standards for Library Media and new Computer Science Standards. Woodrow Cummins students visit the library each week for 40 minutes for book exchange and lesson time, which often features a variety of center work. Centers involve teams working together to solve problems with MakerSpace and robotic materials, conducting mini research projects, and learning to utilize a variety of digital resources.

The students of Woodrow Cummins are provided whole group enrichment that is STEAM-centered through 40 minutes of weekly Gifted and Talented classes. Identified Gifted and Talented students from 3rd and 4th grade participate in a pull-out group called Pinnacle in which they receive instructional services different from those provided in the regular classroom. They have the opportunity to work at their ability level and area of interest. Instruction includes creative and critical thinking, research, and affective development. These students are required to meet for 150 minutes of instruction per week.

Students at Woodrow Cummins are beginning to develop decision-making, communication, and life skills, as well as character values. It is also a time when students develop and acquire attitudes toward school, self,

peers, and social group. The counseling program objectives fall into two domains: educational and social emotional. The educational focus involves the knowledge of academic abilities and educational needs and interests of students. The personal/social involves the development of an awareness of self and others. These objectives are implemented through developmentally appropriate activities ranging from whole class counseling activities, individual counseling, consultation with parents/guardians and school personnel, and coordination with community agencies. The elementary school years set the foundation for developing the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for children to become healthy, competent and confident learners. The counselor at Woodrow Cummins Elementary has an impact on these years by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program and collaborating with school staff, parents and the community to create a safe and respectful learning environment. By providing education, prevention, early identification, and intervention the school counselor helps students achieve academic success, develop an understanding of career opportunities and develop social/emotional skills in response to issues they face.

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

The foundation of curriculum at Woodrow Cummins Elementary is the Arkansas State Standards. Our focus is on educating the whole child—emotionally, socially, and academically. Our teachers ensure that they are using a variety of instructional methods to educate students in all required academic areas. Development levels, learning styles, and interests of our students also guide instructional practices.

Our staff strongly believes that foundational skills must first be acquired by students in all core areas. Consequently, the school uses current data, previous year's standardized test results, and other classroom-based formative assessments to design differentiated small groups and facilitate individualized interventions that are used to increase both student academic abilities and confidence. Technology and curriculum resources such as Lexia, Scholastic, Readworks, Spelling City, Benchmark Universe, Moby Max, Zearn, Reflex Math, Response to Intervention (RTI), Connections, and hands-on learning materials are utilized to provide individualized interventions for students.

Assessment data plays a vital role in identifying the needs of every student to ensure academic success. Varieties of assessments are utilized to measure student growth, student mastery, content area strengths and weaknesses, and projected student growth. Along with the state mandated ACT Aspire Summative assessment for 3rd and 4th graders and NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments for students in kindergarten through 2nd grade, Woodrow Cummins uses data from the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), ACT Aspire Interim and Classroom assessments, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Arkansas Rapid Automated Naming Screener (AR-RAN), and the Developmental Spelling Assessment (DSA).

Through ongoing data collection from DIBELS, NWEA MAP, ACT Aspire, Academic Improvement Plans, and classroom performance, teachers determine which students need additional support. Although Woodrow Cummins does not receive any federal assistance, we are fortunate to have a part-time interventionist who supports the students and uses small group instruction with targeted teaching strategies. DIBELS is administered to all students in grades kindergarten through second, as well as students in third and fourth grades that are reading below grade level based on their DRA level. Progress monitoring is implemented for students showing weakness in any of the following areas: phoneme segmentation, nonsense word fluency, and oral reading fluency. In addition to DIBELS, the AR-RAN is used to identify students demonstrating characteristics of dyslexia. Once identified, students and their families are notified of the results and placed in a multisensory program provided by the interventionist.

NWEA MAP tests are administered to our kindergarten through second grade students at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to show individual growth in literacy and math. NWEA MAP provides detailed reports that show at what level the student is performing and individualized student goals. Teachers utilize these reports to ensure students are receiving appropriate academic support.

To ensure students maintain high levels of achievement, grade level teachers at Woodrow Cummins collaboratively plan lessons that involve real-life problem-solving skills at appropriate stages, reinforce fundamental concepts, and provide immediate differentiation for students experiencing difficulties. For

students who exhibit a need for additional challenges and differentiation, opportunities for enrichment and extension activities are put in place to ensure their continued academic success. Teaching methods balance conceptual understanding, visual learning, as well as problem solving. Students having difficulty mastering core content area skills are provided with research-based interventions.

The building principal, assistant principal, part-time instructional facilitator, school psychology specialist, special education teacher, part-time interventionist and classroom teachers participate in monthly RTI meetings to ensure academic needs are being met for all students. Information is gathered to diagnose academic needs and to prescribe interventions that will best support students who are not making significant progress based on multiple sources of assessment data. While most students make significant academic progress through such targeted instruction, other students may continue to show significant instructional needs after individualized interventions and progress monitoring expectations are fulfilled. This is the time when the RTI committee will investigate further academic supports including the need for a 504 Plan, behavioral interventions, or a Special Education referral and evaluation. RTI meetings are a time for dialogue among team members to analyze curriculum needs, instructional practices, and to determine appropriate professional development for teachers that will enable them to promote student learning and achievement.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Woodrow Cummins Elementary's mantra says it best, "We don't do bad days...every day is a good day!" Having a good day is inherent at Woodrow Cummins Elementary School. As students and staff arrive at school each morning, they are welcomed by "The Dancing Assistant Principal" along with student greeters smiling from ear to ear. With such an uplifting and positive start to the day, the Woodrow Cummins Family cannot help but have a good day.

Lions R.O.A.R. is our school motto. We show Respect, maintain Obedience, keep a positive Attitude, and exhibit Responsibility for ourselves and our school family. This motto began as a collaborative process for supporting positive student behavior and maintaining a productive learning environment. Upon walking into our building, everyone is greeted with a televised display of engaged students involved in fun learning experiences. Our "Lion Cam" is always on the prowl looking for students that exemplify R.O.A.R.

Students are recognized throughout the year for their behavior, academic success, and extra-curricular achievements. Our counselor promotes character education during her class meetings, and students are recognized at our monthly spirit assemblies with a certificate and a "Be a Friend not a Bully" shirt. During our spirit assemblies, grade levels perform a song or chant. The winning grade level is rewarded the spirit stick. Each month, classes compete to see which classroom will receive the "Cleanest Classroom" or the "Best Cafeteria Behavior" awards. When students are "caught" displaying exceptionally good behavior they are rewarded with a "behavior buck". Once a month, students are able to cash their behavior bucks in for a variety of prizes. Some of the most popular prizes are Principal for the Day, extra recess, lunch with the principal, and slime.

Relationships between administrators and teachers at WCE are characterized by openness, trust, respect, and appreciation. Principals make a point to visit with each teacher each day, provide a common planning time for teachers, and create a sense of belonging. The individual successes of teachers are recognized and celebrated. Important leadership decisions are made collaboratively with input from teachers. Teachers feel their opinions matter and are comfortable taking risks with new instructional strategies. The positive school culture of WCE is conducive to professional satisfaction, high teacher morale, and effectiveness, as well as to student learning, fulfillment, and well-being. Teachers and students feel emotionally and physically safe. Mistakes at WCE are turned into opportunities to learn and grow. Students and teachers are held to high expectations and they consistently meet or exceed those expectations.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

We are ecstatic about our family involvement at Woodrow Cummins Elementary. Some of the programs we have in place for families throughout the school year are: Watch D.O.G.S (Dads Of Great Students), Homeroom Helpers, Open House, Family nights, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings and committees, music programs, Family Fun Day, and Faulkner County Parade School Float Committee.

Woodrow Cummins distributes the Lions' Den weekly newsletter to parents that is developed with participation of the PTO. This newsletter shares pertinent parent information, highlights special events being held at Woodrow Cummins, and celebrates the successes of our students and teachers of things they are doing within the school and community. Our fourth grade Pinnacle students, along with their gifted and talented teacher, produce a daily Lion News broadcast for each student in the school to watch. This broadcast gives the students and teachers information about activities coming up during the week and weeks to come, celebrates the achievements of students and teachers, and provides time for each class to say its "Character Pledge", Pledge of Allegiance, and have a Moment of Silence. Woodrow Cummins has a district website that keeps students, parents, and the community informed about our activities and celebrations in our school. We also have two social media pages that are updated weekly to help engage our parents and community by broadcasting news and information about what is going on in our school. We find that this is an excellent opportunity for our school to connect with families and share information

rapidly. These social media pages help us to provide an opportunity to showcase our Woodrow Cummins culture with those who are unable to be in our school building throughout the day. By keeping our information current and accurate, families greatly rely on these resources to help them know what is going on in the school.

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice a year to inform parents of academic strengths and deficits. Parents are provided with the opportunity to interact with the teacher and view student work samples. Teachers send home a folder weekly that contains student work and reports on classroom behavior. Parents are asked to sign the folder and send it back to school. Teachers routinely contact parents on an individual basis to communicate their child's progress. Many teachers utilize the Remind communication tool to keep parents informed about the daily and weekly happenings in their classrooms. Teachers also send weekly newsletters to parents to communicate upcoming activities and skills the students will be learning during the week.

Woodrow Cummins maximizes the wealth of resources and support found in the community. Ballin' for Books is our annual Celebrity Basketball Jam and is fully funded by local businesses. This event supports literacy at home and in our school. Our Mighty Lion 5K is an annual race for our students who participate in our running club, and it is also sponsored by local businesses. Our students travel to the University of Central Arkansas and Hendrix College to experience hands-on STEAM activities, an electromechanical planetarium, fitness activities, drama, and theater arts.

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

The Woodrow Cummins Elementary School administration and faculty, along with the Conway School District, believe that professional development is not effective unless it causes teachers to improve their instruction and causes administrators to become better school leaders. Professional development is aligned with Arkansas State Standards and personalized for staff members to address such issues as bullying, intervention methods, and student behavior. The primary goal of all professional development is to better prepare our staff with the knowledge and techniques to implement successful classroom instruction and ultimately student outcomes.

Conway School District provides the majority of staff professional development, which allows for valuable horizontal and vertical curriculum preparation including both core content teachers and non-core specialty area teachers from across the district. The bulk of District professional development is teacher driven to meet grade-level needs and content driven to meet the needs of specialty areas with many presenters being core/non-core teachers, interventionists, and facilitators representing each of the nine elementary schools. Opportunities for collaborative learning from peers equips the staff of Woodrow Cummins with the skill-set required to ensure academic achievement for all students.

It may be, however, that some of the most essential professional development occurs on the campus of Woodrow Cummins Elementary. Grade level collaborations provide teachers with time each week dedicated to analyzing student work and assessments, data analysis to inform instruction, creating common formative assessments, and developing engaging learning experiences to meet curricular goals. Teachers use on-going data analysis to prescribe effective instructional strategies that are individualized to each student's academic, social, or behavioral needs.

A Professional Growth Plan (PGP) is utilized by every licensed staff member to guide their personal learning goals for the year. Learning goals are determined after teachers self-assess and analyze their instructional data. This professional reflection allows teachers to target areas for growth. Teachers participate in professional development provided by Conway School District as well as our local Education Service Cooperative, Arch Ford, to address their professional development needs based on personalized PGP goals and action plans.

Administrators support all staff members in selecting purposeful instructional strategies and classroom management skills that benefit teaching and learning. Administrators use the state implemented evaluation and observation system, Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS). TESS provides a

statewide system for observation and support for all K-12 classroom and specialty teachers. Administrators at Woodrow Cummins provide feedback and next steps for teachers through ongoing formal and informal observations throughout the year.

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

Woodrow Cummins Elementary is led not only by the principal and assistant principal, leadership is also shared with teacher leaders who provide valuable insight into school improvement. The school leadership team leads instructional efforts to ensure every student matters and every moment counts. To accomplish this vision, teachers assume an active role in continually gathering and assessing student data. Administrators monitor curriculum and instruction through frequent classroom visits because learning is the school's most important mission.

In all things we do, our students are our first priority. Students participate in a social-emotional learning survey to measure their perceptions of teaching and learning in order to better support each student. Teachers use the data to not only improve students' academic achievement but also to help students feel known and supported. Our school is a place where students feel safe and loved and have their basic needs met because only then can real learning take place.

In all things we do, our staff is committed to excellence. Teachers participate in a school climate survey to determine their perceptions of professional learning opportunities, their confidence in the classroom, their relationships with colleagues, students' families, and the school leadership, and their feelings about the school's climate. Data from the survey led to district-wide focus walks by both school and district leadership teams to support and nurture teacher development by providing feedback on curriculum and instruction.

In all things we do, we maximize opportunities to grow professionally. The leadership team talks to teachers, provides meaningful staff development, and supports lifelong learning about curriculum and instruction by being participatory learners with the staff. The collaborative learning community builds trust. Our school is in a constant state of analysis, reflection, and improvement of curriculum and instruction. School leaders also manage the structures and processes of the school around instruction. Instructional time is protected by limiting classroom distractions. Grade level teachers have daily common planning periods to collaborate and openly discuss instruction. The school leadership team expects teachers and students to hold themselves accountable for the success of the school.

In all things we do, we create an environment where everyone matters. To ensure both academic and non-academic needs of our students are being met, the building principal, assistant principal, part-time instructional facilitator, school psychology specialist, special education teacher, and classroom teachers participate in monthly Response to Intervention meetings. Information is gathered to diagnose academic and social-emotional learning and to prescribe interventions that will best support students in need. The leadership team ensures teachers have access to necessary tools and resources to make certain that students' needs are being addressed.

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

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Woodrow Cummins Elementary School is dedicated to the belief that every student matters and every moment counts. Building positive relationships with all students, families, and stakeholders is a vital component of our school success. It is the validity of these relationships that inspires and motivates each member of the Woodrow Cummins Family to give their best every day. “Morning Musical Drop-Off” sets the tone for the day by providing encouragement for emotional and behavior support, and is followed up by teachers taking time after school to meet with parents about strategies for academic success.

The culture of caring at Woodrow Cummins can be seen by the family-like atmosphere in which every member is valued, challenged, and treated with kindness. These relationships are not just evident in the school building. They can also be seen at many different places within the community. Teachers and administrators attend the extra-curricular activities of many of the students and it is a common sight to witness parents and students visiting with the staff at the grocery store. Building these types of relationships is a benefit to everyone involved. This allows all members to get a glimpse of the different aspects of their lives outside of school and make strong bonds to carry us through any situation. With our future-focused mindset, we believe that building these relationships will allow the Woodrow Cummins family to reflect back on this time of their lives as a positive learning and growing milestone with many lifelong relationships created along the way.

Students are recognized throughout the year for their behavior, academic success, and extra-curricular achievements. Students at Woodrow Cummins are beginning to develop decision-making, communication, and life skills, as well as character values. All students are held accountable for their behavior. When students are “caught” displaying exceptionally good behavior they are rewarded with a “behavior buck”. The “behavior buck” system not only supports positive student behavior but also allows for a productive learning environment. Grade level classes are also recognized for their positive behavior and display of character as they are awarded with titles such as the “Cleanest Classroom” or the “Best Cafeteria Behavior.”

Relationships are what transform the purposeful decision making made by the Woodrow Cummins Family and result in positive, welcoming, and focused classrooms. The connections made between all students, family, and staff result in a positive school climate where students learn and thrive.