

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):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	42	40	82
K	29	26	55
1	30	33	63
2	39	26	65
3	38	26	64
4	33	42	75
5	0	0	0
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	211	193	404

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

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 11%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	38
(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)]	46
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	407
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 82%
333 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 83%
Total number students who qualify: 336

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %
30 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>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>24</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>4</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: 7
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.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 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	97%	97%	98%	97%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2018.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

The mission of Wilbur E. Lucas Elementary is to produce responsible and productive citizens who are capable of thinking critically to solve problems in an ever-changing world by providing a system of quality instruction, based on appropriate curriculum, effective instruction, community, and family support.

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

Named in honor of a founding school board member who advocated for children's educational needs, Wilbur E. Lucas Elementary opened its doors in the Fall of 2003. The school serves students in pre-kindergarten (3- and 4-year-olds) through fourth grade and houses the District's only special education life-skills program for severely and profoundly disabled students in second through fourth grades.

Located in the southernmost portion of Hidalgo County, Lucas Elementary is approximately two miles from the U.S./Mexico border. The school is one of eight campuses within the Valley View Independent School District (VVISD), which includes a 10-mile area nestled within the Texas cities of McAllen, Pharr, and Hidalgo. The student body is reflective of the demographics of the community and home to some of the poorest populations in the nation. In the 2018 U.S. Census Bureau Survey, Hidalgo County registered the lowest median household income, the highest poverty rates, and the highest child poverty rates of the entire nation. A Title I School-wide campus, 87.71% of the students at Lucas are economically disadvantaged.

Additionally, Lucas students face other challenges. Most come from homes where only Spanish is spoken. Students at Lucas are 100% Hispanic, and 74.23% are English Learners (ELs). Due to the large influx of recent immigrants with interrupted formal schooling, many of our newcomer students experience learning difficulties.

The staff meets these challenges by promoting the school's motto: "Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow." At Lucas, every student, teacher, and community member supports, values, and ultimately, believes in each other. In partnership with parents and the community, the staff consistently creates a school where students become independent learners, responsible decision-makers, and thoughtful citizens. The school is a safe and caring environment that helps students reach their full potential.

A core value at Lucas is that students come first. This philosophy is evident as the staff pay careful attention to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs that the students bring to the classroom; Lucas staff are responsive to their students' cultural backgrounds. For example, when Lucas celebrated fifteen years in operation, a Quinceañera was held to celebrate the milestone. A quinceañera is a popular celebration held for young women in the Hispanic culture when they turn fifteen; it represents a coming of age. The Lucas tiger mascot was dressed in a ball gown and serenaded by Mariachis while students and guests enjoyed cake and punch. The quinceañera represented a validation of the students' culture, which was greatly appreciated by the children and their families.

Lucas offers quality instruction in a print-rich and child-centered environment. The staff provide a comprehensive curriculum that integrates learning through academic, artistic, technological, and athletic programs. Recognizing the developmental characteristics unique to all students, teachers make use of all available resources to prepare students for academic success. Students are taught in whole group, small group, and individualized settings, depending on each child's need. Computer lab and library resources are used weekly to enhance and encourage student engagement. Implementation of a school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) plan called the Tiger Buck\$ Life Skills program teaches and rewards students for being safe, respectful, and responsible. In addition to traditional physical education activities, students participate in programs that promote health and physical wellness such as Hidalgo Cleanup Day, Jump Rope for Heart and maintenance of an outdoor vegetable garden.

Lucas Elementary's strength is the family behind every student. Parents and guardians hold high expectations for their children and have a strong tradition of supporting the school's goals and objectives. As highly respected partners, parents work closely with the Community Aide to support students and teachers in all school activities. Parents participate in conferences, Family Literacy Nights, and daily library reading activities. Parents also chaperone school events and help create instructional materials. Lucas Elementary's Parent-Teacher-Organization (PTO) is extremely supportive of teachers and has many family events throughout the year. These include informational meetings regarding assessment, special program guidelines, and current school events. The PTO hosts fun-filled activities and fundraisers that the entire school community enjoys such as festivals, Field Days, and School Beautification Day. The most popular

activity is Lotería Night, which fills the cafeteria with students and their families to play Mexican-style Bingo.

A testament to the success of the programs, Lucas Elementary has earned the highest ratings and distinctions for academic achievement and attendance. The campus is recognized at the local, state, and national levels as a leader in the quality of education provided for students. Since 2004, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has awarded Lucas with the highest possible ratings, including exemplary status and met standard with numerous distinctions. The campus has been recognized as a Title I Distinguished School, a Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC) Honor Roll School, and a National Center for Urban Schools (NCUST) High Performing School. In 2017, the school earned TEA's Distinction Designations for Academic Achievement in English Language Arts, Reading and Mathematics, Top 25 Percent on Student Progress, Closing the Gaps, and Postsecondary Readiness. The staff is committed to excellence and the adoption of current educational practices so all learners can grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Lucas implements a Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)-based Reading and Language Arts curriculum that incorporates a Balanced Literacy Approach which combines whole language and phonics. Students see reading and writing modeled, share in language activities with the teacher, practice skills independently, and are actively engaged in word study. Teachers follow the district curriculum, which includes a scope and sequence that spirals tested standards and comprehensively assesses students. Teachers collaborate to develop engaging lessons and activities that help students learn to read and instill in them the love of reading to become lifelong learners.

Lucas teachers employ a variety of strategies for language development that includes the metacognitive use of academic language and literacy. Language is taught through a system that encompasses word recognition and context clues. Teachers assess comprehension and reading fluency weekly and measure students' progress through both formative and summative assessments. Students in need of intervention participate in extended day tutorials and small group interventions with instructional specialists along with leveled computer-based programs. Students demonstrating above-level reading skills are provided with additional challenging computer-based programs and activities addressing all literature elements.

In pre-k through first grade, an emphasis is placed on beginning reading skills: print awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These skills are targeted daily to foster reading improvement. Using the Language Experience Approach, Lucas teachers guide the students to create and explore reading and writing daily. This method allows students to share their personal experiences and promotes oral language, which enables the children to acquire the English language. At Lucas, all fourth-grade students meet with the principal and participate in Writing Wednesdays to target composition. After completing their essays, students receive written feedback for continuous improvement. Students have earned distinctions for writing excellence.

In 2nd through 4th grades, instruction builds upon previously acquired skills and targets comprehension and analysis of skills across genres in a variety of texts. Instructional tools such as graphic organizers and reading-response journals are integrated to improve students' comprehension. Teachers differentiate instruction by forming small, flexible groups and targeting students' needs.

1b. Mathematics:

Lucas uses a comprehensive mathematics curriculum that equips teachers to fully implement the TEKS in a manner that is rigorous, coherent, engaging, and accessible to all learners. The curriculum is designed to develop mathematically secure students who can apply principles in problem-solving situations. Teachers write concept development lessons according to the TEKS for each grade level, emphasizing basic understandings of number, operation, and quantitative reasoning; patterns, relationships, and algebraic thinking; geometry and spatial reasoning; measurement, probability, and statistics. Each six-week learning period contains five concept development units.

Each day, teachers use manipulatives to teach content knowledge, problem-solving strategies, graphing skills, basic facts, and cooperative learning. Teachers review basic math facts with students daily. Teachers at all grade levels use rigorous problem-solving strategies and spiraled math skills to engage students in higher-order thinking. Spiraling occurs through word walls, centers, and animated videos. Powerful and engaging videos assist teachers in addressing areas of instructional challenge for mathematics content. By the end of the school year, Lucas students are prepared to transfer their learning to higher level mathematics.

Teachers determine the review topics using the student performance data from the previous six-week assessments in concepts, operations, and problem-solving. Teachers also utilize computer software assisted

instruction to reinforce each student's abilities. Students have additional opportunities to practice problem-solving skills through web-based programs accessible at school and at home. Daily work, weekly tests, and six-week assessments are continuously analyzed to evaluate students' progress, strengths, and weaknesses. These assessments provide ongoing feedback to teachers and students to determine learning progress and identify areas of need. Immediate intervention includes opportunities to practice problem-solving skills through the use of web-based resources.

The campus' success is due to sustained math professional development. Every six weeks, teachers attend training designed to provide them with a sequenced guide to implement the math curriculum in the classroom.

1c. Science:

Science is taught using lessons that promote scientific investigations and reasoning, while including instruction in the three main branches of science: earth, physical, and life. The district basal ensures vertical alignment while addressing the TEKS; English Language Proficiency standards and College-Career Readiness standards are embedded in every unit. The curriculum includes best practices and strategies, guiding questions, academic vocabulary, and links to instructional videos integrating the use of technology in each lesson. Concepts are spiraled to connect to previous and future learning. The curriculum incorporates a pre-assessment, a formative activity, and a unit summative assessment. An interactive science notebook is one of the methods used to help students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of concepts. All students record their observations, notes, vocabulary terminology, and key concepts.

The campus has two science labs that allow students to experiment in order to gain knowledge of the covered topics. In addition to the science lab, software aligned to the lessons enhances the learning that takes place at the lab. These technological resources support hands-on learning and inquiry-based investigation. All students participate in two annual science fairs that allow them to design, construct and present their investigations. Students have the opportunity to showcase their learning and knowledge by presenting their projects to parents and the community.

Lucas has classroom pets and a schoolyard habitat. Classroom pets stimulate curiosity and provide many learning opportunities. The pets are beneficial to the emotional and mental growth of the students. They encourage nurturing in children and teach them to be careful and kind and provide opportunities for students to learn turn-taking and responsibility. The schoolyard habitat enhances lessons regarding science and nature while providing students with a powerful example of land stewardship. Furthermore, presenters from the local community wildlife refuge and university conduct lessons and experiments and bring artifacts for students to observe. These learning activities provide students with the opportunity to interact with the natural world and to learn about their role in conservation efforts.

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

Lucas Elementary's social studies program prepares students for college, careers, and civic life with lessons that are rigorous and aligned to the TEKS. The curriculum is designed to teach students to develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse and democratic society. It includes targeted lessons in history, geography, economics, government, citizenship, and culture in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade. Taught daily, all lessons provide a unique combination of printed materials and digital resources that teach students civic responsibility. Students work independently and in cooperative groups to learn vocabulary and social studies content using grade-level appropriate newspapers. Teachers provide instruction using themed stories and pictures, along with written activities and reading comprehension questions. Each lesson provides opportunities for students to engage in lively discussions and debates while learning about Texas and national historical events. Lucas teachers craft and personalize lessons, addressing the importance of holidays in the United States and those that are culturally relevant such as 16 de Septiembre, Día de Los Muertos, and Cinco de Mayo. Before the winter break, the PTO sponsors a Posada for all students which is marked by traditional rituals filled with cheerful singing, authentic food, and fun, including a piñata filled with candy.

Lucas also stresses the importance of morals and virtues. The school's character education program recognizes good habits to lead students to become responsible and mature adults. The main lesson is taught by the school counselor each month, and classroom teachers reinforce activities in the classroom using research-based video resources, curriculum modules, interactive software, and other helpful tools such as the Tiger Buck\$ Life Skills program. This program is implemented school-wide to recognize students who demonstrate virtues through the use of play money as rewards and consequences.

Beyond the classroom, students learn about civic engagement by participating in projects that help the community such as pet food drives, neighborhood cleanup, and voting in Student Council elections. The annual Career Day allows students to meet local and state officials and learn about the importance of civic duty.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

Lucas Elementary has a full-day pre-kindergarten program tailored to the needs of 3- and 4-year-old children. The curriculum aligns to the kindergarten-third grade TEKS in language arts, math, science, and social studies. All subjects are taught using developmentally appropriate play-based activities and inspire engagement to build a foundation for learning. Teachers organize lessons around themes that grow in scope throughout the school year. Students are assessed using the state's progress monitoring system, which is administered at the beginning and end of the school year. Students who have attended Lucas pre-kindergarten program have performed at high academic levels in the primary grades.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Lucas is committed to educating all students in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade by offering classes in physical education, health, technology, and the arts. Aligned to state standards, each program ensures that Lucas students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged for long-term success.

The staff provides physical education and health classes in accordance with the TEKS. Physical education teachers provide instructional experiences in which students are active and engaged in developmentally appropriate ways. All students stay physically active with vigorous exercise, games, and sports for the first half of each class period and lunch recess. The physical education instructor uses the state-mandated Fitnessgram to assess daily exercises and physical conditioning throughout the school year. Students participate in afterschool tumbling, team sports, campus-wide Field Day, and intra-district competitions.

The school nurse conducts nutrition and healthy habits classes every six weeks. Lucas students participate in other presentations from local health organizations that promote dental and personal hygiene, healthy snacks, and personal safety. Health topics addressed are diabetes prevention, obesity, high blood pressure, and making informed choices. The school counselor works in coordination with the nurse to teach anti-bullying, bus safety, character education, and conflict resolution. Together, they promote health and wellness activities for the student body and community at large during Red Ribbon Week, Jump Rope for Heart, and Pennies for Patients.

Lucas implements the TEKS-aligned music and fine arts curriculum in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade for 45 minutes each week. The arts are heavily integrated into the curriculum. Students engage in music-making using a web-based program, percussion instruments, and singing. The students also act in self-created plays and dance productions. Lucas staff incorporate performing and fine arts skills into daily lessons to build a strong foundation for students as they prepare to pursue the arts in middle and high school. Throughout the school year, Lucas students have opportunities to join music groups, dance teams, University Interscholastic League (UIL), and Destination Imagination. These student groups meet weekly to prepare performances for Meet the Teacher Night, local and community parades, PTO meetings, the

Christmas Showcase, school pep rallies, and the end-of-year Lucas Talent Show.

Lucas Elementary's staff and administration understand the importance of technology and follow the VVISED computer applications curriculum aligned to the TEKS in grades pre-kindergarten through fourth grade. Every homeroom class visits one of two computer labs at least twice a week for 45 minutes. The lab instructor guides and encourages student participation in digital applications that reinforce reading, language arts, and mathematics skills. Lucas teachers incorporate technology applications in classroom lessons that foster creativity, innovation, and critical thinking in the daily lives of students. Rigorous activities encourage students to produce PowerPoint presentations, engage in interactive worksheets and create videos. Each teacher guides and promotes participation in digital applications to expose the students to a variety of media and virtual environments as stated in the TEKS. Students have the opportunity to develop creative ideas in various digital formats by using iPads and Chromebooks. Daily access to these devices allows students to acquire the skills necessary to become digital citizens. Fixtures in every classroom are three desktop computers, a mounted projector, and a document camera for student and teacher use.

The library media program is the heart of Lucas. All students are taught using TEKS-aligned lessons by a certified librarian. The weekly classes promote individual and whole class attention to books through book studies, book-to-movie field trips and other fun reading incentive programs such as Tiger Star Readers, which encourages students to read a million words annually. Igniting a love of reading is the central mission of Lucas Elementary's library. Not only do readers score higher grades, but they also become better citizens, which correlates directly with the school's motto, "Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow. At Lucas, the love of reading is nurtured by allowing choice and self-selection of books, giving students time to read during the school day, and providing access to quality literature. These principles have been crucial to the success of the Lucas Library program for the past fifteen years. Lucas participates in local, state, and national reading initiatives that encourage reading for enjoyment as well as reading for learning. The library is open 30 minutes before school, 30 minutes after school, and during lunchtime. A special reading event, Super Fun Saturday, is held each semester to promote reading and help students read more than one million words during the school year.

3. Special Populations:

Lucas teachers use data to inform and influence instruction that matches students' needs during the school year. In August, all students take a pre-test in each core content area. Results from the pre-test are used to form dynamic groups for formal instruction.

The process of teaching the same material to all students using a variety of instructional strategies requires the teacher to deliver lessons at varying levels of difficulty based on the unique abilities of each student. During each lesson, the teacher provides rigorous whole group instruction. After whole group instruction, teachers implement techniques with small groups using a variety of modes based on the assessment data. Materials such as leveled readers and manipulatives are used to close achievement gaps. Immediate intervention is part of the daily lesson; flexible groups are based on student understanding and performance on formative assessments. Self-paced technology lessons also provide opportunities for ancillary staff to assist any student in need of additional help. After each Friday assessment, teachers produce an item analysis with performance summaries to identify students' weaknesses and to target specific areas of need.

Throughout the school day, students are heterogeneously grouped. Tiger Focus Time is a 60-minute daily intervention or enrichment for all students during which teachers organize students into teams based on their needs, according to assessment data, in the areas of reading and math. Content, process, and product are key elements in the lesson design and reflect the unique needs of each group. Students identified as Gifted and Talented participate in rigorous learning activities that offer a variety of opportunities to perform tasks at an advanced academic level. Students who are on grade level in both reading and math are challenged with instruction that is adjusted to facilitate achievement at a higher level of proficiency.

Students in need of intervention in reading and/or math participate in a structured curriculum designed to strengthen their foundational skills and close achievement gaps. Students identified in need of additional support are assigned to extended day tutorials. Group size is generally six to eight students, but sometimes

the group is as small as two to three students. After analyzing the data, the teachers collaborate with the principal and ancillary staff at grade level meetings regarding best practices and strategies to improve student learning. Master teachers are also available for classroom modeling of best practices. Students most in need attend reading intervention class. The reading teacher tailors instruction to a small group or individual using guided reading strategies and technology applications.

After each assessment, student groups may change. Progress monitoring is used to track student performance every three weeks. Student groups are adjusted if the data support the change. On occasion, there is a gap of ten or more percentage points between the test scores of all students and the test results of the Special Education subpopulation. To address the achievement gap, students are targeted through direct instruction by the homeroom teacher, ancillary teacher, and special education teacher. Together, they utilize a repertoire of individualized strategies specifically designed to meet the academic needs of the sub-group.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Lucas, striving for excellence is not a means to stand out, but a way to fit in. The staff cultivates a love of learning while promoting a sense of community. Students feel welcome, safe, and supported. Because this is a small community, everyone feels like family. Family and community engagement are the essence of student success and achievement.

The school year begins with a campus-wide theme designed to motivate and excite the entire school community. The theme is reflected in the hallways, classrooms, and common areas to communicate a unifying message designed to enhance school and community relations. It promotes "esprit de corps" and serves as a way to re-imagine and re-interpret curricular units. The theme is incorporated into the curriculum through classroom projects, the arts, and athletics. All decorations are created by the staff and parent volunteers. This year's theme, "Exploring Worlds of Knowledge," provided an avenue for each grade level to explore a continent. Students researched the continents' customs, traditions, and national symbols. As one walks the hallways, there is a unique blend of untamed wildlife, ocean life, and historical landmarks to catch the eye and inspire the imagination.

Lucas holds numerous activities that foster positive relationships with parents and the school community throughout the school year. The school librarian hosts Grandparents' Day, Family Literacy Night, and Read Across America. Building family literacy and instilling a love of reading is achieved by inviting parents and the community to visit the library and read to children. Other events that promote partnerships between the school, parents, and the community are UIL, Awards Assemblies, Fall and Spring Festivals, Career Day, and the end-of-year Lucas Talent Show. These activities have demonstrated a positive impact on students' academic, social, and emotional growth.

A campus-wide behavior initiative reinforces a positive school climate. Lucas staff understand that celebrating students' success leads to increased student achievement. By providing incentives such as classroom participation points, "Tiger Buck\$," or positive notes to parents and guardians, students are encouraged to continue striving for personal and academic growth. In addition to redeeming their Tiger Buck\$ and points for a variety of prizes at the Tiger Mall, academic success is also acknowledged and celebrated every six weeks during awards assemblies. Rewarding students for their hard work has proven to be an effective way to motivate students and increase academic engagement.

Lucas teachers are supported by recognizing their specific contributions, accomplishments, and service to the community. Announcements, small tokens, and refreshments are provided monthly to staff. This recognition validates and motivates their ongoing desire to develop professionally. The school's stakeholders value the teachers' dedication to the school and their commitment to student success.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Lucas staff understand that a family's engagement in their child's education is critical to improving academic outcomes for their child. The campus works diligently to establish a welcoming environment for parents and the community. The annual Meet the Teacher Night provides parents and students with the opportunity to meet teachers, staff, and administrators before the school year begins. This event supports the school's primary objective of creating a partnership between the school and home by affording parents the opportunity to ask questions and teachers the opportunity to share academic goals and expectations.

Lucas Elementary encourages parents to take an active role in their children's education. Communication is essential; to this end, administrators and teachers keep parents informed of school events. The school shares information via notes, telephone calls, conferences, home visits, the parent portal, the electronic marquee, and social media networks. Teachers also use web-based tools to share pictures, videos, and instructional tips to support instruction with parents.

Parents and community members participate in campus committees and activities: Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), District Wide Educational Improvement Committee (DWEIC), and the Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC). Parent volunteers provide much-needed help daily by preparing instructional materials, by helping students with craft projects, and by making treats for special event days.

Lucas has a Community Aide who works together with parents, teachers, and administrators to keep the students in school, to eliminate barriers to student success, and open doors of opportunity. Parents are invited to attend weekly training sessions at school. These sessions provide information to parents on a variety of topics such as instructional strategies, school policies, attendance, health and wellness, state assessment, and the emotional well-being of children. A popular activity is visiting the classroom during math instruction. Parents become the student by watching the teacher model strategies in the area of math reasoning.

Lucas promotes several activities to build a strong school and family partnership. The staff strives to tailor activities to the student population to overcome barriers to academic success. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) works cooperatively with the campus. The PTO meets monthly to maintain open lines of communication with parents, teachers and the school community. During the meetings, parents are informed of student needs, school activities, academic objectives, and state and local assessments. Students perform at every PTO meeting. These performances allow students to showcase their talents outside of the classroom. The PTO also works with the school to provide rewards, incentives, and field trips for students. These incentives encourage students to maintain good study habits and academic success.

3. Professional Development:

All staff receive multifaceted professional development anchored in daily teaching activities. The campus administration participates in a summer leadership academy provided by the district administration to receive training on effective strategies for closing learning gaps for struggling students and to receive curriculum updates based on revisions to the TEKS. The administrative team leads the professional development for teachers, who then align the new approaches learned to the academic standards and implement them to support student achievement.

The district's central office and campus leadership work together to create a professional development plan that provides students with the best possible education and the most equitable classroom experience. Professional development activities for all staff are based on student assessment data, the TEKS, and the district's curriculum. Valued for their expertise, Lucas teachers lead the majority of professional development. Other staff development sessions are conducted by outside consultants, district leaders, and via online platforms. Sessions begin in August and continue throughout the school year. Staff also participate in local, state, and national conferences to increase their knowledge and eagerness to implement new ideas.

Weekly grade level meetings provide opportunities for teachers and the principal to analyze assessment data, instructional practices, and resources. Each semester, the principal conducts a book study for faculty and staff. The practice promotes collaboration and conversations among teachers and school staff and leads to new ideas in the classroom. One practice that the school has implemented as a result of a book study is the use of interactive notebooks for students. Each student uses this personal tool to synthesize ideas and concepts in the core subject areas. Student reflections in the notebooks are used during parent-teacher conferences to demonstrate what students are learning in class.

With the increasing number of students with interrupted formal schooling, the newly revised language arts/reading TEKS have prompted all teachers to devote a majority of their professional development to learn about the new standards and how to deliver the language arts/reading instruction. Sessions are held in various formats: weekly grade level meetings, district staff development sessions, and regional service center opportunities. After attending these sessions, teachers work as a team to implement new techniques. This collaborative approach has yielded excellent results, especially when working with English Learners and At-Risk students.

Lucas places a strong emphasis on ensuring that technology is used effectively to create new learning opportunities and promote student achievement. Lucas teachers collaborate to implement technology such as virtual field trips, video lessons, learning stations, exit tickets, and game-based learning platforms. These applications were used to "visit" the grade level's assigned continent and explore its language, culture, and traditions. Lucas Elementary's targeted, sustained professional development has a positive impact on staff; consequently, students are engaged and motivated to learn.

4. School Leadership:

Lucas Elementary leadership's philosophy is that an effective leader has a clear purpose in mind and a deep intention in the heart. The leadership team is comprised of the principal, assistant principal, counselor, and lead teacher. While the principal is the primary source of influence; staff, students, and the school community work together to challenge and support students to become lifelong learners and tomorrow's leaders. Together, they advocate for student achievement by promoting a culture of responsibility, adaptability, and high expectations.

Each day begins with the principal standing in front of the school, greeting students and parents, and wishing them a great day. After student-led morning announcements, the principal visits classrooms checking on homework and reading goals. Throughout the day, the principal meets with other campus administrators to ensure that day-to-day operations run smoothly and that all staff has the supplies and resources necessary to provide a secure, positive learning environment. School leaders are in the hallways, conducting classroom observations, and monitoring common areas throughout the school day. The classroom visits are non-threatening and provide constructive feedback with a focus on professional growth.

The school counselor addresses students' social and personal development. In addition to leading Student Council and other student groups, she teaches character education lessons. The counselor helps the school principal maintain open communication between the school and the school community. Together, they initiate programs and activities that foster interactions and communication with parents and the community. "Coffee with the Principal" is a monthly engagement where parents meet together to discuss campus concerns and offer suggestions for improvement.

All staff at Lucas Elementary assume leadership roles in the school. Teachers lead by example to create an environment of mutual respect between and among faculty, staff, and administration. In this collaborative environment, the staff has a safe space to refine their practices to improve student outcomes. Teacher morale is high and there is virtually no teacher turn-over. Lucas teachers adopt various roles on committees to support student achievement, health, and safety. Grade level chairs meet weekly with their colleagues to develop engaging lessons and meaningful learning opportunities. Throughout the year, teachers serve in various campus committees such as the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), Site-Based Decision-Making Committee (SBDM), Section 504, Response to Intervention (RTI), and Gifted & Talented (GT) committee, among others. These leadership opportunities build capacity for all staff and create an environment of professional trust and respect for all.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that makes Lucas Elementary a great place to learn is the authentic engagement practiced by all teachers, staff, and the school community. Lucas staff work arduously to create a welcoming and supportive culture so that all parents are respected and equal partners in their child's education.

To that end, the staff developed a tool to increase communication and ensure collaboration. The Tiger Binder is an organizational system of managing assignments and information for parents. Students carry their school work in a systematic manner that enables them to keep track of their educational activities and have it readily available for homework or review before a test. This three-inch binder contains various sections. One section of the Tiger Binder contains the week's learning concepts for each subject area, spelling lists, and homework guidelines. The Weekly Agenda is divided by days of the week and lists each subject's class assignment and homework. This tool serves to help students keep up with assignments when they are absent. Moreover, it serves as a conversation between students and parents to prevent the default "nothing" response to the "What did you do in school today" question.

The Tiger Binder also includes a section to make entries about the child's conduct and reading fluency. This portion is a reflection of the student's behavior and reading progress. These reflections help parents monitor their child's progress and are discussed during student-teacher-parent conferences.

School notes from the principal, nurse, or PTO are also included in the Tiger Binder. The parent communication section is meant to keep parents "in the know." Notes include permission slips, conference requests, newsletters, and invitations to school events. This section keeps parents well-informed and has increased parental involvement at Lucas. The Tiger Binder goes home each day and is signed by parents. Because parents are provided with easily accessible information, they are more responsive and supportive. Parents and other community members are a part of their children's learning, whether through frequent support and monitoring at home or by volunteering at school. Students are engaged in the learning process, and teachers make deliberate instructional choices that bring the students into active learning.

Due to the increasing number of students with interrupted formal schooling, Lucas seeks ways to engage students with positive school experiences. Greater satisfaction with school experiences leads to greater school completion rates. Lucas students outperform students from schools with similar demographics in all content areas. The staff believes that strong, authentic engagement helps foster a positive school culture and encourages children to become tomorrow's leaders.