



## **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):
- 17 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 6 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 28 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>	10	28	38
<b>K</b>	17	25	42
<b>1</b>	23	25	48
<b>2</b>	33	25	58
<b>3</b>	26	26	52
<b>4</b>	25	21	46
<b>5</b>	25	27	52
<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>	159	177	336

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

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 36%

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

Dishman's mobility rate is 35.9% and is due to factors such as family displacement. Many families co-habitat with grandparents or family members in order to share living and housing expenses. Consequently, with residing in such a small rural community, when a family withdraws, multiple students are withdrawn from our campus and with small numbers analysis, percentages are influenced greatly with even minimal numerator fluctuations. Another factor is economic stress. Combes has limited employment opportunities and in order to obtain employment or seek higher pay families must move. Families are forced to migrate to other places to earn their livelihood and create better opportunities. Families experience a broad range of difficulties that may result in residential or school instability.

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	68
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	67
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	135
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	376
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.36
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	36

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 17 %  
57 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: 94 %  
Total number students who qualify: 315

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %  
29 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>5</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>7</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>2</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</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.	24
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.	9
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 13:1

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	98%	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.

<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.

Promote a highly rigorous academic environment by establishing and maintaining a learning environment that promotes success and ensures lifelong learners. Through research-based practices, we will expose our students to a variety of instructional practices in order to reach excellence and focus on "Educating Future Leaders."

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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Dishman Elementary School, located in Combes, Texas, is one of seventeen elementary schools in the Harlingen Consolidated School District (HCISD). James Henry Dishman, a successful rancher and a native of Cherokee County in east Texas, headed to the South Texas Gulf Coast in 1892 pursuing lucrative ranching opportunities. In 1893, he purchased 640 acres, in northern Cameron County and built a homestead. In 1926, Mr. Dishman sold 40 acres that led to the creation of the town of Combes. That same year Combes voted to go into the Harlingen School District. In 1928, Mr. Dishman sold 5 acres to the Harlingen School District for \$1 and with that, the original section of Dishman Elementary was constructed with the promise of additional rooms to be built. By 1930, the school was completed and despite Mr. Dishman's reluctance, it was named in his honor.

Combes is a small farming community located in northwestern Cameron County. It is located four miles north of Harlingen and eighteen miles south of Raymondville and it encompasses a total of 3.1 square miles. Although the town is small, with a population of 2,855, there are a few established businesses. It is a tight-knit community where neighbors help one another and people value and take pride in their school. Dishman Elementary has been the foundation for many generations in Combes. It serves 336 students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade in addition to a life skills unit serving children with special needs in grades first through fifth. Dishman's racial/ethnic composition is 95.86% Hispanic. 93.2% are identified as economically disadvantaged with 16.9% identified as English Language Learners (ELL). 93% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals. 8.6% of students qualify for services in the special education program, and 52.4% are identified as at-risk. Dishman has a mobility rate of 35.9% with 6.2% of students served in a gifted and talented program.

Dishman's motto is, "Educating Future Leaders." It has a strong and positive campus culture focused on student success and achieving excellence. Among the seventeen elementary schools in HCISD, Dishman transformed from a low scoring campus that ranked among the lower quarter of the campuses to one that now ranks first in five of the eight testing areas. Dishman has improved tremendously over the years due to the hard work and effort of students, teachers, and staff. In 2017, it was recognized as a 2016 Texas Honor Roll School. The Honor Roll recognizes public elementary, middle, and high schools that demonstrate consistently high levels of student academic achievement, improvement in achievement over time, and reduction in achievement gaps. In 2017, Dishman's accountability rating was, "Met Standard," and it earned six out of six possible Distinction Designations. Distinctions earned were Academic Achievement in ELA/Reading, Mathematics, Science, Top 25 Percent Student Progress, Top 25 Percent Closing Performance Gaps, and Postsecondary Readiness.

Key strategies that Dishman has in place to ensure student success are based on the belief that children regardless of demographics, personal background, and or socioeconomic status can rise to meet expectations, but those expectations have to be clearly outlined and understood. The message was clear - Dishman would settle for no less than #1. Students understood what was expected and upon conclusion of assessments, they would inquire about their standings among the other schools. They were on the same mission to reach #1. In addition to setting the campus goal, Dishman focused on the "team." Students understood that assessments and campus results would be the result of the grade level and not just that of a few. Student conferences were held with those who were showing academic difficulties and personal, yet realistic, goals were set in place. In addition, students tracked their scores and monitored their progress. As a campus, Dishman implemented strategic plans of action to assist those children who were struggling. Tutoring was established and those who required additional help were asked to attend. Students understood that this was not an option but an expectation. An additional component of setting high standards was incorporating celebrations. Dishman celebrated both the big and the small accomplishments. Teachers were encouraged to send in students who were showing improvement and or those who had met their personal goal so that administration could personally congratulate them and recognize them for their effort.

Dishman offers unique and special programs. The master schedule accommodates blocked periods in reading/language arts, math, science, and social studies, along with a special programs block allocated to music, physical education (PE), and library. Teachers have a 55-minute planning period for collaborative

communication and professional learning. In addition, a character education counseling and guidance program is utilized weekly. Fridays have an embedded intervention block aimed at assisting struggling students, with an enrichment time for the other students.

Dishman has clearly outlined campus goals, devised strategic plans of action, worked the plan, and tweaked it as necessary but, never lost sight of the goal. Dishman will continue on the path of excellence. At this point, the goal is no longer to get to #1, but it is now to maintain #1.

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

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

Dishman Elementary upholds the state adopted curriculum standards that are to be used in all Texas public schools. The current standards, which outline what students are to learn in each course or grade, are called Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The goal of the TEKS is to increase rigor, challenge our students, and prepare them for meeting the demands of the 21st century.

At Dishman, the first goal for all literacy instruction is the development of phonemic awareness, which then leads to phonics. Phonemic awareness begins in kindergarten through a routine, explicit, and systematic practice of letter recognition, phonemic awareness, oral language, letter-sound correspondence, and skywriting. The application of phonics begins in first grade and extends to second grade. This instruction provides a routine, explicit, and systematic practice for decoding, or being able to decipher words that are unfamiliar. Students discover letter sound characteristics, review words with flashcards, engage in a reading practice for the skill being taught, and listen to a read-aloud that targets reading comprehension. Phonics instruction transitions to word study in grades 3rd to 5th. It is through this hands-on approach that students discover and increase their vocabulary.

The English Language Arts (ELA) TEKS are a combination of reading comprehension skills that are practiced daily in grades K-5. These metacognitive reading skills include establishing a purpose for reading, asking questions, making inferences, retelling or summarizing, and making connections across all genres. Instructional tools such as graphic organizers, reading response journals, and a web-based reading program are integrated to improve the student's ability to comprehend.

Writing is a state tested subject. During the school year, students participate in writing activities that incorporate the writing process from start to finish; encompassing the TEKS writing standards. Writing is taught through the use of mentor texts, teacher demonstration, and teacher/peer conferencing. Instructional tools such as graphic organizers, journal writing, and rubrics are integrated to improve the student's ability to develop and edit their compositions.

The math curriculum is aligned vertically to the TEKS. Dishman has created a math vertical alignment where each grade builds on prior concepts that students were taught and incorporates concrete methods to help students scaffold to abstract concepts. The State Board of Education (SBOE) approved the revised math TEKS for adoption in April 2012. The revised math for kindergarten through eighth grade was implemented in the 2014-2015 school year. The math curriculum contains mathematical processes divided into four reporting categories needed to acquire and demonstrate mathematical understanding. Teachers use the district math scope and sequence to teach skills such as number operations, geometry, measurement, data analysis, and personal financial literacy. Re-teach, small group instruction, centers, and intervention are utilized to help students acquire math foundational skills.

Kindergarten through fifth grade science curriculum is aligned vertically to the TEKS and is supplemented by district curriculum thus providing the required foundational skills in science. Teachers have access to a variety of online resources addressing the learning standards for all students. Additionally, grade level field trips are aligned to the TEKS such as the second-grade trip to a sea turtle ranch. Students learn about rehabilitating and releasing injured sea turtles. The trip helps increase awareness concerning their safety and habitat and gives information on how to assist with conservation efforts. In cooperative group settings, students are able to learn from each other by collaborating through hands-on investigations, laboratory experiments, lab reports, and journal writing.

The social studies curriculum follows the TEKS and is introduced through project-based assignments whereby students acquire and build upon their foundational skills. Students are exposed to a continuum of skill development from kindergarten through 5th grade. Civic learning is integrated throughout the curriculum and this is reinforced through various projects and events on campus. Every year Dishman participates in student council elections. Candidates campaign, prepare a speech, and wait for voting results.

Students have also participated in a living wax museum in which historical figures are represented by students. Virtual field trips are scheduled to take the students back or forward in time. Students also engage in a school garden project. The program requires students to plant and care for their own vegetable garden while keeping track of it in a journal.

Students who qualify for the Pre-K4 program receive instruction aligned to the Texas Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) guidelines. The core curriculum subjects taught in the Pre-K4 program are Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English/Spanish Language Arts. This provides a strong foundation and promotes academic readiness to ensure students' success in the upper grades. Dishman offers a full day Pre-K4 program where students develop gross and fine motor skills, language acquisition, and social interaction through classroom centers. The impact of our Pre-K4 full-day instruction is evident through results shown by an online assessment screener administered in the beginning, middle and end of the school year resulting in successful early readers.

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

The teachers and staff at Dishman Elementary are committed to guiding, inspiring, and educating all students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth in the areas of physical education, technology, music, extracurricular activities, and character.

Students participate in 165 minutes of physical education, movement, social development, and health education each week. During this time, the campus focuses on the TEKS for physical education while integrating core curriculum. For math, PE teachers target skills such as: skip counting, adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing. To support literacy, the PE teachers include sight word practice during stretches. To review Earth Science, students are challenged to complete a Solar System obstacle course. PE teachers ensure curriculum rich physical activities through effective planning and incorporating research-based practices. PE integrates Social Studies through an agri-life program. This program provides students with engaging educational experiences that connect them to the fundamentals of nutrition and health. Students learn how to garden and study the nutritional benefits of what they are growing. The intent is to give students the tools to learn about nutrition and develop good eating habits at an early age.

Technology application TEKS are embedded into the daily lessons to promote active student learning, problem-solving, and informed decision-making. Digital classrooms blend online learning and assessment, digital reading, and project-based learning to engage all learners. Dishman's two computer labs are utilized throughout the day. Technology is an integral part of the instructional program at Dishman and it is embedded in a variety of ways across the curriculum. Teachers model the use of technological tools such as iPads, chrome books, document cameras, and Apple TVs. Students are then given opportunities to incorporate these same tools during application of the lesson framework. Dishman has been awarded seven digital classrooms with two of those classrooms awarded to the library media specialist (LMS) and music teacher. Both of these professionals incorporate and demonstrate technology-rich instructional lessons weekly in their classes. Dishman's 3rd-5th grade classrooms are equipped with Smart TVs, Apple TVs, and Macbooks. Technology is constantly at students' fingertips and helps them conduct research, discover information, practice skills, and stay connected in a digital world. While adhering to Digital Citizenship as stated in the technology application TEKS.

Students attend music classes once a week. Music class is designed to expose students to the K-5 Fine Arts TEKS through music literacy, movement, singing, and instruments from different time periods and cultures. The teacher uses technology, instruments, songs, video clips, and movement to teach age-appropriate music and literacy at all levels. Choir is a part of Dishman's music program. The choir is composed of fourth and fifth graders that meet weekly to learn varied repertoire and singing techniques for a variety of school events such as Veteran's Day, the Christmas Program, and end of the year Talent Show. Music provides students opportunities to perform for parents, peers and the community.

Dishman's Information Literacy Center (ILC) schedules classes weekly. Lessons are typically whole-group, followed by an activity and concluding with a book check-out. Lessons are developed after collaborating with teachers and consulting the TEKS. The main objective of the ILC is to create a digital environment of

life-long readers. This is achieved by sharing quality literature as well as selecting diverse, high-interest books which support student learning for the collection. The ILC is available to students at all times. Students are advised on choosing appropriate reading level books. The ILC confers with teachers to review web-based reading program reports and ensure students are choosing reading level appropriate books and testing on them.

The guidance counselor serves as the link between students and any outside resources that benefit them in any way. Pre-K through fifth-grade students receive monthly guidance lessons while pre-K students receive weekly lessons. Guidance lessons focus on study skills, character traits, conflict resolution, and college and career readiness.

The emphasis on acquiring the skills necessary to keep up with the 21st century is visible in Dishman's extracurricular activities such as Coding, Chess, and Robotics. In coding students use a coding program that allows them to create their own interactive stories, animations, and games. In the process, they learn to think creatively, reason systematically, and work collaboratively all essential skills for everyone in today's society. Dishman's chess team competes throughout the year and will be competing at a national chess tournament. This is the team's second trip to nationals. Robotics taps into students' problem-solving skills, teamwork ability, creativity, and technical knowledge. The team has been in existence for two years and they have secured a regional championship spot. These programs allow students to tap into the STEM world of education.

The Six Pillars of Character are the core ethical values of Dishman Elementary and they are recited in the daily character counts pledge. Reminding students daily helps to instill a positive school climate for students and a culture of kindness, making Dishman a safe environment for students to learn.

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

At Dishman Elementary, what is taught and how it is taught is critical in the teaching of the core curriculum. Dishman's primary objective is for students to be challenged through a rigorous and challenging curriculum. Dishman prepares students to be productive citizens in a global workforce by "Educating Future Leaders."

Dishman made a commitment to optimizing the instructional program by departmentalizing grades second through fifth. Utilizing this methodology, teachers dropped their traditional roles as generalists and served instead as experts, teaching one or two content areas and taking equal ownership of the students. Departmentalizing ensures that daily instructional time is maximized and that students receive an optimum education with the academic support needed for their success. Dishman provides 335 minutes of daily instructional time for all students with a 100-minute non-negotiable block for both reading and mathematics. The instructional approaches used at the Tier I level follow the district's teaching and learning framework (TLF). The TLF is designed to support teachers in the delivery of high-quality teaching, problem-based learning, and differentiated practices which ultimately aim to improve the students' ability to learn and understand the material that they are being taught. This instructional model is fluid and encourages the teacher to hook the students into the lesson prior to the guided instruction. During guided instruction, the teacher provides instruction, then the teacher and students work together. The final step allows for students to demonstrate the skill being taught either independently or collaboratively.

Through Dishman's professional learning community (PLC), administration meets with teachers every Tuesday to collaborate with each other concerning different teaching methods that will ultimately improve the levels of instruction in the classrooms and across the curriculum. Grades PK-5th teachers review and analyze the data gathered from both classroom formative assessments, district benchmarks, and progress monitoring programs aimed at increasing school readiness skills. Data analysis for PK-2nd targets reading progress in the learning of non-negotiable words, letter names, letter sounds, and fluency. Data analysis for 3rd-5th targets percentage of met standard, student progress, commended performance, special populations, and TEKS mastery. Teachers use this information to guide their instruction in the classroom to ensure student success. Additionally, teachers use it to consistently group students according to areas of concern.

Students are administered campus-wide assessments, such as benchmarks, unit tests, weekly comprehension

tests, and interim assessments. Interim and benchmark assessments are given in the Fall and Spring. Teachers use the results to modify and improve teaching techniques. Academic support is provided for students with a gap of 10 or more percentage points between tests scores of all students and test scores of subgroups. Dishman utilizes various forms of instructional practices to assist students who are Tier II or III via differentiated or tiered instruction. Project-based learning is also used to attain comprehension and mastery. During the school week, 2nd-5th grades have a scheduled 60-minute intervention block. Students are divided into intervention groups, while those who are on grade level participate in fine arts, reading, and technological applications. Aside from the 335 minutes of instruction, Dishman offers extended day programs. These programs give students a smooth transition from the instructional day to an afternoon of tutoring, mentoring, and goal setting.

Response to intervention (RtI) is an intervention for students who are identified with academic deficiencies. The RtI process begins with a student's teacher assessing skills in class. These assessments occur monthly and help to identify which students need instructional interventions. Interventions can be implemented via whole or small groups and tailored for different skill levels or learning styles. Another essential component of RtI is progress monitoring. The school frequently assesses a student's skills to determine whether an intervention is working. The RtI team meets every 3 to 9 weeks to evaluate if a student is improving at the expected rate or if they need additional support. If additional support is needed the RtI committee reviews the data and makes suggestions on additional interventions to implement or may refer the student for further academic testing. Students performing above grade level are pulled out for classes with the gifted and talented teacher for a minimum of 90 consecutive minutes per week. Tier 1 students also receive an additional 60 minutes of enrichment during the school week offered through the library media specialist or the music teacher. This time allows student choice and exploration of students' strengths and interests.

Walkthroughs are done with fidelity to give teacher's constant feedback on instructional practices. Walkthroughs not only clarify the role of the instructional leader but also strengthen the instructional effectiveness of the staff. Visible leadership reinforces the importance of maximizing instructional time and provides administration an opportunity to gauge the organizational health of the campus.

Realizing that student achievement is a group effort, teachers and students discuss methods to take ownership of their learning in order to reach their academic goals. Dishman supports student success by celebrating progress. Dishman does not use the words pass or fail. Dishman uses the words "met your goal." Students are unaware of the passing standards on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) but rather set a goal for themselves identifying where they would like to be. As students track their gains, they feel a sense of accomplishment and a desire to exceed. Dishman utilizes incentive programs to promote student success and mastery.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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

“Educating Future Leaders” is Dishman’s motto. Dishman Elementary is focused on promoting a highly rigorous academic environment by establishing and maintaining a learning environment that promotes success and ensures lifelong learners. Through research-based practices, Dishman exposes students to a variety of instructional practices in order to achieve excellence. Dishman students, teachers, staff, parents, office personnel, counselor, custodial staff, cafeteria personnel, and administration are all on the same page and working towards the same common goal. Dishman celebrates success through campus events such as awards assemblies, whereby every nine weeks, students are recognized for academic achievement, perfect attendance, top accelerated reader, and citizenship. In addition, twenty-one students are selected by their teacher to be featured on the Principal’s Wall of Fame. Students highlighted on the Principal’s Wall of Fame are invited to an off-campus luncheon with the Principal. Students are also recognized and celebrated when personal goals are met or mastered. In order to encourage and support academic success, incentives such as special snacks, prizes, parties, drawings, and recognition on morning announcements are common practice at Dishman Elementary.

Dishman has a positive, nurturing, and inviting climate that is felt when you walk onto the campus. The concept of teamwork is embedded in day to day operations both on and off campus. The campus provides opportunities for students to expand their social and emotional growth via opportunities to participate in clubs such as chess, robotics, choir, student council, and coding. Students also attend monthly group and individual counseling sessions that focus on various topics such as, conflict resolution, peer pressure, self-control, goal setting and character development. In addition, a different character development trait is read daily during the morning announcements.

Dishman supports the needs and development of teachers and has an open-door policy where teachers feel comfortable to seek assistance or guidance with instructional, behavioral or personal issues. Teachers are provided opportunities to partake and have an active role and a voice on campus committees. PLC’s and weekly meetings are held to discuss student achievement, plans of action addressing student deficiencies and to recognize areas of celebration. Dishman values and supports its teachers by recognizing them for their success and effort with incentives and awards. Teachers receive awards for perfect attendance, academic achievement, and the Principal’s, “Make It Happen” award. Teachers are also acknowledged and celebrated throughout the year with impromptu snacks, luncheons, socials, jean passes, holiday parties, potluck lunches, etc. Dishman’s PTO also supports teachers with gifts during Teacher Appreciation Week. Dishman teachers are truly valued and supported.

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

An integral component to Dishman’s success has been the support and relationship between our students, staff, community, and parents. Parental involvement is an important component in a student’s success in school. Dishman has activities throughout the year to encourage parental involvement such as breakfast socials for Grandparent’s Day and Parental Involvement Day. In addition, the campus hosts various annual events such as Meet the Teacher, Family Picnics, Literacy Nights, Pre-Kinder and Kinder Make and Take sessions, Christmas program, Polar Express Parade, Talent Show, Field days, Award Assemblies and Kindergarten and Fifth-grade Promotion Ceremonies.

Dishman has an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) that assists in engaging and gathering the support of parents and the community. The PTO recruits parents throughout the year and has received awards for increased PTO enrollment and for Top Men’s PTO Membership. PTO sponsors fundraisers during the year and makes substantial contributions to the campus by providing incentives for students and teachers, supporting field trips, and purchasing items for the campus to support and encourage student success. The PTO also purchases Christmas gifts for every student assuring that every child receives a Christmas gift. Parents are active participants in Dishman’s Parental Involvement Program and serve on the Language Proficiency Acquisition Committee (LPAC), Campus Improvement Plan Committee, and Parent

Compact Committee.

Dishman partners with the community through events such as College and Career Fair. The College and Career Fair is an annual event and has an attendance of thirty plus representatives from the community. Businesses and community members graciously volunteer to attend and share highlights of their careers and reiterate the importance of an education. Local colleges also attend and provide students with information regarding programs of study and career choices. All students from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade attend the half-day event as Dishman expects all students to be college and career ready. Dishman partners with local businesses and was recently presented with \$3,000 worth of school supplies to benefit students and give them the tools they need to have a successful school year.

Communication is fundamental to building a strong partnership between home, the community, and school. Dishman ensures stakeholders and community members are fully informed of student achievements, challenges, and campus events via newsletters, social media, website, automated phone messages, technological apps, conduct cards, homework logs, home visits, and parent-teacher meetings. To ensure student success, Dishman uses a variety of effective strategies to make communication as informative and interactive as possible.

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

Professional development (PD) opportunities are provided for teachers throughout the year and the summer. Administration shares and encourages PD attendance available at the campus, within the district and at training provided by the local Region Education Service Center. Data analysis, effective instructional practices, and best practices have been instrumental to Dishman's success. Teachers acquire knowledge via participation in weekly grade-level professional learning communities (PLCs) in which curriculum, assessment data, timelines, student expectations, and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are reviewed and correlated to student achievement and mastery. Additionally, teachers participate in vertical team planning to develop and implement a vertically aligned program aimed at helping students acquire the academic skills necessary for success.

Teachers attend district professional development opportunities at the beginning of the school year and mid-year, on field-specific content trainings in math, reading, science, writing, social studies, special education, response to intervention (RtI), dyslexia, data disaggregation, differentiated instruction, technology, and bilingual education. Teachers also receive updated information regarding Performance Based Measurement Analysis System (PBMAS) and state and federal accountability through professional development sessions held during the district's extravaganza day. Prescriptive PLCs for special education teachers, music, physical education, RtI, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten are available throughout the year ensuring that staff members are active participants in a structured professional learning community. Focused agendas incorporate curriculum planning, data analysis, and intervention/enrichment processes.

Faculty meetings incorporate training on the latest technology apps, programs, and software and provide a means of teachers learning from one another. Teachers are encouraged to present effective technological applications and their implementation in the classroom, supporting technology-rich classrooms, in which students are engaged, and teachers are able to animate difficult topics and subjects. Required annual district and state training are scheduled throughout the year. Additionally, administration reviews assessment data results, along with district standings, and revises the campus' plan of action accordingly. Layers of Learning staff development will be provided on-site by campus-based personnel such as Administration, Library Media Specialists, Instructional Coach, Digital Classroom Teachers, and Campus Technician.

Administration attends an annual three-day district administrator academy that focuses on student and teacher success initiatives centered on the district's teaching and learning framework (TLF). The TLF analyzes TEKS, knowledge of students, resources, lesson sequence, and assessment data. Administration participates in monthly district administrative PLCs focused on assessment and accountability, curriculum and instruction, organizational development, business and human services and district operations. Administrative professional development includes district, regional, and state conferences. Dishman's PD approach impacts the capacity of teachers and administrators by targeting student needs, increasing student

achievement and strengthening teachers and administrators performance levels. PD is strategically planned year to year and is a valuable way in which teachers can learn so that they are able to better their performance and raise student achievement.

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

School leadership at Dishman consists of the principal, assistant principal, instructional coach, and counselor. The leadership team works and plans together to ensure that the campus operates in a manner supporting our philosophy of excellence and academic success for all students.

The principal is responsible for the day to day operations and management of the campus, as well as, overseeing personnel, campus evaluations, discipline, budget, campus spokesperson, etc. The principal serves as an instructional leader and is responsible to ensure that the campus capitalizes on instruction every day by setting a clear sense of direction and a shared understanding of the organization and its goals, thereby developing the campuses' purpose or vision. The principal, along with the instructional coach, collect and monitor campus data to ensure the school is on track to meeting state academic standards. If performance on standardized tests is below the school goal, the administrative team works with teachers to devise a plan of action to improve student performance.

The assistant principal is responsible for managing discipline, student folders, textbooks, materials, attendance, campus safety, campus testing and training, student populations, and assists the principal with organizing campus activities and events. The assistant principal additionally assists with personnel and campus evaluations.

The instructional coach is responsible for ensuring educational strategies are in place in order to support effective learning for all students and to serve as a facilitator, guide, and supporter of quality instructional practices. The coach serves as a mentor to teachers and is available for resources, lesson demonstration, and planning. The coach provides feedback regarding best practices after visiting classrooms and or having professional learning community meetings and helps the principal organize and coordinate the re-grouping of programs and or classrooms as needed.

The counselor is responsible for implementation of a comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program which is vital in the achievement of excellence. The counselor provides one on one or group counseling to students. This counseling may help students overcome behavioral problems, improve their time management and organizational skills, establish goals, resolve interpersonal problems with other students, work through personal problems, and or bring college and career awareness to the students.

Dishman's leadership philosophy is that all children regardless of socioeconomic status and background can succeed if we provide them a strong educational foundation. Dishman's leadership team meets weekly and collaborates to establish and communicate instructional goals that will support and lead to student success. The leadership team makes itself visible throughout the campus and is present at professional learning community meetings, faculty meetings, in the classroom and at campus events. The team along with teachers and students work collaboratively to encourage and enhance student achievement.

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

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An instrumental practice that has led to Dishman’s success was the implementation of campus-based professional learning communities (PLCs) in 2011. Teachers were provided a regularly designated time in which they were able to ask questions, obtain answers, meet collaboratively, obtain new instructional strategies, and receive training. In addition, teachers were able to discuss topics such as lesson planning, timelines, data analysis, review student expectations (SE’s), and/or the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the week, as well as, any difficulties and or concerns that they had. Teachers were also able to seek resources and or suggestions on areas/topics that they felt may be difficult for the students to understand. Coaching and mentoring were also available during PLCs.

Dishman data analysis PLCs were scheduled based on campus needs and arranged on a one to one with the administration and the instructional coach. During these meetings, teachers were asked to fill out provided data documents. The various documents required teachers to take a close look at their student’s data which in turn helped them to recognize data patterns and or trends. Teachers were able to isolate areas of deficiency and in turn devise a required plan of action targeting those areas. Teachers created lists and data files giving them a compass to identify the students who were on target towards approaches, meets, or masters standard.

During professional learning meetings, teachers were introduced to research-based instructional strategies in areas of need such as differentiated instruction and how to adapt instruction to meet students' needs. Teachers also underwent training on various topics such as phonics and how to address the domains of phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Additional professional development sessions focused on curriculum development in areas such as mathematics, science, reading, and writing. Setting goals or objectives, developing higher-level questioning, and project-based learning were also areas that were targeted. In addition to grade level PLCs, vertical PLCs were also scheduled, thereby providing different grade levels within a given discipline an opportunity to work cooperatively, target hot spots, and design a vertically aligned program that will ensure student success.

Through PLCs, Dishman has developed strong teachers that plan collaboratively and strategically. Teachers work as a team for the common good of the students and the campus. Dishman Elementary will continue with established PLCs and will continue to develop outstanding teachers by strengthening their instructional practices, their knowledge, and thereby ensuring continued student achievement.