

U.S. Department of Education
2021 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 Ms Sophia Acevedo
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Calder Road Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 6511 Calder Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Dickinson State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 77539-0000

County Galveston County

Telephone (281) 229-7500 Fax (281) 229-7501

Web site/URL https://schools.dickinsonisd.org/page/11.homepage E-mail sacevedo@dickinsonisd.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* Mrs. Carla Voelkel E-mail cvoelkel@dickinsonisd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Dickinson Independent School District Tel. (281) 229-7500

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. David Swartz
(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, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
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 current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	19	9	28
K	67	58	125
1	55	69	124
2	46	55	101
3	56	67	123
4	64	50	114
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	307	308	615

*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
 - 4 % Asian
 - 19 % Black or African American
 - 42 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 32 % White
 - 3 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: 13%

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, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	47
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	39
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	86
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	642
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.13
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

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

Akan, Cambodian, Chinese, Hindi, Krio, Mandarian, Pilipino, Spanish, Vietnamese, Yeruba

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 18 %
110 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 61 %

Total number students who qualify: 375

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %

112 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <u>11</u> Autism | <u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>12</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>23</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>48</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>15</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: 10

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	45
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	17
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1

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

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

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.

Calder Road Elementary School (CRES) will empower and educate every student to make decisions that reflect exemplary character and build proficiency and excellence in all academic subjects. Our students will leave CRES with a solid educational foundation in order to pursue their goals and dreams. CRES staff will work tirelessly to find innovative solutions to problems that hinder students from maximizing their full academic potential and social and emotional well-being.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Calder Road Elementary School began the school year in August 2020 with 100% virtual instruction through asynchronous lessons. Beginning in September, CRES offered families a choice of 100% face-to-face instruction or asynchronous virtual learning. In order to create classroom communities, the CRES leadership team, along with teacher input, built strategically designed classrooms that contained both face-to-face and virtual learners. This model allowed students to feel connected to the school and it provided a flexible model for students to transition between face-to-face and virtual learning, if needed. Another benefit of this model was that it reduced the class size of face-to-face learners when initially returning to the classroom. Although it was more work for teachers initially, the leadership team agreed that planning for virtual learning was a task that teams could share. By November of 2020, 50% of CRES students returned to campus. In January, CRES had increased to 80% of students back face-to-face, and now in April, 95% of CRES students are receiving face-to-face instruction. At CRES, the leadership team attributes the rise in face-to-face numbers to the hope and confidence school leaders and teachers shared from the beginning. CRES staff believe transparency, honesty, and consistency along with following the CDC guidelines inspired hope in families. Nelson Mandela once said, “It always seems impossible until it is done.” CRES teachers have proven this quote true through the creative and flexible ways they have found to teach both their face-to-face and virtual learners.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Calder Road Elementary School (CRES) is a part of the Dickinson Independent School District (DISD) which is located 30 miles south of Downtown Houston and approximately 30 miles north of Galveston. Dickinson ISD is a dynamic, innovative district that continues to honor the values and beliefs that define this tight-knit community. CRES opened its doors in August of 2010 and has undergone two rezoning initiatives due to the continued growth of the district. CRES neighborhoods include new development, older homes, HUD housing, duplexes, and apartments. CRES students come from many diverse backgrounds. CRES staff serve hard working families and a large number of students who attend daycare before and after school.

Today CRES serves 650 students. The demographic data shows 19% of students as African-American, 42% Hispanic/Latino, 32% white, 4% Asian, 3% two or more races, and currently the mobility rate is at 13%. Seventeen percent of students receive special education services while 16% of the population is classified as English Language Learners (ELL). CRES offers a dual language program, Early Childhood Special Education program (ECSE), and two self-contained classes for children with severe cognitive and physical impairments. CRES has a strong inclusion program for students with specific learning disabilities. At CRES, visitors will see children with a variety of needs interacting socially and academically with each other and all staff. The results-driven dyslexia program ensures students are given equal access to the curriculum and that they are successful in all of their endeavors. With a research based positive behavior intervention program, all CRES students experience success and pride in their daily interactions with peers and adults.

CRES staff believe in the philosophy of “no excuses.” All staff members believe in the power of public education and that every student has the right and the capacity to reach his or her potential. We tackle home and learning struggles as problems that need solutions and not excuses. CRES staff does not blame students for their obstacles; instead, they look for ways to adjust their own practices. Teachers come early, leave late, and visit families at home when necessary to make connections. CRES students run a morning homework club for each other. This homework club is open to any student who may need to read with an adult, finish their homework, or simply need extra help with learning from the previous day.

One of the defining systems of CRES that has contributed enormously to their success is their embedded professional learning community (PLC) hour. CRES staff has an additional hour embedded weekly in order to meet with support specialists and campus leadership. This uninterrupted time provides teachers the opportunity to look at student growth, plan interventions and extensions, and request professional development to meet their immediate needs. During this time, students are engaged in their own positive learning community (PLC), which focuses on character lessons and social-emotional activities. The professional learning communities specifically look at student data to assess growth in all students. CRES staff consistently analyze the growth of the high performing students as well as students who are working below grade level expectations. A key focus during these meetings is to provide professional development on Tier 1 best practices. They believe great initial instruction and intervention in the moment is the foundation of high achievement.

The ongoing academic success is evident in Calder Road Elementary’s state assessment data. Since the state transitioned to an A - F rating, CRES has maintained an A accountability rating. They have earned a score of 100 for the past 3 years in the state’s Domain 3-Closing the Performance Gaps. Additionally, for the past 3 years, they have received 4 out of 5 possible Texas academic distinctions. In 2018, CRES earned all of the five possible state distinctions. These distinctions include Mathematics, ELA/Reading, Postsecondary Readiness, Closing the Performance Gaps, and Academic Growth.

Calder Road Elementary, like the community of Dickinson, is resilient. They endured Hurricane Harvey, which devastated 80% of the housing in the area in 2017. They have also faced other flooding events, several area evacuations, and most recently the damages caused by the ice storm and loss of electricity and water. Adding to all of this, the pandemic has hit the campus, along with the rest of the world, with new challenges to solve. COVID-19 has challenged the leadership team to create new schedules, distancing protocols, contact tracing systems, and innovate ways to address needs caused by required quarantines. However, through all of these circumstances, one thing has remained the same; the leadership, teachers, and

support staff have kept expectations high and they continued to build supportive relationships with students. CRES believes in the power of education and they have used the challenges of COVID-19 to bring innovation and flexibility to a quickly changing environment.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Calder Road Elementary (CRES) teachers plan lessons across the curriculum aligning to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), and the district scope and sequence. Grade level teams meet weekly to review the curriculum, study academic vocabulary, and plan high level, engaging activities that result in activities at the real-world application level.

One of the major changes CRES teachers made to the campus scope and sequence in response to the COVID-19 instructional loss was to narrow the focus in order to define essential standards and to plan lessons and assessments that could easily be accessed from home. Teachers identified and targeted essential standards which addressed foundational skills to help remediate any learning gaps caused by the interruption in instruction in the spring of 2020 and the ongoing quarantines of 2021. After the essential skills were identified, TEKS-based lessons were designed by planning backwards from the desired student learning.

The English Language Arts TEKS are taught through guided reading groups that meet daily to ensure students grow in their individual reading levels and the TEKS content. Teachers use running records as a formative assessment to measure growth in fluency and comprehension on a weekly basis. Teachers analyze the data to prepare real time interventions for individual students. To address the TEKS, lessons are designed to include phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, decoding strategies, genre study and comprehension. TEKS-based reading lessons also include modeling metacognition strategies across genres, read aloud texts, shared reading, literature circles, author studies, and most importantly, time to read for pleasure to help instill a love for reading in students.

In writing, teachers design TEKS-based lessons around the workshop model. Students are taught a skill daily and assessed through ongoing portfolio checks, individual student conferences, and skill based mastery checks. Teachers plan individual and group interventions and enrichment based on the analysis on these formative assessments. Throughout the year, the campus instructional specialists meet with CRES writing teachers to ensure the progression of the writing process through the grade levels. Beginning in kindergarten, students learn the TEKS through exposure to authentic mentor texts, authors' studies, and opportunities to write about their own personal experiences. Even the youngest writers learn the writing process through oral rehearsal, self-correction, peer conferences, and studying correct grammar through literature.

When faced with the initial campus closure, CRES developed a structure and a starting place for remote instruction. The CRES leadership team designed an asynchronous digital learning cycle (DLC) which focused on the objective of the week in each subject. For reading and writing, they made daily authentic writing assignments and provided models to help explain the processes to the parents. Students were asked to orally rehearse ideas with a parent, sibling, or even a pet before they began their writing activities. Each grade level had a minimum time to write and provided digital timers for students. CRES teachers developed training for parents and provided ideas on how to give students a quiet place to read and write daily. Teachers continued to conference with students on writing through virtual platforms and held guided reading groups daily.

In science and math, teachers continued to teach the TEKS, however, they adapted the activities to meet the virtual format. Teacher instructional videos and choice boards were created to encourage student choice. Activities ranged from at home science experiments to "cooking with math" activities. Student learning was assessed formatively through the use of interactive platforms. Teachers were always cognizant of the varying levels of home support and knew some students would turn in the minimum amount of assignments while others would complete all of the activities and ask for more. Students sent in videos of "think alouds" which allowed teachers to hear the students' mathematical thinking in order to intervene for misconceptions.

In social studies, CRES teachers used literature as the primary way to teach the TEKS through the process standards of reading. Teachers evaluated student progress using project based assessments.

For students with no access to technology, teachers provided paper/pencil assignments and telephone calls until they were able to provide adequate technology options. The district hosted a massive technology deployment that included hot spots and devices to families in need. Through online platforms, CRES was able to differentiate for students by changing the level of questioning or giving students access to the curriculum through accommodations such as visual supports and virtual manipulatives.

As students returned to school, changes were made to reach all learners. Through those changes, however, one thing remains constant--the TEKS are taught at the same level of rigor as always, and the expectations for student achievement remain the same. Formative assessments are used daily to guide instruction and summative assessments are developed by grade level teams for the purpose of reworking the upcoming instruction.

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

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

Calder Road Elementary School (CRES) offers both English and Spanish pre-kindergarten classes for children who are four, as well as an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) class for students who are three and four with special needs. These two programs work closely together and plan inclusive lessons shared between the two programs. Teachers use the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines as their primary curriculum resource. These guidelines provide readiness standards for success in kindergarten and subsequent grades. CRES pre-kindergarten classrooms include positive adult interactions, time to be read to, and play experiences that promote literacy, math, and science. CRES teachers plan instructional routines and lessons that are developmentally appropriate to ensure students are immersed in literacy, numeracy, language, and social engagement during whole group, small group, and play centers. Lessons are taught through music, play, and direct literacy instruction. CRES school data analysis reveals a direct correlation between attendance in prekindergarten and high reading levels in kindergarten.

When school was interrupted in the spring of 2020, early childhood teachers quickly transitioned to an online platform and began teaching daily synchronous lessons. They also provided parents with tools, manipulatives, and other resources to use at home. When students returned face to face, CRES put social distancing protocols in place for our students in the pre-kindergarten and ECSE classes. Teachers used visual cues and creative scheduling to help the youngest learners follow the CDC guidelines. CRES teachers incorporated lessons via an online video platform to provide weekly collaborative opportunities for at home learners. They have ensured lessons target outdoor activities, cooking experiences, and arts and craft options that can easily be completed at home. Despite these initiatives, it is known that the interruptions of face-to-face learning could negatively affect some pre-kindergarten students. CRES is currently reworking the kindergarten scope and sequence to ensure it meets students' needs when they enter school in the 2021-2022 school year.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All students in grades K-4 attend a computer, art, music, or physical education (CAMP) class for one hour each day. They attend physical education for two hours each week. To support TEKS-based instruction in a real-world setting Calder Road Elementary School (CRES) students take field trips to local museums, theaters, the symphony and the ballet which enhance the instruction in these classes. This year CRES adapted the field trips to virtual events and teachers and students are looking forward to getting back to in person field trips soon. At CRES, they believe field trips extend the learning experience more than any other extra-curricular activity.

Music TEKS expose students to musical history, composers, and musical literacy including melody, rhythm, beat, and scale. Although teachers were not able to invite visitors to the campus this year, CRES students did perform via a live stream event, Veterans' Day, their community favorite.

In art class, the TEKS focus on artistic techniques, famous artists, and a variety of art genres. Students' artwork from all grade levels decorate the hallways throughout the year. Traditionally, teachers invite local artists and musicians to speak at Career Day. Since CRES was unable to host the event this year, the art teacher highlighted both local and famous artists through virtual programs.

The physical education TEKS at each grade level focus on healthy living, sportsmanship, and working as a team. Because of pandemic protocols, CRES has moved physical education classes outside as frequently as possible (weather permitting). Many long standing traditions, such as Field Day, have been adjusted based on CDC protocols and some events have had to be cancelled.

As with the other CAMP classes, students attend technology class once a week for one hour. The TEKS address grade level standards in digital citizenship, communication, and collaboration. They learn how to digitally search for information and organize it using presentation software or word documents.

Calder Road Elementary CAMP teachers maintain up-to-date virtual classrooms that are filled with uplifting messages of encouragement, weekly TEKS-based lessons, videos, and activities that can be done at home for virtual learners.

The hub of the school—The CRES Library—sits in the center of the building. The library stays current with diverse resources which align with student interests, abilities, and curriculum for teachers. The library environment reflects the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) guidelines. To prevent a summer slide in reading, the CRES librarian leads reading challenges throughout summer break. She has maintained an open library throughout the pandemic welcoming parents to sign up for a time to check out books in a safe way.

Prime Time is a school-wide instructional period that allows staff to provide intervention and enrichment focused on TEKS-based essential standards. Enrichment experiences include a newspaper club, makers' space, book clubs, and a robotics team involving third and fourth grade students. Students learning from home have the voluntary option of coming in person for this time or joining the class virtually.

3. Academic Supports:

At Calder Road Elementary School (CRES), a progress monitoring process is the primary system used to ensure each student is making consistent academic growth. Every four weeks, each grade level team meets with campus administrators, interventionists, campus instructional specialists, the counselor, and the behavior coach to review the current levels of performance of every student. The overriding goal of this collaborative process is to guarantee, "no child goes backwards."

At the first meeting of each year, teachers color-code students on their roster by groups (gifted/talented, ELL, special education, 504, Response to Intervention). The purpose of this coding process is two-fold. First, the process allows teachers to make certain that they are aware of student needs, and secondly, the process guides the meeting discussion by groups of students.

Multiple sources of data are used, such as, universal screeners in math and reading, running records, curriculum-based assessments, state assessments, class work, teacher anecdotal documentation, parent information, and student work samples to determine if the students are working at grade level or meeting projected levels of growth. After this, teachers and administrators move into tracking the progress of each student. Once this is complete, the conversations are based on what strategies and resources can be used and how often to accelerate instruction or enrich achievement. Teachers share ideas and they leave with concrete ideas to try for the next four weeks.

For students who are already receiving services or support through special education or 504, CRES staff review the individual education plans to determine if additional time, resources or

accommodations are needed. At the end of each progress monitoring cycle, CRES staff collaborate with the 504 and special education facilitators to schedule review meetings as appropriate.

Teachers also carefully analyze the achievement data of English Language Learners (ELL) to ensure growth both academically and linguistically. State data from Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) is used to analyze long-term progress in the acquisition of English skills during the ELL review. The CRES progress monitoring team works in conjunction with the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) to make appropriate decisions on instruction and assessment.

After reviewing each group of students, CRES staff look at students who are not making projected progress and currently are not identified as a special education, 504 or ELL student. At this point, teachers shift their focus to the CRES Response to Intervention (RtI) framework that includes additional data analysis, tier specific interventions, and Student Intervention Team meetings. This provides a strategic process for the team to determine the additional supports or assessments required to meet the needs of these students.

Throughout this review, CRES intervention teams continuously reinforce how the classroom teacher is the most important part of the process. CRES teachers know academic success is grounded in rigorous, strategic, and targeted Tier 1 instruction. During progress monitoring, teachers review student deficits and work collaboratively to determine strategies to implement during daily instruction. Many times, during progress monitoring, teachers will schedule time to do a “learning walk” to another teacher’s classroom or participate in differentiated professional development in order to refine their instructional practices.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Regardless of whether students are learning virtually or face-to-face, Calder Road Elementary School (CRES) works to ensure students are engaged, challenged, and loved in a positive school environment.

To promote social and emotional growth of all learners, virtual and face-to-face, teachers facilitated morning check-in meetings with relationship building activities. Throughout school closures, CRES teachers continued to foster social emotional support strategies by being available to families, dialoguing with students, and explicitly teaching how to regulate emotions, resolve conflict, and build relationships with peers.

Before COVID-19, CRES classrooms were buzzing with activity. Classroom learning areas were filled with book club meetings, buddy reading, students conferring about their writing, and math teams playing number sense games. In response to COVID-19, teachers developed individualized stations for students, paired students in breakout rooms, and placed students into small cohort groups for contact tracing. Teachers have worked to create interactive learning experiences including: virtual scavenger hunts, academic digital escape rooms, and a variety of academic computerized games with friendly competitions.

To further motivate students, especially during this difficult time, classes participate in activities such as the “Daily Mile” where students and teachers take daily walks and learn math and science skills by distance-tracking, monitoring heart rates, and observing nature. CRES also planted a school wide garden that our pre-kindergarten students care for daily. On weekends and holidays, our CRES parents are engaged by caring for the garden.

One of the most effective strategies CRES has implemented to internally motivate students is teaching them how to set personal growth goals. In reading and math, CRES students track their independent reading levels and their math fact automaticity rate. Students learn to set goals, track their growth, and celebrate when their goals are achieved.

Despite COVID-19 and campus closures, CRES staff have continued to promote college and career readiness in a variety of ways. For example, the hallways are filled with college flags, the daily announcements include a variety of college fight songs, and teachers inspire students to learn about careers and colleges as early as prekindergarten.

CRES has established a parent teacher organization (PTO) scholarship for the graduating seniors as a way to help the Calder Road alumni acquire the dream of attending college. The first group of former CRES students graduated from Dickinson High School in 2019. The leadership team invited these students back to the campus to march through the halls in caps and gowns and shake every student’s hands.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Calder Road Elementary School (CRES) hosts many events throughout the year for their students and their families. These events include Math Night, Literacy Night, Art Shows and Music Programs. They also host family nights such as Multicultural Night where they invite school families to set up a display table to share their own culture. CRES Career Day brings parents and other community members to the campus to expose students to a variety of career possibilities.

During the season of COVID-19, CRES leadership team scaled back these events and provided virtual activities instead. To maintain the connection with CRES families, they increased their social media presence and options. They have been purposeful in sharing with their parents the celebrations, student work, and events that occur on campus each day. Although CRES wasn’t able to host large events, the teacher and parent relationship grew through online video platforms, phone calls, and daily communication.

CRES families are generous and are committed to helping each other. Families donate clothes to the school so staff can share them with other students who might be in need. During the recent freeze, many families came and dropped off coats at the school so they could be distributed. Families donate new and used items to help keep the incentive program, The Gator Store, well stocked and accessible for the students. Each year CRES collects non-perishable food items and/or money to support the local food bank. This year the school wide “food drive” became a \$1.00 drive and CRES was able to donate over \$1,000 to the community.

CRES and DISD provide additional support for families in need including a full-time student support specialist through Communities in Schools and a mental health therapist provided by a partnership with the Family Service Center of Galveston County to assist students and families with mental health counseling, mentoring, food, and clothing. CRES has several local businesses that support their school with donations of time and resources. The local federal credit union and a local church are also highly engaged in the community and staff outreach.

Every semester CRES welcomes educational interns from the local university. The partnership with the university has grown into a wealth of benefits for CRES teachers, including professional development and opportunities for post-graduate course work. CRES believes strongly in mentoring the new generation of teachers. They know that they learn as much from new teachers as new teachers learn from them.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Calder Road Elementary School (CRES) is a professional learning community, and their leadership team focuses on individual talents and building capacity across the campus. In order to maintain a high level of instruction and student and staff safety, campus administration immediately began attending professional development through the CDC in order to get the most accurate information. The campus administration also continued their learning on accelerated learning and building and sustaining professional learning communities in order to close gaps due to the loss of instruction due to COVID-19.

In a typical year, the site-based team meets to analyze the formative data and revise the campus needs assessment. Once the needs assessment is completed, the leadership team develops professional development options for the campus as a whole. Team members then solicit input from CRES teachers to finalize their training for the year. The principal also meets with each teacher to design individualized professional development ranging from post-graduate classes to basic classroom management. Although planning is done in the spring and summer, CRES embraces change and flexibility. If planned professional development is not relevant because of circumstances, CRES has no problem with shifting, cancelling, or rearranging training. They learned the value of flexibility this year when suddenly, in the spring of 2020, their goals transitioned to learning how to connect, engage, and teach from a virtual platform.

Before and during COVID-19, teachers have time during work hours to plan, problem solve, and engage in meaningful professional development. Anytime they are tasked with a new initiative or problem, teachers are highly involved in the training and problem-solving required. This provides systematic, in-house support on campus, instead of relying solely on outside resources. Teachers take great pride in being trained in up-to-date educational practices. Teachers from every team serve as mentors, participate on district committees, and they present at district and state-level training. Teacher survey and low teacher turnover are a direct correlation to the impact of these practices on our teachers and administrators. Although some practices have changed due to COVID-19, teachers are still able to plan collaboratively and learn from each other. Many of the professional development partners shifted to virtual formats, and they were able to meet teacher needs throughout the year.

Based on the current benchmark and formative data, student achievement has not regressed as experts had predicted. Student achievement gaps are closing quickly, students and families are safely attending school, and CRES students are receiving daily social/emotional support in person.

4. School Leadership:

At Calder Road Elementary School (CRES), leaders are found throughout the campus. The CRES principal believes and demonstrates an ability to share leadership and build capacity at every level. The principal strives to create collective responsibility in grade level teams by asking difficult questions and guiding the staff to find solutions. The CRES leadership team consists of administrators, grade level team leaders, instructional coaches, and the school counselor. The administrators, principal and assistant principal, believe the trust placed in staff leads to decisions that are best for all students and grade level teams.

The CRES principal periodically meets with the leadership team to ask, “What can be taken off of the instructional buffet that is not impacting student growth?” She encourages teachers to analyze campus programs and resources to determine whether they positively or negatively benefit students. Questions and innovation are encouraged so the staff can strive to work for students instead of living in the world of compliance.

Student achievement data guide leadership decision-making for both professional development and the campus budget. The leadership team and teachers identify grade level needs to include in the annual needs assessment. These needs then guide the budget decisions for the next year. A significant part of the budget is allocated for professional development to ensure CRES teachers are always up-to-date with the latest research-based practices. Each spring, campus instructional specialists send content specific surveys to ask teachers to self-access individual needs for the upcoming school year. CRES teachers are invested in the decisions that guide their campus and know that their feedback matters.

COVID-19 has changed leadership roles this year, and the CRES principal has been transparent in the shift. The primary focus of the principal this year has been to support the school nurse, support families, promote emotional well-being, and implement all CDC recommendations. During this transitional time, the multi-tiered system of leadership has kept academic achievement as the foundational goal. CRES campus instructional specialists and interventionists have stepped into leadership roles in planning and revising curriculum decisions based upon the changing needs of students. CRES leadership team has worked tirelessly to ensure gaps are addressed and remediated. This embedded campus leadership has allowed the principal to focus more on the operational systems this year while the academic focus of teaching the TEKS at CRES has not been impacted.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Many Calder Road Elementary School (CRES) students go home to grandparents, daycares, or older siblings caring for them while parents work. The CRES community represents a variety of cultural backgrounds and religions. The staff is sensitive to ensuring all students are represented and needs are met while at school. CRES teachers and staff are intentional in the work asked of parents at home so they do not overburden families since we have a high number of students with working parents and students living with grandparents.

CRES has made partnerships with the local churches and daycares to work together to meet family needs. CRES teachers have partnered on many occasions with these partners to care for families in need. For the CRES community, a family’s needs can be anything from a place to shower to locating affordable day care.

For the past three years, CRES has been intentional in learning about different cultures. Through positive learning communities, students participate in lessons that strengthen and sometimes challenge their beliefs about various cultures. For example, students have studied about different Asian cultures and customs and then finished the study with a Lunar New Year celebration. Teachers are made aware of cultural/religious holidays such as Ramadan, so they can better support their students.

Calder Road Elementary School has been designated as a “No Place for Hate” campus by the Anti-Defamation League for the past seven years. The purpose of the “No Place for Hate”

movement is to build a learning community of inclusivity, respect, and equity. Three activities are completed each year specifically designed to challenge beliefs, build inclusivity, and ensure equity. The yearly “Unity Day” celebration allows students, staff, and families to participate in activities to show unity for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion and to send a visible message that no child should ever experience bullying.

CRES staff benefits from direct instruction in trauma practices through the Emotional Backpack Project, created by Mental Health of America. Historical and Racial Trauma are just two of the types of trauma that are addressed in the training. The love and respect CRES staff has for one another allows frank conversations that may challenge beliefs. Plans are already in the works for the staff to participate in an equity series training next school year, and to take part in book studies on a variety of equitable and culturally responsive teaching practices.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

As evidenced by low teacher turnover, high academic achievement, positive parent survey responses, and yearly anonymous staff surveys, the one practice that has been most instrumental in the school's continued ability to successfully educate and support students is the distributive leadership and communication system. This collaborative system has consistently been the foundation of the decision-making process at the campus.

In March of 2020, when the doors were closed for the year, distributive leadership empowered grade levels to make decisions, take risks, solve problems, and make the immediate changes needed to continue to educate students with the state standards (TEKS) at the forefront of instruction.

The principal met with the leadership team to give accurate information, discuss the big picture of how to transition to virtual learning, and solicit input on how to move forward. The leadership team immediately met with grade level teams to do the same. Once teachers were reassured that there was no "one" road map for turning a brick and mortar campus to a virtual school, teachers immediately used creative, innovative approaches to keep parents informed, students connected, and to keep learning moving forward.

In the summer of 2020, the decision was made that parents would have a choice on how their child would be educated in the 2020-2021 school year. With guiding questions from the principal, the team went to work designing plans for teaching face-to-face learners and virtual learners asynchronously. As schedules and operational changes were being made to meet the CDC guidelines, teacher input was solicited every step of the way to keep them as an integral part of the decisions that would influence their daily routines.

The CRES staff also focused on creating a transparent communication process for parents and students. Virtual campus tours and weekly videos about safety protocols and virtual learning began in the summer. The CRES counselor and Community in Schools representative checked in on disengaged families and focused on meeting their social and emotional needs. The collaborative leadership system already in place allowed the staff to get to work quickly without waiting for details to be worked out first.

Distributive leadership is the foundation of the CRES framework. This sense of collective responsibility grounded them during the uncertainties of virtual learning, quarantines, and distancing protocols and it allowed the principal to get input and advice from the entire team. The shared leadership system has allowed Calder Road Elementary School to thrive, and not just survive, during the COVID-19 pandemic.