



## **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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban
  - 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>	13	4	17
<b>K</b>	7	8	15
<b>1</b>	7	5	12
<b>2</b>	8	7	15
<b>3</b>	5	11	16
<b>4</b>	9	11	20
<b>5</b>	9	7	16
<b>6</b>	10	5	15
<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>	68	58	126

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 0 % Black or African American
  - 80 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 18 % 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: 3%

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	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	4
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	125
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 8 %  
10 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 62 %  
Total number students who qualify: 78

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %  
17 Total number of students served

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

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</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>10</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>5</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:

	<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.	8
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
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 15:1

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%	97%	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. 2004

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

Every child belongs at Walcott and every child shall have the opportunity to demonstrate his or her learning, skills, and talents.

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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Walcott School was under the guidance of Deaf Smith County School Superintendent from 1905 until 1971 when it became Walcott ISD. The original school was a one room wooden building 12 miles east of its present location. The children came to school on horseback until 1935, when a school bus was acquired. With the passage of the Gilmer-Aiken Law in 1949, most of the county school districts consolidated into Walcott School District, comprising 475 sq. miles. In 1971 the school, by vote of the people, changed to Walcott ISD. A new brick building was constructed in 1950, with 4 classrooms. Each of the four teachers would have two grades in the 1st-8th grade school. High school students were bused to a nearby district's high school. In 1968 Walcott again added on to the school with more classrooms and a combination gym, cafeteria and auditorium. With the passage of a bond in May 2017, additional classrooms and tornado/lockdown shelter are under construction.

Deaf Smith County has more cattle than any other county in the U.S. We have more than one million in feed yards, not counting those on ranches. Most of the farming involves cattle feed. Almost all of our parents are employed in agriculture. In the last 30 years, Walcott's demographics have changed from 90% white, 10% Hispanic to 80% Hispanic, 20% white and other. Language instruction is more of a challenge for many Hispanic children. Walcott Elementary has had great success with all of our English as a Second Language ESL certified teachers and our bilingual aides available to instruct students.

Walcott has less than a dozen in district students by the latest census, but the school's reputation for high academic performance encourages families to enroll their children in our school. Walcott makes this possible by maintaining a bus system that picks up all students at their homes every morning and brings them home every afternoon. This arrangement reflects the culture of teamwork and commitment throughout the Walcott Elementary community. Some students travel as little as ten miles to school, while others travel as far as forty-five miles. One of the local weather reporters refers to Walcott as the "little school on the prairie."

Walcott Elementary serves 126 elementary students in grades pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. This allows for a low student-teacher ratio, but it also allows for a more personal environment with students and the community. Eleven of Walcott's twenty one employees drive a bus each day and this gives each teacher a clear awareness of what is going on with students when they get on the bus each morning. Drivers communicate with the staff and let teachers know when students seem to be having a bad day.

The educational philosophy of our school is based on each unique student who requires a secure and stimulating atmosphere in which to grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Each educator's desire is to guide our students, enable their natural curiosity to direct and inspire their learning, and promote respect in all aspects of daily life. Walcott Elementary gives its students, day-in and day-out, structure and stability. The success of students is the main priority as well as dedication to excellence. With the dangers that have become an unfortunate part of school reality, Walcott has adopted a policy in which some teachers are trained to carry a weapon. Walcott is located about thirty miles from Hereford and parents agree that is a good choice for the safety of our students.

Walcott Elementary has a tradition of academic excellence with our district performing at the Exemplary level for many years. Walcott was a Blue Ribbon School in 2004. This honor was publicized extensively on radio and TV. Walcott was honored to have several news stations visit the school and share stories about the school's success.

The mission statement for Walcott is as follows: Every child belongs at Walcott and every child shall have the opportunity to demonstrate his or her learning, skills, and talents. Walcott provides a varied and appropriate curriculum aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). We encourage parent involvement in the educational process. Walcott assumes accountability for students, parents and all school personnel. Working together our students become lifelong learners, enhancing the quality of their lives.

The faculty at Walcott Elementary is the contributing factor to the success of our students. Our ten teachers are committed to student achievement and their own advancements in education. All our teachers are English as a Second Language (ESL) and Gifted and Talented (GT) certified. Teachers in the school district attend many professional development opportunities throughout the school year. They strive to become stronger educators and desire to take their curriculum to the next level by enhancing lessons and making them more engaging. Walcott teachers make sure that each student has the opportunity to succeed. Walcott teachers go above and beyond to help their students reach their academic potential. By analyzing STAAR scores and early predictors' scores such as the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI), our teachers have information to develop individualized plans for instruction in the classroom. If our teachers see a student showing regression or non-mastery, then they work to provide every opportunity for that student to get back on track and to once again be successful. We have two teachers who work with Special Education students during part of their day and provide Response to Intervention (RtI) the rest of their day. It is Walcott's hope that this extra time and assistance will help students improve weaknesses and have students better prepared for the coming school year. We at Walcott believe that "No Child Should Be Left Behind" and we work diligently to promote this philosophy.

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

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

Walcott Elementary strives to promote a positive atmosphere for students to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to become a responsible, educated citizen of society. As a low socio-economic community, Walcott Elementary sees every child as an individual of great potential. Curriculum at Walcott Elementary is very diverse. Each teacher uses their chosen curriculum based on their method of measuring student achievement and individual student learning style. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are the foundation curriculum for all educational instruction. It includes alignment of supporting and readiness standards throughout each grade level. It seamlessly ties our classrooms together leaving no instructional gap and it supports student progress.

In English Language Arts and Reading, the curriculum is personalized for the students so they can master the grade-level TEKS. Criteria such as reading level, interest, and readiness-for content all impact our curriculum. Walcott Elementary is dedicated to producing successful Pre- Kindergarten through sixth grade students. We strongly believe that reading is the core to a successful student. Starting in Pre-K, the teacher begins laying a solid foundation for phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension. Instruction is divided into three main sections: reading/vocabulary, writing, and spelling. Walcott teachers focus on the needs of each individual student when they determine reading instruction. Teachers base their instruction on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). At an early age, we get students excited about reading through daily read-aloud time and partner reading with upper elementary students. The primary teachers place a strong emphasis on phonics and balanced literacy through an integrated curriculum. We utilize our basal series along with phonics and leveled readers to facilitate instruction with our younger students. In our upper grade levels the basal series is also used. Whole group novel studies enrich student vocabulary and comprehension. Student interest is generated and maintained through purposeful literature. The reading program serves as a bridge between home and school in increasing student readability and comprehension. Effort and growth are celebrated and rewarded through classroom prizes or privileges, notes home and recognition at an awards assembly. Walcott teachers evaluate each student's success based on scores from the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test, the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI), Star Test and many other resources available at our school district.

In the area of mathematics, all grades are using a TEKS based Math curriculum which we have found to be extremely successful. This series promotes critical thinking and problem solving skills using the applied learning concepts. Math blocks range from 60-90 minutes and include whole group instruction, small group, and opportunities to address student's individual needs. Classroom teachers present lessons in multiple formats and provide students many opportunities to model mathematics through hands-on manipulatives and visual representations. Students utilize communication skills and work in cooperative groups frequently. Teachers also emphasize mastery of math facts. Student learning is further enhanced by technology via programs that differentiates instruction and targets learning gaps. Accelerated Math and other online programs are used which include videos, examples, practice problems and more. Students are able to receive math intervention from the RTI instructors as well.

Science instruction is delivered in a variety of ways emphasizing the relevance of concepts and skills to the world beyond the classroom. The science classrooms utilize TEKS based, state adopted materials. At Walcott Elementary, a very hands-on approach is used to teach science. The classrooms are equipped with both consumable and non-consumable materials to aid in the learning process. Students begin in kindergarten and first grade applying the scientific method and making observations in teacher-led experiments. To further enhance learning, various field trips are planned throughout the year including The Discovery Center, Window on a Wider World Collaborative and Ag Day. Teachers also have access to virtual experiments through their textbook resources which give students a wide range of instructional opportunities they may otherwise not have the chance to experience. As with all content areas, student progress in science is monitored with formal and informal assessments and those results are used to drive targeted instruction. Instruction is differentiated to meet each student's needs.

The social studies curriculum at Walcott Elementary is also aligned with the state learning standards and the teachers utilize the curriculum components provided to them, such as the scope and sequence and the basal text for the course. One effective component of the classroom textbook is the use of a weekly publication that aligns with the curriculum standards and grade level TEKS. The social studies passages correlate with informational text from the reading and have an online tool that houses updated current events used for instruction, and assessment tools. The online component provides students with videos to bring the instructional content to life. Teachers then use the assessment tool to ensure the students are mastering the content area curriculum and provide further small group remediation for those who need it.

Walcott Elementary provides a hands-on pre-kindergarten program to build a strong foundation for students. Walcott follows the state developed pre-kindergarten guidelines. These guidelines allow students to develop strong language, reading, writing, and math skills through individual, guided, and modeled reading, writing, and mathematics. Pre-K students are exposed to curriculum areas such as numbers, letters, and colors which prepare them for the kindergarten curriculum they will experience.

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

Walcott Elementary offers several non-core curriculums that create challenging, useful learning. All curriculum in these areas follow the standards set forth in the state required TEKS. The knowledge and skills acquired in physical education, art, music, accelerated reading program, and UIL competitions are beneficial to all core subjects.

Walcott Elementary students Pre-K4 through 6th attend PE five days a week for 45 minutes each day that ties directly to the physical education TEKS. 4th -6th grades participate in a basketball program where all students are allowed to participate. The students attend basketball tournaments with other schools in the area. High expectations for effort are expected throughout this program. Specific skills dealing with movement and physical activity are developed and assessed. Hard work, good sportsmanship, cooperation, and a positive attitude are incorporated into our program. During May of each year, our students are involved in a track meet with schools in the area. All students participate in physical activities through a fun-filled competitive day. Our School Health and Advisory Council (SHAC) play an important role in strengthening the connection between exercise, health, and learning. They can help parents and community stakeholders reinforce the knowledge and skills children need to stay healthy for a lifetime.

Walcott Elementary art curriculum teaches basic art techniques and vocabulary outlined in the TEKS. It is conducted at least once a week for a 30 minute period by classroom teachers. Each year, techniques in painting, color mixing, watercolors, drawing, and many other hands on projects are explored. Students are given TEKS-based opportunities for creative thinking and problem solving processes. Students are encouraged to use their creative thinking and imaginations when creating various projects. Walcott Elementary students also participate in the Window on a Wider World (W.O.W.W.) Program. W.O.W.W. is dedicated to enriching the education of students through arts, science and cultural experience. Through the W.O.W.W. program Walcott has had many opportunities for a historian from an art museum to visit the school and teach an art lesson on a particular culture.

Walcott Elementary has a unique way of incorporating our music program into the school year. Walcott students participate in a Christmas musical with daily practices that last for at least 8 weeks. This performance gives students an opportunity to be a part of a musical that showcases their talent for their families and the community. The students listen, sing, and move to the music as well as have major speaking parts. Each classroom teacher choreographs a dance routine with their students. Many students have solos or duets and spend extra time practicing with the music teacher and other support staff. They learn about many aspects of music such as tempo, pitch, and rhythm. Parents along with community members make a point to attend the Walcott Christmas Program each year because it is not just a play it is a major production. Students not only learn the music, but also learn the responsibility of auditioning for parts, memorizing their lines, and stage management skills. Students also have the opportunity to participate in University Interscholastic League (UIL) Music Memory. This contest offers an opportunity to develop music appreciation by studying composers and their music with emphasis on time period, style, and theme. The students take an individual listening test to identify the music and the composer.

Walcott Elementary technology skills are reinforced in every classroom on a daily basis. Each classroom has 4-6 computers in the classroom as well as access to two mobile computer carts which teachers can take into the classroom and use for lab time. Walcott students access grade level TEKS through software programs. Students follow individual learning paths to achieve mastery or accelerate learning beyond the current grade level TEKS in all core subjects. Computer and technology skills are taught at an early age. Different ages of students utilize their keyboarding time in different ways. Younger students work on keyboard recognition of letters in the alphabet and manipulating the controls on the computer. As students get older, they spend time learning keyboarding and typing assignments from subjects. They learn to utilize tools and resources on the computer in a productive, appropriate, and efficient manner.

Walcott Elementary believes innovation begins in the classroom. In each classroom, our students have access to technology for instruction, assessment, support, and enrichment. Providing our students the skills and knowledge to compete in the competitive world of technology is critical to their current education and future success in society.

Starting in kindergarten, each teacher uses a computerized reading program to promote and advance student literacy. This program is used daily throughout the entire school year. Goals are set for each individual student and rewards are given for meeting these goals. For example, students use their points at the end of the school year like money in the book fair. A student who has earned 100 points has \$10 to spend on books at the fair. The testing data has proven that this reading program has improved our student reading levels.

University Interscholastic League (UIL) academic competition is offered to all grade appropriate students. They participate in many events and have been very successful over the years. Walcott has placed in the top three schools in our region for many years. Students and staff take pride in this success and prepare for the events throughout the day. All our staff is involved and plays a role in the success of our students.

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

Walcott Elementary is truly vested in the needs and interests of its students. Learning is enhanced for all students because they are engaged in what they are studying. To support high levels of student achievement, Walcott teachers use an array of instructional methods, interventions, and assessments that reflect the needs of individual students, as well as the needs of the group. Instruction is designed to capture and sustain student interest by making connections to relevant experiences, providing opportunities for student choice and creativity, and seamlessly integrating technology. Students in Pre-K through 6th grades are in self-contained classrooms. Each teacher is allowed a great deal of flexibility in determining the method in which they will use TEKS based materials in their individual classrooms. Walcott students are held to a high standard of academic achievement. Much of our instructional decision making processes are based on classroom grades, previous years testing data, and benchmark testing using released STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) test questions. We use this data to refocus our classroom instruction and begin the intervention process for struggling students.

Walcott Elementary is committed to the academic success of every child and believes all children can learn. Our dedicated staff is conscious of all students' learning abilities and how each student can benefit from differentiated instruction. The priority is to determine where each child is academically, and what interventions or enrichment activities are needed. Students are screened using STAR Reading, STAR Early Literacy, and STAR Math at least five times per year. Kindergarten through 2nd uses the TPRI for testing. In addition to these screenings, teacher created assessments are also used to determine each student's strengths and weaknesses. Data gathered from the STAR, TPRI and teacher created assessments guide teachers in forming flexible skill groups, planning instruction, determining interventions, and prioritizing student needs. All students receive grade level classroom instruction which is vertically aligned in all core areas and are provided individualized instruction. Ongoing assessments are essential to determine the student's progress and success.

STAR Reading and Math assessments are given a minimum of five times yearly (baseline assessment in September, then at the end of each six weeks thereafter). STAR assessments are customized, adaptive

assessments taken electronically. Reports from these assessments are essential in analyzing student levels, growth, strengths, and areas of concern. These reports are also shared with parents on a regular basis. Teachers also utilize the Accelerated Reader Program to challenge students to meet reading goals and to check on the understanding of the texts being read and vocabulary. Reports from Accelerated Reader help teachers and parents identify the type of texts that the students are reading, as well as the accuracy percentage of their comprehension.

Walcott Elementary Response to Intervention (RTI) program helps to minimize the achievement gap. Using highly-qualified educators, the program is designed to aid in the early identification of students struggling with a specific skill or objective. This tiered intervention is incorporated into the student's day for thirty minutes at least four times a week. The RTI teachers work directly with the classroom teacher to ensure that all students are given every opportunity to succeed. This program begins in kindergarten.

Walcott Elementary dyslexia classes serve as part of RTI. These identified students meet with a dyslexia specialist for thirty to forty-five minutes four times a week to receive phonemic support and consistent, repetitive fluency instruction. Our special education and 504 students also have individualized plans including their modifications and/or accommodations. These may include oral administration on testing, extra time or reduced assignments, preferential seating within the classroom, or the use of a calculator.

Walcott Elementary English as Second Language (ESL) students receive additional instruction as needed from the classroom teacher who is ESL certified.

Walcott recognizes that assessments and interventions occur for students of all academic levels, Walcott utilizes nationally normed qualitative assessment and observation instruments to identify gifted students. Working individually and in small group settings, gifted students plan, design, and participate in differentiated real-world project activities. Formal and informal assessments/observations which address the intellectual, social and emotional needs of each child are included in on-going teacher/parent/student communication.

Walcott Elementary prides itself in retaining highly-motivated, highly-qualified teachers. Walcott has teachers that have been at the school twenty-five plus years. Retaining these highly-qualified and experienced teachers allows for continual education from year to year with fewer instructional gaps. The focus in the classroom can be on grade-level TEKS with minimal reteaching of previous grade objectives. "Not getting it" is not an option for the students. All errors are reflected on and complex ideas are retaught in different ways that meet the needs of Walcott students.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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

Walcott Elementary staff members play an important part in providing a positive climate to meet the needs of our students. Since the majority of our staff drive buses to and from school their positive remarks to the children in the morning as they step onto the bus help get our students' day started positively. The administration and teachers greet the students by name as they walk in the door, and the cooks provide breakfast with smiles and friendly comments. These are all examples of the positive upbeat climate of Walcott Elementary. We function as a family, and our role is to make sure we do whatever it takes to promote a positive learning environment for the students and help each of them get the best education possible. Our students feel important and are therefore properly motivated to succeed.

Part of the charm of Walcott Elementary is its small size. Teachers and students greet each other in the hallways and may take some time to visit about things happening in each other's lives. They often know many of their student's parents because they've taught them in the past.

The experience and dedication of the teachers that have stayed here have determined that this culture is positive. Teachers are happy to be here, sharing their love of teaching. The magic happens as students come into a classroom that makes them feel safe and valued. Walcott Elementary has a sign posted at the school that states, "Attention, be aware that the staff at Walcott ISD is armed and may use whatever force necessary to protect our students." Walcott passed a bond and will begin construction, with new classrooms a tornado/lockdown room for better protection and safety for our students.

In addition to providing a positive learning environment for our students, Walcott also strives to ensure that the climate of the school for teachers is as superior as it can be. Teachers are treated with respect and are considered the expert for their grade level. The administration supports the teachers and listens to their needs, providing assistance and resources when necessary.

Walcott Elementary staff gets along well and are much more like friends than coworkers. They have time during staff meetings and in-services to share ideas together. Staff members are comfortable with each other and make suggestions on how the school may be improved for themselves or for students. Providing a safe, fun, and positive environment for all is a key to the school's success.

Walcott teachers are often given a bonus check each year in appreciation for a job well done. All Walcott staff is recognized during "Teacher Appreciation Week" with gifts and goodies from the principal and Superintendent.

Individual recognition for student attendance, achievement and behavior is done each six weeks for Walcott students. Students love being recognized for their success. These motivational incentives help give students a goal to work for each six weeks.

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

Walcott Elementary believes it takes a village to raise a child. At Walcott, family and community engagement is paramount to student success and school improvement. Attendance is essential for exemplary achievement to be obtained. Walcott staff knows when students are motivated to attend school, they are successful. Importantly, Walcott Elementary recognizes positively engaged family and community members are catalysts to school attendance.

Walcott Elementary success is due to the involvement and support from parents, families, and community members regarding their child's education. We work hard to help our families feel welcome. We have an open door policy for our parents to visit the classroom or teacher at any time.

We realize parents play a critical role in their child's academic achievement. Therefore, developing

collaborations between home and school is one of the keys to our school's success. Parents know we care about their children, and trust us to have their best interests at heart. This atmosphere ensures our families feel comfortable approaching the staff with any questions or concerns they may have. Students in Pre-K through 6th use a daily planner to help facilitate communication of school work and important notes.

Communicating and involving our families is vital to our success. The school website houses much information that is accessible to all. Walcott Elementary has a call system it uses to keep families informed of important events as well as school cancellations or delays due to weather or other unforeseen emergencies. Walcott Elementary has a Facebook page where we share information and display pictures showing student successes.

Walcott Elementary staff work hard throughout the year to communicate with parents often through face-to-face conversations, over the phone, text, email or classroom notes. Teachers send home progress reports every three weeks and reports cards at the end of each six-weeks. Teachers send home STAR Reading and Math reports as well as TOPS reports from Accelerated Reader and Accelerated Math. Parents are given a clear picture of how their student is achieving all year long.

We have a variety of parent engagement activities each year. The year starts off with a Back to School "Hamburger Meet and Greet" hosted by Walcott PTO. The fall carnival is organized by the staff with assistance from the PTO. This is a fun time for all with games, food and lots of interesting costumes. Walcott also participates in Red Ribbon Week. Students learn about being drug free by doing fun activities and dressing up throughout the week. The Walcott Elementary Christmas Program is always the highlight of the year. Parents, family members and community look forward to this each year as it is not just a program, it is a major production! PTO provides refreshments following the show. The Walcott Basketball Tournament hosts small rural schools from around the area. The tournament is one of the PTO's biggest fundraisers. The end of the year awards ceremony is special for all students. Walcott Elementary students are recognized for academic success, attendance and UIL awards. Walcott also has graduation for 6th grade. Walcott recognizes outstanding 6th grade students with the Hustling Wildcat Award and the Walcott Citizenship Award.

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

Walcott Elementary School's success at maintaining highly-qualified teachers is a result of teachers developing close and trusting relationships. Teachers constantly turn to each other for input to improve their own teaching performance. This culture allows them to consult with each other to address problems that students are having as soon as problems surface. Teachers provide professional development to each other daily, and they frequently participate in school discussions of additional professional development needs. Walcott teachers are able to address issues immediately rather than waiting for weekly or other structured meetings. Furthermore, when teachers identify an area where they need refresher training or training in new areas, they discuss those needs with their leaders.

Walcott Elementary has eight required staff development days prior to the start of school each year. Three of those days are allotted for teachers to attend trainings and workshops of their choice over the summer. This allows for the teachers to choose areas of growth to best maximize the impact on student achievement. These days correlate to the Professional Development Appraisal System, which is used to assess teacher performance each year. The principal meets with each teacher in May for a summative conference to reflect on teacher performance.

The remaining days of professional development are set by the district administration team. Our principal and teachers work together to plan training that is purposeful in meeting the needs identified in the Comprehensive Needs Assessments (CNA) and District Improvement Plans (DIP). Trainings have included data disaggregation, trainings on the TEKS for math and reading, and new classroom instructional technology.

Throughout the school year, Walcott Elementary teachers are encouraged to participate in workshops that boost their professional growth. Walcott teachers receive most of their training at the Education Service

Center. Teachers return to the campus and share what was learned with other teachers.

Walcott Elementary depends on ingenuity to keep functioning in a remote and sparsely populated area. Staff willingly operates in a way that allows them to continue providing the best education possible for their students. Without peers at the same grade level, Walcott teachers share ideas with the teachers in other grades and often ask for help or suggestions for students who are struggling. The background of the child can be shared and a new idea or solution can almost always be recommended. Teachers learn from each other and value the knowledge that another teacher may possess. Staying current is important for Walcott teachers and their students.

Walcott Elementary School's goal is providing professional development to grow not only teachers that promote a fun, positive, and safe learning environment, but also high performing students both at the school level and state testing level.

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

Walcott Elementary administration believes that their primary purpose is to support the teachers and students of the school. Administrators have an open door policy. Walcott is unique in that it has only two administrators, the full-time Superintendent and the principal who also teaches sixth grade. The school board consists of three members who are farmers and ranchers in the school district.

The principal/teacher is available to the staff and welcomes them to schedule meetings as needed. The superintendent keeps the staff informed of all events going on in the school. Communication is always open, honest, and friendly. Administration is also empathetic to the needs of the students and staff and jumps in whenever they are needed. The Superintendent handles most of the discipline problems throughout the day although those are minor. Administration may help finding substitute teachers, assisting with student learning objectives, analyzing data, janitorial assistance, and offering teaching suggestions. The Superintendent and principal monitor student success closely and work with the teachers to make adjustments in learning programs and class schedules in order to best meet the needs of each student. Meetings and informal discussions are held often in order to build student success. These meetings may be before school, during breakfast, at lunch, or in the hall.

The Superintendent and principal firmly believe that you cannot ask the staff to do what he or she is not willing to do themselves. This builds trust and demonstrates to others the expectation of hard work. Being such a small school and having only two administrators, leadership can sometimes be spread thin with all that is expected, so delegated leadership built on responsibility and trust are key to the school's success. Teachers report to the principal areas of success and concern. Teachers also come to the principal with ideas they want to try in their classroom or throughout the school.

Teachers are empowered in the selection of curriculum, holding meetings amongst themselves and attending webinars or professional development to determine which curriculum is desired for all subjects. Their suggestions are then reviewed by administration before adoption. Teachers ultimately have the final say in what curriculum they feel is best for the students and since the principal is a teacher as well, everyone works together to do what is best for Walcott students. School policies are reviewed as necessary. Staff meetings allow time for administration to share policy changes. The school board also reviews policies annually to make sure they are current and provide the standard structure on which the school operates. School leadership feels strongly that teachers are the reason for the success of the school and wants them to have the tools to feel empowered to teach students to the best of their ability and often provide the guidance necessary for this to be the reality.

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

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At Walcott Elementary the size, location, and experienced staff have encouraged the development of a strong sense of family with a culture and tradition of achievement. It is this family atmosphere that is the foundation of our success. Walcott is a family with big expectations. Walcott has high expectations of our staff and of our students. Over time, this family atmosphere has attracted and kept teachers that go above and beyond what is normally expected. The teachers who come and stay at Walcott feel at home.

Teachers are invested in the success of our students. Teachers know where they come from, and know school might be the only opportunity most of our students have for improving their chances in life. We can make a difference, and we believe the biggest mistake is giving up. The trust and expectation of this school family is apparent in our daily interactions. We plan together in the morning, over lunch, or in the hallways. Students are the number one priority of the school district and all staff strives to make sure that the individual needs of all students are met on a daily basis. When students come to school, they know they are in a safe environment that supports their learning needs. School staff, teachers, and administrators have built trusting relationships between the family and school environment. Students are provided opportunities to succeed socially, physically, emotionally, and academically. Teachers use the adopted curriculum as a base for instruction, but spend many hours enhancing the curriculum and attending professional development in order to provide alternative instructional strategies that drive student success. In this small rural school, sometimes called “the little school on the prairie” by the area news stations, we teach our kids to love learning. We are a family, with trust and high expectations. We believe with hard work, anything is possible!

Walcott Elementary is proud of our success stories. Walcott was a Nationally Recognized Blue Ribbon School in 2004. The school received Exemplary ratings from 1996 until 2011 when Texas no longer used that label. Walcott has been a Title I Distinguished School many times and in 2014-2015 Walcott received the Reward School designation from TEA. Walcott Elementary received these designations through consistent high performance on state tests. Walcott Elementary takes pride in our hard working staff members and students who make these distinctions possible.