

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2012 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	28	23	51
1	24	27	51
2	27	21	48
3	28	21	49
4	25	29	54
5	33	27	60
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	165	148	313

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 4 % Asian
 - 11 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 74 % 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: 11%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	19
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	14
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	33
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	304
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7%
22 Total number ELL

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

Bantu, Burmese, Chinese Mandarin, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 29%
Total number students who qualify: 91

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %
26 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>2</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</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: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
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 17:1

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2017.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

Create and nurture a community of life-long learners by providing progressive educational opportunities and challenging experiences that are responsive to the needs and talents of all students.

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

Harrington Waddell Elementary School is a public school located in a picturesque residential setting in beautiful downtown Lexington, Virginia. The majority of Waddell's students are residents of a rural/city community of just over 7,200 (2015). Twenty-four percent of students attending Waddell are non-resident students from the surrounding Rockbridge County area. Lexington is a college town, home to the Virginia Military Institute and Washington and Lee University, two of the nation's oldest and most prominent academic institutions. The city's primary employment sectors are education services and retail trade. Tourism is also an important component of the Lexington economy.

The elementary school is the only school serving the city's school children. The original building, built in 1926, opened its doors as a high school in 1927. In 1960, the school became Harrington Waddell Elementary School, serving various grade levels until 1983, and since then, serving all of the city's K-5 students. A number of building renovations were completed over the years, and in 2014, the original school building was demolished to begin construction on a new \$14 million dollar state-of-the-art school set on the original footprint. After two years in mobile classrooms set on the city's middle school campus across town, the new Harrington Waddell Elementary School opened its doors to students and staff in October 2016.

Today, this beautiful, modern three-story school is home to approximately 315 students and 48 staff members. Waddell has three classes for each K-5 grade and also houses a HeadStart preschool classroom serving a small population the community's three and four-year-olds. Approximately twenty-eight percent of Waddell's students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch. The school and community partner to meet the diverse needs of all students. On Fridays, eligible students can take home a backpack of snacks and prepared foods for the weekend. Tutors from the university and local public library meet weekly with students who need academic support beyond the school day. The school counselor, administrators, and local community agencies partner to provide family services, counseling, and basic needs, and volunteers within the community lead after-school enrichment clubs and volunteer during the school day to read with students and assist with special projects and events.

Unlike other school divisions, Lexington City Schools does not have a transportation program. Students walk or are driven to school, as there are no school buses. This year, the school division purchased a shuttle bus that transports students between the elementary and middle school campuses so that students who live closer to one of the schools can walk to or be dropped off to ride the bus to school.

Waddell students receive instruction in the core content areas of reading/language arts, math, science, and social studies, and in addition, participate weekly in physical education, music, art, and library classes. Special educators and paraprofessionals support students with identified special needs, and as a targeted Title I school, Waddell offers reading remediation services to students who require additional support. In addition to these programs, two part-time grant funded reading and math teachers provide additional student intervention services.

Waddell serves a small population of English Language Learners through an integrated and pull-out approach. The school's part-time gifted education teacher serves ten percent of Waddell's students who are identified in their area of giftedness, while also working with the school's media specialist to provide enrichment opportunities for students referred for extension opportunities.

The school's Parent Teacher Association and school staff actively play a large role in carrying on annual traditions and special events, such as the school-wide Halloween costume parade through the neighborhood led by the drummers from the Virginia Military Institute, the school's Spaghetti Dinner with live music played by several parents, and the family Sock Hop where K-5 students perform dances they have learned in music and P.E. classes. These are just a few of the special traditions that bring together Waddell's students, parents, staff, and neighbors to enjoy fellowship and a celebration of the school's greater community.

Waddell is a school where parents send their children to be challenged, nurtured, and exposed to a wide variety of learning and social experiences. Expectations for excellence are great from both ends – the

parents and the teachers. Teachers are passionate about providing more than the expected standards based instruction. They artfully design and implement creative units of study that offer performance based learning, hands-on experiences, and a deeper investigation of “the basics”. The administration and division staff are eager to support their efforts and help the school continue to grow and take “excellence” to the next level.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The Virginia Standards of Learning set expectations for student learning and achievement. Waddell uses curriculum and pacing guides aligned with the state standards. Our teachers strive each day to provide challenging and creative lessons and activities which address all learning levels and encourage students to be good citizens, critical-thinkers, and life-long learners.

Language: Waddell believes that reading is the core of all learning. Waddell inspires a love of reading and writing within our students. Skilled reading requires weaving language comprehension (which includes: background knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, language structure, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge) with word knowledge (which includes: phonological awareness, decoding, spelling, and sight recognition) and using them simultaneously. At Waddell, students are engaged in 150 minutes of daily language arts instruction. Our teachers believe in a developmental continuum in reading maturity where students must build on skills they already have. Teachers assess and analyze data on each student. Once this is completed, a balanced literacy diet is presented. The diet addresses fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, word study, and writing for beginning and transitional readers. Emergent readers focus on phonological awareness, alphabet, concept of word, concept of print, and writing. During instructional time, various resources are used to enhance learning. The core resource of the reading program is the adopted reading series. Teachers incorporate additional resources that include word study, leveled reading books, timed-repeated passages, trade books, periodicals, reader's theater, read aloud, and interactive technology to develop oral reading fluency, comprehension, and critical thinking. Comprehension and writing is supported by the use of modeling, brainstorming blocks, writing webs, graphic organizers, writer's workshop, and other writing processes.

Math: The teachers at Waddell use a variety of methods and materials to support successful math instruction for approximately 60 minutes a day. All grade levels start with the standard curriculum, but instead of expecting students to simply solve problems with paper and pencil, they let them experience math through cooperative learning, interactive technology, games, and manipulative materials. Teachers make sure that students understand why they are solving math problems, instead of just how to solve the math problems. Whenever possible, students are shown how math curriculum is linked to real world situations, reinforcing relevance and connections.

Waddell students participate in 30-45 minutes of science and/or social studies instruction daily, depending on the grade level and the unit being taught.

Science: Our science curriculum is greatly enhanced by our location in the Shenandoah Valley. Students benefit from fieldtrips to nearby Boxerwood Nature Center and Woodland Garden for hands-on learning about watersheds, food chains and webs, and conservation. Fifth grade students learn about cave formations at Luray Caverns. Teachers also take advantage of science resources and personnel from Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute to provide authentic learning experiences and role models for students.

Social Studies: Virginia is rich in history and important in current events. Our teachers find creative ways to motivate students to engage in both. Our location allows us to move beyond a textbook and have students experience learning at historical sites, such as Monticello, the Frontier Culture Museum, and the Monacan Indian Village at Natural Bridge.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The art program at Waddell provides students with a chance to explore a variety of media while creating a vast array of projects. Students in grades kindergarten through fifth have art class for 40 minutes each week. During class, students enjoy discovering ways to express themselves while learning about art techniques, as well as social and cultural awareness. Students collect recycling materials for collage and sculpture while learning about environmental care. The art teacher often collaborates with other teachers to incorporate

different subject areas. For example, students draw spider webs to discuss geometry, maps, and time. Painting to music combines fine arts, and group sculpture challenges encourage team building. Students enjoy exploration of Chinese brush painting while creating kimonos. They learn about Mexican culture while making sugar skulls to celebrate Day of the Dead, and Greek culture while painting Greek vases. Young artists are proud to see their artwork hanging in the halls throughout the school. They are learning that they are all artists and they each have a story to tell.

Music education adds to the well-rounded education students receive at Waddell Elementary School. Music education requires students to demonstrate consistent personal discipline while working to express beauty and emotion through performance. Music activities integrate classroom units, children's literature, and the Virginia Standards of Learning for Music as well as the National Standards for Music Education. The music department at Waddell serves all K-5 students each week in a 40-minute general music class. Students enjoy playing numerous percussion instruments, singing a variety of songs, and learning many cultural dances during their time in music class. Fourth grade students learn to play the recorder, and every grade level performs in at least one concert during school year.

Each year, over 90% of the fifth grade class participates in beginning band. Students meet twice a week for 40 minutes in one smaller band class with similar instruments, and then as a full band. Students may learn to play flute, oboe, clarinet, alto saxophone, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, French horn, euphonium, tuba, or percussion. Band students perform a concert at the end of the school year to demonstrate the progress they've made on their instruments.

The physical education curriculum is designed to introduce students to a wide variety of skills, activities, and challenges in a fun setting. Each week students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade participate in individual sports skills, non-sports games that use sports skills, team cooperative games and challenges, as well as fitness activities for two 40 minute sessions. Students also participate in thirty minutes of daily recess. Our students' levels of physical fitness improve throughout the year and along with their knowledge of why fitness should be a lifelong goal. Grade-level appropriate nutrition education, energy balance concepts, and anatomical basis of movement is a focus throughout the year. Higher level thinking skills are encouraged as the students work together through problem solving activities and game strategies, including incorporation of content, math and reading into movement.

All students K-5 come to the library on a fixed schedule 40 minutes per week for instruction and book selection. Students may also come to the library each morning for book selection. The library houses over 9,500 materials and includes a media lab with 20 workstations. The librarian gathers and delivers materials weekly to classrooms and grade level teams that support current units of instruction. The library curriculum follows AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner and supports appropriate grade level SOL. Class instruction focuses on age appropriate research skills, and literature-based lessons reinforce both language arts concepts and classroom content units. Students are also encouraged to become lifelong readers and are given ample time to select appropriate materials and instruction on how to make the best possible choices for themselves both for pleasure reading and information gathering.

Movement to Music is a course designed by the music and physical education teachers that creates a marriage between the two curriculums. Movement to rhythm and beat, creative movement, social dances, and cultural dances are all covered for grades K-4 in a 30 minute once a week session. Manipulatives such as scarves, ribbons, and hula hoops are often used in the dances that are accompanied by rhythm sticks, drums, bells, and tambourines.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Waddell Elementary is a high-performing, Title I school. Formative and summative assessments guide the scope and direction of lessons and review. Performance-based assessments allow students the opportunity to show their knowledge and skills in unique ways. Interventions, such as read aloud options, study guides, and tailored assignments are provided to fit individual needs.

Assessing student progress is essential. Teachers use a variety of assessment tools to make sure they have a

full picture of the learning style and progress for every student.

To identify reading strengths and weaknesses of each student, the staff uses formal and informal assessments. Student assessment results drive the instruction to meet the needs presented. K-3 uses the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) data, PALS Quick Checks, running records, observation, formative and summative assessments to plan instruction. Grades 3-5 teachers rely on benchmark performance data, Qualitative Reading Inventory 3 (QRI-3), observation, formative and summative assessments.

Teachers begin math units with a pre-assessment so that they only focus on what students need to learn and then have a more formal summative assessment. Summative assessments often focus on the process as much as the final answer, giving students the opportunity to solve problems in a variety of ways, with multiple correct answers. Exit slips in math check for understanding of new material and allow students to show their thought process. Math fluency activities allow students to practice in pairs for test preparation. Teachers utilize whole group, small group and individualized instruction to meet the needs of a diverse classroom. Differentiation occurs daily within the classroom, while extension and remediation often occurs with specialists and support staff. Teachers get very creative and challenge exceptional learners by extending the core curriculum.

In language arts, whole body movements and crossing the midline help students acquire phonemic and phonological awareness, such as Yoga ABCs, sound and letter sizing, and finger spelling. Writing is also used to connect reading tasks with author studies, story maps, story elements and presentations using technology.

In math, teachers ask students to think deeper, use number sense, and make connections to current material, rather than just supplying them with recall work. Students are challenged with leveled, differentiated centers, real life scenarios that ask students to solve problems, higher level thinking, and at times, participate in ability groups. Hands-on manipulatives and math focused videos also enrich math lessons.

In science, starting as early as Kindergarten, students are introduced to investigative skills, making predictions, and testing scientific methods during hands-on experiments. To learn about simple machines, third grade students use interactive demonstrations and experiments designed by a professor of engineering in a partnership with a local university.

In social studies, students participate in election activities, simulations, technology-based research, presentations, and readers' theater to enhance learning. In fifth grade, students analyze a "crime scene" of the Boston Massacre. Students take advantage of visiting Thomas Jefferson's home, Monticello in fourth grade. Kindergarten experiences compare past and present family life in an interactive visit to the Frontier Culture Museum.

Reading assessment results show the need for additional intervention or enrichment. Intervention is provided by teachers, specialists, and support staff. Specialists and support staff can provide additional support and instruction in the classroom or by pulling students individually, or in smaller group settings for remediation or enrichment. Reading Specialists have received additional language arts training in all areas of the essential building blocks of reading and implement them as needed. Reading specialists are Reading Recovery, Foundations, Wilson Phonics, and Barton Reading trained.

Through a partnership with the Rockbridge Regional Library, Waddell offers trained literacy volunteer tutors for students who would benefit from additional support. When students struggle with math content, all grade levels reteach individually or in a small group to pinpoint issues and help with academic progress. Teachers often use additional resources to reintroduce the concept in a new way, give students extra time with simplified steps, or use hands-on materials. Students are able to participate in math stations as part of the remediation or enrichment process when their assignments are complete. Teachers are always collaborating with colleagues for support and new ideas.

Whenever possible teachers incorporate interdisciplinary methods for science and social studies. One example is by using nonfiction texts during reading groups to help reinforce content and curriculum.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Waddell strives every day to live up to its mission of creating and nurturing a community of life-long learners. We view students, parents, community members, and staff as one team, dedicated to the goals of student growth and achievement. Every member of our team plays an important role in creating a safe environment where students feel valued. The common goals of being safe, being kind, and being responsible are posted throughout the school and announced each morning.

School staff and parents have high expectations for the students, both academically and socially. Teachers collaborate in planning and implementing cross grade level activities to encourage multi-age, student-to-student learning. Students can choose from a wide selection of after school enrichment programs to explore their interests. Waddell has also replaced traditional paper-pencil homework with the nightly task of reading for twenty minutes. We undertake each of these initiatives in response to the changing needs of our students in an effort to instill in them a sense of ownership of their learning.

While academics are an important focus, we recognize the need to engage the whole child on a daily basis. Creative outlets such as art, music, P.E., library, and daily scheduled recess offer opportunities for our students to develop the bonds of friendship and teamwork. These practices recognize that children grow and learn valuable lessons through play and social interactions.

Students learn that, as a team, everyone in our school community is responsible for contributing to our success. Students can be involved in service clubs such as Green Team, Safety Patrol, and Library Assistants. We celebrate student successes with Bulldog Awards, given by any staff member to a student for positive achievements. Many of our students participate in the Secret Granny program which provides extra support and a reminder that someone in our community cares for them. The school nurse and local vision and dental screenings ensure that students are healthy in order for them to focus and be successful. The guidance counselor provides opportunities for the students to build social skills and practice qualities of good citizenship. The Therapeutic Day Treatment specialist collaborates with families and teachers to create a positive educational setting for students who require additional behavioral and social support. All of these individuals, students, parents, community members, and staff, are working together as a team keep our school a safe, creative, and inviting place to learn.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Waddell's unique setting in a community with three universities provides many opportunities for support by members of these institutions of higher learning. Our school's volunteer program is designed for specific needs at each grade level. Parent and community volunteers engage with students to support reading and writing skills development, project-based learning, and special interest programs to support and enhance the curriculum. Our committed PTA also provides a wide variety of events and activities that support family engagement and student achievement including annual book fair events, the twice annual Bulldog Bash where families gather for a school-wide picnic and social gathering, and various educational field trips and school assemblies supported through fundraising efforts.

Waddell benefits from other community programs, as well. Too Good for Drugs engages students in grades two through five in a number of classroom lessons each year that encourage students to make good choices and work toward a positive future for themselves and their school. Project Horizon, the local sexual and domestic violence prevention agency, presents lessons to all grade levels each year to promote positive self-esteem, making good choices, and avenues for seeking help when needed. The Roots and Shoots Intergenerational Gardening program connects some of our school's neighbors with our students in K-5 as they learn about gardening through classroom lessons and hands-on experiences in our beautiful school garden. The adult volunteers, known as the "roots," and our students, referred to as the "shoots", prepare the garden, plant, tend, and harvest during the school year. Each of these specialized programs helps prepare our children for their future and empower them as students, community members, and future

leaders.

Teachers and administrators use report cards, phone calls, emails, phone alerts, weekly folders, newsletters, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and the school website to keep families up to date on important information and events related to school. Through these many forms of communication, our parents are better able to support and reinforce learning at home. Meet the Teacher, Back to School Night, and parent-teacher conferences with all families in the fall set the tone for frequent positive communication between parents and teachers throughout the year. Daily contact between administration, teachers, and parents occurs during drop off and pick up of students since most families walk or drive to pick up children from the school. These many opportunities to connect allow us to be true partners in education promoting student growth.

3. Professional Development:

Waddell's professional development plan is largely determined by the school division's overall strategic plan and the identified needs of our learning community. Our school division's strategic plan guides educators and students toward the goal of being community leaders, citizens, and scholars. All administrators and staff participate in professional development that promotes growth in accordance with this goal.

In addition to aligning with the strategic plan, professional development is also responsive to Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) requirements, school needs, current trends, and teacher interests and knowledge. For example, in response to the VDOE's substitution of some standardized tests with locally-developed assessments, our school has offered multiple sessions to boost teacher knowledge, understanding, and skills in implementation of performance based assessments. Performance based learning and assessment is implemented throughout the school, with teachers in primary grades focusing on growing students' task-related skills and teachers in intermediate grades focusing on assessing content knowledge through authentic performance tasks.

Professional development activities have also included book studies and workshops in response to trends in our student population. Shifts in economic demographics, an increase in the number of English Language Learners, and the needs of gifted students in the classroom have dictated areas of development and growth for our teachers. Whether the development takes place within the school environment or through conferences and workshops, teachers are tasked with teaching the skills they have learned to entire staff, practicing these skills in the classroom, reflecting on the effectiveness of the skill or the impact of a strategy, and sharing feedback at future meetings. This model of "teachers teaching teachers" further enhances our team culture and multiplies the effectiveness of professional development funding.

4. School Leadership:

A crucial piece to Waddell's success is its school leadership philosophy. As in most schools, the administration plays a key role in the success of the school. What makes our school truly unique, however, is how our leadership defines its role in our school community. Administrators function as facilitators, empowering staff to utilize strengths to serve the needs of our students. While administrators serve as liaisons between the school board, superintendent and government agencies to ensure compliance with all requirements, they encourage the faculty and staff to have voice in the day to day practices in our building. This philosophy has built a faculty that is dedicated and committed to making our school an amazing environment for our students.

This drive for excellence and the high expectations the faculty and staff hold for themselves has served Waddell well over the past five years. Our school and students have thrived despite having had multiple leadership transitions with different principals and a new superintendent while also teaching in temporary structures as we built a new elementary school building and being identified as a focus school during the 2014-2015 school year. To meet these challenges and move forward, we have relied on what we do best, working together as a team and putting the students first every day.

The leadership of Waddell is not defined by one or two people. Our faculty has a committee of team leaders chosen from each grade level or resource area. However, leadership encompasses the entire staff as we function as a strong and well-developed team. It is our collaboration and our combined efforts that move us forward daily, monthly, quarterly, and yearly. It is this philosophy that most impacts Waddell's success.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Shared ownership and a team commitment approach are keys to the academic success students experience at Waddell Elementary School. Waddell is a nurturing school community where high expectations for academic and social growth are standard for all students. This is not only reflected through the exceptional work of our teachers and school staff, but in the active involvement in and support of the school's programs by parents and community partners.

Over time, the teachers and school staff at Waddell have created a supportive, rigorous, and engaging school community where student success is the goal for all involved. When you walk through the school on any given day, you will see students that are academically and socially engaged with their peers, with school staff, and with parent and community volunteers. Everyone in the school plays an essential role in the individual learning and growth of each child.

Paraprofessionals and support staff play an equally impactful role in meeting student needs and promoting student achievement. These key players take an active part in the teaming approach with classroom teachers and school administration to address the learning and social-emotional needs of each child. Our paraprofessionals work closely with regular and special education staff to get to know each student and their learning needs so that they may provide targeted, individualized instructional support. Each week, the Student Success Team (SST), made up of teachers, specialists, the principal, and school counselor, meets to identify strategies and supports that will help to move a child forward in his/her academic or social development. The team helps to support the staff who are involved with that student, as well as families, access the resources and strategies needed and then track that student's progress over time.

When a student is struggling, our teachers, the school counselor, principal, and other support staff wrap their arms around the student and teacher to do whatever is necessary to help. Developing positive behavior plans, partnering with community organizations to access programs, designing individual academic plans, or meeting with the student's family to offer support, Waddell has its students' best interests at heart. It is in this commitment and through this teaming approach that we dedicate our work to the academic and social successes of all Waddell students. An environment of high quality learning requires that our staff and school community work together to meet the goal of student success for each and every child.