

U.S. Department of Education
2022 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 Mrs. Kendra Sherrill
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Claude School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address PO Box 209
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Claude State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 79019-0209

County Armstrong County

Telephone (806) 226-7331 Fax (806) 226-2244

Web site/URL https://www.claudeisd.net E-mail greg.brown@claudeisd.net

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* Mr. Greg Brown E-mail greg.brown@claudeisd.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Claude Independent School District Tel. (806) 226-7331

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 Mrs. Leah Lee
(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 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 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 2016 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: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 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	7	10	17
K	11	7	18
1	11	5	16
2	12	10	22
3	13	19	32
4	8	10	18
5	12	10	22
6	8	13	21
7	18	10	28
8	13	12	25
9	11	10	21
10	15	10	25
11	12	16	28
12 or higher	8	8	16
Total Students	159	150	309

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 15 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 79 % White
 - 4 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 17%

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

Due to COVID-19, quarantines, an unusual amount of students enrolling and withdrawing, and the fact that we are a small school, our mobility rate was higher than normal during the 2020-2021 school year.

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	22
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	32
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	54
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	318
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.17
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	17

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
3 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 36 %

Total number students who qualify: 111

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 10 %
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. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>18</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</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: 3
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.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
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 13:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	95%	99%	96%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	100%	95%	100%	96%	100%

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 2021.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	23
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	52%
Enrolled in a community college	13%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	4%
Found employment	22%
Joined the military or other public service	9%
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.

Through vision and commitment, Claude Schools will strive to achieve academic excellence and prepare each student to become a productive member of society.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. The District prohibits dating violence, as defined by policy FFH(LOCAL). Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Claude Schools sit in a ranching town of 1,186 residents in the Texas Panhandle. Even though it is considered a small 1A district, it is big on heart, resilience, and multigenerational tradition. Families there are important and supported. Safe neighborhoods and close-knit community make this a great place to live. The school is truly the center of many activities for the whole area, whether it's Mustang sports, Homecoming bonfires, annual Turkey Trot relays, traditional Christmas concerts, library story-times, or Chili Cook-off fundraisers. Besides all that, the most unbelievable scenic views are practically in our backyard, where the High Plains drop off suddenly into the red rock walls of Tule Canyon.

Education was obviously a priority of the earliest founders of the area because a school was established almost as early as the town itself. However, Claude Schools have faced difficulties. That original schoolhouse remains by the railroad tracks as part of the county museum. A new 3-story school building replaced it in 1907 at great expense. Later, it burned down, almost to the ground, and had to be rebuilt. Part of the current junior high exists in that rebuilt structure. We are also known for our historic gymnasium, constructed by prisoners of war, which retains its original rock walls and is used for physical education (PE), athletics practices, and community events. The current school is combined with recent updates to the library, athletic facilities, including a new basketball gym, and classroom additions.

The single campus makes us unique. All grade levels reside under the same roof, sharing cafeteria, library, art and music rooms, nurse, teachers' lounge, and computer lab. It is common for students, prekindergarten (pre-K) through 12th grade, to be seen (and heard!) interacting throughout the building on a daily basis. This provides further opportunity to cultivate relationships and foster an atmosphere of mentorship and role-modeling between older and younger students. There are several academic and athletic mentoring programs that encourage positive character traits along with teaching skill sets that are admirable in the workforce, throughout the community, and among student athletes.

The median income currently hovers around \$30,000, with families working diligently in agriculture and also, increasingly, in occupational capacities such as helicopter manufacturing and nuclear weapon disassembly at plants nearby. Although it has never been a property-wealthy school district, the small class sizes can definitely offer a remarkable staff-to-student ratio. The school has earned a welcome reputation for providing a quality education with the benefits of an old-fashioned, hometown feel. Bus routes cover the majority of a widespread county, and transfer students from nearby districts are attracted. There is definite pride that many of the staff are Claude graduates themselves and have chosen to raise their own families there. In fact, some staff members who were working at the school when Claude Elementary was awarded recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School in 2005 are still there serving the children of the community. There is no mistaking the value there of family ties and multigenerational connections.

Extracurricular opportunities abound, with a majority of students participating in more than one program at a time. Girls' basketball and cross-country teams achieve regional and state success year after year. The football team competed in the state-wide Gholson Six-Man Independent Bowl as recently as 2018.

In addition to athletics, the band program earns a berth in state-level marching competitions regularly as well as earning Sweepstakes in concert competition for multiple years. Elementary students also have the opportunity to take part in musical performances, public speaking, and artistic displays. Academic University Interscholastic League (UIL) teams from elementary and secondary have historic success as well, specifically in Current Events, where last year's team competed at the state level.

The active agriculture program enjoys success, even nationally. In 4-H, Claude students consistently come out on top at major livestock shows around Texas each year. These organizations are representative of a strong emphasis on local farming and ranching that also serve to draw students back to Claude after graduation. Participants build practical, hands-on expertise as well as develop other important life skills, such as leadership and citizenship.

Throughout the COVID crisis, we have remained committed to in-person learning for students, believing

that face to face instruction is always the highest goal. During mandatory closures, teacher and student virtual attendance remained high. All students were prepared for remote learning with their own district-provided chromebook. All students pre-K-12 used a virtual classroom and online meetings as their primary means of communication of content but also continued relationship building. Administration made personal contact with all parents each week to ensure the success of students and provide support as needed. Instructional materials and meals as needed were delivered to their doorsteps. In-person school reopened at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, with 98% of students attending face-to-face instruction, rather than remote learning.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:

Without a doubt, relationship building is key to their academic success. The teachers practice explicit instruction across all core areas. But because they know their students so well, they are able to target instruction specifically to what students need, differentiating based on how they perform, and track their progress. High academic expectations are maintained for all students, including at-risk, special education, and other sub-populations.

The use of data drives instruction so that teachers are able to deliver precise individualized support. Besides frequent formative assessment, they also use unit tests, benchmarks, and diagnostic inventories to set academic goals and hold all educational parties accountable for student success. With small class sizes and focus on teacher expertise in content areas, teachers are allowed to utilize a variety of instructional resources that create autonomy in the classroom and support teachers in meeting diverse needs. In addition, they work closely with parents to inform them of the progress their child is making and communicate frequently regarding formal and informal assessments.

Integration of technology is present in the use of new interactive display boards installed in every classroom. Each student is issued a computer, making Claude a 1-to-1 technology district. All teachers use technology daily to enhance learning, meet individual learning styles present in the classroom, and provide differentiated instruction through digital and online media formats. Use of technology allows teachers to quickly access disaggregated data on assessments and to increase rigor within daily lessons, holding up the district view of high expectations of all students.

Our school believes in celebrating our students throughout the year as they meet and surpass their data goals in all content areas. Through school-wide assemblies, social media shout-outs, Magnificent Mustang Mail, and other daily recognitions, we commend the hard work of our students as they achieve their goals and show academic growth and success.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

At Claude Schools, we believe that reading is a life-long skill and that reading and writing are foundational to the learning in all content areas. That belief includes an acknowledgement that writing leads to deeper understanding of language and text. So, recognizing that the cognitive process that writing requires is the highest level of English Language Arts and Writing skills assimilation, writing is emphasized throughout the school. Teachers work hard to engage students in ways that promote independent writing, such as student autonomy and choice based on personal interest in early grades. In fact, they begin writing in kindergarten the second week of school, regardless of letter/sound or letter formation knowledge. This becomes a natural process that students expect and enjoy doing daily. This writing focus extends into all grade levels and all content areas. Upper grade levels incorporate writing into their reading time with strategies such as reading response cards and daily quick writes that focus on making connections to text or self, inferencing, comprehension, and character dynamics. The use of writing on a daily basis is meant to support all content areas and has even been shown to increase skills in other areas such as UIL competitions, scholarship and work study applications, and agriculture leadership skills and contests.

Technology is largely integrated in the English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) classrooms to facilitate collaboration between students and the teacher, and aids in student organization. This helps students collect a breadth of work electronically and helps teachers have ready access to student writing to use in monitoring and adjusting instruction. Teachers recognize that they are preparing many of their students for a post-secondary education and believe in the importance of providing rigorous reading and writing instruction that will allow them to become successful after they leave the halls of Claude Schools.

ELAR teachers partner with the district librarian to build students' love of learning through weekly story time with pre-K-kindergarten classrooms, and each grade level has a weekly library time. During this library time, the district librarian provides literary lessons that support the classroom teacher with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), district curriculum, and scope and sequence. Weekly library time is encouraged throughout the secondary level to build on the love of reading that is instilled in elementary years. Reading is largely integrated, and higher-level novel and poetry texts are used daily. Frequent formative and summative assessments are utilized in all grade levels to individually gather the necessary data needed to drive planning and implementation, and address student learning gaps within the Texas state standards to design an individual learning plan that best supports each student.

Trained reading interventionists provide targeted, data-driven, explicit instruction using research-based instruction materials that are tailored to meet the individual needs and learning gaps of the students. This small group instruction has greatly improved student success in the classroom and on state standardized tests. Collaboration between the classroom teacher and the interventionists provides a supported reading environment for students to show academic growth in reading, writing, and phonics.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

In this school an emphasis is placed on creating real world connections in mathematics, and students are focusing on practical applications of the concepts. In the math classrooms, teachers design lessons to support student collaboration with real life practice to help them learn to better communicate with one another, ask questions, take turns, respectfully disagree, problem solve, persevere, and think critically. Students are taught how to work together in small steps with teacher guidance that creates a learning environment that results in student-led learning and instruction. Teachers have found that their students often learn more from one another, which creates a deeper connection to the importance of learning.

Within the state standards, math teachers are responsible for teaching a wide variety of concepts and skills in all grade levels. Through the use of spiral reviews and daily math warm ups, they are able to create a classroom structure that utilizes mini-lesson teaching which they have found better supports students as they encounter new content and skills as the year progresses. Beginning in August, students are expected to answer questions that come from higher-order thinking and lead to success on the end of year Texas state assessment.

Formative and summative data is collected through benchmarking to give students and teachers in all grade levels immediate feedback to address learning gaps. These district-wide assessments are rigorous and require higher order thinking following each unit within the district-designed scope and sequence. Data from these formal and informal assessments allows teachers to remediate students on an individual level, as well as provide enrichment for students performing above grade level.

Being a small school limits the staff in many ways, but one important benefit is that it allows their teachers to maintain intimate knowledge of each student's progress. The teachers and students form relationships throughout their educational career, thus giving the teacher a more in-depth knowledge of the students that helps in the planning and implementation process. A rigorous environment is created in high school math courses, which has proven to better prepare students for higher education mathematics courses. The secondary math teachers have created an environment of high expectations that challenges all students to also set goals and balance their workload to be successful.

Claude Schools administer district-wide assessments that are vertically aligned, and data is shared through regular professional learning communities (PLC) to foster common vocabulary and teaching strategies that best support the learners in their classrooms. The classroom teachers work hand in hand with interventionists, paraprofessional staff, and special education teachers to ensure that they are creating an individualized learning plan for each student that is focused on the data derived from formal and informal assessments. If a student is shown to need more support for the classroom content, the intervention team works together to write a Response to Intervention (RTI) plan and create data-driven goals in an effort to find innovative ways of meeting the needs of students that address their current learning gaps.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

With the state-wide TEKS standards as the basis of course content, our science curriculum is vertically aligned from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Through PLC meetings, teachers are able to discuss and share lesson ideas, experiments, vocabulary, and teaching techniques that have shown to engage students in their own classrooms. Being a small district, we rely on a handful of teachers to provide all of the science content for the 300+ students. These teachers attend Educational Service Center training to improve their knowledge base of the state standards and discover innovative ways to teach students.

Within each science classroom, they are committed to giving students the opportunity to participate with a hands-on approach through the use of labs, experiments, and off-campus field trips. If you stepped on to our campus on any given day, you might see students labeling the parts of a cell using microscopes to make Christmas ornaments that decorate the district Christmas tree, creating the moon cycle using Oreo cookies, charting the unpredictable West Texas weather, or designing and showcasing a student-made skin wound at Halloween. Each year, a Science Night is hosted where students showcase an experiment of their choosing for parents and community members, as well as a student-made Car Race during the Friction/Force unit in upper elementary.

WE have partnered with Amarillo Independent School District to provide our students with an opportunity to earn their Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) while in high school, completing their practicum with a local nursing home. Claude Schools fund this program for any student interested in the nursing field beyond high school. Students have also toured a helicopter factory, an international airport, and a local air and space museum in order to pique student interest and curiosity in these science fields as they look toward career opportunities after they complete high school.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Claude Schools is fortunate to be surrounded by an area rich in history and culture. We recognize that it can be difficult to engage students in events that happened years before they were even born. However, we have adopted state-approved curriculum and resources that increase student engagement and help them develop real world connections to the past, relying on teacher expertise and collaboration to provide a cross-curricular approach to the required content. Data from formative and summative assessments are used to develop lessons that are tied to the rigor of state assessments and measure student progress.

It is our intention to take full advantage of the rich history within our county and allow students to create meaningful connections by visiting the Charles Goodnight House, Armstrong County Museum, and Palo Duro Canyon State Park, to name a few. The teachers are strategic at utilizing local resources, such as renting trunks for on-site field trips and experience from the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum and inviting guest speakers from the area to share presentations on topics such as the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and the role they played in Texas history. The students are also strongly spurred on to participate in and understand the way democracy works by allowing them to volunteer with local elections as poll workers.

Particularly in social studies, we have approached staff recruitment with an eye to finding teachers with specialized experience and expertise in providing social studies instruction. The current teachers have years of combined experience in the social studies classroom and have helped them in implementing improvements. These improvements have included an emphasis on setting a strong foundation of civic and historical background knowledge in order to set students up to extend and expand that knowledge in the upper grade levels.

1f. For secondary schools:

This school has an ongoing mission of increasing our students' college and career readiness and access to a wider variety of programs of study. The current programs of study include Nursing Science, Animal Science, and Applied Agricultural Engineering which allow students to have the opportunity to earn certificates such as Certified Nursing Assistant, Feedyard Technician in Cattle Care and Handling, and

Feedyard Technician in Machinery Operation, Safety and Repair.

We partner with a neighboring higher education institute to provide students with dual credit opportunities during their high school career. Students are able to choose their high school classes based on a program of study that suits their interests and career goals. Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructors work closely with businesses within the community to provide on-site training and instruction so that students are able to have hands-on experiences that support and enhance the learning experience.

The Future Farmers of America (FFA) program provides a variety of opportunities for students to gain practical knowledge and skills that help them be career-ready, often earning them certificates that will help them to be marketable in the job force immediately out of high school. The FFA program offers courses in Agriculture Principles, Agriculture Mechanics, Animal Science, Veterinary Medicine, Livestock Production, Agriculture Business, and Agriculture Leadership. Claude's FFA program partners with the Armstrong County 4-H program to provide facilities and support to a large population of students that participate in local, state-wide, and even national stock shows. The FFA program is also competitive in a number of FFA Career Development Events throughout the state of Texas, providing their students with opportunities to network, showcase their work ethic, and practice skills that are taught throughout their school career in projects and opportunities that continue to show their college and career readiness.

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

This school provides 4-year-old students with exceptional instruction by a highly-qualified teacher and support staff, aligned with Texas PreK standards including instructional content in English/language arts, writing, math, science, and social studies. The curriculum also builds skills in social/emotional learning and physical development. These standards are directly aligned with kindergarten through 3rd grade level TEKS.

In Claude, there has not been any other availability for daycare or preschool options for students. Therefore, we are fortunate to be able to offer our PreK program to all students, regardless of their eligibility status based upon income level or academic need. The design of the program allows many children to be included in unique learning opportunities at a young age regardless of qualification. Students are exposed to a variety of learning opportunities, including weekly story time with the school librarian, daily PE and music time, literacy and math content and centers, along with student choice centers that work on social skills, self-control and self-confidence, and thinking skills as they explore and experiment within their structured academic environment. The program also places emphasis on beginning to write for meaning and purpose before entering kindergarten.

Administrators facilitate weekly meetings where the pre-K teacher collaborates with lower elementary teachers to determine how to best support and develop skills needed in kindergarten and beyond. This allows the scope and sequence to be vertically aligned and assessment procedures to be consistent among grade levels. Throughout recent years, they have seen dramatic increase in student performance in kindergarten students who participated in the preschool program. Students who have attended this pre-K program prior to attending kindergarten have a higher level of understanding and knowledge base of how letters and sounds correspond to form words and develop into reading and writing of text. These students have a strong foundation with phonological awareness skills and academic vocabulary.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Claude Schools' visual and performing arts programs collaborate together to provide student access to Fine Arts, promoting movement, creativity, and collaboration within an Elementary Specials rotation, and providing a creative outlet and a competitive environment at the secondary level. These events and preparations often incorporate other student organizations and interaction with the community that helps to bolster these programs. These events can include annual Veteran's Day programs, Christmas pageants, and an annual Visual and Performing Arts Showcase, to name a few. This year, in October 2021, a number of students participated in the filming of a feature film that used the school campus and community as a filming location.

We have a highly competitive state-recognized band program that aids in promoting campus pride, community support, and student engagement. Students have the ability to participate in the band program beginning in the 6th grade, and our high school marching band includes students from the 8th grade class.

Claude is proud of its Visual Arts program that engages students in art education throughout all grade levels in the district. Writing is promoted on a daily basis in the secondary art classroom, requiring the students to use specific vocabulary from the Visual Arts Texas State Standards.

Claude Schools' secondary students are also given the opportunity to integrate their writing, journalism, photography, and design skills into the creation of an annual Mustang yearbook. These students also sell the annuals throughout the school and community to practice marketing skills.

In PE and health, courses are provided for the students from elementary through graduation. We also recognize the students' needs for physical activity in the early grades and help provide that opportunity through daily classes and dedicated recess time. In the secondary school, explicit courses are offered in health and nutrition.

Spanish is offered to secondary students to fulfill the foreign language requirement for high school graduation. Students take Spanish I during their freshman year and follow with Spanish II during sophomore year. An online learning platform is primarily utilized to support students' foreign language learning. However, the program is presented by a bilingual instructor who covers the foreign language TEKS, including components of speaking, reading, and writing in Spanish, as well as the history and culture tied to the language-learning. For enrichment opportunities, Spanish students have gone on field trips to learn about and celebrate various aspects and traditions of the Hispanic culture.

We are proud to be a one-to-one district where we provide every student with a personal learning device. Teachers take advantage of quality, enriching literature. The librarian, alongside the teachers, chooses literature to support the teachers' and students' needs and interests. Each semester, the school hosts a book fair where every student is provided with the opportunity to choose a text that interests them, regardless of financial ability. They collaborate with community members to host career fairs encouraging post-secondary, trade school, and workforce experience. Students also enjoy monthly character-building lessons with emphasis on social-emotional learning and connections for students.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Over the recent years, the district has implemented a pull-out reading intervention program using research-based strategies, curriculum, and resources. Students are assessed and monitored at beginning, middle and end of year, using a variety of assessment tools for tracking student progress. The data is used to design an individual plan for students who do not meet grade level expectations and to provide explicit, systematic instruction in areas such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

We have also implemented a pull-out math intervention program to target specific skills that the student is lacking through a hands-on approach that utilizes math manipulatives and real-world connections to increase student understanding and mastery. We believe that this targeted intervention makes it possible to address student learning gaps and remediate quickly. The interventionist works closely with teachers to monitor student progress and also informs the parents of progress through regular communication during their tier period. We have seen great student progress since the implementation of this intervention program.

Students are also provided with 30 minutes each day for small group tutorials during "What I Need" (WIN) Time. Students work closely with their classroom teacher to address individual student needs based upon classroom assessment data. We also recognize student learning loss that happened as a result of COVID-19, school closure, and remote learning. We use their daily WIN and RTI times to provide remediation to address this loss in learning.

Claude Schools also implemented a new dyslexia program several years ago. This excellent program provides a systematic, multisensory approach aligned with research-based practices for developing literacy and is designed for students with basic reading difficulties, such as dyslexia. This intervention follows an intensive, explicit, and cumulative design for remediation of reading and writing skills at all grade levels to meet the specific needs of struggling readers.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

In any classroom, teachers must serve a wide variety of students on many different levels. In Claude's elementary reading classrooms, students are grouped based on reading level to increase text understanding and comprehension. We partner with two online platforms that assess students individually and develop specific learning paths in both math and reading, always updated based upon most recent student data. For students performing above grade level, we have seen an increase in their learning because their individual path provides them with exposure to advanced content and scaffolds instruction to motivate them to adopt knowledge and skills well above their given grade level instruction.

We have built Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) into the daily schedule in an effort to increase students' content and real-world application based upon student interest. During STEAM time, students are provided with various materials and tasks that require higher-order thinking skills and outside-the-box thinking. Teachers accelerate the learning and rely heavily on student creativity, problem solving, and critical thinking. Many community members and parents are employed by two major local science-based industries. Knowing that many students could potentially be employed with these firms after leaving Claude Schools, school leaders encourage investigation within these fields in the hopes of better preparing them for their future endeavors.

High-achieving and gifted and talented students are well supported throughout the school. These students participate in extended learning opportunities including field trips to facilities such as air and space museums, airports, local food banks, and nearby universities. Teachers also provide these students with project-based learning opportunities. All students in grades 2-12 are also given the opportunity to participate in UIL events each school year and have had the privilege of representing Claude on the state level in many academic events.

3c. Special education:

Claude Schools strive to accommodate special education and 504 students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) that meet their specific needs in the classroom. These populations are largely served through an inclusion model of instruction, with some opportunity for Content Mastery, or resource settings, when needed. These learners will be the most successful if they are collaborating on a daily basis, socially and academically, with their peers. We are fortunate to maintain relatively small class sizes that make the majority of the challenges manageable with inclusion support. Some successful classroom accommodations may include a copy of class notes, small group instruction and testing, extra time for completing classwork and exams, text-to-speech services, content and language supports, and use of supplemental aids and graphic organizers.

The district fosters a strong level of communication between general education and special education staff through weekly documentation of accommodations, collaboration in planning and instructional practices, and in-class support for teachers and students. Administrators work closely with special education staff and the Diagnostician to ensure appropriate grade level instruction, a least restrictive environment and level of support, and specific goals that can be measured for effectiveness throughout the process.

The special education staff and administration solicit frequent feedback from classroom teachers on the effectiveness of implemented accommodations. In the event accommodations are not being successful, or certain behavior may be impeding learning in the classroom, additional Annual, Review, and Dismissal meetings are held to ensure communication between the school and parents, and to adjust the level of support needed for success. We recognize the need for daily accommodations and district/state testing accommodations to be unified. This creates an environment of consistency for the students where they are

familiar with specific teaching strategies, classroom and testing settings, and successful accommodations used on a daily basis.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

As with other special populations, the school has structures and personnel in place to serve ELL or Emergent Bilingual (EB) students. These services begin with enrollment when each student is asked to report the language that is used most at home or is spoken most by him/her. Interpreters are available as necessary. Students who identify a language other than English as their main language are given a national norm assessment to see if they qualify as an EB student. Students who qualify are provided with additional instruction and support in the classroom with targeted instruction in reading and language skills. Teachers in a variety of grade levels hold an English as a Secondary Language (ESL) certification and are trained in strategies that support learners in the classroom who are assimilating content as well as language skills. These strategies include the use of picture cards, dictionaries, or online programs to help further their understanding of the English language.

On the secondary side of Claude Schools, the students continue to receive similar support from instructors who hold the ESL certification. Students are monitored closely as they grow older to ensure their long-term academic success. If needed, they are able to provide an instructional pull-out program to ensure mastery of grade level TEKS.

Those students who qualify as EB students are assessed every year in their language development using the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). This assessment measures the progress of the student's language proficiency and makes it possible to track language development year-to-year. The assessment also allows the student to exit the EB program when they become proficient enough to do without the regular support. Exited students are monitored for several years to confirm their success, and academic support is ready for them if they show a decline.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:

Effective systems are in place to support all students who may come to the district. We ensure that students and families residing in the district are well informed on how to reach out to Claude Schools if they are in need of these services and are well informed in their native language. Partnership with the Region 16 service center also provides support and opportunities for families included in various special programs.

ELL, special education, and 504 students have IEPs that include modifications or accommodations that teachers follow to enable grade level instruction. Training is done with general education teachers to inform them of a wide variety of accommodations that can be provided for students in order to assist them in mastering their learning objectives, as well as individualized goals they have. They allow teachers autonomy in their classrooms to determine the needs of each of their students and urge them to explore new and innovative ways to meet diverse learning needs. The school counselor, campus principals, and special education teachers work closely with classroom teachers to ensure that all needs are being met and all students are afforded the opportunity to master what is being taught. During registration, migrant and homeless populations are surveyed. If identified, there are support systems and funds set aside to help provide stability and supplies for these students.

With the addition of a new House Bill requirement in the state of Texas, we have dedicated the past several years to ensuring that all pre-K through 3rd grade teachers are certified in the Science of Teaching Reading. We believe that this training has helped improve the knowledge, skill set, and teaching strategies to accommodate all students in the classroom, especially special populations such as migrant, ELL, special education, and 504 students.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Claude, we believe in the importance of engaging our students in their own learning and supporting them in setting high academic, social, and emotional goals for themselves. Each six weeks, students are recognized for meeting academic goals and attendance requirements. Students pre-K-12 meet in the gymnasium for the Mustang Pride Program, celebrating growth and effort. Teachers play games along with students and parents, participate in challenges, and are rewarded with treats and Mustang gear. Frequently, members of the community are invited to these school assemblies and pep rallies as guest speakers to inspire students and athletes. We are fortunate to have a strong community that supports all students in celebrating their successes in the classroom, on athletic fields, and beyond the halls of Claude Schools.

Administration continually celebrates students in random ways, with treats from their “Woot-Woot Wagon,” when a teacher gives students a shout-out for positive behavior, course work, or personal growth areas. In addition to honoring students on a daily basis on announcements, website, and the school app, we use social media to further the recognition to extended families and community. Magnificent Mustang Mail is a fun ritual we’ve adopted that means a lot to kids and parents. Positive postcards are sent in the mail to children who stand out in exceptional ways including academic growth, work ethic, character, leadership, or social graces. The family takes a photo of their child holding their Magnificent Mustang postcard and emails it back to the school. These photos are displayed on the district’s social media page for everyone to appreciate and applaud.

The school administers multiple district-wide assessments and other formative assessments to monitor academic progress throughout the year in all grade levels and content areas. With teacher support and guidance, students track their own progress following these assessments and then set academic goals for themselves for future assessments. Providing students with an opportunity to monitor their own progress creates a higher-level accountability that in turn creates a higher level of expectation and engagement for the students in all academic areas.

To support and engage students in college and career readiness, the district hosts a bi-yearly college and career fair where they invite various careers and post-secondary institutes to inspire their students with future opportunities. We also set aside Monday each week to promote post-secondary education by wearing college or trade school apparel to raise awareness of opportunities for students after they leave the campus.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

This school has the privilege of being in a small town where there are tight connections with parents and members of the community. The value of helping one another is consistently modeled by staff and passed along to the students in tangible ways. Whenever a need or tragedy appears, the school is often in the place of coordinating a response to help. That has been in the form of raising funds for a community member’s medical bills or supplying some extra “muscle” when someone has a large shipment to unload.

Parents are an essential and integral part of Claude Schools. Since the number of faculty is limited, there is often a need for extra adult help on projects or events. This is where the Parent Teacher Organization and Booster Clubs step in. On field trips, class parties, track meets, and competitions, you will find a faculty sponsor accompanied by multiple parents who lend a hand. The support for classrooms and activities is always appreciated and never lacking.

Several partnerships with local businesses and colleges have been formed to enhance the opportunities for quality instruction and enriching experiences for students. The school has a long-standing agreement with an area junior college to provide dual-credit courses for high school students, allowing students to graduate with college hours already completed. Some have graduated with over 30 hours of credit. A college professor at another nearby junior college has initiated a welding competition to inspire and motivate students in the agriculture department. The winner of the competition earns a set of welding tools to be used

in the welding industry or a post-secondary program.

For students interested in the medical field, Claude offers a pathway of courses that lead to the opportunity for certification as a CNA. For this program we have partnered with a local nursing home where students intern during the final phase of their training, giving them real-life, hands-on experience.

One of the more recent partnerships has been with a local day-care facility which was going to begin providing after-school care for working parents. With the help of a grant, the school was able to fund the activities on campus with staff from the day-care planning and executing the lessons and games. This was most definitely a win-win for the community, giving parents a safe place for the kids to be and giving kids high quality, enriching activities to take part in.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The culture of Claude Schools begins with a foundational belief in the competence and dedication of our staff. Teachers are viewed as professional, and there is a general understanding that they are the ones that know their students best and know best what their students need. This philosophy has a great impact on the overall culture of the school because staff feel like they have a level of autonomy that might not be present in other schools. This isn't to say that there are no curriculum choices or strategies that are school-wide, but those directives are kept to a minimum and are only set in place if research supports their efficacy. This approach changes the administrator's role from one of being directive to one of being supportive. The leadership of the school will often have conversations on how best to support the staff in their instruction and will often ask the teachers directly what would best help them. In concert with those conversations and student performance data, professional development is selected that targets the identified need. One way that the district addresses the need is by purchasing an agreement each year with the Educational Service Center in the region, allowing teachers to take part in numerous and varied professional trainings. Teachers are prompted to take advantage of these trainings and are given release time if needed. The district also purchased an online learning option, giving teachers the ability to access the training remotely if it is offered. Individual coaching has been provided to teachers where it has been determined to be more effective than group training.

Giving teachers the time to plan and prepare has also been an effective strategy. Claude has implemented a series of two-hour late starts where teachers have dedicated time to collaborate and work together on the plan for the upcoming six weeks of instruction.

The philosophy of support is research-based. Studies on motivation have shown that one of the most demotivating situations for an employee is for expectations to be set higher than the employee feels like they have the training or tools to reach. No one would argue that expectations in the field of education are high, and increasingly getting higher. Supporting the teachers and striving to give them the tools and training to reach those high standards becomes an imperative to the work of the school, and is one reason that Claude succeeds.

4. School Leadership:

The school leadership at Claude begins with a belief that every student deserves the best instruction possible, and that each child has the potential to succeed. The administrators, teachers, and staff members put their full effort behind that belief. Claude Schools is actually a single campus school where the superintendent works with two principals, one on the secondary side and one on the elementary side. The superintendent is responsible for ensuring adequate funding through budgeting, setting the instructional direction of the school, and working with the leadership (including the School Board) on setting goals and policies. The principals are tasked with day-to-day operations of the school and working with the teachers on implementing the instructional program, upholding the instructional standards that the district has set. Principals are given authority to make decisions in concert with the teachers in lesson planning, curriculum choices, and instructional strategies. Crucial to the success of the school has been the belief that the people who are closest to a situation are the best ones to make a decision that affects the students. It is that philosophy that has caused the superintendent's and principals' roles to shift from being directive, which is a

more traditional approach, to being supportive.

A shining example of how the leadership of Claude ensures student success took place occurred in the fall of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic was still in effect. Believing that the best instruction and care for students could only be provided in a face-to-face setting, the school leadership in concert with the Board of Trustees made the decision to open the school and invite students physically into the classroom. This produced measurable positive results.

The school leaders recognize that a relationship with the student is one of the primary factors in students reaching their full potential in the classroom, so relationships are emphasized and focused on when planning with instructional staff. The superintendent and principals also try to take advantage of every opportunity to build relationships with individual students. The principals know the names and progress of each student, regularly meet with teachers during planning time, and discuss specific progress on formative assessments.

The superintendent and principals share the belief that accountability for success starts with them. Therefore, they hold themselves to a level of excellence, modeling in their own behavior and actions what is expected of the staff and students in the school.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

The general population of Claude is a mixture of students from diverse family backgrounds. A cross section of the population could include students from families in agriculture and families of professionals, students from low socio-economic situations and those whose families have means. However, students display a common set of needs regardless of the background they come from. The staff at Claude Schools particularly recognize the social and emotional needs of the students and have systems in place to capture kids in crisis so that they can be given support. In the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the social-emotional needs of students were placed front and center in the decision to reopen the school in the fall of 2020 so that students could come back in person. The staff recognized that students needed face-to-face instruction as well as face-to-face interactions with peers and adults in order to have their best chance at successful development.

Students who find themselves with a particular need will be surrounded by people to help. This could come in the form of counseling, clothing, food, school supplies, or a host of unique responses for unique needs. Many responses come from members of the community who are happy to give to students.

Access to technology is a place where equity is becoming more and more crucial in education. The digital divide is thoroughly addressed there. Being a one-to-one school in regard to devices ensures that students have the same access to technological resources as any other student at the school. Students who may come from a background where obtaining technology would be difficult are still given the chance to use a device that is issued to them. This serves to equalize the opportunity for learning across content and grade levels.

Due to our size, the staff are more closely connected to families and understand the backgrounds and cultures they come from. When issues arise, our personnel are quick to respond in positive and supportive ways. In the classroom, teachers allow students to express their beliefs and opinions regarding current events and issues appropriately in an open dialogue. Particularly in the higher grades, it is not unusual for a discussion to occur spontaneously with students expressing views on both sides of an emerging topic. Teachers at Claude Schools take the position of neutral facilitators of those conversations, creating an environment where ideas can be exchanged respectfully and even challenged without judgment being passed on the student who holds or expresses the idea.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Many factors play into this National Blue Ribbon School nomination, but there is one practice that helps Claude Schools to stand out amongst other districts. The cornerstone of all learning begins with strong, positive relationships between teachers, administration, students, parents, and community. We believe that creating these meaningful relationships is the most instrumental factor in our school's success. Our teachers foster positive relationships with our students to design learning environments conducive to academic success. Students are more actively engaged and have stronger social and emotional skills because of the trusting bond with their teacher. It is our belief that no real learning will happen within the walls of a classroom until students feel welcome, loved, and safe.

As teachers and administrators, we pride ourselves in putting the needs of our students first when making any decisions about their education. This value for relationships supports the success of all Claude students and sets high expectations for the students' social, emotional, and academic learning as they prepare students for the next chapter in their lives. Even in the midst of the recent Covid crisis, we were diligent in our efforts to retain the relationships we had cultivated within our classrooms, even from a distance.

Claude Schools recognizes that parents are a child's first teacher. We work closely with parents by establishing a strong partnership in which we are collaborating toward the same goal of ensuring that their child is successful in the classroom in all aspects. We have an open-door policy, and parents are invited to be heavily involved in their child's education. Additionally, teachers proactively communicate each student's progress and goals on a regular basis. This partnership with parents helps support students' work ethic and positive attitude about school. We are thankful for the strong school-home connection we have with the families in our district.

The school also works very closely with the members of our community to foster a supportive system for our students. This support system helps to hold students accountable both in and out of school. Our community shows students how much we care by packing the stands on any given Friday night and supporting the students when they are sought out for fundraising by various programs and teams.

In conclusion, without the relationships that have been built within the school walls and community, Claude Schools would not be the great student-centered locus of learning that we strive to be.