

U.S. Department of Education
2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Aletha Yoho Snowberger

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name C.T. Walker Traditional Magnet School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1301 Wrightsboro Road

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Augusta GA 30901-3289
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Richmond

Telephone (706) 823-6950

Fax (706) 823-6954

Web site/URL https://www.rcboe.org/ctwalker

E-mail snowbal@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Angela Pringle E-mail _____
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) pringan@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us

District Name Richmond County Schools District Tel. (706) 826-1000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Jimmy Atkins
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

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

54 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, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	40	41	81
1	37	65	102
2	48	57	105
3	39	60	99
4	41	63	104
5	38	64	102
6	18	36	54
7	21	32	53
8	26	24	50
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	308	442	750

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5 % Asian
 - 53 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 29 % White
 - 6 % 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 2017 – 2018 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.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	27
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	27
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	791
(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: 2%
17 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Mandarin, Chinese, Vietnamese, Hindi, Tagalog

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 97%
Total number students who qualify: 728

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %
21 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</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: 5
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	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	33
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 23:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
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 2018.

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.

C. T. Walker is a school of excellence that empowers students to be confident, cooperative, lifelong learners, and leaders. Each morning our students and staff pledge to be Wise, Attentive, Leaders who are Kind, Ethical, and Responsible.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

C.T. Walker is a culturally diverse setting that is designed to mitigate racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic status differences. In order to qualify to attend C.T. Walker, parents must reside within the boundary of Richmond County. Admission applications are available twice during the school year for all Richmond County choice programs, including the magnet schools. Once the application is completed, students are administered a reading and math assessment. Students must score on grade level in order to qualify for the school lottery. Lotteries are conducted for each grade level. Students selected from the lottery are enrolled at Walker based on outlined ethnic guidelines in the Richmond County magnet charter.

PART III – SUMMARY

C.T. Walker Traditional Magnet School has a proud history dating back to 1934. The original building was constructed during the Great Depression with federal financial assistance from the Works Progress Administration. The school was named after the Reverend Charles Thomas Walker. The school originally housed grades one through seven and was built to relieve overcrowding and populations shifts in Richmond County. As Richmond County schools were integrated in the early 1970's, student enrollment patterns changed; court-ordered busing was instituted to ensure racial balance and remedy fluctuating enrollment patterns. This made it possible for students from all areas of Richmond County to attend C.T. Walker. The magnet program was founded in 1980 and served grades K-5. Over the next three years, a middle grades program was added. Today, over 700 K-8 students are enrolled from across the county, and a racial balance is maintained. The school is nestled in the heart of downtown Augusta and is in the midst of a neighborhood undergoing revitalization. Many of the people living in the homes surrounding the school are Walker alumni and help tend our garden, keep the front of the school litter free, and attend volunteer events held throughout the year.

As a magnet school, Walker is known for a focus on respect, patriotism, and rigorous academic programming. Our goal is create confident, self-directed learners who can compete in a global society. We accomplish this goal through the art of communication, dedication to higher-order thinking skills, and fostering respect within the school and the community. In 2004, C.T. Walker added a communications and leadership focus to the magnet program. This allows for an expansion of the magnet theme through multiple avenues. Student-generated community service projects were added as an expectation for each grade level. Communications projects were implemented with standardized rubrics developed in conjunction with Augusta University, and partnerships were formed with community stakeholders, including the U.S. Air Force Communications Battalion stationed at Fort Gordon.

Today, there are over 700 students enrolled from throughout Richmond County. We have students that live directly across the street while others come from over 30 miles away. This results in a student population that comes from every zip code, ethnic group, and socio-economic classification. This diversity embodies the spirit of the school and guides our programs and initiatives. In most neighborhood schools, families live in close proximity to the school, but this is not the norm for Walker. Therefore, our school designs monthly targeted programs and events to combat the isolation students and families may experience. Each curriculum area hosts a night for families that involve games related to academic standards, food, and social time. Each month parents are invited for volunteer training, and each quarter, parents are invited to special events. Some the events include pastries for parents, book parades, and our Veteran's Day Fun Run. These events allow parents and students to opportunity to know each other on a personal level and to make deep connections to the school community.

The emphasis that sets Walker apart from other schools is our deep commitment to impacting each student far beyond the educational requirements of the curriculum. Our focus on the entire child creates an environment where students are encouraged to be leaders, understand citizenship, and be active in the community. Outreach requires students to have input in project planning and implementation. Students learn processes for setting dates, identifying resources, and delegating responsibility. Every student is allotted daily instruction in visual and performing arts, foreign language, and career development. These courses support skills from the academic classroom and develop creativity and individuality. Certified faculty facilitate advisement groups where students participate in small groups. Role play and discussion assist with peer relationships. Our peer mediation program is designed to help students learn conflict resolution and problem solving.

We recognize that partnerships are the key to any school's success. Walker has several dedicated and established partnerships. Through integrated science and social studies lessons, our students partnered with the Watson-Brown Foundation to create the first fully certified Monarch across Georgia Pollinator Garden. Our students have gone on to work with and help start butterfly gardens in other local schools. A neighborhood vegetable garden has also been added. Working with Safe Kids, our middle school students created videos about pedestrian safety entitled "Take Action Again Distraction." Augusta University

partnered with our students to create a fairy tale literacy CD that is used in schools across the state.

Walker utilizes our distinguished history to empower our modern initiatives. Our focus is to help students understand that opportunities are available to students from all cultures. With the diversity of our student body, it is a daily occurrence to watch parents and students from all different religious backgrounds interacting and forming relationships. Parents volunteer to teach language, make presentations on their religions or cultural traditions, and provide exploration lessons for our students. Multiculturalism is not something that we just teach, it is something that we live at C.T. Walker.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Walker provides a standards based balanced literacy approach with immersion in reading, writing, and word study. Balanced literacy in Walker classrooms uses authentic texts, high interest reading topics, pre/post assessments, and in context vocabulary to support student learning. The English Language Arts (ELA) instruction is composed of nine components: conventions of standard English, reading foundations, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, fluency, analysis of literary texts, listening and speaking skills, text types and purpose. Our school uses pacing guides to align instruction with required state standards. Additionally, a number of informal assessment are given to gauge student comprehension. Teacher use I-ready benchmarks to monitor student progress; this data is then used to determine individual student needs for acceleration, provide remediation, and to create flexible learning groups. Time is set aside daily for extended learning (ELT). During this time, small groups of students work with teachers on skills identified by data analysis.

ELA instruction is integrated in all other content areas. Teachers emphasize literacy skills and write in every academic classroom. For example, students justify their thinking in math class in paragraph form. Teachers use strategies for showing textual evidence when answering social studies and science questions. All teachers approach reading as the fundamental skill to help promote student success. Vocabulary development is another school-wide initiative to assist with literacy development. The entire school uses a systemic approach to teaching vocabulary in all content areas. Through the use of Sadlier-Oxford teaching materials, students are engaged in word study daily. These materials focus on high impact words and provide students with word rich environments.

Literacy instruction is an integral part of media center programming. Students come to the media center weekly and are given leveled bands of books that are at the high end of their lexile stretch band. Each week students check out one fiction and one informational text in their stretch band to promote increased reading fluency. This integrated approach creates a balanced literacy approach at Walker.

1b. Mathematics:

C.T. Walker's math curriculum is aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Content teachers use manipulatives that allow students to construct cognitive models of mathematical processes. Teachers design lessons using a three part instructional strategy: concrete, representational, and abstract thinking (CRA). Instruction is scaffolded in order to strengthen student understanding and promote retention of conceptual math knowledge. For example, 7th grade students engage in introductory algebra lessons by manipulating Cuisenaire rods to determine the value of variables. Third graders learn to derive formulas for area by constructing block models. Students are able to count square units to determine the total space inside; they then use their knowledge of length and width for computing areas of squares and rectangles. This approach to mathematical thinking is found in every classroom.

Math instruction focuses on concepts of numbers and operations, algebraic thinking, measurement and data, and geometry. Teachers administer benchmark assessments in order to determine readiness for mathematical content and to provide teachers with student quantile levels. The teachers design personalized lessons based on math skills and readiness, and instructional grouping profiles are created based on student skill. Teachers assess these groups weekly on math fluency and are able to retrieve Tools for Instruction lessons from our I-ready program that are matched to student deficit areas. This continuous assessment process provides teachers with evidence of student learning and aids them in developing remediation and enrichment lesson for each instructional group.

Students solve problems by engaging in a math world problem daily during the opening or closing of instruction. This allows students to discover how math connects to the real world. For example, 5th graders

took a survey of the school to tally how many geometric structures make up the school. First grade students created one foot measurement cutouts and measured distances. Third graders used fractions and proportions to make Rice-Krispy treats. Walker's approach to mathematics is to have students see math as a tool to solve problems in the real world.

1c. Science:

Science instruction at Walker is based on the concepts of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). The instructional approach is based on three main categories: inquiry based labs and instruction, cooperative learning, and technology integration. Each grade level has two levels of lab instruction. The first level of instruction takes place in the academic classroom. Students participate in classroom lab activities and demonstrations weekly that are designed to further understanding of standards. For example, during the unit on matter, 2nd grade students spend the week rotating to different classrooms exploring the different states of matter. With each activity, students are taken through the scientific process of discovery and are asked to complete lab reports and observations. Our teachers design lessons using the Georgia Standards of Excellence framework. The standards are based on a three-dimensional model of science that includes core ideas of science and engineering, integration of math, and problem solving. Quarterly benchmarks are monthly formative assessments are used to measure student mastery. The benchmark data is disaggregated to determine standards that students have mastered and standards that need to be readdressed.

The second level of science instruction happens in the weekly STEM classroom. Students in STEM classes use scientific inquiry to participate in labs tied directly to unit standards. Students collect and analyze data in order to draw conclusion about their findings. In collaboration with the academic teachers, the STEM teacher also assists with data analysis of the science benchmarks. During gap weeks, the STEM teacher and science teachers design lab activities for the STEM classroom that address the standards that need to be reinforced.

Technology is used as a tool for integration. Through our partnership with Augusta University (AU), professors provide real world lab experiences via Skype. For example, our 5th grade students Skype with professors to discuss magnetism prior to completing lab experiments. They then share their findings with the STEM teacher and the AU professors.

Science instruction at Walker is a student centered environment that explores the connections between the abstract concepts of science and the real world.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Walker's social studies curriculum utilizes an inquiry based learning methodology with the intention of supporting College and Career Ready students who are active citizens in a global society. To accomplish this, teachers use curriculum maps, unit and year-long pacing guides, pre/post assessments, and actual and virtual field trip opportunities to enrich student learning and expose them to diverse cultures, values and belief systems. Our social studies instruction is focused on three areas: inquiry based learning, skills and practice, and informational literacy. Students are expected to be able to think critically about what they are taught and to understand causality rather than just people, places, and things.

Students analyze primary resources and explore point of view, author's purpose, and historical time periods to derive meaning and connection. For example, when studying the civil rights movement, Walker 8th graders learning about the Birmingham bombing. Students viewed excerpts from the movie, read first-hand accounts of the event, and attended a play based on the story. This culminated in students drawing comparisons between the actual event and the dramatic interpretation of the story. Social Studies skills practice is also vital to our instructional approach. Students learn to effectively read maps and globes, interpret charts and data, and create visual displays of historical events. Our hallways showcase student thinking as their creations are displayed throughout the building.

Literacy is a fundamental aspect of our social studies instruction. Classes are student centered and involve reading, writing, analyzing and discussion concepts. Mini-lessons are taught to students and then teachers

take on the role of facilitators. In order to teacher empathy and compassion, students are often asked to place themselves in the positions of people that they are studying and to justify decisions from the historical figures point of view. As a part of a school-wide initiative, students are using interactive note-booking strategies and thinking maps to improve their literacy skills with informational texts. Quarterly benchmark assessments provide data on mastery of standards and skills. During gap weeks, teachers use assessment data to provide corrective instruction or acceleration of content standards.

1e. For secondary schools:

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

C.T. Walker offers every student the ability to study music, drama, visual art, Spanish, Mandarin, STEM, business and computer science, and physical education as a part of our school's emphasis on creativity, communication, and character. Beginning in kindergarten, all students participate in these courses in a year-long color rotation. The seven-day schedule is essential to the school's philosophy that exposure to creativity and self-expression support learning in core academic areas through cross curricular teaching. For example, fine arts teachers plan interdisciplinary lessons on immigration and segregation through the creation of art, music, and drama. PE teachers use math reviews as an integral part of the games. It is common to hear the PE teachers calling out multiplication questions as students scramble to find the right square. The foreign language department uses curriculum to explore both language and cultures of Latin America, South America, Spain, and China. These cultural explorations are aligned with social studies standards in multiple grade levels. At the conclusion of 6th grade, students specialize in two fine arts areas, selecting one per semester to attend along with PE. In addition, 7th and 8th grade students enroll in high school foreign language courses for high school credit.

Literacy is infused in K-8 through our media hub. The media center operates on a flex schedule and is open and accessible to all students daily. The media specialist collaborates with teachers to design lessons. Our media hub is both a working classroom and literacy center for students. Each grade works on developing research, reading, and digital literacy skills through lessons run in the media center. Our media center has one of the highest circulation numbers in the district.

All students attend STEM lab weekly with activities specifically designed to support science and math curriculum. Using benchmark assessment data, the STEM teacher collaborates with the classroom teachers to design stations that support re-teaching or acceleration based on the data. In addition to classroom labs that are held weekly, the STEM teacher implements lab activities designed to match the curriculum map for each grade level, ensuring that students are exposed to visual representations of the standards. All students in grades 3-8 attend computer literacy classes. For elementary students, the courses are designed to help familiarize students with basic computer programs, such as Microsoft Word, Excel, One Drive, and keyboarding techniques. With students in every grade required to present a communication project quarterly, this curriculum allows for students to add technology components to presentations in academic classrooms. Students attend these classes at least once during the color rotation. Middle school students are enrolled in Business and Computer Science and Intro to Digital Technology that are designed to teach the basics of computer coding, multimedia presentations, and technology centered learning environments. The teacher implements projects related to the academic content areas through collaborative planning with content teachers. Students attend these classes either two or three times a week depending on the week's schedule. With an emphasis on college and career readiness, one major component of these courses is to utilize research skills to explore career pathways. Students in grades 6-8 design career presentations with identified Georgia Department of Education career clusters. These presentations require students to plan a career lesson that includes technology and an interactive activity. Middle school students are matched with an elementary classroom to implement their career lessons plans.

Career portfolios and college readiness is also integrated into our guidance department. Our two counselors assist students in completing career interest profiles, scheduling career presentations, and understanding the fundamentals of academic requirements. In kindergarten, students begin career exploration and the career interest portfolios is created and follows students through middle school. These portfolios are also utilized during our Teachers as Advisers program in which every certified staff member in the school is assigned a small group of students to meet with monthly. In addition to career and college readiness, additional topics are student driven through surveys completed at the end of each advisement session. Some topics that have been discussed this year are bullying, goal setting, study skills, and building positive peer relationships. The emphasis during these sessions are topics of social emotional learning (SEL). SEL components are also addressed weekly in middle school. Our middle school teachers have all been trained on the Life Skills curriculum and weekly sessions are conducted using role play and scenario based learning. Since implementation, our discipline referrals in middle school have decreased. All of these special programs are an integrated part of our holistic view of learning for our students.

3. Special Populations:

Walker is committed to providing a rigorous instructional program to every student. We employ a highly qualified staff that is capable and prepared to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students. Our School Improvement Plan (SIP) has targeted interventions for our bottom and top quartile students to ensure growth. Center-based instruction, flexible groupings, and student goal setting are at the heart of our instructional model. Data is used to determine areas needed for remediation or acceleration. Based on this data, students set learning goals. During daily extended learning time (ELT), students fluidly move between classes to work on pre-identified skills; students use data notebooks to track progress toward meeting goals. In addition to their weekly resource time, three gifted teachers provide academic support for gifted learners during ELT. All special education students are in general education courses more than 80% of the school day; this is accomplished through extensive co-teaching and collaborative planning between general education and SPED teachers. This instructional approach helps all of our students and ensures individualized attention is given to all students in our special populations. Our population of English Language Learners (ELL) is continuing to grow; we are currently serving 17 students in our ELL program through weekly, individualized instruction and classroom support. For students who do not qualify for ELL services but are at risk due to language barriers, our Spanish teacher provides an after-school support program to address reading comprehension weaknesses. Our district liaison commended our school for the implementation of creative and effective RTI interventions that ensure differentiation for our potentially special populations.

The Wildcat Extended Learning Program provides personalized ELA and math learning plans. Teachers design targeted, direct instruction plans that address academic gaps unique to each student. During the 2017-2018 school year, students that were enrolled in the program grew, on average, an entire grade level in ELA and math as measured by our district I-ready screener. For example, at the onset of the extended learning program 26% of enrolled students were more than 2 grade levels below in math, 61% were 1 grade level below, and 13% were on grade level. At the end of the school year, 2% were more than one grade level below, 35% were one grade level below, and 63% were on grade level in math.

A second initiative that has resulted in significant achievement for our special populations has been a focus on literacy across content areas. Walker adopted a focus on vocabulary development and reading of informational texts. Parent volunteers and community partners participate in small group instruction and individual sight word inventories to increase the amount of small group instruction students receive daily. At the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, 9% of students were more than 2 grade levels below in reading and 30% were 1 grade level below. With the combined literacy approach, end of the year results indicated that only 3% of students were more than 2 grade levels below and only 13% were 1 grade level below. At the end of the school year, 84% of students tested at or above grade level in reading.

Our instructional approach contributes to the academic success of our targeted subgroups and our school community as a whole. As a result, Walker minimizes the achievement gaps typically found in subgroups and creates a unified school culture in which every student is able to succeed.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The Walker Way, our daily pledge to be Wise, Attentive Leaders, who are Kind, Ethical, and Responsible, was designed by a team of teachers, administrators, and parents in order to create a supportive and positive climate and culture. All students (K-8) are involved in our Walker Way PAWS program to recognize and encourage positive behaviors that support learning. Through this initiative, students earn stamps on their individual PAW cards for exhibiting traits found in our pledge. Each stamp is worth 5 PAW bucks and can be traded for quarterly incentives, admission to our PAWSitively Awesome events, and for trips to the PAW store. Whole classes are also recognized for following the Walker Way. Each month, classes compete in grade-level bands to earn the most class PAWS for their doors by following our school expectations for behavior. Winning classes are treated to a party each month. Students who have perfect attendance are drafted into the NBA (Never Been Absent) club, and students without a tardy are drafted into the NFL (Never Found Late) club. We have a large number of students that are in both the NBA and the NFL. Discipline is also handled in accordance with The Walker Way. Redirection, reflection, and refocus are the basis of most behavioral consequences. When students do not meet behavioral expectations, they are asked to reflect on the principles of The Walker Way that they did not meet. They then have to create a plan to address that issue and to refocus. This method has helped our students self-monitor and problem solve.

Teachers are also a valued part of The Walker Way. Teacher input is paramount in determining our core values. Each teacher is part of a leadership team; these teams provide input and help guide decisions about budgeting, resource allocation, instructional supports, climate, and school improvement. Quarterly, teachers anonymously complete climate pulse surveys to give feedback on teacher morale. Through this survey, teachers are given a forum to address concerns and help administrators make adjustments to improve teacher support. For example, one of the most recent surveys highlighted that teachers felt frequent use of the intercom was disrupting instruction. Given this feedback, adjustments were made with staff on how and when the intercom should be used. The goal is for teachers to feel that their concerns are heard and addressed.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Community engagement is vital. Due to Walker's district-wide school zone, connection to the school has to be fostered purposefully. At the beginning of the year, parents attend a Day in the Life event. Parents are invited to their child's classes. During this time, teachers discuss student and parent resources, provide a glimpse into rituals and routines, and lead parents through standards based mini-lessons. Quarterly family nights are held to bring families together. These nights are tied to curriculum standards and feature performances and displays from our fine arts and foreign language departments. Data, disaggregated by teacher data teams, identify challenging content standards to use in planning activities. For example, math night activities were geared toward the use of fractions, decimals, and percentages. The outcome is two-fold: students are practicing the skill and parents are able to understand and reinforce the standard at home. The school sends out the Wildcat Weekly every Sunday via phone, email, and social media. This includes important upcoming events and offers ways for parents to get involved in school activities. Monthly volunteer training is held on the 3rd Monday of every month to help encourage parents to obtain their volunteer cards. Parent University also engages parents and helps establish relationships. The sessions have included: Understanding the Milestones, Parent Portal 101, and Active Parenting for Today's Teens. Open lines of communication are established at Walker. Weekly progress reports are sent home every Tuesday and parent conferences are a regular part of the instructional day. Conferences are held face-to-face, over the phone, or through video conferencing to ensure that parents are a part of their child's academic support team. Teachers send out daily Remind and Class Dojo messages to parents and websites are updated daily to reflect the content being addressed in the classroom. All of these programs are designed to help support families.

Business partners are also an integral part of our school. Walker has over 15 committed business partners throughout the community that lend their time, talent, and resources to make our school successful.

Soldiers from the Air Force regularly mentor, support reading and small group instruction, and assist in our fine arts department. This allows teachers to work more closely with small groups of students and provides students with more individual attention throughout the school week. Augusta University (AU) supports a variety of science, math, and writing initiatives at our school. Currently, our Mandarin teacher is fully funded by the AU Confucius Institute. The POTASH corporation has provided support for our STEM lab and funding for our students to establish a vegetable garden that helps provide fruit and vegetables to our neighbors while also educating our students on life-cycles, soil ph, and decomposers. Annually community stakeholders are provided a copy of the school's performance and are invited to a breakfast to celebrate their integral support of our school.

3. Professional Development:

Professional learning at C.T. Walker is designed to provide teachers with differentiated experiences in order to foster continuous professional growth for both students and teachers. In support of our district focus on education, collaboration, and innovation, Walker designed a professional learning plan that is connected to three school improvement goals. These goals were designed by the school's instructional leadership team after a comprehensive needs assessment. With each goal, a professional learning plan is created with topics that support improvement initiatives. Teachers lead sessions on these topics monthly during our Wildcat Workshop time. For example, teachers led technology based learning sessions at our last workshop. Teachers could choose two sessions based on their individualized learning goals. Session topics included Promethean board techniques, how to use iPads to support literacy instruction, utilizing contact logs for increasing parental support, and resource stations for the classroom. The effectiveness of this plan comes from the fact that the teachers suggest the sessions, plan the sessions, and lead the sessions. Providing teachers with choice also builds capacity in the entire staff.

A school focus on literacy also guides professional learning. District professional learning specialists are invited to conduct training on standards based assessment, interactive notebooks, and writing across the curriculum. Teachers rotate through these sessions and then leave each session with at least one defined takeaway to implement in the classroom. During monthly vertical alignment meetings, takeaways are reflected on, student work samples are shared, and new goals are created. This year the faculty is exploring a virtual learning community through Microsoft teams. Teachers are posting assessments for feedback, discussing data digs and lesson strategies, and posting videos for other colleagues to critique. This forum has allowed teachers to explore new strategies based on suggestions from their peers and has been a powerful tool for teacher growth.

At the district level, a calendar of professional learning opportunities is published and shared with all employees. Teachers can register and enroll in classes on a wide array of topics. In many cases, members of our faculty are asked to facilitate sessions in their areas of strength. The district also supports the professional learning for aspiring teacher leaders and administrators. Several teachers at Walker are involved in our teacher leader's district program that is designed to help develop leadership skills for grade chairs, department heads, and instructional leadership team members. Teachers who are interested in administration are provided an opportunity to participate in a leadership consortium that pushes them to design and implement school improvement projects within their school. Current administrators are also a part of the professional learning. Assistant principals and the principal attend monthly professional learning sessions. Topics are developed based on feedback from school level administrators so that the sessions are relevant and meaningful. To ensure that professional learning, done either at the district or school is effective, feedback is solicited from participants and adjustments are made to ensure the needs of the target audience is being addressed.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership is a collaborative effort at C.T. Walker. Each member of the staff, certified and classified, is a part of a leadership team. The data team analyzes assessment results, teacher and student attendance, discipline reports, and climate surveys. The instructional leadership team utilizes the trends and patterns found by the data team to formulate school improvement initiatives, identify professional learning needs, and monitor instructional initiatives for effectiveness. The role of the Title I team is to allocate budgets to

necessary resources, plan and implement parental engagement activities, and research and propose programs and resources that will align to our identified school improvement needs assessment. The school safety team focuses on operational effectiveness of the school, conducts monthly safety walks, and implements training on safety needs. These teams meet monthly and the agenda is created by a collaboration of team members.

The principal and two assistant principals serve as advisers to the four leadership teachers; the administration's goals are to listen to give feedback, while empowering teacher leadership in order to drive school improvement. This philosophy has helped several projects emerge this year that have resulted in increased student achievement. For example, teachers on the instructional leadership team and data team created an interactive data room to support effective analysis of data, an online professional learning community was launched in Microsoft Teams to share best practices, and our Response to Intervention (RTI) protocol was revamped to be more concise and effective.

Parents are a vital part of our school's leadership. Walker has an active school council that meets quarterly. This parent group serves as an advisory board for the principal on matters pertaining to instruction, safety, curriculum, and assessment. School council members provide input on school improvement initiatives and resource allocation. The board sets its own agenda and the principal provides information on topics defined by the school council. The input from school council is an important piece in understanding the parental experience at Walker and providing an open line of communication with parents. The PTO is another facet of our stakeholder involvement; this organization provides direct instructional support to teachers, students, and staff. The PTO dedicates funds to supplementing resources that are not able to be purchased with Title I funds. These resources include additional equipment for our physical education department, specialty fine arts supplies, and playground equipment. The PTO is also an avid supporter of our after school organizations and provides resources for our students to take field trips and attend competitions throughout the community.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Walker's success can be summed up in our strategy of continuous reflection. The school is in a constant state of reflection concerning academic practices, school-wide expectations, climate and culture, and meeting individual student needs. The school improvement process begins in the spring, with leadership teams reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of our programs, initiatives, and goals. Teacher teams delve into data that assists them in finding root causes for areas of weakness and helps the school focus on celebrating success. These reflections then help drive the beginnings of our school improvement plans and goals. Parents and community partners are surveyed to provide feedback to the school. This information is considered and discussed among all stakeholders in open and honest discussions. Walker has created a climate in which reflection on our challenges is seen as a problem solving exercise rather than a negative critique.

Reflection is an ongoing process. During the summer, teams of teachers meet to devise changes to The Walker Way, refine school improvement goals, and evaluate individual student needs based on the previous spring's assessment. Teachers assist in matching students to classrooms with learning profiles that meet their individual needs. This helps Walker begin each school year with students placed in classes strategically designed to maximize their growth as learners.

As the school year begins, pulse surveys on climate and culture taken by teachers, students, and parents provide a way for the leadership teams to monitor and adjust programming. Feedback is presented to the faculty as whole and recommendations for the adjustments are considered. For example, the leadership teams reflected on the alignment of The Walker Way with our discipline plan and saw the need for adjustment to closer align our discipline procedures with our school-wide expectations. Teachers reflected on the steps that could be taken to correlate these elements and created a minor incident report (MIR) that outlined behaviors found in our daily pledge. This form is used to help students self-reflect and problem solve. For example, their behavioral reflection essay asks students to identify and discuss the element of The Walker Way that they did not meet and create a plan to improve in that area. The MIR reports are sent home with the student so that parents can help reinforce decision making and alignment with our school's expectations.

Reflection is at the heart of our focus on the individual child. Response to Intervention (RTI) tools are used to provide student support teams with concrete data to help evaluate and reflect on student growth. Weekly teachers reflect on strategies used in whole group, small group, and individual instruction in order to determine steps for the week ahead. This ensures that the needs of all students are being considered and addressed. At Walker successes are acknowledged and celebrated. However, a focus on reflection ensures that the school is constantly seeking ways to enhance the educational experience for all stakeholders.