

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 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

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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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
PreK	0	0	0
K	9	15	24
1	3	13	16
2	9	9	18
3	14	10	24
4	12	8	20
5	9	10	19
6	0	0	0
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	56	65	121

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 17 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 77 % 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: 8%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	116
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 35 %
Total number students who qualify: 42

8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %
7 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>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</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: 17
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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	6
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	1
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
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 20:1

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	96%	96%	96%
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.

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. 2012

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

Empower all students to fully develop their potential to succeed in an ever-changing world.

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

Wall Elementary School is located in the community of Wall, South Dakota. Wall Elementary School serves 121 students in grades K-5. Of the 121 students 77% are White, 17% are Native American, 2% are Black/African American, 2% are considered two or more races, 1% is Hispanic/Latino, and 1% is Asian. The poverty rate is currently 34.7%. Wall is located in western South Dakota and is approximately 50 miles east of Rapid City, the nearest "large city" (population greater than 60,000). Wall's approximate population is 820 people. Ranching and tourism provide most of the employment in the community. By most standards, Wall is considered a rural community.

The Mission of Wall School District 51-5 is to empower all students to fully develop their potential to succeed in an ever-changing world. Beginning with the No Child Left Behind Act, and now with the Every Student Succeeds Act, Wall Elementary staff seeks to serve their students so all students achieve at Advanced or Proficient levels on challenging state academic standards each spring. Wall Elementary believes that 100% of the children meeting the academic standards means 100%, and does everything possible to help all students meet and/or exceed that target.

Wall Elementary School's success comes from many factors. First, the students in Wall are blessed to have parents/guardians and a community who support their school and their children. Additionally, the district employs teachers, paraprofessionals, office staff, kitchen staff, custodial staff, administration and school board who care for all students and work tirelessly to meet the needs of all. Excellent guidance and staff development come from the South Dakota Department of Education, Title I and Special Education staff in Pierre, Rapid City TIE (Technology and Innovation in Education), as well as through "in-house" staff development involving peer coaching and co-teaching activities.

Wall Elementary puts an intense focus on reading and math instruction. Since 2008, Wall's strong emphasis on reading instruction centers on scientifically based reading research. During reading instruction, the lessons focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. This approach has worked for us as each year there are a large number of students who achieve at the proficient and advanced levels on the Smarter Balanced Assessments.

To meet the needs of all students, several things can happen within the school day. First and most importantly, staff members frequently cover each other's duties so they can assist students or schedule and/or meet with parents/guardians. Staff regularly exchanges ideas as they pass in the hall or head to their vehicles each afternoon. Staff keeps an effective line of communication open with the school's principal and superintendent. Additionally, Wall Elementary staff conducts regular team (or collaborative) meetings to review student achievement in reading and math. During these meetings, all staff (Title I, SPED, Paraprofessionals, Principal) assigned to work with students in that grade are involved with this process. When applicable, the team develops an intervention plan that focuses on individual student needs. The creative approach to addressing students' needs has been a learning process for everyone, but has resulted in Wall Elementary School being consistently recognized as a Distinguished School by the South Dakota Department of Education and the Elementary School's selection as a 2011 & 2017 National Title I Distinguished School and 2012 National Blue Ribbon School.

As a school originally part of the Dakota Character initiative, Wall Elementary taught and reinforced character traits throughout the school day. Since the completion of the initiative Wall Elementary continues to review character traits ranging from Kindness and Compassion to Trustworthiness, Honesty, and Dependability. In addition to focusing on the above mentioned character traits, the past three years have included a focus on sportsmanship. Sportsmanship activities include reviewing and practicing appropriate behaviors as a winning team as well as part of a losing team. A popular sportsmanship activity involves each class taking turns greeting starting lineups for the Wall Boys or Girls Basketball teams and their opponents prior to the start of varsity contests. The number of behavior incidents continues to decline as staff and students emphasize building a school culture of cooperation and respect.

Technology at Wall Elementary is another strong point. Every elementary classroom has an interactive

white board, every teacher has his/her own laptop computer, and the student to computer ratio (in the Elementary School) is about 1.25 students per computer. Because of the large amount of technology in the district, the staff has taken part in numerous training activities concentrating on using technology to analyze data and integrating technology in the classroom. These experiences have allowed the staff to address literacy in not only reading and mathematics, but also all content areas.

After several years of updating and refining our reading and math instruction, receiving recognition as a National Title I Distinguished School and National Blue Ribbon School validated our efforts. Knowing that these honors are difficult to achieve, Wall Elementary turned its sights on achieving 100% proficient and/or advanced on end of year assessments. It began focusing its efforts on seeking additional ways to differentiate instruction. Wall Elementary has seen individual students moving closer to and into the next highest proficiency level.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

To ensure that Wall Elementary School students meet the state standards the teachers indicate, on their lesson plans, which of the state content standards they are addressing with each lesson. By identifying the content standards in each lesson, it ensures that the teachers are helping students meet the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act. It also allows the teachers to track their instruction for their curriculum maps, and it prepares the students for current and future assessments.

The Language arts curriculum addresses the "Big Five" of reading instruction, spelling, writing, and speaking. The mathematics curriculum centers on the state content standards. Science curriculum is both integrated to reading instruction and entails hands-on activities. Social studies content is also integrated into reading instruction.

Wall Elementary School designates 115 minutes per day for reading and language arts instruction. In reading, the staff addresses the "Big Five" of reading instruction. The "Big Five" of reading instruction includes, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Comprehension, and Vocabulary. Each of these areas of focus is included within the state content standards. As students get older, they focus less on phonemic awareness and/or phonics. However, if during a team meeting the teachers believe a student needs phonemic awareness and/or phonics interventions, those areas are addressed. Writing, spelling, and speaking are included in the "Big Five" of reading instruction and integrated throughout the curriculum.

Mathematics instruction centers on five strands that include number sense, measurement, algebra, statistics, and geometry. To ensure mastery, the staff employs different methods of instruction. The methods include but are not limited to, cognitively guided instruction, hands-on activities, and several problem-solving activities.

Science standards are covered through different ways. Hands-on activities that include classroom science fair activities and other experiments help reinforce science concepts. Science is integrated into many reading lessons. Using aspects of stories such as interests of main characters and/or story settings, teachers plan science lessons that correspond to reading activities. Grades K-5 are exposed to (with increased expectations) information in physical science, life science, and earth & space science. Kindergarten is introduced to forces, plant and animal needs, and relationships between living organisms and where they live. As students progress into first grade and beyond they are exposed to additional information that expands knowledge; such as how plants use their physical structure to survive, depend on animals to pollinate or spread seeds, and how plants use their structure and environment to repair themselves and reproduce.

These activities are not restricted to classroom activities. School staff use everyday activities to draw attention to scientific phenomena throughout the school day. Using spinning and/or swinging equipment on the playground, playground monitors help students compare the speed at which things swing and/or spin to the size of, or number of students on the equipment. Teaching staff used school landscaping to help students understand why snow collects in specific places. Plant boxes on the playground help classrooms understand a plant's life-cycle and reinforce agriculture's role in sustaining our food supply. In physical education students learn the impact ball rotation has on its flight or that vigorous activity have an impact on their heart rate.

Social studies standards are also included as part of reading instruction. Like the science standards, the social studies standards are taught through content in the texts, phonics readers, leveled readers, and/or learning centers. Through additional periodicals purchased for the classrooms and library, teachers address several areas of social studies.

The South Dakota Social Studies Content Standards call for students to learn history, civics/government, geography, and economics. Teachers address each of these content standards throughout the entire year.

The reading materials call for some disciplines (history, civics/government, geography, and economics) to be addressed more often at one grade level versus another. For instance, as students move from grade 3 to grade 5, biographies and autobiographies are more commonly read during English/Language Arts classes. These texts provide more opportunity for teachers in grades 3 through 5 to discuss historical events than students in grades K through 2. Multicultural versions of folktales read in grades K-2 lend well to discussion of geography, governments (kings & queens versus elected officials), cultural differences from one country to another, the United States, and finally South Dakota.

This practice differs with grade 4. South Dakota Social Studies Content Standards address South Dakota history, civics/government, geography, and economics. When addressing the four disciplines in the fourth grade social studies standards, students compare and contrast South Dakota to happenings in biographies, autobiographies, historical fiction books, and other reading materials and periodicals.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Each elementary classroom has what we refer to as "Specials", where they leave the classroom for music instruction, physical education, computers, and art. Finally, due to our incredible access to technology, teachers regularly integrate technology into several areas of the curriculum.

The elementary classrooms are scheduled to attend art class one day per week. Depending on the grade level, students spend between thirty-five and forty-five minutes participating in activities that range from analyzing and evaluating artistic works and techniques to interpreting meaning from the presentation of artistic work.

Wall Elementary students attend music classes two times per week for thirty minutes each. Music instruction includes preparing for Winter and Spring Concerts and standards covered come from the South Dakota Fine Arts Content Standards.

Students are scheduled for two thirty minute physical education (PE) classes per week. During their PE classes, students maintain moderate to vigorous physical activity through games that address teamwork, good sportsmanship, and individual improvement. Many games and activities (such as archery, table tennis, golf, and/or running) are ones that encourage physical activity outside of the regular school day/year.

Each classroom receives instruction on technology. Activities range from keyboarding to integrating technology into science activities and presentations. Students in grades K-2 learn the parts of the computer and additional software basics while reinforcing what students learn in the classroom. Because students in grades 3-5 each have a laptop in their classrooms, they are able to learn keyboarding while completing writing assignments/activities, conduct research, and prepare for presentations.

Finally, each classroom receives regularly scheduled counseling time. During those times, students learn and reinforce positive character traits, while fostering a culture of kindness and respect. In addition to defining and demonstrating respect, kindness/compassion, perseverance, trustworthiness, honesty, integrity, empathy, and responsibility; sportsmanship and teamwork have become additional character traits we regularly address as well.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Wall Elementary believes that all students can learn. The elementary staff also believes that all students can be proficient in Reading/Language Arts and Math, as dictated in the Every Student Succeeds Act. To achieve this vision, the elementary staff implements various methods of instruction using Response to Intervention strategies. Throughout the school day, the elementary staff employs the nine teaching strategies (identified by Robert Marzano) and teaching styles (identified by Eggen and Kauchak) appropriate for the objective that meets the needs of the students.

Today's students come to school with a wide range of experiences, needs, and learning styles. The elementary staff takes part in staff development that addresses different teaching styles and teaching

strategies. During the staff development activities, staff consults with the presenter while they prepare lessons/activities that entail using newly learned strategies. Additionally, staff carries out peer coaching and co-teaching strategies, providing them with additional methods they can employ in future lessons and/or giving direction to new staff.

Instruction in English/Language Arts and Mathematics begins with direct and explicit instruction. The general education teachers follow teaching templates that ensure all activities correspond with each other and meet state standards. Instruction begins with large group general instruction. Students who struggle to master desired skills receive small group (three students or less), strategic direct instruction to address their individual needs. Intensive instruction is reserved for students who are not able to master the skills learned and reinforced during strategic instruction. Intensive instruction involves intense direct instruction in a one-on-one setting.

By analyzing assessments data from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), the Consortium of Reading Excellence (CORE), and STAR Reading and STAR Math, and other curricular assessments teachers are able to pinpoint the students who are in need of strategic and/or intensive interventions beyond large group core instruction. It is very common to find students engaged in several activities in small group, or one-on-one settings receiving attention. These settings allow the assigned teacher to find and employ numerous interventions (from Anita Archer, Jill Jackson, our Reading and/or Math series), as well as activities they include but are not limited to, recorded texts, highlighted texts, and classroom material at the students' reading levels, and the like.

DIBELS, CORE, STAR Reading, and regular skills tests help the staff determine each students' specific needs and strengths in reading. Interventions designed for enhancing phonemic awareness skills are employed with students who need extra attention in phonemic awareness. Interventions designed for enhancing phonics skills are employed with students who need extra attention in phonics, and so on, with fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary.

STAR Math and regular skills tests help us determine each students' needs and strengths in mathematics. Students needing assistance or extra practice in number sense receive interventions specifically designed for their level of understanding. Additionally, extra learning activities are planned and carried out for algebra, measurement, geometry, and statistics.

The team (grade level) meetings are where elementary staff plans appropriate interventions beyond the initial classroom instruction. The collaboration of classroom teachers, special education teachers and paraprofessionals, and Title I teachers and paraprofessionals determines appropriate interventions and who is best able to put the interventions into action. We believe that this approach ensures that the students with the biggest needs receive instruction from the teacher most qualified to support him/her.

Wall Elementary School's student to staff ratio is ideal for continuing its achievement levels. To supplement initial core instruction, we provide reading and math instruction in groups of four or fewer using non-classroom teachers and paraprofessionals, which allows the most qualified staff to teach students with the greatest needs. Through regular team meetings staff is also able to develop extended activities for students who excel.

Wall Elementary School takes pride in its success. Focusing on staff development and conducting in-house training for new staff helps the school maintain consistent achievement levels. The principal uses cognitive coaching strategies and encourages peer coaching to encourage continuous growth with teachers/paraprofessionals new to the profession and more experienced teachers/paraprofessionals.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Schools can have the most qualified and experienced teachers in the country and still fail to make adequate yearly progress. The culture at Wall Elementary School fosters high expectations for students and staff within their day-to-day activities, and reassurance that learning occurs in success and in failure.

Planning lessons and activities interesting to the students keeps them engaged and motivated. Through collaborative teams, teachers work together differentiating learning activities and assessments that accommodate a wide range of learners. In many cases tiered assessments, problem based learning, free choice activities, and traditional methods of assessments are introduced to students allowing them to choose activities best suited to their strengths and interests.

Wall Elementary School staff focuses more on intrinsic motivation than extrinsic (small toys, free time, candy, etc.). Immediate and specific feedback is a goal Wall Elementary staff addresses, especially in reading and math. It is very common for teachers to review student progress monitoring at its conclusion. During the review, teachers often relate substantial increases to students' increase number of pages read during the past few weeks, or a decreased score to a lack of activity demonstrated in Accelerated Reading. It is also common for teachers to relate higher scores on a math test to an increased number of extra math practice a student completed, or a concentrated effort to work diligently through a test or practice test. Prior to students moving on, staff reviews "lessons learned" with many experiences as a way to encourage students to work toward improvement.

According to Robert Marzano, teachers have the greatest influence on student achievement within the school setting. Throughout the school day/week/year classroom teachers spend more time with their students than any other staff member. The principal values teacher time in many ways. First and most importantly, staff meetings are brief and items most often covered involve curriculum, instruction, assessments, and circumstances that cannot be efficiently addressed electronically. Second, the principal regularly covers morning time on the playground, lunch recess, and lunchroom duty so teachers/paraprofessionals can prepare for the upcoming school day. Next, teachers are considered a valuable resource for each other during collaborative team meetings and/or peer coaching activities. In order to allow opportunities for peer observations, the principal will provide instruction for one class, enabling that teacher to complete a peer observation in another classroom. Finally, because teachers have a vast knowledge of student achievement, they are consulted during staff development planning, providing appropriate direction, which increases staff buy-in.

Beginning on their first day of Kindergarten through their last day of fifth grade, Wall Elementary students are instilled with the expectation of fervent effort and hard work. Wall Elementary staff understands learning occurs in "failure." Students, teachers, and other school staff are recognized for lessons learned from mistakes. As a group, Wall Elementary staff is not perfect. The lessons learned in that imperfection are what separates Wall Elementary from other schools.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Family and community involvement is vital to a school's success. Wall Elementary school uses various methods to include the families and community members. First, the families and community members are part of Wall Elementary School's Title I Parent Committee and district Consolidated Application Committee. Families receive regular communication from teachers. Families, community, and students complete surveys, and community members are included in character activities and developing a school culture that fosters positive relationships.

Federal regulations require that schools include parents and community stakeholders with planning and implementing programs paid for with federal funds. The parents/guardians and community are involved with this process through regular Title I Parent Committee and the Consolidated Application committee

meetings. The Title I Parent Committee meets numerous times per year. At those meetings we discuss the Title I Program, how Title I funds are used to meet the needs of students, review the school/parent compact, review the school's parent involvement policy, and several activities that help us know how we can better communicate with families and community. The Consolidated Application Committee is similar to the Title I Parent Committee, but it provides insight into the Title programs (Title II Part A, Title II Part D, Title IV, etc.). Even though some of these federal programs are no longer funded, the district uses its allocation and general fund monies to continue activities that fell under those programs.

Communication with families occurs through personal contact, email messages, telephone conversations, and "BRAG" Books. The most common method of communication occurs through the BRAG Books. "BRAG" books are used for daily communication. In the BRAG books, teachers send home communication that may include activities students can complete to improve reading and/or math skills. These books are also used to send home student work and initiate communication between the classroom teacher and parents/guardians.

Families and the greater Wall community are excellent resources for Wall Elementary. Surveys sent to Wall Elementary families and Wall community allows the school to receive feedback that will allow the school to evaluate the state of the school, identify school culture, and determine how to move forward. Survey results provide Wall Elementary School with a parent's/guardian's perspective of school climate. The results provide Wall Elementary School with a parent's/guardian's perspective of teaching methods and curriculum. Information from the surveys are then used to address concerns and plan for improvement.

Family and community activities take place at school during select times of the school year. Teachers plan special weeks throughout the year inviting parents/guardians, grandparents, local seniors, business leaders to plays, readings, and observe classroom instruction. The community witnesses Wall Elementary School students greet the starting line-ups of home and visiting basketball teams during introductions. For varsity football, basketball, and volleyball games, students also decorate popcorn bags with pictures illustrating a positive character trait and/or sportsmanship reminders. The elementary classes also have "mini" productions of classroom activities played on the school's designated cable channel for community members to view.

3. Professional Development:

Wall Elementary School staff works with the High School staff, Middle School staff, district administration, school board, and community during the professional development process. The major driving force that determines our professional development activities comes from the data retreats, team meetings, and other classroom assessments.

During data retreats, the district thoroughly examines Smarter Balanced Assessment results, DIBELS, CORE, STAR Reading, STAR Math, attendance results, discipline issues, and community survey results. The district contracts with our area Educational Service Agency to review and analyze the results of each assessment. The district develops goals that address requirements set by the South Dakota Department of Education and the Every Student Succeeds Act.

The school improvement plan involves several items. Teachers are required to include content standards in their lesson plans. When student achievement levels are low in a curricular area, lesson plans are consulted to determine if extra emphasis is needed in that area, if standards were missed, or if professional development is needed to improve our method of instruction in that area. Additionally, attendance reports, discipline reports, and survey results from students, parents, and staff helps clarify how the learning atmosphere can be improved.

Team meetings help us uncover professional development needs throughout the school year. Through the

analysis of day-to-day assessments (DIBELS, theme and chapter tests, and/or regular classroom assessments), team members frequently note their thoughts about how professional development can make us better educators.

The school's approach to reading is the best example of how professional development has improved student achievement. As part of the South Dakota Reading First Initiative, the elementary staff received professional development from several sources. During these activities staff was in-serviced in scientifically based reading research, the "Big Five" in reading, and conducting effective team meetings. The results of this training have been, based on the above listed assessments, an increase in reading and math achievement. Because the purpose of team meetings is to identify and plan for individual student needs, the team meetings is a major factor for the increase of student achievement.

4. School Leadership:

The Wall School District leadership team is different than most school districts. Due to budget restraints, the leadership team consists of the superintendent, principal, and business manager. The superintendent's duties include: school superintendent, principal for grades 9-12, and 504 director. The principal's duties include: K-8 principal, Big White (the district's second elementary school) principal, and federal programs director. The business manager provides additional administrative duties in the absence of either the superintendent and/or principal. Each principal is responsible for the development and implementation of curriculum and instruction in his/her building.

The superintendent and principal have divided the staff for evaluation purposes. Since the elementary school, middle school, and high school share personnel the elementary principal evaluates those teachers who work with any/all K-8 students, while the superintendent evaluates those individuals who only work with high school students and some classified staff. The business manager supervises the day-to-day activities in the district office as well as evaluating some classified staff.

Strong communication within the leadership team is vital to the success of the school and district. The Wall School District leadership team frequently meets with its staff and each other to collaborate on the direction of the district. The open and frequent communication has resulted in a strong collaborative culture in the school.

The leadership team supports the teaching staff in many ways. To provide time for teachers to focus on instruction, it is very common to see the principal on the playground for recess supervision. The elementary principal monitors the lunchroom, providing teachers extra time for planning and/or carrying out learning activities. Common plan time is arranged in the daily schedule to allow for peer coaching and collaboration. Finally, to promote fidelity to staff development opportunities, the elementary principal actively participates in staff development alongside district teachers and paraprofessionals.

Wall Elementary School carries out the development and implementation of curriculum and instruction through voluntary independent learning, during scheduled staff meetings, and staff development days. The teachers are encouraged to research teaching and learning strategies that will address their classroom needs. This autonomy provides incentives for teachers to focus on individual student needs rather than pursuing a, "one-size fits all" approach practiced in many larger districts.

Although Wall Elementary School does not officially practice collaboration through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), activities carried out reflect much of what PLCs entail. These PLCs address individual student learning, teach each other new and/or different methods of instruction, and focus on student results. It is common for individual teachers to take the lead and research activities such as peer coaching and/or close reading and conduct "mini-lessons" for the group at staff meetings. Teaching staff in-service paraprofessionals and volunteers so students can be better served.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Several strategies contribute to Wall Elementary School's success. Regularly scheduled classroom counseling, consistent communication with parents/guardians, a staff that focuses on and encourages good character and fortitude, and supportive families and community all contribute to Wall Elementary School's success. However, our focus on teacher collaboration is the key to higher student achievement.

Collaboration at Wall Elementary School is very similar to Response to Intervention, which involves administering core assessments from the Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), the Consortium of Reading Excellence (CORE) assessment, STAR Reading and STAR Math assessments. During regular team meetings, teachers discuss student progress, determine areas of need, select and plan appropriate interventions, and decide which teacher/paraprofessional will carry out each part of the plan.

The school's collaboration is not limited to Response to Intervention activities. Collaboration includes co-teaching and peer coaching. Lynne Cook and Marilyn Friend, among other researchers, have written on co-teaching and have divided co-teaching into several methods. The most often used methods of co-teaching at Wall Elementary are 1) alternative teacher co-teaching, and 2) parallel teaching. Alternative teacher co-teaching requires one teacher to pre-teach, re-teach, or supplement lessons to a smaller group of students while another teacher or paraprofessional instructs a second larger group. Parallel teacher co-teaching involves more than one teacher addressing an objective and/or skill with his/her smaller group.

Peer coaching is a method of collaboration we recently started. Peer coaching at Wall Elementary School involves two (or more) teachers carrying out a pre-observation conference to discuss the objectives/standards instruction, planned activities, and assessments. The observation takes place during the lessons. Finally, the post-observation involves each member reflecting on what he/she taught and/or observed. We believe this practice allows teachers to receive constructive feedback, while receiving background that will build their collection of strategies in settings that are less intimidating than working through building administration.

Wall Elementary School's methods of collaboration addresses both the needs of its students and it builds teachers' collection of strategies.