

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 400 NW 3rd Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Happy State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 79042-0458

County Swisher County

Telephone (806) 558-5311 Fax (806) 214-6828

Web site/URL http://www.happyisd.net E-mail rkeith@happyisd.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. Ray Keith E-mail rkeith@happyisd.net  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Happy Independent School District Tel. (806) 558-5331

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. Jay Wade Johnson  
(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**

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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

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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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	8	12	20
8	7	12	19
9	20	11	31
10	13	8	21
11	16	5	21
12 or higher	14	9	23
<b>Total Students</b>	78	57	135

\*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):
- 0.8 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 0.4 % Black or African American
  - 9.8 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 84 % White
  - 5 % 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: 5%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	6
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	127
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %

7 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 29 %

Total number students who qualify: 39

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 29 %  
39 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>0</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>29</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>1</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.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	1
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 10:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	96%	99%	96%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	12
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	42%
Enrolled in a community college	33%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	25%
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.

In partnership with parents, teachers, and students, the mission of the Happy Independent School District is to ensure a positive, supportive, nurturing environment in which to educate all students through a commitment to quality and high standards.

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

[https://happyisd.net/301285\\_2](https://happyisd.net/301285_2)

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**

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Happy High School nestles in the small town of Happy, Texas, with a population of 697 alongside I-27 between Canyon and Tulia. Happy began as an agricultural-farming community and was booming with many businesses until the construction of Interstate 27. While businesses faltered, the school remains the heart of the town. The community still pulls together to support and foster relationships with one another, especially through and because of the school. Many of the teachers have spent the majority of their lives here and take pride in the town and in the school.

The population of Happy High School has ebbed and flowed throughout the years, but today, boasts an established number of students in grades seven through twelve. Because of its location and the lack of businesses in the town, many people do not live in Happy for work and/or housing, but a large population of transfer families enjoy the tight-knit community. Happy High School certainly fosters community through a daily family-style breakfast, teacher-built relationships, and a strong growth mindset.

The culture of the school, therefore, expands on the same principles of the town. Not only do educators know their students well, but they recognize the value of the individual. Happy's population includes a diverse group of students who have responsibilities beyond the school day and extracurriculars; many attend after-school sports/academic practice, then head home to chores and/or show animals daily. Several students help support their family through after school jobs which require commuting to nearby towns. Church activities, leadership roles, coaching little league sports, community service, and 4-H activities are just a few of the events students participate in outside of school; however, because of size, these are also the athletes, musicians, thespians, and academic scholars. Happy High students know how to work and work ethic truly shines throughout the student body. So, the foundational character of Happy High School comes from a deep value system, evident in the various activities students include in their journey through school. Happy High takes a holistic approach toward educating students, working together to provide an environment that meets individual needs and ensures life-long success as productive members of society.

Much like the students' versatility, teachers are involved in a multitude of activities that foster student growth. A "Career Talk" program was implemented that brings professionals from different careers to speak during breakfast in order to empower students to seek a career they are passionate about. Breakfast time is spent as a 7-12 family where everyone is in the cafeteria for breakfast. This allows the principal and counselor to touch base with all students and allows for campus announcements as well as praise and recognition for a variety of activities. Student Council also develops a theme and quote for the year that is recited daily in the cafeteria at breakfast; such as, "Be the Light that Leads Others, Let Your Light Shine Bright."

The Family and Consumer Science (FCS) teacher also facilitates community service opportunities and fundraising event planning to help families and individuals in the community with ongoing needs. Happy's educators cheer for their students and help work alongside them at concession stands which builds up a family atmosphere and unmatched rapport in the classroom. Because students feel valued, they are happy to help clean the cafeteria every morning after breakfast, excited when elementary students ask to take pictures with them as their reward, and pleased to have opportunities to serve in the elementary school and the community. Students learn that actions and words must always symbolize the "Cowboy Way" because little eyes and ears are always watching and listening.

The leadership at Happy reinforces consistent grades through Response to Intervention (RtI) and tutorials daily; students who are struggling or have shown evidence of educational gaps are required an extra 25 minutes with an assigned teacher who is focusing on their struggles in even smaller teacher:student ratios. Administration bases student placement according to formal/informal assessments and teacher referral to ensure that every concept is grasped and continual growth achieved for each student with the use of shortened lessons to reach students through research-based individualized instruction. Differentiated instruction through digital and traditional methods meet students' needs in an inclusive climate across all grade levels and subjects. Students involved in academic UIL also utilize this time for practice.

With these high expectations, Happy High has achieved an overall A rating as well as distinction designations in mathematics, science, social studies, comparative closing the gap and postsecondary readiness in state ratings.

Happy High's expectation of success encourages everyone to become involved. The community embraces student activities and cheers them on whether in person, listening to a live broadcast, or attending a pep rally/send off. The reality is, though, that the community does not simply celebrate when the school finds success, they celebrate life every step along the way.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

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

Happy Independent School District utilizes a core curriculum resource for math, English/Language arts/reading, science and social studies where Instructional Focus Documents (IFD) and Year at a Glance (YAG) planning documents are used to create a roadmap for pacing and instructional focus. However, teachers have the ability to implement whatever resources necessary to teach the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) to the rigor required for student mastery in each subject and grade level area.

Teachers are trained with the mindset to teach bell-to-bell, engaging students in bell ringers upon entrance and maintaining student engagement through research-based instructional strategies for the entire class period. Formal assessments provide concise snapshot documents and teacher learning reports that are useful as checklists for covering TEKS. Teachers also receive instructional strategies to engage learners and develop differentiated instruction from curriculum resources. Assessments are administered so that administration can help teachers disaggregate data to target strengths and weaknesses in instructional objectives and create RTI groups accordingly. Student data from formative and summative assessments is utilized to target student learning that is in need of intervention and additional instructional support. Teachers implement informal assessments and employ everyday interactions with students to know and understand areas of instructional weakness.

In light of the disruption of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) to learning in 2020, Happy High School has always kept student physical and mental well-being and student learning at the forefront of decision-making. Although all parties involved knew that in-person learning was the best, situations arose where students would attend remotely according to their daily schedule. Synchronous instruction included online classroom platforms, which are still being utilized to disseminate classroom materials and assignments to students. Installation of new cameras in every classroom ensured teachers the ability to meet with students virtually, allowing students to receive the same material (verbally and visually) as their in-class peers.

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

Reading and writing are two areas where many students struggle according to assessment data, and English teachers recognize the level of difficulty and dread that students can associate with the material. To help alleviate some of this, teachers utilize the writing process on informal assignments and incorporate audio options for reading assignments. Also, separate reading and language arts classes are taught through seventh grade before they are combined to form a general English course. Success in any secondary curriculum stems from lower-level comprehension; Happy Elementary School sets a strong foundation as the building block through sentence strength, paragraph formation, and reading fluency.

The desire of Happy's English teachers is to spark and maintain the interest of each student while addressing the TEKS. Differentiated lessons and audio-enhanced StudySync curriculum is a great basis for the course and is supplemented with grammar lessons, extra reading, current events, writing prompts, and a formative outline to improve student writing and ensure overall success. Students hone their writing skills through multiple drafts and edits, as well as through a strong audience analysis comprehension. Once students are able to successfully use the outline, they begin to gain confidence in their voice and take risks in their writing. Students then notice more about what they are reading as well. For example, a student who knows where to place a main idea in their introduction, knows where to look for a main idea in a text. Confidence and self-development allows students to relate to character traits, recognize author's purpose, employ critical thinking, and expand their revision and editing skills.

Inclusive classrooms require scaffolding and differentiation. Group work, discussions, and projects allow students at every level to shine--expanded conversations allow depth of the subject matter for high-

achieving students while continuing to push the entire class. Students also have the opportunity to teach others according to their strengths, allowing growth that does not happen in a teacher-centered lesson.

Upon noticing that students were lacking academic-level vocabulary, the focus shifted from definitions to comprehension-based instruction that breaks down the word to understand the meaning, origin, and use, and is assessed weekly. Students have not only improved their vocabulary through practiced word study, but are able to understand and relate word-meaning across subjects. The same rings true in grammar; where students spend a great deal of time texting, they forget the formal rules of writing, so daily grammar lessons targeted to meet student needs are written by the teacher. Students recognize the emphasis the teacher places on grammar through their efforts and return the enthusiasm through consistent growth and exploration of the grammar rules.

In order to ensure student success, teachers incorporate essays, quizzes, scripts, acting, speaking, and word study to assess students' abilities both in recollection and application. Successful students enjoy learning; teachers select relevant and relatable texts and ask students to work alongside one another to grasp concepts and regularly reteach and adjust their own processes to build stronger students and peers.

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

Mathematics instruction at Happy High School is always looking at the next step. The TEKS are taught for each grade level with the mindset of what this concept morphs into at the next grade level, or how this idea might be useful in a different subject area. Students growth is dependent on their own ability to recognize value educationally and relationally, so they must comprehend application. Math is a subject area that hones skills necessary to be successful in a variety of other school areas; measurements in culinary arts, equations and manipulations of formulas in science, geometry in the agricultural mech and metal classes, and in real-life experience where students are creating projects and applying skills. Teachers give students examples of how the math concepts can be applied to real world scenarios regularly to maintain engagement and reinforce the value of a growth mindset.

Students are taught using a variety of research-based methods including forms of direct teaching, individual practice, partner, and group work. Teachers conduct individual student conferencing during independent practice to provide one-to-one reteach. Spiral review is incorporated with bell ringers at the beginning of each class period to maintain comprehension and consistency between classrooms and across grade levels. Bell ringers are also used as a pre-assessment to any new concepts, guiding teachers toward any information necessary before delving into material. Informal assessments are utilized to check for understanding and growth. Teachers also survey students according to comprehension with thumbs up/down, and to show agreement on the way a problem the teacher and/or a student has worked on the board. Students are asked to go to the board and work problems and walk through the process for class discussion, sometimes allowing comprehension amongst peers who may not have understood the teacher's process.

Hands-on learning activities and projects are used to reinforce concepts while the use of mathematical vocabulary is regularly taught and students are expected to verbalize steps and processes of problems. Writing out each step to a problem is also reinforced as a valuable method of writing; an answer alone is not accepted, as students are encouraged to always be problem-solvers and critical thinkers, so the process of reaching the answer is as important as getting the correct answer.

Mathematics is not taught as a rote skill, but a process. Teachers help students with their thinking and identify where student mistakes are being made whether in the process of the problem or in simple calculation skills. Using STAAR/EOC scores, as well as classroom data, students are assigned to courses that ensure growth and close any gaps before limiting comprehension. A strong algebraic foundation is beneficial for both the math and science classes; it is the foundation to a strong math understanding. To prepare students for college and career readiness, ACT and Texas Success Initiative Assessment 2.0 (TSIA2) questions are incorporated into Algebra II and senior year math classes to prepare students and increase success on those exams.

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

Research based instructional strategies, especially scientific inquiry-based learning, are used by the science teachers to ensure scientific thought processes among students. Everyday lessons are embedded with differentiation and intervention through the use of multiple resources to ensure student-centered engagement. Within an array of books, students learn the information through reading and writing, while teachers incorporate hands-on, interactive lessons which maintain student engagement and growth. Additional resources online allow students to meet TEKS while working in groups, experimenting and hypothesizing, and teaching their results to classmates. Teachers also spiral concepts from current lessons to prior knowledge.

Formal and informal assessments are used to check student understanding and enable teachers to make adjustments to student learning. With the assistance of technology, some lab experiments can be performed virtually giving students more experiences. Students are given opportunities to work on projects that integrate concepts learned, such as the Rube Goldberg project, the Egg Drop, Catapult project, and dissecting animals, physically and virtually. A skeleton is employed as a basis for learning about the body, while internal organs are studied through 3D models. Students in physics classes build a Bluetooth speaker, place plastic wrap over the speakers and use salt to observe how the sound wave patterns change with frequencies and amplitude.

Teacher-created discovery pages provide as much information related to the subject as possible before students evaluate the information to recognize key concepts. This process enables the teacher to introduce students to new concepts while students learn to synthesize the information before drawing conclusions. Students learn note-taking strategies that can be used across all subjects and employed in post-secondary education. A metacognitive exercise where students rate their knowledge on material during the review process before test-taking allows students to gauge their range of understanding. Students learn from experienced, vetted teachers who value student growth through multiple avenues of learning.

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

Social Studies classes are taught with the balance of teaching towards specific TEKS for each class as well as incorporating discussions about current events. Teachers recognize that events happening now or recently, but not yet published in history books, are important for students to discuss to recognize the parallels politically and historically. Intentional discussions on how events from the past would be handled today and speculation on how those events could have been handled differently to create a different outcome help students draw conclusions and critically analyze the material. Teachers recognize the value of politically-minded, historically knowledgeable students who can associate the past with current events and the roles their decisions make on the future.

Data is gathered through informal and formal assessments providing so that any comprehension problems are well-addressed and readdressed as needed. The sequence of classes is set from world geography and history to United State history and government to give students a broader understanding of the world. In recognizing overarching timelines and geographical locations, students comprehend how each government can affect another.

Technology is used to research and provide collaboration on group projects as well as accessing online curriculum resources. Students find an interest in their social studies courses as teachers work diligently to engage them through the material by using technology and research-based instructional strategies. Students' critical thinking skills are expanded through individual and group projects while regular class assignments practice map-reading and timeline orientation. Students utilize these skills in geography and carry that knowledge into history courses; this basic understanding of cross-curricular allows students to recognize the time periods and goings-on in world history according to the material introduced in English and art studies. This level of comprehension builds literacy skills that students use academically and in life, offering them a better-rounded education.

#### **1f. For secondary schools:**

Happy High School always has career and college readiness on the forefront of teachers' minds as they prepare students to become productive citizens. Dual credit classes are offered in English, Government, Economics and U.S. History. Before graduating high school, students have the opportunity to receive industry-based certifications in several areas: ServSafe, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), multiple welding types, Feedyard Technician, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and drone flying. Teachers emphasize that students learn academic skills in the classroom alongside necessary job skills such as being on time, meeting deadlines, working individually as well as with a team, and being respectful and responsible.

A local requirement for all students, Money Matters, is taught by the business teacher. This course presents money management, budgeting, resumes, mock interviews, and financial terminology providing all students with hands-on, real-world applications for a post-graduation advantage.

The FCS teacher has made it her mission to provide students with information about a variety of jobs that do and do not require higher education by inviting members of the workforce to discuss jobs in a series called Career Talks. These speakers come during breakfast where all seventh through twelfth graders learn about possible careers in hopes to find one that piques their interest.

An eighth grade Career Cruising class is offered that enables students to take interest inventories to guide students towards their strengths and then explore and research a variety of careers that fall within each of the CTE career clusters.

The counselor and principal provide evening sessions explaining the graduation requirements for various endorsements so students and parents can begin planning the 4-year graduation coursework. Individual meetings are held with all other students at the end of every year to discuss future plans and courses best providing growth opportunities within their interest fields.

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

### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Happy High School provides a number of elective courses to high schoolers vital to the school's success. They provide students opportunities to learn skills for competition and use in the next phase of life, whether pursuing higher education, a career, or a job skill to help them work through college. These electives teach students skills according to specific TEKS to work as a team member, provide service to others, and become well-rounded individuals.

Technology classes teach students skills benefitting them in current classes and providing information for future careers. Students create teacher web pages, learn animation basics, plus film and edit weekly webcasts to highlight student activities/events. Students learn to fly drones for competition, school use, and earn certification. Robotics and drone activities are offered to students at all grade levels.

A medical program of study that leads to a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) is offered through our partnership with another school. Students seek certification that enables them to stay in the workforce or pursue higher education classes to further their career.

The business department sets high expectations to learn Office programs preparing students for the professional world through detailed assignments and Microsoft Office certifications. The UIL Accounting teams compete at state annually, earning team gold eleven of thirteen years with seven individual gold medals. UIL Computer Applications students have competed at state annually since 2015, twelve students advancing and two individual gold medals. Students graduate with confidence and knowledge to excel in college accounting and skills helpful in attaining jobs. Money Matters has been developed and personalized with careful attention to life skills.

The Family Consumer Sciences classes have evolved, adding culinary, offering students a deeper understanding of prepping and cooking food. The department routinely provides meals for School Board meetings, sends teams to state Parliamentary Procedures contest, and offers community service through projects: establishing a community garden, painting street signs and fire hydrants, decorating the community, and organizing community events.

Our Agriculture/Animal Science program offers students the opportunity to earn certifications in welding and feedyard technician, providing an upper hand in the job market, leading to a lifelong career. Students build projects for competition and market their product through presentation. Students learn about animals and apply knowledge through raising and showing animals which translates to competitions in livestock judging, meat judging, and general agriculture, leading to scholarships and opportunity.

The Spanish program is offered through Stetleon Institute and students complete two consecutive years of instruction. The online course is supplemented by a hands-on instructor who visits, zooms, and listens to student's speaking assignments; a strong, Spanish-speaking facilitator ensures success and acquisition.

Health is required for every student where they receive a basic knowledge of environmental, physical, social, and mental issues that face today's youth.

Fine Arts credit is received through band and theater. Marching band has been to state competition and regularly earns sweepstakes at competitions. Theater has advanced in One Act Play and performed multiple student-written pieces for the community and school. These programs require students to utilize artistic and musical abilities to meet associated TEKS.

### **3. Academic Supports**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level:**

The school provides multiple tiers of prevention and intervention to ensure success for all students in school. Previous state assessment scores, formal and informal classroom assessments, diagnostic tools, and teacher input are all used to identify students who are in need of intervention. Because we do not staff interventionists, students are assigned an RtI schedule in which classroom teachers, principal, and counselor work with either individual students or small groups on concepts needing reinforcement or reteaching. Reports from DMAC and NWEA systems are used to identify specific learning objectives that are weaknesses.

Teachers plan RtI differentiated instruction according to the student or group of students who are assigned to them each day using both formal and informal assessments. Students who have failed or did not meet grade level on a state performance test are provided the opportunity to attend a summer boot camp before retaking the exam and/or a semester long course during the school year where instructional strategies are used to bridge the gap in content areas. Our seventh grade English class is split into reading and writing, so that during the reading class, teachers can place students into smaller learning groups to intervene or accelerate the learning process.

Students are consistently monitored and adjustments made according to the level of supports needed. An online diagnostic assessment for reading, math, and science is administered to all students, grades seven through nine at the beginning, middle, and end of the year, giving teachers and administration a deeper understanding of student needs. Reports are used to identify which objectives students are struggling with, as well as identifying those objectives that students are mastering and may require stimulation. Our goal is to provide the education necessary to empower students with the confidence to be able to succeed.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

Although there isn't a high level of identified gifted and talented students, all students are pushed and expected to go beyond their comfort zone to reach for their next highest level. Teachers and students continuously discuss ways to strive for excellence, never settling for just enough. Secondary students are

given access, time, and incentives to progress through an online ACT preparation program on their own time. Bootcamps are offered in class to students to prepare them for the ACT and TSIA2 testing.

Fortunately, our district offers the ACT State test on campus during the school day, which has eased the anxiety of many students on such a high-stakes test. Whether students intend to attend college, trade school, or join the workforce, the ACT and TSIA2 are encouraged and paid for by the school to offer equitable access to all students, ensuring that all students are equipped with the necessary requirements should they decide to attend college.

Students performing above grade level receive accelerated instruction through online, adaptive software, high school credit for advanced courses, and individualized, high-level instruction. Teachers also differentiate assignments accordingly, giving students opportunities to delve deeper into materials and advance their knowledge-base.

Students performing above grade level are also encouraged to participate in University Interscholastic League (UIL) activities that cover a broad range of topics offering students necessary skills to compete throughout life. Because these students who are performing above grade level are not needing the response to intervention time, that time is utilized to hone those skills and increase their knowledge base in UIL events mentioned above. Doing well in UIL competitions leads to potential scholarships, exciting trips, and competition where students strive to excel. Students are also valued in class as peer teachers to those struggling students whom they are often able to offer new perspective.

### **3c. Special education:**

Providing the education and skills necessary for each individual student to experience success is our main goal. Sometimes this means that inclusion is the best method; whereas, other times it may be best with a more one-on-one, or very small group approach in the special education classroom. Each decision made about the least restrictive environment is based on the individual student and there are many times the Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee determines instruction time for each student that can be facilitated in the regular education classroom with inclusion support which has resulted in more on-level academic success.

Accommodations include individual instruction by the use of pre-teaching, vocabulary support, use of graphic organizers, guided notes, visual representation, checklists, extended time for quizzes and tests, textbooks on audio, note taking assistance, copy of notes, highlighted text, and reduced answer choices. Goals are written to ensure progress is made according to the individual student's needs and academic levels.

Some students do not thrive in classroom academic learning, and instead the focus is on functional skill instruction. Our principal, counselor, special education teacher, and paraprofessional have adjusted schedules and created opportunities outside of the traditional classroom learning for students who need such experiences; for example, taking charge of the weekly grocery shopping for our high school culinary arts classes and making plans to start a small greenhouse to grow herbs and a few vegetables for the culinary arts classes while applying science knowledge according to the TEKS and curriculum.

Transition to life outside high school is always thoroughly discussed with all students, but especially with students in the special education department, whether getting students in touch with Panhandle Workforce Solutions or helping them with paperwork in other programs. Ensuring students have the resources and support needed to have a productive life outside of school is paramount to their future success.

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

English Language Learners are supported through a variety of ways, such as preteaching vocabulary, note-taking assistance or providing a copy of notes, individualized assignments, tiered supports, differentiated instruction, and any other proven research-based instructional strategies. Many teachers implement text-to-speech or oral administration of tests and assignments as well as offering extended time as needed on

assignments and tests.

Teachers are trained to incorporate increased wait time between a given question and student response to allow equity. This gives all students, especially emerging bilingual students, time to process the question and develop an answer. Teachers create a nurturing environment where students feel comfortable answering questions and asking for help.

English teachers choose culturally diverse reading passages and books and actively teach ethos, pathos, and logos, which allows for comprehension growth while teaching empathy and social acceptance for all students. Sentence starters are used in a variety of classrooms to help students know what format and how to begin assignments. Teachers also encourage verbal expression before writing the answer to offer confidence as students learn to write in English.

Technologies such as Google Translate can be used by teachers and students as an aide when connections cannot be achieved quickly and are employed at any level of academic need to encourage student growth and teacher-student relationship. English Language Learners who need more intensive help mastering the curriculum content are given a class period where they focus on their school work in a small group setting where a teacher is available in addition to any additional support during RTI and tutorials. Because of small student:teacher ratios, students also receive a fair amount of instructional help in class as needed. ELL students are offered multiple ways to experience success within the classroom and are encouraged to become involved in extracurriculars that highlight their strengths.

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

To make sure every student's basic needs are met, several community donors contribute to a supply closet that offers students access to necessities for use at home or school: clothing, personal hygiene products, and school supplies. While at school, economically disadvantaged students can concentrate on their academic learning. Providing confidence and equity to students nurtures social and emotional well-being and quickly affects their desire and ability to learn.

Another community-supported non-profit organization provides bags of nutritional snacks for students who express need to take home every Friday to provide sustenance over the weekend. Local churches 'adopt' families through parent-granted permission to the school counselor and provide clothing and gifts during the holidays, as well as food for a holiday family meal at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter.

Regardless of student need, anytime after-school tutorials are required, snacks are provided, and when a student arrives to school late, they are offered breakfast. Hungry students cannot learn.

A number of students who are at a higher risk of dropping out due to life and academic circumstances receive added support and RtI. The same group is assessed for any other needs that may benefit them and their families, and are offered any available supports to meet them where they are.

Social and emotional support are provided by allowing time during the school day to be used for counseling whether that is with the school counselor or a licensed counselor who visits in person or via online video/audio communication.

Teachers, staff, and administration make sure students know they are valued and create a positive environment where students are always expected to put forth their best efforts. Whatever the learning environment, teachers and administrators continuously monitor student progress and adjust accordingly so that every student receives everything they need to experience and strive for success.

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Happy High School expects strong character and utilizes every opportunity for character development. Students learn to work through athletics, academic UIL, band competitions, and extracurricular practices, while teachers in the classroom implement character lessons and opportunities for students to recognize how adults approach and handle life situations.

Teachers not only teach academics, but also job and life skills. To start, students are taught that their job in life at this moment is school, where they are expected to show up on time everyday, ready and willing to cooperate and learn, to be a team player, as well as a driven individual, and to respect authority and peers. Teachers also provide real-world connections with lesson objectives and consistent communication to guide social-emotional development.

Small town values are instilled through student involvement in a variety of activities, usually more than one activity at a time, where one's word to compete is one's promise to show up and do one's best. Students learn how to communicate with their peers on a sports team or with a group on a class activity or project, think on their feet by putting together thought-provoking debate support, and adjust to the physical and mental demands of individual and team sporting events. Students are engaged in leadership not only at school, but also in the community as officers in 4-H clubs, Rodeo clubs, and youth groups. High school students know they are setting examples for elementary students and those students are watching actions and listening to spoken words at school events as well as out in the community. Students are taught many aspects of balance, time management, and commitment while also developing communication skills that can help them in future situations, while ensuring that their character is reflective of the human they want to become.

Respect for others, sportsmanship on and off the court, noticing jobs that need to be done and completing them without being asked, silent leadership, sticking through to the end, pushing past adversity, and fighting for the right thing in every circumstance shows up in students because it is the expectation. Character starts with staff and trickles into every aspect of the school because pride in the "Cowboy Way" runs deep. Students know they are the next generation of the work force and are treated as such by engaging them during class, in hallways, and across the small town. The school and community push character because character will always serve the students well.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Happy High wants to make the students feel like a member of the family, and without the inclusion of the families of students, that cannot happen. Each partner in student education should feel at home when they walk through the front doors.

Before the start of the school year, both campuses host an Open House where parents and students are encouraged to come to the school, drop off school supplies, and meet the teachers. Later that same evening, a local organization, Happy Days Association, provides a meal for the entire community to meet the teachers before the football, cross country, and basketball teams are introduced, and the band and cheerleaders kick off each new year. It is a time for the entire community to gather together as one big family and celebrate the beginning of a new year, sure to bring success and failure, which will be approached head-on.

The first weekend school starts, there is also a Happy Days celebration where different groups create floats for the parade and the high school athletes serve the senior citizens a meal at the city park. Happy High students organize and provide carnival-type games for the entire community at the annual Halloween Carnival. Homecoming is a week-long, annual event when alumni organize class reunions and cheer on the Cowboys' football team. The All-School Booster Club, composed of anyone from the community, helps support students in all activities monetarily and actively and offers scholarships to seniors each year.

Students and families have access to the student information system where low grades, missing assignments, and attendance can be tracked in real time. Parents are invited to be members of various committees, such as school calendar, campus and district improvement, and student health advisory. The local fire department, made up solely of volunteers, is always available for routine fire drills, and are also excited for send-offs that celebrate whatever group has advanced past district. Lights and sirens escort students down the street in front of the school for elementary and high school students to cheer alongside, and then lead them down Main Street where other fans gather to wish them good luck on their way out of town.

To ensure open communication, Remind groups, social media, and website updates keep parents and community members in the know about everything going on at Happy High, in addition to an ever-important google calendar with information for every event.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Teachers are a vital asset to student learning and student success. Teachers are empowered with choice in how they facilitate and provide effective, research-based TEKS instruction. Teachers are given the freedom to attend professional development opportunities during the school year as they see beneficial to their subject area.

Scheduling and staff assignments play a vital role in the academic achievement of Happy High students. The school strives to deliver a full range of educational opportunities for all learners and the master schedule is designed to optimize instructional time. Teacher conference periods are scheduled so that teachers of the same subject share a planning period so vertical alignment and discussions can take place which is a version of the professional learning community (PLC) since there is not more than one teacher per subject/grade level.

Core classes are strategically placed before lunch to optimize learning and hopefully ensure less interruption and student absenteeism for extra-curricular activities. Technology is used frequently in the classroom and the school has purchased enough Chromebooks to allow 1:1 use. This allows teachers more flexibility in using technology-based programs and apps without the worry of signing up for a time to use the computer lab or classroom set of Chromebooks. Classrooms also have interactive whiteboards and video cameras that enable connectivity with students when quarantined. This connectivity also allows teachers to teach remotely in instances where they would normally have a substitute teacher in their place allowing uninterrupted direct learning for the students.

Allowing teachers to still be part of their child's school activities is very important, and being in a small school, teachers who have children who are students are able to get coverage to attend in-school activities such as elementary class parties, awards assemblies, and student class presentations, building the morale and overall culture among staff members. All pre-K through 12th grade teachers come together for staff development prior to the beginning of each school year where school-wide training and discussions revolve around special education topics, first-aid, social and emotional well-being of staff and students, data disaggregation, and discussions of research-based instructional strategies. Administration supports teachers, but relies on their expertise and teaching practices when selecting resources to facilitate the teaching of the TEKS.

Teachers know the set of students in their classrooms and use instructional strategies that best fit that group of students. Happy High School teachers are truly a village who help grow the students to find success in a variety of ways.

### **4. School Leadership:**

Leading with a servant's heart describes the leadership team. The school administration team is comprised of a principal and a counselor who put the needs of the teachers and students at the forefront of every decision.

The principal oversees instructional leadership, curriculum development, professional growth and daily operations of the building, including discipline. The principal and counselor work together to create the master schedule and disaggregate data to help determine placement of students. The principal fosters school-community relations by being visible at school events and posting information and accolades on the school's social media platform. She has been known to help set-up and take down the run-through tunnel at football games, help broadcast play-by-play at sporting events, direct the band when the director is out, be the substitute teacher in classrooms, shuffle students to and from events, and take out the trash; showing students she is invested in them. She views her position as a way to serve others, doing whatever is needed inside and outside the school walls.

The principal provides support and encouraging motivation while maintaining high standards, expectations, and accountability. Partnership and collaboration lead to trust which leads to an overall successful learning environment. The principal and counselor also make a point to meet and greet students as they enter the building in the mornings and as they leave in the afternoons, and if they are not at school, will call to check on them. During the family-style breakfast after first period, they make it a priority to make contact with each student. They initiate conversations with students to let them know that each one of them is important.

The school counselor has taken it upon herself to be on the watchful lookout for students' well-being. She has pursued a grant to provide students with a safe and secure school campus through continual staff development and research-based curriculum. She serves as the district testing coordinator, 504 coordinator, and provides social-emotional support individually and in groups. She also partners with other organizations, the community, and parents to offer need-based instruction and post-secondary opportunities.

In serving each of these roles, the administration works together to continually update RTI and tutorial lists, support teachers through difficult situations and circumstances, and whatever else deemed necessary to keep the safety and well-being of each student and staff member at the top of the priority list. Both know that once those needs are met physically and relationally, the educational learning will follow.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

Although Happy High School is a socioeconomically diverse school, it does not have the cultural diversity that can be found in many other schools. Therefore, the staff must introduce students to the diversity they will encounter as they graduate and go out into the world.

Social Studies teachers, especially in World History and World Geography, are able to discuss the various cultures and religions found around the world while English teachers offer more in-depth study of specific cultural experiences throughout literature. Math instructors incorporate names and scenarios throughout their lessons that are culturally diverse so students can relate to the material. Science teachers incorporate the scientific studies and research expanded upon across the world. Social and cultural norms are interwoven throughout curriculum as students read and develop new ideas that encourage student identity. Cultural diversity is apparent in almost any class discussion, raising questions and awareness of familial differences.

Current events are discussed and taught based on factual information and informed discussions, not according to the teacher's opinions of current events or social movements. Teachers introduce students to themes, political views, and ideas that are culturally diverse to foster student awareness and ideas. Happy High School staff embraces each student to make them feel welcomed, valued, and appreciated.

At every opportunity, teachers make connections between the curriculum and students' experiences to build on their pre-existing skills and knowledge to teach relative content. Students are encouraged to draw on previous knowledge and become an active participant in class discussions to anchor learning and provide alternative perspectives. Differentiated instruction and constant reminders encouraging students to be kind and respectful and to look at the individual, not the difference, are the cultural norms within the district.

Spanish-speaking students are encouraged to be peer teachers to other students in the Spanish classes and used to facilitate class conversations in Spanish. Music variety is expected at school-sponsored student

dances where students teach their sponsors and peers new dance moves. A Spanish-speaking staff member is available for parent-teacher conferences, ARD/504 meetings, and phone calls made to any Spanish-speaking parent/guardian.

Together, Student Council and FCCLA organize fundraisers to assist classmates and community members in need, offering support on multiple levels to families dealing with long-term illnesses, unexpected deaths, and tragedies. The entire community comes together to support one another regardless of differences, and hope to guide and direct students to continue their growth and development through an overall acceptance of diversity.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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The overall approach of learning and academics at Happy High School follows the motto of “Excellence is expected, respected, and rewarded.” People want to send their students to Happy High School, as proven by an extensive waiting list of transfer applicants, and teachers want to be a part of the culture and chemistry the school offers. Each staff member helps make students know they are cared for as individuals. Each aspect of the school makes students strive to learn and expand on the successful tradition at Happy High School.

Success is not always measured in public accolades; it is also the growth that students show in the classroom that teachers then encourage and praise students for. The reality is the big and the little things create a positive culture on campus. Success in one area adds to the confidence and success of many others, while failure serves to guide students toward success.

In 2017, the UIL awarded Happy High School the Lone Star Cup, an award given to a school with success in all areas: athletics, fine arts, and academics. This award set the foundation for the constant push toward a school-wide goal for each year. This goal encompasses hard work and excellence from all students in all areas. Students want to learn how to take their learning to the next level whether it be college, trade school, or onto a lifetime career. Students also know that teachers are there to support and encourage them along whatever path they choose. Teachers build relationships with their students because they are invested in their success; most students are a part of teacher’s daily lives for multiple years creating strong relationships and respect.

The school finds ways for each student to plug into an activity that motivates or connects them to Happy High School and their future career path because students who enjoy coming to school are committed to their own success. There is a great deal of pride, and a few tears shed, when a student asks a teacher to present a letter jacket earned for participation and success; very few students leave Happy High School without a jacket because each student has a place as a valuable part of the whole.

Teachers and administrators at Happy High love students and expect something out of them, giving students the feeling that fosters success and a lifelong foundation necessary to succeed.