

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Chase "Chase" McLaurin

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

Official School Name Walnut Hill Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 10115 Midway Road

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

Dallas City TX State 75229-6230 Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County DALLAS COUNTY

Telephone (972) 502-7800

Fax

Web site/URL https://www.dallasisd.org/walnuthill E-mail rmclaurin@dallasisd.org

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. Michael Hinojosa Ed.D

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail HINOJOSAM@dallasisd.org

District Name Dallas Independent School District Tel. (972) 925-3700

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 Dr. Edwin Flores Ph.D

(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

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
 - 145 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 38 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 44 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools

227 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
 - Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
- 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	50	41	91
K	35	39	74
1	32	21	53
2	24	26	50
3	30	15	45
4	17	14	31
5	22	14	36
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	210	170	380

*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
 - 8 % Black or African American
 - 83 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 5 % White
 - 2 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 5%

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	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	18
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	378
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 53 %
201 Total number ELL

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

Gujarti, Arabic, Hindi, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 75 %
Total number students who qualify: 286

8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %
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>7</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>16</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: 4
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.	21
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.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 18:1

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	98%	98%	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. 1999

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

Walnut Hill Elementary will create and foster an optimal learning environment focused on academic excellence, creative innovation, high expectations, and a commitment to actively involving and leading our world.

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

Walnut Hill Elementary is rich in tradition and history and is situated in an affluent North Dallas neighborhood. While some students come from the neighborhood attendance zone, the majority comes through hardship or curriculum transfers. 74% of students are economically disadvantaged while 82.3% of students are Hispanic, 8.2% African American, 5.8% white, 1.8% Asian, 1.6% multi-racial, and 0.3% other. Students commute from across the city of Dallas and even from the suburbs to attend Walnut Hill for the high quality education provided, the communal pride, and our inclusive specialized programs. This is evidenced by cohorts of students who stay together from Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade with the majority of students admitted to magnet schools. The high level of family and community commitment is demonstrated by the core of volunteers for reading partners, and participation in family events such as the annual Reading Under the Stars, Hawktoberfest, Math Family Game and STEAM Night. Families are drawn to the small campus because they can identify with the diverse, highly qualified staff who are role models for their children. Also, parents are attracted to the school's unique programs such as the Two-Way Dual Language, Dual Language Gifted and Talented, and tuition based Pre-Kindergarten.

Walnut Hill Elementary, was founded in 1916 as a rural school with only 25 students and served students in grades 1-12. It now serves pre kindergarten through 5th grade students and has reached a student population of 380. In 1946, the Walnut Hill School District became part of Dallas ISD and remains part of the 14th largest school district in the US today. Walnut Hill's performance peaked when the campus received national recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School in 1999. During this time the campus was not as racially and ethnically diverse, and less than half of the students were economically disadvantaged. The student demographics continued to change over the next twenty years. For example, our English Language Learner (ELL) population has increased from 21.5% in 1999 to 55.3% in 2019 and our economically disadvantaged population has more than doubled during this period. Although the campus had a reduction in staff and an increased at-risk population which provided new instructional challenges, the staff changed their mindset and embraced innovation in order to meet students' needs and achieve academic excellence. Throughout the years Walnut Hill's vision, promise, and pledge to our stakeholders has always been the same, to ensure a world class education for all students with a focus on developing them for the future. The National Blue Ribbon on the front of the school building reminds the community of Walnut Hill's rich history of excellence. It has remained a symbol of pride over the years for the hard work and devotion of all students and staff members. Winning the award has created a community that believes and pursues high levels of student achievement. In 2016, the school celebrated its 100 year anniversary and was recognized by The State of Texas – House of Representatives for The Historic Milestone of 100 Years of Outstanding Public Education in April 2017. Over the last four years even with more disadvantage students and changing demographics, Walnut Hill Elementary has seen a renaissance and reached new heights in academic achievement receiving many awards and recognition. Since 2016, the campus has received three gold ribbons from Children At Risk. In 2017, the campus received all six of the state's academic distinctions for the first time and the highest district climate survey for the first time. Walnut Hill earned a preliminary "A" letter grade on the Texas Education Agency's new grade accountability system in 2018.

As the mission states, "Walnut Hill Elementary will create and foster an optimal learning environment focused on academic excellence, creative innovation, high expectations, and a commitment to actively involving and leading our world." Because the school is committed to diversity and leading the world, it is important that staff and their perspectives aid in shaping the world views of students as a strategy for cultural development. Representing countries from four continents, the staff brings with them a global knowledge and experience that improves the social and academic lives of students. They demonstrate life-long learning by furthering their education and continuing to learn the most current teaching methods and practices. Thirty percent of educators have master's degrees and most have multiple state certifications. Staff readily integrates technology into the classroom creating a more engaging and collaborative learning experience. Whether technology is incorporated or not, students are consistently engaged in authentic learning activities which are culturally and globally responsive. Teachers differentiate instruction by process and product to meet the needs of all academic levels. The core of instruction aligns to school's motto, "Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow," and is embodied in the theory of practice as instruction is culturally responsive and ambitious in moving students above grade level. Student products are based on

cultural thematic units that displayed throughout the campus which develops student pride in their work. Walnut Hill started implementing a leadership program to instill habits that build character, meet social-emotional needs, and create an exemplary school culture.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

The English and Spanish Language Arts Reading curriculum is guided by a comprehensive core program beginning with a strong foundation in Pre-Kindergarten. Core instruction is provided to the class as a whole and in differentiated small groups based on student academic achievement, language proficiency, and specific needs. In the early childhood grades (PreK- second), the ELAR foundational skills are acquired through phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. The program is strengthened through supplemental instruction, language to literacy charts, performance assessment, authentic student work, real-life application projects, guided reading, and connections across content areas. Purposeful use of technology may be observed in all grade levels via web based individualized literacy programs that provide instruction and assessment. Campus teachers collaborate during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to design best instructional practices that align to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) while enriching global perspectives. The goal is to foster students' creativity and empathy through their love for literacy, and it is visible in our students' excitement to visit the school library and read a variety of books. Moreover, reading and writing TEKS are considered to be interdependent so a balanced literacy approach is used which includes word study, text analysis of rigorous, varied mentor texts through text-dependent questions and annotations, close reading, and read alouds. Walnut Hill is a Two-Way Dual Language campus offering English and Spanish instruction to ELLs and non-ELL students who opt in to the program. Teachers work on adapting the English curriculum to not only design activities that create biliteracy, but also bicultural experiences. Our Two-Way Dual Language Gifted and Talented teachers utilize a Gifted and Talented curriculum. This curriculum is unique because it incorporates literary analysis and interpretation, persuasive writing, linguistic competency, and oral communication for gifted students while supporting their critical thinking skills.

1b. Mathematics:

Every student should receive a quality education regardless of their socioeconomic background. The teachers use district adopted curriculum, manipulatives, cross-curricular projects/activities, and researched based practices to enhance and continuously ensure quality use of the mathematical Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Beyond the district resources, teachers utilize their experience and knowledge to create materials that will enrich and engage students as they tackle math in each situation thus creating a mathematically strong foundation. In order to build mathematical foundational skills, teachers implement a conceptual - representation - abstract process. This is done through hands-on activities, manipulatives, and anchor charts to provide differentiated approaches to problems and creates a student centered math classroom. Students are given daily opportunities to apply problem solving models in everyday situations, in and out of the math classroom to become well rounded analytical mathematicians and citizens who are able to defend and reason through their thinking. During Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) teachers collaborate on ways to reach all students across all grade levels based upon analysis of data. Teachers collaborate to create a cross-curricular synthesis of concepts and vocabulary through projects and products, hence students become more aware of each subject's dependency on one another, realizing there is always a connection to be made. Along with teachers and the administration, students consistently analyze their own data advocating for their mathematical education. Through the use of trackers and leadership notebooks, students are able to pinpoint their strengths and areas of growth. From that point teachers and students can work together to differentiate their learning to push towards more critical thinking performance tasks at and above grade-level curriculum, and also or to address how gaps will be filled and surpassed. Students take ownership in their learning and have a greater investment in their progress and achievements.

1c. Science:

The science academic foundation begins in Pre-K 3. The 5E model (engage, explore, explain, elaborate and evaluate) was chosen because it actively involves students in developing their own understanding, with teacher support. The curriculum is presented through district-adopted and supplemental materials, digital resources, and applying science to real world situations that are aligned to the TEKS. Students are challenged on a regular basis to analyze and evaluate scientific processes and engage in cooperative learning through labs, outdoor activities, and problem based tasks to acquire science foundational skills. This design provides opportunities to differentiate instruction as well as tutoring and after school clubs for successful content and application retention. Integration of monthly Science Technology Engineering and Math cross-curricular projects allows students to apply their skills and learn through real life application. It is imperative that students link math and science since both subjects use quantitative and qualitative analysis as measurements as a common ground to develop and retain knowledge. In an effort to ensure that all students are at or above grade level the school uses performance tasks and assessments so students may demonstrate their comprehensive skills and knowledge. As an example of a school wide project, the campus was awarded a \$100,000 outdoor classroom grant and garden which allows educators to integrate STEM aligned lessons which match the pacing and meet the requirements of both TEKS and district expectations. This serves as a guide to all teachers and assists in the implementation of differentiated lesson structures using the garden as an extension to rigorous lessons. Using the outdoor learning classroom and curriculum, educators are successful by increasing student engagement through student-driven, exploration-based learning, increasing effectiveness and job satisfaction using outdoor experiential learning, challenging students to apply knowledge to solve meaningful real-world problems, and fostering 21st Century skills.

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

Teachers strive to provide innovative Social Studies practices to enrich and teach our students to become critical thinkers and communicators who know how to take meaningful action. Walnut Hill's purpose is to ensure students are civic minded global leaders who positively affect change. Students work diligently to attain foundational skills through project based learning, performance tasks, document based questioning, cultural awareness, and cross curricular instruction. They participated in democratic processes such as voting. Cultural awareness is the current overall theme and driving force of Social Studies instruction. As part of the school's mission to create global leaders, it is essential to cultivate civic responsibility and excitement about other cultures, as well as expose our students to a variety of customs and backgrounds. To achieve this goal, the school focuses on different cultural and historical themes that impact our world as identified in the TEKS. The students research different topics across all content areas, and engage in learning experiences that help ameliorate their cultural sensitivity. The student excitement sparked from these activities guides the lessons and allows them to own their learning thereby creating a unique and personalized learning experience for each child. During this process, students explore issues such as race, equity, class, and gender that impact our world. This is important because students need to know that there is a whole world in which they can learn. Many students are economically disadvantaged and do not have personal global experiences that lead to multiple perceptions. The goal is to expose students to diverse learning opportunities to ensure that they are global leaders and cultivate the curiosity for meaningful travel. Targeted social studies instruction is possible through cross curricular instruction. Cross curricular instruction in this subject area has allowed staff to target reading, writing and social studies TEKS through a whole new lens. This has also increased students' vocabulary knowledge, creating a holistic classroom experience.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

Walnut Hill Elementary PreK offers a complete program that includes project based instruction, encouraging creativity through exploration, hands-on activities and self directed learning. Our school provides the students with a safe, structured, inclusive learning environment that promotes social emotional development to form productive members of our community. Learning experiences are based on TEA Prekindergarten Guidelines in the areas of mathematics, science, literacy, social studies, social emotional

development, early writing and reading, language and communication which are directly aligned with TEA Kindergarten - Third Grade academic standards. Our teachers challenge their students to reach and surpass the milestones needed for a successful and holistic transition to Kindergarten and throughout their school experience. Early education and intervention based on cognitive and socio-emotional skills play a critical role in filling the gaps for at-risk students, as shown in students' achievement gains.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Walnut Hill Elementary provides comprehensive electives that greatly enrich the student learning experience and align with the TEKS. Visual and performing arts (VPA), physical education, Mandarin Chinese, and Library and Media services are among the programming that is offered to ensure all PK- 5th grade students are well rounded and receive a world class education. Students attend each special programming at a minimum of once a week, but typically attend more often because of flexible scheduling that provides increased opportunities.

Visual and performing arts programming provides opportunities for students to engage in arts education through creative means and celebrate their accomplishments through school wide performances and events. The VPA department also helps with the curation of student work and performances that align with celebrating monthly cultural themes. In addition to this students are able to utilize the school library to gain essential digital citizenship skills, learn about internet safety, and facilitate students' foundational research skills. Parents, families, and community members are invited to actively participate when students showcase their work through performances, galleries, and cultural celebrations.

The physical education program provides students with a foundation for a healthy life. The physical education teacher has helped to support generations of local and global "learners, and leaders." Students from PK-5th grades participate in physical education for one hour daily, three times a week. Students learn the fundamentals of fitness, a balanced and nutritious lifestyle, teamwork, and basics of team sports so that they can engage in a healthy community. The main focus is to develop physical fitness to the students' best ability. All classes use the physical education TEKS, which are aligned with the scope and sequence for several content areas. Reading, writing and math are also reinforced in the P.E. classroom. In order to reach the community, the P.E. department sponsors the annual Jump for the Heart program to invite parents to come to class and engage in physical exercise that promotes healthy cardiovascular activity.

Because we are committed to developing global learners and leaders, we are the only elementary school in our district that offers Mandarin Chinese as part of our core enrichment programming. Research shows that language learning before the age of 7 increases language learning ability overall. In 2018, student began to receive Mandarin Chinese language classes for grades PK-5 through exposure to songs, books, and vocabulary. This type of language learning supports students in language learning at Walnut Hill Elementary as it provides another avenue to strengthen the parts of the brain that facilitate language acquisition. The Mandarin Chinese program works in concert to complement the Two-Way Dual Language program by providing an enrichment program built around language that seeks to ignite the cultural curiosity of students. This program provides students with rudimentary knowledge of the language as well as opportunities to engage in cultural exploration with a native speaker as their teacher.

Library and Media services helps to realize and facilitate development of the school-wide technology plan. All students in grades 2-5 have one to one access to Kindles in which each student maintains a digital portfolio that includes student achievement and goal setting data. Teachers regularly schedule opportunities to access the library which opportunities for in-depth research projects that align with the TEKS and a foundation for students' academic research. Furthermore, students learn digital citizenship that promotes internet safety and awareness and an understanding of the impact of their digital footprint.

As a Leader In Me School, we consistently cultivate character education and social-emotional learning for all students. A CASEL endorsed program, Leader In Me uses the 7 Habits of Happy Kids to help students, families, teachers, and staff to engage in the habits of mind that build capacity in soft skills, social-emotional learning, and strengthen school culture. The 7 habits focus the 5 core paradigms that drive the whole-child approach. The 5 core paradigms are: 1.) everyone can be a leader 2.) everyone has genius 3.) change starts

with me 4.) educators empower students to lead their own learning 5.) develop the whole person. Through implementing this model our staff proactively mitigates the impact of adverse childhood experiences by equipping students with a system that empowers them to succeed.

3. Special Populations:

Walnut Hill is a top tiered school that produces excellent academic results within its diverse student population that includes a great number of English Language Learners. To close the achievement gap the school developed a plan to increase parental involvement, development of a culturally responsive curriculum, and parent teacher conferences and communications home in their native language to increase effective participation.

Staff are highly trained, well informed, and work collaboratively to address the needs of the diverse learners on the campus. Through deep data dives, teachers identify students in need of additional assistance. All students receive differentiated instruction based on their individual data which is acquired through a variety of sources including teacher observations, state assessments, district common assessments, grade level assignments, and performance tasks. Based on this information teachers create tiered instruction, small groups, differentiated instruction, technology based support, and tutorials. By meeting each student where they are academically, Walnut Hill teachers maintain high levels of achievement.

Special Education students often come with varied academic abilities that need to be reinforced in smaller group settings through inclusion and pull-out services. Once identified, these students participate in the program based on their individual needs. In order to close the achievement gap, students are provided assistance either in the classroom (inclusion) or are pulled out of the classroom based on Admission Review and Dismissal committee decisions, with specific goals as outlined in their Individualized Education Plans (IEP). Inclusion and pull out services expose students to continuous academic rigor; keeping them engaged and learning the same curriculum as their peers without disabilities. The students who are pulled out of the classroom are usually below grade level and work primarily to improve vocabulary and comprehension skills for reading and/or math; including math calculation skills. During these small group instructional sessions, the teacher may modify grade level TEKS and adapts pacing and materials to address IEP goals based on assessments.

WHE has offered consistent pull-out Gifted and Talented (GT) services over many years. Recently a need was identified to better serve underrepresented students from our English Language Learner sub-group within Gifted and Talented. With the support of the district, on campus state certified Gifted and Talented teacher and administrators, Walnut Hill was chosen as a pilot school for the Two-Way Dual Language for the Academically Gifted Program, new to our school this year. Both GT programs provide premier learning experiences to help students develop a love of literacy, language and culture while using Gifted and Talented (GT) strategies that increase the level of rigor and enrich the overall student learning experience. While one GT program has a pull-out modality and the other a homogeneous environment, both programs respond to the diverse and unique needs of the population to foster academic advancement and social emotional learning of gifted students. Overall, the design of the GT pull-out and Two-Way Dual Language programs lend themselves to explicit cross-curriculum connections using research-based methodologies such as the Depth and Complexity Model, and an national award winning gifted curriculum. The work created by gifted students is authentic in nature and affords each student daily opportunities to develop leadership skills and demonstrate critical thinking skills with ongoing support.

The campus offers Dual Language education to the English Language Learner population as an additive model which has biliteracy and biculturalism as the main goal. Students receive instruction in English and Spanish in all content areas to foster language acquisition through content as identified in the TEKS and the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). Teachers incorporate best practices such as bilingual partners, students generated alphabets, bilingual labels in the classroom and throughout the building, cognates, and bilingual learning and research centers. All bilingual teachers are highly qualified. Several staff originate from outside the United States which enhances our mission to provide students with global perspectives.

Walnut Hill's student population can belong to one or more subgroups; therefore the campus engages in a collaborative approach to close the achievement gap that exists among 3rd grade African American students in Mathematics, 4th grade At-Risk students in Writing (English only,) and 5th grade Non-Gifted and Talented students in Reading (Spanish). Through the use of ongoing weekly tutoring (45-60 minutes/per session), teachers use a variety of resources to address their needs. The ongoing collaborative approach, specialized programs for Special Education, Dual-Language, Gifted and Talented program has empowered Walnut Hill to excel each year and continuously earn high Distinction Designation from the state of Texas.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The school environment and atmosphere are filled with all seven habits of a leadership program and showcases students' academic, social and emotional growth. In pursuit of both private and public victories, students show more confidence in their education, relationships, and self-esteem. They take ownership of their learning as seen in individual data/leadership notebooks where they create personal and academic goals, track their progress, and set up action steps to meet those goals. This paradigm shift has been created by teachers who not only support and encourage their students but have empowered them to believe in themselves and increased academic achievement.

The relationships between teachers, students, and the community are essential for a continuous, nurturing learning environment. Teachers build a lasting relationship that will impact each student's growth in learning. The bonds created are incorporated into the leadership program, which promotes synergy. Cultural awareness and diversity are embedded academically throughout the lessons and student work tasks which displays quality where creativity shines and rigor is amplified, as well as socially through learning about various cultures and understanding the importance of how historic events have shaped the world.

Students also grow in mindfulness. The counselor implements social and emotional strategies in each classroom during guidance lessons on kindness, bullying, career awareness, and wellness. Discussions of the seven habits are incorporated daily during breakfast in the classroom. Teachers use breathing activities and calming areas to work with students for behavioral interventions and may refer students to individual and group counseling.

Staff celebrate the leader that is in all of us. Exceptional student leaders are voted as Leader of the Month and receive school-wide recognition. Students use their unique characteristics of a leader to find their own voice. A variety of clubs are offered that students may get involved in such as Gardening, Chess, UIL, Soccer, Ozobots & Coding, and Lone Star Challenge, as well as enrichment opportunities including Reading Partners and annual field trip to the state capitol in Austin.

Teachers are also valued as leaders of the school who have many leadership and professional development opportunities throughout the year. All teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals communicate, work together to develop goals, and willingly seek support from each other. In addition to collaborating daily, professional development trainings occur weekly. The Parent Teacher Association celebrates staff by providing various meals. Team building starts on the first day of the academic year with incentives such as Friday jean days. Staff receives support by our caring sunshine committee and monthly demonstrations of teacher appreciation. It is not a coincidence that student achievement gains over the past three years occurred as the campus scored the highest on the district climate survey in all indicators and one-fourth of the staff have stayed on campus for over twenty years.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

To promote school success and improvement, Walnut Hill is always seeking ways to communicate with families more effectively. Rather than sending a letter, the Remind and Seesaw applications send messages more efficiently and help teachers stay in contact with families. Teachers add assignments so that children can work in class and parents can see what their child is learning in class. These applications have been successful by engaging parents with their child's' education and achievement.

Walnut Hill is supported by the amazing families who donate time and effort to make their children's school experience memorable. Whether it is during the school day helping decorate the hallways or dressing up for our haunted house, our parent involvement is both encouraging and uplifting to all staff. PTA and teachers are involved in Hawktoberfest, which acts as our fall festival and fundraiser. On the Walnut Hill grounds is a community garden and house that are used by community members, teachers, students and PTA.

School activities are embedded to support our core academic classes. These events cultivate an environment where teachers, students, and parents want to be. One of our biggest events, Reading Under the Stars, has students and their families with blankets, sleeping bags, and flashlights lined throughout the hallways as they read their favorite books under thousands of stars that staff and parent volunteers hang. Dr. Seuss Day and the Book Fair support the love for reading. During STEM night, students are challenged to creatively solve real world problems using the knowledge and skills that they have learned in the classroom.

Engaging activities are crucial to support morale of the school and to continue participation from stakeholders. The Modern Mile Home Tour is a community outreach event that allows the school to be active and invest in the community around the school. United to Learn is a non-profit organization and an essential partner that provides support to the school with various resources including the Leader in Me. Parents are informed of students' academic achievements through technology communication systems and/or packets sent home. Parents have full access to grades provided by the district called PowerSchool. Data walls are in every classroom to facilitate self-monitoring of assessment performance in each subject or specific TEKS student expectations. Walking the campus as a visitor or community member, you notice and appreciate all the authentic student work displayed and the pride students feel in their assignments.

3. Professional Development:

Walnut Hill prides itself on intentionally planning and providing professional development that promotes the needs of every child. Decisions are based on campus needs, network goals, and district initiatives. Achievement data at the beginning and throughout the school year is utilized to make informed decisions about areas of need. Sessions are chosen based on staff needs (e.g. teacher's experience, knowledge of content area, and areas of teacher interest). Learning opportunities are provided to achieve campus goals aligned with the mission and vision statements. Weekly opportunities are provided for staff members to engage in learning and collaboration to expand their teaching strategies on the TEKS, pedagogical methods that meet student needs, and drive student learning. This comprehensive PD plan has a large impact on students' performance; for example, the school identified writing as an area for improvement, so after teachers went to several writing trainings, they shared new strategies with colleagues that led to increase writing across the campus.

The administration, along with the staff, reflects on student achievement, possible gaps in curricula, and teaching methods and strategies. This discussion reveals a focused and clear pathway to place efforts. In order to meet the needs of all students and new programs, the leadership and staff understands the unique needs of a student who has been identified as gifted and talented. Individuals from Dallas ISD's Advanced Academics department have been supporting this goal by providing thirty hours of learning on the basics of gifted education, leading a book study on Teaching Gifted Kids in Today's Classroom, co-presenting parent workshops, and coaching classroom instruction. In addition, the district's Bilingual ESL Department provided a workshop on Project Based Learning by representatives of the Buck Institute for Education. These professional developments were incorporated as part of the campus goal to offer a Two-Way Dual Language for the Academically Gifted program. Besides participating in all campus PD, administrators attended the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development Empower 18 and the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented Leadership conferences.

Campus leadership is able to offer staff a variety of leadership opportunities by facilitating sessions that showcase their expertise on a variety of topics using book studies, research articles, role playing, and collaborative learning. Walnut Hill staff are committed to helping their peers by presenting at the campus, network, district and global levels. A few teachers travel to the Galapagos Islands to model high leverage cross-curricular teaching practices for Pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade. This demonstrates to students and school community how they can become actively involved in leading the world, which directly ties to the Walnut Hill school motto, mission, and vision statements.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership team's philosophy can be best described as a commitment to developing world leaders. They expect teachers to be leaders in the field of education and students to become leaders with the 21st century skills necessary to positively impact our world. This philosophy can be seen in the mission statement developed by our staff: "create and foster an optimal learning environment focused on academic excellence, creative innovation, high expectations, and a commitment to actively involving and leading our world."

The principal is a collaborative transformational leader and innovative instructional leader committed to high expectations supporting all stakeholders to ensure realization of the campus's shared vision: "Walnut Hill Elementary seeks national recognition as a premier urban elementary school committed to developing inquisitive global leaders". The principal's main focus is on developing teachers and working together to improve curriculum and instruction. The campus instructional coach supported the principal with coaching teachers and managing the instructional program until the 2018-2019 school year when the campus received an assistant principal for the first time and the instructional coach position was eliminated. The campus instructional leadership team is made up of one teacher from each of the core four content areas along with the counselor. This team collaborates to improve the instructional program by planning and executing professional developments for the staff. All teachers serve in leadership roles to help plan and execute different family and student events throughout the year.

Administrators spend the majority of their time supporting teachers, attending professional learning communities, managing data, and observing classrooms. The principal is visible and models high expectations for students, staff, and the school by reviewing the student work posted in the halls and even picking up trash or pulling weeds in the morning. The principal requires all teachers to have up to date student work that is rigorous and above grade level posted for every subject. The posted student work must also be aligned to the monthly cultural themes and cross-curriculum connections are expected to be seen. The student work highlights the high expectations for all students and shares our story with the community. Teachers are able to vertically align with upper grade levels and the principal celebrates the grade level with the best work each month. Administrators and campus instructional leadership team provide feedback to teachers and ensure the disaggregation of student data is used to drive ongoing improvements to the instructional program.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The main practice that has led to continuous increases in student achievement would be our practice of posting and celebrating high quality authentic student work. The principal praises the grade level with the best culturally themed and/or cross- curriculum rigor student work that is posted. This practice has encouraged teachers to plan backwards to inform their instructional design. It has also created a culture of accountability for high quality instruction in every subject at all grade levels. These tasks have additional rigorous and requirements that require teachers to bring several learning objectives together and figure culturally responsive content to bring into a student performance task. It has also encouraged grade levels to increase cross-curriculum planning to gain praise from school leadership. Teachers collaborate weekly during their PLC time to create high level and tightly aligned performance task and review student work.

Student work is used for accountability at Walnut Hill in a way that motivates teachers to not only improve themselves, but also collaborate to improve instruction together. The increased rigor and advancement of the curriculum can be seen through the high quality authentic student work covering our hallway walls. It has truly transformed the student experience and connected their learning. Student work has evolved from content focused worksheets to advance cross-curriculum performance task resulting in authentic student work for students over the past four years. For example, last year during Asian-Pacific Islander heritage month our 4th grade students were working on financial planning and time projections related to travel to Asia during math. They were learning about cycles in science using food chain and weather cycles in Asia. In social studies, students studied the cultures, geography and forms of government in Asia to compare with Texas. Students then researched different theories related to Easter Islands to help with persuasive writing in language arts.

Celebrating high-quality, authentic student work has led to improved student outcomes with students working harder on their assignments because they know their work is celebrated, visible, and valued. Half of our students are considered at risk and come from low income households. Many of these parents may not know how to show appreciation for their child work through simple gestures like placing it on the refrigerator for everyone to see. At Walnut Hill, our walls serve as our students' refrigerators for showcasing our students' learning and hard work. The practice has also led to increased community support with many stakeholders from the community coming to visit our classrooms and see our posted student work. The learning at Walnut Hill is visible for all to see.