

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):
- 185 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 40 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 42 High schools
 - 25 K-12 schools
- 292 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	16	10	26
K	38	37	75
1	39	34	73
2	42	34	76
3	33	46	79
4	40	23	63
5	33	40	73
6	39	39	78
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	280	263	543

*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):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 37 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 19 % White
 - 32 % 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: 10%

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	27
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	32
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	59
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	568
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.10
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
20 Total number ELL

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

Bengali, Ilokano, Japanese, Portuguese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 49 %
Total number students who qualify: 266

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %
43 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>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>11</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>11</u> Developmental Delay | <u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>3</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: 12
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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	20
Student support personnel e.g., school 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 22:1

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	95%	95%	95%	94%	94%
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. 2011

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

Our mission is to empower & challenge students to gain the skills, knowledge, and habits that will enable them to become responsible and effective 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

Waiialua Elementary is a rural school located on the North Shore of Oahu in the state of Hawaii. Waiialua is a small community of about four thousand people. Many residents were raised around the sugar mill, including several of our staff members who grew up in the plantation housing. Waiialua Elementary was built to educate the children of sugar mill workers in 1966. A decline in production led to the Waiialua Sugar Mill, the last in the state, to close its doors in 1999.

Waiialua Elementary School serves a diverse population. Filipinos and Native Hawaiians comprise approximately 44% of our student population, about 35% are Caucasian and another 8% are Japanese. Almost 50% of our students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Many of our students live in the plantation housing that remains, which is a stark contrast to the luxury beach homes nearby.

At Waiialua Elementary, our number one priority is to empower students by teaching them life skills and personal competence. As a “country” school in Hawaii, our “kuleana” or responsibility is to nurture our students with the Aloha spirit; yet, in the spirit of practical common sense, demand the best from them. We believe we can develop the whole child without neglecting academics. Our teachers and staff accomplish this through balancing academic rigor and high expectations with programs and resources for students’ personal development.

On the “academic rigor” end of the scale, the curriculum is standards-based with focused targets and clear criteria. Each classroom has a teacher and a paraprofessional tutor or part-time teacher. The extra eyes, hands and knowledge in the classroom allows for in-depth assessment and differentiation that would otherwise not be possible with only one teacher in the classroom. The teaming allows for real-time interventions to minimize and prevent learning gaps from occurring. Teachers use effective instructional strategies, formatively assess every aspect of student learning, provide feedback based on data, and hold their students accountable for their learning. Each grade level developed a “promotion matrix” which is shared with parents and students in the beginning of and throughout the school year. The matrix describes the activities and learning criteria necessary for promotion to the next grade level.

On the “programs and resources for students’ personal development” end of the scale, we provide students with afternoon academies and a robust social emotional program. Students in grades 4-6 can engage in authentic learning opportunities through specialized academies. The afternoon “Academy” program, which began over twenty years ago, offers mixed-age, project-based experiences such as: media, hydroponics, Tahitian dance, woodworking, art and so on. These activities help students to develop and practice real-life skills like teamwork and communication. They also give our students another avenue to express their voice and talent beyond academics. The academies begin with “seed money” and must become self-sustaining. For example, our hydroponics academy students harvest and sell the produce they grow on campus; while the woodworking academy sells crafts during our school “market day.” Profits from the sales are used to purchase supplies and resources for the academy.

At Waiialua Elementary, we address our students’ social emotional needs with a program based on the book “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People,” by Stephen Covey. The seven habits are: be proactive, begin with the end in mind, put first things first, think win-win, seek first to understand, synergize, and sharpen the saw. The habits stress personal and interpersonal leadership, and teach our students how to adapt to change and behave with integrity. For example, Habit #1 – Be Proactive, does not simply mean to take initiative; it means to choose the best response to any situation, whether that response be emotional, cognitive or action-oriented.

Finally, something that has served both academic excellence and our students’ personal development at Waiialua Elementary School is a strong emphasis on technology. Going back to the turn of the century, leaders at Waiialua Elementary were committed, Title I school or not, to providing our students with access to technology that would be second to none. Through grants, volunteerism and steady investment of school funds, our school was among the first in the state to put computers in each classroom, to wire our school, to go wireless, to use web-based curriculum like KidBiz and Accelerated Reader, and to reach 1:1 status for

devices. Currently, our students produce a daily broadcast, are fluent technology users and all of them use Google Docs. Instead of a print librarian, we have a media coordinator as well as a technology coordinator.

In 2011, Waialua Elementary School was honored to receive the National Blue Ribbon award. It gave our school a lot of confidence and renewed our commitment to the idea that a Title I school can strive for and achieve excellence in academics and personal growth for our students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Waiialua Elementary School addresses Common Core ELA standards through a layered and integrated approach. Our ELA curriculum combines a variety of programs with direct instruction, assessments and supports to monitor student progress. We see the key elements of ELA as fluent decoding, word recognition, reading comprehension, vocabulary, background knowledge, and writing.

To support instruction of decoding and word recognition, we use DIBELS to assess and monitor student learning and the Soliday System for remediation. All kindergarten and first grade classrooms have a paraprofessional tutor (PPT) for three hours a day, to assist teachers in monitoring students' progress in real-time and provide appropriate interventions to prevent students from falling behind.

Our two main strategies for reading comprehension, acquisition of vocabulary and background knowledge are direct instruction of “close reading” behaviors and providing students with an abundance of differentiated reading practices. We require students to be careful and precise in their reading and response to text. For example, in responding to text, answers must be correct, legible, in sentence form and restate the question. We also teach students to identify structures in text, like claims made and evidence provided by the author.

We use two programs, Accelerated Reader and KidBiz, to provide students with differentiated reading practice. Accelerated Reader allows us to match students reading levels with a multitude of books that spark their interests and address their needs and skill levels. Upon completing each book, students complete comprehension quizzes and earn points for passing scores. Kidbiz also provides differentiated reading practice through text adapted from Associated Press news pieces. These non-fiction texts emphasize science and social studies, providing opportunities for students to practice and increase vocabulary and background knowledge.

In addition to KidBiz, we use Wordly Wise to support vocabulary acquisition. This curriculum program teaches vocabulary by embedding high value words into stories and nonfiction articles.

For writing, we use a program called Lucy Calkins Units of Study K-6, a Common Core aligned writing program that teaches students narrative, informative and opinion writing.

1b. Mathematics:

Math instruction priorities vary by grade level. Computational fluency for addition and subtraction is a need and a priority for second grade, while the essential concepts of “place value” and fractions challenge our fourth and fifth graders, respectively. To set our students up for success, we prioritize the math topics and skills by grade level. We use an integrated approach to maximize student learning and use data to purposefully direct our efforts and hold everyone accountable.

Our base curriculum is EnVision Math, which aligns with the Common Core and has both print and digital features. Just as with reading, we believe that the base curriculum must be supplemented with direct instruction and focused practice.

Students receive additional focused practice through a program called Accelerated Math, which runs parallel to our base curriculum. Teachers assign students specific objectives that are based on their individual needs. This web-based program allows students to work on math objectives at their own pace.

In addition to teaching the math topics and skills, we train students to articulate their understanding of problems with words or drawings. We use story problem templates that require students to demonstrate an

understanding of the problem before they are allowed to begin solving it.

We use an assessment program called “Evaluate” to provide a monthly check for students and a progress report for the common core benchmarks in each grade. This assessment data informs classroom instruction and helps teachers implement interventions for students, such as small group instruction or individual tutoring. The data also highlights the concepts and skills that are the most challenging to students in each grade level. This helps teachers to allocate the appropriate amount of instructional time and focus their energy to the areas of greatest need.

1c. Science:

For science, we seek a balanced approach that involves inquiry, hands on activities, discussion, reading, and writing. Waialua Elementary is in the midst of aligning our curriculum and instruction to match the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). NGSS created an opportunity for our hands-on activities to have a “starring role” in our lessons. With the standards and topics changing, we are adapting our repertoire of learning activities accordingly.

We use a program called Mystery Science. This curriculum presents students with a phenomenon found in world we live in and poses “mystery questions.” For example, “what makes a roller coaster go so fast?” Students discuss these mysteries and develop questions for further exploration. Through a mix of hands on activities, video and discussion, students are given insights into science concepts behind the “mysteries.” Each unit has a summative assessment for students that is aligned to NGSS.

An inquiry approach to science still requires that students have a broad-based knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts, so our science curriculum integrates reading and writing on general science topics. As previously mentioned, KidBiz has a robust library of articles aligned to the science standards; about half of its content is STEM based. Our students must successfully complete two KidBiz articles a week. Each KidBiz article has embedded assessment activities for the topic assigned. Additionally, we use a great deal of science text in reading instruction. Our writing curriculum - Lucy Calkins Units of Study for Writing - has a unit on informational writing for grade K-6 where students are asked to write about science topics. In fact, the “informative” writing unit for second grade is “Lab Reports and Science Books.”

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

Waialua Elementary School uses the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards III (HCPS) for Social Studies as a base for its curriculum. As in other states, the standards here are a mix of geography, national and world topics, along with a mix of state history.

We do not follow a single, school-wide curriculum. Each grade level closely examines its standards, identifies the concepts and topics addressed, then maps out the resources and activities the teachers believe best address their particular standards. For example, fourth grade is primarily devoted to the history and culture of Hawaii. Grade levels develop unit assessments and projects to assess student learning.

We feel it is important to create relevancy for our students by aligning field trips to social studies topics. From kindergarteners visiting the neighborhood fire station, third graders learning about diversity on a visit to Chinatown, fourth graders going to the Pearl Harbor Memorial or fifth graders going to the State Capitol Building.

As with science, we make certain to integrate reading and writing into the social studies curriculum. We use Time for Kids, NEWSELA, and KidBiz to provide a variety of resources that offer contemporary social studies articles across all grade levels. KidBiz contains many articles that align with the HCPS Social Studies standards. Each KidBiz article has embedded assessment activities for the topic assigned. Our writing curriculum for all grades includes units focused on informational and opinion writing. Teachers use this form of writing to address social studies topics, including the issues of the day.

As of the submission of this application, the state of Hawaii is in the process of implementing a new set of
NBRS 2019

standards for social studies called the Hawaii Core Standards for Social Studies. We are reviewing and dissecting the new standards and adjusting our curriculum to ensure alignment.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

Four years ago, Waialua Elementary was one of few schools in the state selected to host and pilot a Pre-Kindergarten classroom for four-year-olds from economically disadvantaged families. The focus of our Pre-Kindergarten class is twofold - one, socialize children in a structured and interactive school setting with an emphasis on play curriculum; and two, lay the academic and behavioral foundation that is fundamental in helping the students succeed on the K-3 continuum and beyond.

Our first set of four-year-olds are now in third grade. For a cohort of students that would normally trend below grade level, our data shows 78% of our former Pre-Kindergarten students assessed above grade level for reading and 90% above grade level for math, based on STAR reading and STAR math assessments.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Waialua Elementary we strive to provide our students with positive experiences in academics, the arts, technology, and self-development through a mixture of enrichment activities. We do not have the funds to hire physical education (PE) and art resource teachers, so we rely on the regular grade-level teachers to address these subjects. For grades 1-3, non-core subjects are taught on a rotational basis. For example, in a grade level that has three teachers, one will teach art, another PE and the third music. The subjects taught are based on the teacher's individual interest and expertise. For grades 4-6, we augment the efforts of individual teachers through our academies.

The academies are self-selected and mixed-age. The academies focus on a variety of fine arts such as media and arts and crafts as well as physical activities like the "team academy" with a focus on sports. Academy options go beyond art and physical education, and can include agriculture and Polynesian culture. Some of the academies allow students to develop skills that can lead into careers, like our "green thumb," hydroponics and media academies. The project-based academies create products or performances, and teach the students accountability and other skills necessary for the world of work. To determine the success and value of the academies, we administer a survey to the students. Last school year's student survey, 92% of students agreed with the statement "academies are valuable and important to students at our school."

Technology is at the forefront in Waialua Elementary School. We are a 1:1 school with wireless carts in every classroom, and we have two computer labs. Beginning in kindergarten, students use the devices to access web-based curriculum and tutor applications. We also start with keyboarding lessons in kindergarten. Students in grades 1-6 have a Google account for which they use Google Docs. And many of our teachers are utilizing Google Classroom. Our school has both a technology coordinator and a media coordinator. We leverage social media and various media applications to support professional development, classroom instruction, student learning, foster a positive school culture and communicate with parents. The academy students produce video projects that are then edited by our media academy and shared during the daily morning broadcast.

Our school library is busy and thriving, with one of the highest circulation volumes for an elementary school in the state. Between print and e-books our students have access to more than 15,000 titles. The Accelerated Reader program promotes the continuous reading of books to our students, so we have to work hard to meet the demand for books and library access. Every other week, each grade level has afternoon professional learning communities (PLCs), which has helped to increase student access to the library and computer lab. While the teachers are working together to examine data and improve instruction, the students (K-6) rotate through group activities in the library and the computer lab.

During the PLC time, we offer a counseling workshop, in which students receive the social emotional learning curriculum. Lessons come from the book “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen Covey, and “mindfulness” lessons from a program called Second Step. We teach students that everyone is a leader and the first person you lead is yourself. Our mission statement is “to empower and challenge students to gain the skills, knowledge, and habits that will enable them to become responsible and effective leaders.” Each class creates its own mission statement which is posted in a public area. In the classroom, leadership positions are created so that students have the opportunity lead in some way. We also have a Student Congress that provides leadership opportunities for the upper grades and “The Who’s Who Club” for students showing positive leadership behaviors in grades two and three. The data from last school year’s student survey, showed 83% of students agreed with the statement “the 7 Habits are something I will remember and use in the future.”

3. Special Populations:

Waiialua Elementary School seeks to address the diverse needs of our learners in multiple ways. One strategy is the use of paraprofessional tutors (PPT), part-time teachers (PTT) or educational assistants (EA) in each classroom for a portion of the day. Having an additional educator in each classroom promotes differentiation, facilitates small group instruction and the application of interventions in real time. This allows us to identify and address learning needs and close achievement gaps.

In addition to the extra support in the classroom, more than half the staff is paid to provide after school tutoring and study hall. The iReady assessment screening program is used to identify students who have severe gaps to overcome. These students are pulled out of the classroom during the school day to receive targeted interventions from PTTs and EAs. We offer summer tutoring for students to provide support and minimize challenges they may experience in transitioning to the next grade.

A variety of web-based programs provide assessments, differentiated practice and even individualized interventions for students in math and ELA. The list of reading support programs includes (some previously mentioned), STAR Reading, Sonday Systems, Accelerated Reader, KidBiz, and iReady.

For math support, we have STAR Math, Accelerated Math, Evaluate and iReady. We have two PTTs who provide pull-out and push-in services for our English Language Learners (ELL). ELL students have access to a special curriculum called Imagine Learning. This program provides students differentiated practice for reading, writing, listening and speaking. It also provides support in fifteen different languages. We also fund ELL tutoring programs that take place after school, and during the fall, winter and summer breaks.

In addition to services delineated in their individualized educational plans (IEP), special education students are in a class with a smaller educator to student ratio, and receive supplemental tutoring during and after school. Special education students in grades K-2 receive 1:1 support with the Sonday System to improve decoding skills. Special education students in grades three and up, are pulled out twice a week for 1:1 reading comprehension tutoring. PTTs use strategies based on the “Reading Recovery” protocol.

Results from the annual state testing with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) give us reason to believe we are on the right track. Our subgroup of “high needs students,” which includes disadvantaged, ELL and higher functioning special education students, scored a proficiency rate of 72% on the language arts portion of the assessment. This is 18% higher than the state average for the general population of students. Our “high needs” students had a math proficiency rate of 65%, which is 16% higher than the proficiency rate for the state’s general population. For the 2017-2018 school year, our achievement gap between high-needs students and non-high needs students is 10% for language arts, compared to the statewide gap of 32%. For math proficiency, our achievement gap is 6%, compared to the statewide gap of 28%. (Source: StriveHI Statewide Snapshot.)

We believe that our school culture, which is both nurturing and demanding, is particularly helpful for our high-needs students. We also believe that our commitment to providing our students access to current education technology has contributed to our students’ proficiency results.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Waialua Elementary School, we understand that students need to demonstrate learning through academic assessments. We also understand that no one makes a living by doing well on academic assessments. People make a living - and make a quality life - through their agency, knowledge, skills and personal competence. That is why our number one priority as a school is to empower students through life skills and personal competence. We have to balance the daily grind of academic achievement with broad opportunities for students to grow and develop as individuals. We have to balance the work required for success with moments of joyful fun.

Approximately 20% of yearly class time is devoted to interest-based and project-based academies for grades 4-6. This gives students the opportunity to use their student voice in selecting their academy, as well as their role within the academy, and the projects they pursue. Students have found success in unexpected ways and developed talents they never knew existed. Whether it be an ELL student reading the news on a media broadcast, or a special education student performing a Tahitian dance in front of the school to a roar of applause, or young girl breaking a gender stereotype by using power tools in the woodworking academy - academies provide many special moments of growth for students and staff alike.

The use of “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” as our social emotional learning platform, is an effort by our school to nurture and empower students. The first three habits emphasize personal growth, but the next three – think win-win, seek first to understand and synergize – are about establishing productive and nurturing relationships, and help to promote a positive school climate.

Beyond academies and the 7 habits, we are a rural school in Hawaii. The spirit of Aloha and "ohana" or family atmosphere permeates throughout our campus. Most of our teachers' children attend our school, many of our staff grew up in Waialua and attended our school as children; and as we get older, we are fortunate to experience teaching the children of children we taught years before. Our staff enjoys pot luck socials every month and we always look for opportunities to have fun. When our students do well on the annual SBAC assessment, the entire school (and staff) celebrate by throwing water balloons at the principal.

Finally, we show our staff they are valued by not micro-managing them or using overly scripted solutions. Many of the practices and programs that are part of our culture were collaboratively developed by the staff.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Waialua Elementary School is continuously working to build positive relationships with parents and our community. We leverage technology to communicate with parents, utilizing applications like Remind, we send messages, pictures and even videos that allow them to see what their children are experiencing in school. We also use "Seesaw" to create digital student portfolios that are shared with parents. In addition to technological applications, we have an annual parent night and quarterly “Principal Coffees.” These events invite parents to engage with the Principal, teachers, staff and school.

Our School Community Council (SCC) consists of representatives from our staff, community and parents. At each meeting, we review the academic plan and key initiatives to ensure progress is being made and goals are being met. While the SCC takes such oversight duties seriously, they take more satisfaction in organizing school improvement projects. The SCC has built partnerships with community organizations and local businesses for a variety of projects. Over the years, the SCC has overseen the construction of an outdoor stage, the school marquee, a cultural garden and the renovation of our cafeteria dining room.

We have partnerships with a number of civic organizations, including Kokua Hawaii Foundation, who supports agriculture and healthy eating at school; and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program managed by

the Department of Agriculture and the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, an “artists in the schools” program.

In Hawaii, there is a strong military presence, and we are fortunate to work with military partners. Our current partners are the 307th Expeditionary Signal Battalion and we have worked with them to create a mentorship program for some of our boys who may be at-risk and/or may not have positive male role models. We have an interesting program in place with Monsanto Corporation, now owned by Bayer, called “Pay it Forward.” In this program, grade levels identify causes they want to support - like The Humane Society, The Ronald McDonald House, Special Olympics and Shriners Hospital - and pledge to meet certain levels of achievement or performance task. When these students accomplish their goal(s), Monsanto makes a donation on the students’ behalf to the select organization. For example, our third graders might pledge to read five hundred books in a quarter in exchange for a \$500 donation to the American Red Cross on their behalf. When third grade meets that goal, a representative from the Red Cross comes by and is presented a check from Monsanto on behalf of our students. This creates a “win-win” by tying academics and service to others together in one project.

3. Professional Development:

We seek to improve the capacity and expertise of teachers and administrators but maintain the focus of continuously improving our practice to increase student achievement of standards. Professional development is an ongoing process at Waialua Elementary School. Our approach is very practical, collaborative and responsive to data. We do not believe in general, “latest fad,” “bring in a guru” types of professional development. Simple changes can sometimes be powerful.

We look at achievement data and identify areas of opportunity for our students and consider obstacles that may be limiting student achievement. If we believe the obstacle is occurring during instruction, we research instructional strategies to help students overcome the obstacle and conduct the appropriate professional development. For example, a few years ago we concluded that students were underachieving because they were often not clear on the purpose or target of the lesson. Students were also not clearly understanding the criteria that evaluated their proficiency level. As a result, we invested a great deal of time and energy in research, classroom observations, and professional development to train teachers on providing clear learning targets, developing success criteria and formatively assessing for understanding.

On the other hand, if we came to the conclusion that our students’ success is limited by ineffective curriculum; we would research and select curriculum that meets the needs of our students, then conduct professional development to ensure effective implementation. For example, three years ago we found out that our students needed a more robust writing framework. That led us to Lucy Calkins Units of Study for writing. An abundance of professional development time was dedicated to supporting effective implementation of the new writing curriculum. The first year of implementation, our ELA scores for SBAC improved by 7%.

Since our approach to professional development tends to be the “nuts and bolts” of effective instruction and curriculum implementation, we rely a great deal on teacher collaboration. Teachers meet by grade level in biweekly professional learning communities and each grade level has six pull out days per year to examine data, and make improvements to instruction and curriculum. The idea is that if you have twenty people try out slightly different tactics and strategies, then share everyone’s data, you might find that five of them got better results than the other fifteen. If you can isolate the techniques that improved learning proficiency, you can then replicate them in other classrooms or implement the practice schoolwide, and as a result improve instruction. We also pay teachers to work during the summer for individual or grade level projects that will enhance student achievement.

4. School Leadership:

When it comes to leading a school, it starts at the top. The principal needs to be mindful of the needs and abilities of his/her staff. Clarity, continuity, feedback (objective data) and autonomy are critical to empowering staff. It is the responsibility of the principal and vice principal to develop and sustain a vision

of excellence and set aspirational goals – we are a great school, we create high levels of academic achievement and provide children with enriching experiences.

At Waialua Elementary School (WES) we believe in shared and collaborative leadership. It is the collective action of the staff that brings a vision to life. Administration must work to build a working relationship with and among the staff, maintain morale, equip them with the tools and resources for success, strengthen their leadership competencies and expect results. Our approach to success is to be pragmatic, steady and have sustainable improvement; which is based on the Japanese philosophy of "kaizen", or "good change." Kaizen relies on incremental and organic improvements, rather than big, innovative changes.

Grade level teams assume a leadership role in creating student success. Using assessment data, teachers work collaboratively to select resources, instructional strategies and curriculum that address the standards. As long as their students are showing growth and improvement, the teams require very little oversight from the Principal.

Additionally, we have three standing committees: Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), Technology and 7 Habits, where teachers can take-on leadership roles in the implementation of school initiatives. The committees are tasked with setting the direction for and implementation of schoolwide initiatives. For example, the ILT developed the criteria for "response to text questions", which was adopted by teachers schoolwide. The Technology Committee decided that each grade level should create and maintain their own webpage to communicate with parents. The committee established policy, provided support and had the grade level pages ready for the following school year. The 7 Habits Committee proposed that every classroom complete a 7 Habits activity each week and this became a schoolwide practice.

Waialua Elementary believes in shared and collaborative leadership that is responsive to student achievement data. We are able to make decisions and take action with surprising speed because our decisions are not driven by personal feelings or preference, but by data. For example, when comparing our writing data with schools that have more comprehensive programs, we knew a change needed to be made. We made the decision to adopt a writing program in the Spring of 2017 and the new program was ready for implementation in the Fall of 2017. This was possible because data showed that this was what our students needed. Subsequent data showed significant improvement and supported our decision for making a change.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

If we had to identify “one thing” that contributes to our students’ success, it would be our use of data. The data identifies what is working and what is not. It helps teachers make the connection between what they do and how well their students are learning. It informs and supports the decision-making process.

In 2007, we adopted the use of web-based curriculum which had assessments embedded in the program. The data from the embedded assessments was actionable. For example, it allowed for differentiated reading practice. The formative data was user friendly – teachers and administrators received immediate feedback regarding a student’s progress, both within a school year and longitudinally. Teachers knew their data, as well as their colleagues’ data. It promoted collaboration and professional exchanges amongst the teachers, with the sharing of best practices. This enabled teachers to provide direct supports, implement interventions and modify their instruction. As a result they would see students improve over time. The accessibility to this kind of data has been valuable. Teachers have an awareness of their students’ needs from day one, whereas before students may have fallen too far behind to the point where they lose interest in learning.

Over the years, we added layers of assessments and made formative assessments a priority. This led to the creation of our “promotion matrix” for all grade levels. When teachers meet with students and parents in the beginning of the year, they are able to articulate the assessments and criteria for students - everything from reading fluency to math standards, as well as successful academic behaviors. As the school year progresses, parents and students receive a quarterly update on their progress in addition to general report card grades. The clarity and feedback provided by our system has been empowering for students, staff and parents.