

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

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

School Mailing Address 704 Toliver Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bynum State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 76631-0068

County Hill County

Telephone (254) 531-2341 Fax (254) 531-2342

Web site/URL https://www.bynumisd.net E-mail lmynarcik@bynumisd.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. Larry Mynarcik E-mail lmynarcik@bynumisd.net  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Bynum Independent School District Tel. (254) 531-2341

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. Griff Harris  
(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):
- 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	5	0	5
K	6	5	11
1	10	7	17
2	5	8	13
3	11	5	16
4	6	7	13
5	4	4	8
6	8	7	15
7	6	5	11
8	11	10	21
9	3	9	12
10	8	7	15
11	8	6	14
12 or higher	5	5	10
<b>Total Students</b>	96	85	181

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 5 % Black or African American
  - 34 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 58 % White
  - 2 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 school year: 13%

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

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

<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	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	25
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	196
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.13
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7 %  
12 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 57 %

Total number students who qualify: 103

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 31 %  
56 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>4</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>31</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>5</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>22</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</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: 1
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	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	15
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.	9
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 12:1

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	97%	98%	97%	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	14
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	29%
Enrolled in a community college	21%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	14%
Found employment	29%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	7%

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.

Bynum Independent School District will provide the opportunity for student success by empowering and preparing students to be responsible citizens competing in a changing society. In a district-wide effort, teachers, parents, businesses, and community members will unite to achieve the vision of educating all students to their highest potential.

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

[https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/651?filename=FB\(LEGAL\).pdf](https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/651?filename=FB(LEGAL).pdf)

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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Bynum Independent School District (ISD) is located eight miles east of Hillsboro and Interstate 35 in a predominantly agricultural area. The district is a single campus facility located on Hwy 171 in Bynum, Texas. The main building was built in 1942 by the Works Progress Administration. The school has grown in enrollment from a population of 130 in 1992 to its present enrollment of just under 200. The district draws students from within its 84 square mile boundary as well as some transfers from surrounding school districts. Bynum School was established in 1880. It became an independent school district in 1905. Between 1905 and 1914, five surrounding schools were annexed. Five additional schools consolidated with the district between 1931 and 1958 with Brandon and Irene schools being the last. The district is a small rural school in a predominantly rural agriculture area, however the majority of students are not the traditional rural agriculture kid one might expect. Students participate in a number of school activities and sports. Whether students are participating or spectating these activities tend to lay the foundation for social life in Bynum, Texas. The diverse community serves a large population of economically disadvantaged students but also includes a few students at the other end of the spectrum as well. What makes Bynum ISD special is the comradery among students and the hospitality that is shared that does not seem to take into consideration their economic status.

The district's strategy for success has always been built around having great teachers and small classes that the district provides. The goal is to hire teachers that are enthusiastic about making a difference. Bynum ISD has recognized the importance of great teachers and over the past few years has allocated more resources to this area. The district has increased teacher pay, created a teacher incentive plan, as well as paid retention incentives. Teachers make a difference every day to the students in their class. The goal as a district is not only to keep them in the district but to keep them happy and enthusiastic about what they are doing. With an average class size of twelve students, the strong rapport built between the teacher and students encourages student success. Teachers know students on a personal level and challenge them to be the best that they can be. Bynum teachers have made themselves available to students for extra help at seven in the morning or four-thirty in the afternoon to work around the student's schedule. That is the innovation that represents Bynum ISD, a healthy rapport and the love of student success.

In 2019 the district was identified as in need of targeted support by the state. This was a result of low test scores. With a few new staff members, some staff development, and the mission to get better, the staff was inspired to improve. Teachers were provided an accurate baseline for their students to start the year as well as good data throughout the year. There are fifteen teachers in the district. This small number allows time for collaboration and planning. While the 2020 year ended prior state testing, Bynum students were well on their way to improving from the previous year.

COVID-19 redefined challenging. After losing a portion of the 2019-20 school year, the 2020-21 school year started on August 9 with uncertainty. Bynum ISD became a one-to-one device district that year. A single learning management system for both in person and remote learners was utilized in an effort to make a seamless transition to and from remote instruction. The option of in person or remote learning was given at the beginning of the year. Three weeks into the year, the realization that the majority of our remote learners were being unsuccessful was confirmed. The remote option was modified by requiring students to be passing at the end of the grading period or return to in-person instruction. As a result, nearly all students returned to in-person instruction which has proved to be a significantly more effective means of instruction at Bynum ISD. While virtual learning for students seemed to be predominantly ineffective, a number of teachers were effective virtually. Bynum's mitigation plan had a stay at home period for teachers (and students) that were exposed or tested positive to COVID, therefore several teachers taught virtually from home while being in isolation. While COVID 19 is sure to continue to bring new challenges, the tenacity of great educators will have an answer.

Bynum ISD is a small school in a rural agriculture setting that houses a diverse population of students. The district believes that great teachers make a difference and that all stakeholders have to be active participants to be successful, but without a doubt, our teachers and students are the key players.



## **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:**

Teachers at Bynum ISD are encouraged to utilize a state maintained website with content and grade level resources correlated to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) along with the district adopted curriculum to plan for instruction. Planning time is provided at the beginning of each school year for teachers to unpack their standards, familiarize themselves with content specific vocabulary, and study the alignment between grade levels above and below. Using that information, teachers create a year at a glance calendar to help plan for larger instructional units amidst school holidays, grading period schedules, and important state assessment days. This backward design helps teachers strategically map their instructional year to ensure that needed grade level content is taught and mastered before the end of the school year, as well as prepare students properly for state assessments.

Once a year at a glance has been created, teachers have the flexibility to plan weekly, monthly, by the unit, or the grading period. Lesson plans that include subject area activities, standards, vocabulary, and assessments are shared with administrators and they are reviewed frequently. Whenever possible, teachers are encouraged to reflect on their weekly plans to make notes of what worked, what improvements could be made, and what changes are needed for the plan to be successful in the future.

Due to the small size of the district, Bynum ISD only has one teacher per grade level. While this makes collaboration difficult, it is not impossible. Staff and teachers meet informally on a regular basis to discuss and share lesson activity ideas, instructional methods, and classroom management strategies with each other. In addition, teachers attend professional development appropriate to content, actively participate in online teaching blogs, read professional books, and study assessment data to assist with the design of engaging lessons.

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

Bynum ISD focuses on providing quality curriculum and literacy-based instruction that uses a variety of data to ensure that our curriculum is aligned with TEKS. Bynum ISD has adopted an approved state curriculum that is vertically aligned to provide students with a wide range of grade-appropriate readings that are applied in class and independently. A variety of formal and informal assessments assist in identifying areas of needs, as well as putting in place an intervention plan that relies on the data obtained. Assessments include classroom based, formative, and summative assessments; yearly state assessments, and progress monitoring tools and programs.

Small classes allow for stronger connections with students. This small class-to-teacher ratio provides an opportunity for teachers to develop deeper relationships with students, thus being able to tailor learning experiences to the classrooms and individual students. Bynum ISD uses a variety of reading and writing assignments that appeal to a wider range of student interests, learning styles, and abilities. This also allows teachers to link writing assignments and special projects to reading selections. Furthermore, it aids in preparing students for real-world experiences so that secondary students are prepared for employment or post-secondary goals.

Bynum ISD uses informal student-to-student tutoring, in addition to individualized instruction from a teacher or paraprofessional daily. It is very helpful to have cooperation with other staff members including paraprofessionals, support staff, and administrators during the process. This collaboration grants opportunities for students to receive specialized support for learning “obstructions” to be addressed and strive for student understanding. The incorporation of assignments that require students to take responsibility for their own learning and require them to “find the answers” rather than be told the answers increases rigor. The use of one-to-one devices for research, online quizzes, feedback on their emotional

well-being, listening to audio versions of the reading selections, writing and submitting papers permits students to learn in a wide range of areas.

Assessments are provided that mimic the format and content of standardized tests, hence the aforementioned open-book tests. Frequent assessments of various lengths and methods: benchmark testing, short online exercises targeting specific areas of concern, oral quizzes, open-ended test questions, open-book tests. For example, elementary students begin the year with state mandated assessments for reading. The data collected is used to monitor decisions regarding lesson designs and differentiation between students. Remedial activities addressing areas of concern are used to help any students lacking.

Substantially, more online learning assignments, activities, and assessments are provided now than before March/April 2020. It has opened a new world for Bynum ISD students in learning as well as working with technology. Online learning has provided more flexibility in content-covered areas and in “deadlines” for major assignments. Teachers are able to set clear expectations and provide needed structure for students. Every teacher is allowed to design their own virtual classroom to fit their style. However, school-wide we stick to the same theory and work together in order for our students to be successful.

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

The mathematics curriculum also heavily relies on the TEKS, and is vertically aligned from elementary through high school. The curriculum was chosen because it ensures that each state standard is addressed in the scope and sequence for each year and the design of each unit’s rationale is explicated in the context of what was taught in previous years, previous units, and what will be taught next to help teachers plan and differentiate instruction. Adopted instructional materials are available to students in paper and electronic form.

Because Bynum is a small 1A rural school, recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers is difficult. This creates inconsistencies in the quality of math instruction over time. To combat this, the learning standards are approached vertically to find where and when the vocabulary, skills, and symbols that build the current TEKS are taught and assess those formatively. As a class the vocabulary, skills, and symbols are walked up from those lower level standards to build understanding, fill gaps, and tie the current standard to prior knowledge. This allows teachers to individually plug gaps in the classroom without extra time on task in tutorials that are disconnected from the content at hand and to address the needs of English Language Learners at the beginning of each unit. This process deliberately develops confidence in students.

At every grade level, teachers present engaging lessons to students. Technology is incorporated whenever appropriate using individually assigned computer devices, smartboards, and graphing calculators. Mathematics is treated as a language to be acquired over time. Trust is built through the grading policy to create a culture of revision and directly teach students how to advocate for themselves. Students are explicitly taught to take tests without superstitions about multiple choice assessments.

During the 2020-2021 school year, students were instructed face to face and remote synchronously. Every teacher set up an online classroom to post assignments and to communicate with students remotely. Some students were able to attend classes synchronously if they chose to dial in via online meeting room. High school mathematics classes, for example, were recorded daily and posted in the online classroom. Students were able to send emails asking questions if learning asynchronously, and video responses were made to reply. Many teachers met with students learning at home during their conferences through online meets when in quarantine.

In prior years math unit assessments were teacher made and taken with pencil and paper. Teachers now build their tests and collect data about student achievement using a web-based software program. The program offers the added benefit of allowing unit assessments to be taken at home online if necessary during quarantine. Benchmarks in the fall are given over TEKS that have been covered and a full length released state assessment is given in the spring. When analyzed in concert with the unit assessments, teachers can identify gaps and build individualized plans and mini lessons, thanks to very small class sizes, to address areas of weakness.

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

At all levels of science at Bynum ISD, lessons are aligned to the TEKS, with exploration of the scientific world through hands-on learning at the forefront of lesson planning. To ensure the TEKS are efficiently sequenced and paced throughout the academic year, a resource system aligned to the TEKS and adopted curriculum is utilized.

Explicit instruction is used to serve a variety of ability levels seen in all grades at Bynum. The use of this instructional strategy provides students clear learning objectives and expectations, as well as ample opportunities to practice skills and gain feedback. In turn, this offers frequent chances to collect data and assess mastery of concepts. Bell-ringers, in-class discussions, and low-stakes collaborative work are utilized as means of formative assessments; this helps to determine the level of understanding students have of respective TEKS during the learning process and science inquiries. Summative assessments used include end-of-unit tests, final projects, and benchmarks for state tested grade levels. These help gauge where reteach is needed and what is necessary to spiral into future lessons.

In March of 2020, the entire staff worked diligently to provide access to virtual instruction for every student. In the following academic year, administration was able to convert the campus one-to-one with individual computer devices. This allowed teachers, not only in science but across all disciplines, to reach students whilst remaining healthy and safe in such unprecedented times. All students enrolled in a science class at the middle and high school level join a teacher-created online classroom to establish open channels of communication between teachers and students, regardless of whether face-to-face or virtual instruction is taking place. To reach students that are virtual, and prepare students for the switch to online state assessment testing, both middle and high school students have been completing end-of-unit science tests online through the school's software management system.

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

Social Studies standards have been widely and successfully used as a framework for Bynum ISD teachers as a tool for curriculum alignment and development. Social Studies provides coordinated, systematic, study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, religion and sociology as well as appropriate content from the humanities and natural sciences.

The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed decisions for the public good as citizens of a kindergarten through grade 12. Bynum ISD students build a foundation in history, geography, economics, government, citizenship, culture, technology, society and social skills. The content, as appropriate for the grade level or course, enables students to understand the importance of patriotism, function in a free enterprise society and appreciate the basic democratic values of our state and nation. Bynum ISD students apply critical thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through research from a variety of valid sources; including technology. Bynum ISD students use geographic tools, analyze and interpret data as well as communicate in written, oral and visual forms. Students are expected to use problem solving and decision making skills while working independently as well as working with others.

Bynum ISD promotes positive interdependence interaction, individual responsibility, group processing and in conjunction, technology skills. Teachers use data to analyze some of our key areas. For instance we look to determine gaps in learning; based on recent, local and state assessments. Bynum ISD provides time and an appropriately trained facilitator, if needed to align curriculum. In addition to providing individualized accelerated instruction to meet the needs of struggling learners. Bynum ISD enhances the classes, programs, and activities to guide students toward college or career opportunities. Along with continuing classroom incentive attendance programs and providing a safe and drug free school.

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

Bynum ISD secondary curriculum supports college and career readiness through dual credit courses, college prep courses, Career and Technical Education (CTE) endorsements, and student leadership organizations. Through a partnership with a local college, students at Bynum ISD can complete enough college credits to

graduate with an Associate's degree before they ever graduate high school. Bynum ISD also administers multiple-aptitude batteries and alternative state assessments to assist students in identifying appropriate paths for career and post-secondary education. For those students who have not passed the appropriate college readiness exams, we offer College Prep English and math classes.

CTE students can gain Business and Industry endorsements through Ag Power Systems or Ag Animal Systems. While working on an endorsement in Ag Power Systems, students can also start welding classes at the local college. During their junior and senior year of high school, these students attend high school in the morning and then attend welding classes in the afternoon. Through this program they can complete their welding certification before high school graduation.

Students working on their Ag Animal Systems endorsement can complete Advanced Animal Science as their fourth science credit. While taking this class they can also gain six hours of elective credit to the local college for Animal Science and Livestock Evaluation.

In addition to our relationship with the local college, Bynum ISD also offers leadership opportunities through student-led organizations in a variety of areas such as agriculture, academics, and other student interests. These organizations include local, state and national chapters. Through these organizations, students serve in officer positions, learn responsibility, participate in community service and collaborate with peers in their school, community and beyond.

At Bynum ISD we strive to provide students with a well-rounded education and multiple opportunities to challenge themselves in preparation of post-secondary goals. High school graduation rates have been perfect for the past five years.

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

Bynum ISD provides a full day four year old prekindergarten program that is directly aligned to state academic standards in the ten domains: literacy reading/writing, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, physical development and health, technology, social-emotional development, and language and communication. Standards are taught using developmentally appropriate play-based activities that encourage engagement by building a foundation for hands-on exploration and self-directed learning that promotes social emotional development. In addition, students in pre-k are provided with intensive phonemic awareness, which includes but is not limited to, rhyming, syllable identification, phonemic substitution, and deletion, to better prepare them for the grades to come. Collaboration between the pre-k and the kindergarten teacher helps to ensure instructional alignment and expectations for a successful transition into kindergarten. The teacher gives formative and summative tests to track student progress throughout the school year. Students are also assessed using state mandated progress monitoring tools which are administered at the beginning, middle, and end-of-year, to evaluate growth and kindergarten readiness skills. Due to a smaller student to teacher ratio and a more flexible schedule, Bynum ISD's pre-K program provides many opportunities for quality, transparent, and holistic learning to take place. Teachers are able to build relationships with students and caregivers to help in the student's academic success. The school follows a district comprehensive professional development and child progress monitoring platform. Bynum ISD believes that a strong foundation to a student's academic career and social development is due to the substantial pre-K program offered. It is noted that students that now attend kindergarten but did not attend pre-K are much farther behind than those who attended the program. Students who have attended Bynum ISD's pre-K program have performed at high academic levels in the primary grades as evidenced by district assessments.

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

Outside of the standard curriculum, Bynum School has a variety of areas in which students can develop a deeper understanding of the TEKS. Art, theater, and photography are all part of the visual arts program and offered to secondary students daily. Art classes provide opportunities for students to use math, reading, and listening skills in the creative process in third through twelfth grade. High school students in the theater and photography classes are encouraged to use problem solving and creative thinking when performing or

presenting their work. As part of the college readiness program, a Floral Design class is offered to high school students. Through creating arrangements, students are able to apply skills from art, math, and science as they form arrangements for various events and situations.

Beyond the arts program, Bynum has a flourishing physical education (PE) program offered to students from prekindergarten through 12th grade. Elementary students attend PE daily where they learn about fitness, sportsmanship, and healthy living through game play. Beginning in 6th grade, students are enrolled in athletics. Along with participating in various competitive sports, students are also exposed to several types of conditioning and how this conditioning contributes to overall health.

As students enter high school, they are required to take hours of a foreign language for graduation. Bynum offers Spanish as an online course. Every student graduates with Spanish as their foreign language.

Bynum ISD's library is highly utilized. Elementary and junior high school students visit the library on a weekly basis. Because of this established routine, high school students continue to frequent the library without requirement. In elementary, students are exposed to the Dewey Decimal System, participate in a million words competition, and discover differences about fiction and nonfiction texts. Students in elementary also work closely with the librarian to find books that fit their interests or needs. For younger students, the librarian conducts a weekly read aloud to strengthen listening and comprehension skills. In 4th and 5th grade, students are taught basic research skills using both technology and the resources available in the library. This education is continued into junior high and high school through additional technology and CTE classes. With Bynum's one-to-one computer device program, every student is able to gain and grow skills using a variety of online tools for graphic design in the photography and yearbook classes.

Bynum students participate in character building lessons, led by the district counselor, once a week. Tailored to each grade level, the lessons are presented around a monthly theme such as internet safety, kindness, and citizenship. One great advantage to the small class sizes at Bynum is that each and every student is able to participate in these lessons. One of Bynum's greatest CTE strengths is their Agriculture program. Reflecting their community, Bynum has students from elementary to high school participating in the Agriculture program through animal showing, judging, and classes. Through this program, students are able to apply skills from reading, writing, math, listening, and more to various parts of the program.

### **3. Academic Supports**

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

Bynum ISD's instructional decisions are based on several sources of data including previous years' testing, benchmarks, and progress-monitoring programs throughout the school year. Students pre-K through second grade are tested at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to monitor progress in core content areas, while students in third grade and above take benchmarks twice a year.

Information from these assessments are used to identify areas of strength and concern for students. A response to intervention (RtI) program is utilized in which the principal, counselor and teacher meet annually to identify and create individualized learning plans for students below grade level and intervention time is built into the daily schedule.

Teachers throughout the district use technology routinely. Classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards, individually issued computer devices, and computer labs. Technology allows teachers to provide and access virtual tours, program certifications, and college courses on campus. In addition, the students use a variety of online programs for extra support. Many of these are programs that can be tailored to each student's ability with exercises and scenarios. As they master each level, the levels get increasingly more difficult, but at the student's own pace allowing all students the opportunity to be successful learners.

High student expectations, rigorous instruction, and the curriculum framework combined with teacher expertise provide the critical attributes necessary for mastering the state standards. The progress Bynum ISD has made while moving toward individualized instruction to assure equity in education is due to exemplary

teachers and their flexibility and willingness to find best practices. Highly qualified paraprofessionals assist those who need additional help as well. Small teacher-to-student ratios are key in accomplishing this. Due to the size of BISSD, relationships can be forged between the students and the staff. Administrators know every student and that is vital to the student's success.

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

At Bynum ISD all teachers hold extremely high expectations for our students. We do not just want a few to excel, we want all students to excel and achieve academic success. To achieve this, the staff of Bynum ISD works as a team from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade to get to know our students to put them on the best path possible. Bynum ISD is a very diverse school, and because of this, the gifted and talented students are often overlooked. A recent overhaul to the district's GT policy has helped to make the identification and service process for Bynum ISD students more streamlined.

Over the last few years Bynum ISD staff has worked extremely hard to accommodate every student's needs and strengths. Every one of our kindergarten students are tested for GT during the school year. Students in other grade levels can be nominated by a teacher or parent during an open nomination process. Those students that qualify are pulled weekly by the GT teacher and receive instruction based on their individual academic needs that often incorporates personal interest projects based on state gifted and talented curriculum guidelines. Students in elementary that don't qualify for GT, but have been identified as academically high achieving are provided opportunities to participate in special weekly rotations to encourage high achievement and practice problem solving skills, while secondary students can participate in advanced placement classes.

Recent technology advancements have made providing advanced curriculum to our students easier in the classroom. Every student in our school has their own assigned laptop device allowing for easy daily access to computer assisted instructional programs, digital classrooms, progress monitoring applications, and online dual credit classes. The utilization of online classrooms has increased the ability for teachers to individualize instruction, especially for those students requiring more challenging and rigorous work.

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

Special education students at Bynum ISD receive services in a variety of ways. Student instruction is tailored depending on need and their individualized education plans and they may receive any combination of settings including general education, special education, resource or in-class support. The special education department has a very large working space that allows the special education teacher and her paraprofessionals to instruct students of all ages, abilities and content areas throughout the day. The special education teacher has expertly scheduled herself and her paraprofessionals to comply with student content needs, while still allowing students to cycle through as needed for content mastery assistance.

High expectations for academic mastery is continued over into Bynum ISD's special education department through continued rigorous instruction and content. Although in some cases, curriculum is modified for student needs, staff ensure that instruction is aligned with the TEKS, as well as the district's adopted content specific curricula.

Regular education teachers communicate regularly with the special education teacher and they often seek advice and instructional practices for their students to ensure academic success in all settings. Feedback from general education teachers is collected each six week grading period for communication with parents on student performance, growth, behavior, and participation. In addition, special education students are routinely progress monitored with appropriate assessment programs and academic progress is closely observed and tracked.

Bynum ISD is a part of a shared services arrangement for special education services. Participation through this arrangement helps to ensure that Bynum School can provide top quality instruction for students and their special ability needs with highly qualified and specialized professionals in areas such as speech,

autism, and behavior. In addition, the shared services arrangement is able to provide staff with support in professional development areas, such as instruction and best practices.

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

English Language Learners (ELL's) at Bynum ISD are immersed in the language in the general education classroom and served by an English as a Second Language certified teacher where needed. The Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) meets annually to review student specific assessment data and create individualized learning plans with appropriate academic support for language acquisition. Teachers monitor student language development throughout the school year, formally and informally, and report progress of language goals to the ELL coordinator.

Bynum ISD encourages teachers to utilize systematic, explicit instruction for all students, but especially with ELLs. Strategic techniques that allow for varied response opportunities, scaffolding, visual representations of content and vocabulary, intensive practice with specific feedback are embedded into daily instruction to support English learning. Teachers model appropriate communication skills and guide ELLs to participate in classroom discussions using verbal and non-verbal techniques, critical thinking skills, and academic vocabulary. Students in need of additional support outside of the classroom are provided targeted instruction based on their language acquisition demands, as well as TEKS-based instructional needs. This targeted instruction is provided during daily RtI time, as well as during scheduled after school tutorials.

Teachers of ELLs use prior year's data from the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) and state assessment data to develop lessons and interventions that focus on the four basic domains of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Additionally, the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) provide a guideline on proficiency levels and expectations for teachers to monitor student success. The incorporation of additional language enriched resources, both web-based and textbook, provide an additional layer of support while allowing students to practice their English language skills in a safe and supportive environment.

The school provides translated materials of school communication to ELL families and a Spanish speaking staff member is available to assist teachers with daily communication needs.

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

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

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

The environment at Bynum begins in the elementary. Elementary teachers lay the foundation for the growth of students. Teachers work towards building self-motivation in students through goal setting, academic competitions, and programs that encourage self-monitoring. Through these engaging and motivating competitions, students are building habits that will carry them through secondary and post-secondary education. In secondary grades, students are motivated through grades and extra-curricular activity eligibility. However, teachers in junior high and high school work tirelessly to instill the importance of education and subject application to the interests of the students.

Social and emotional learning, much like academic learning, begins in the lower grades. Elementary students learn to interact with each other through group projects, recess, PE, and field trips. However, because of the small pool of students at Bynum, every student from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade is able to participate in a counselor lead character development program. While lessons are adjusted to fit the needs of a particular age, every student takes part in lessons about kindness, working with first responders, and internet safety. The school size also serves as an advantage for no student to be lost in a difficult social or emotional situation. Bynum utilizes an online social-emotional application to allow students to be open about their physical, social, and emotional state within a safe environment. This program also allows teachers and campus leadership to keep an eye out for any situation that may need to be addressed.

In high school, students are preparing for the next stage of life, and for some, that means continuing their education. While Bynum offers select CTE courses such as Agriculture and Floral Design, students are also exposed to different career paths through presentations and college visits. Most recently, Bynum seniors visited a local vocational and technological college to explore the various programs and certifications it offers.

During school closings, Bynum ISD keeps students and families informed and involved through classroom teacher's communication aids, the school website, and social media. Classroom teachers communicate consistently with families using communication applications that allow for safe text messaging. The school also utilizes a similar application for administration to communicate with every parent via email, text or phone messaging. The school website is updated regularly for closings and other information. In addition, the school's social media page is continuously updated and allows for students, teachers, and admin to interact in a secure place. This also allows for questions to be answered for everyone simultaneously.

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

Bynum ISD takes collective responsibility for the success of all students. School board meetings are always open to the community allowing the public to address concerns they may have. The District Improvement Committee consists of teachers, administrators, parents and community members. The involvement of all stakeholders is necessary in order to achieve student success.

Parents and community members are always welcome to volunteer in various school functions. Parents' eagerness to help out contributes to the success of Bynum ISD. Parents are encouraged to attend events such as Meet the Teacher Night, daily conferences to discuss students' progress, achievements, and to learn ways that they can help. Special presentations such as a music program with singing and hand bells during the holidays, presentation of important historical characters, research projects with visual presentations, and science fairs are some of the many ways Bynum ISD has involved families. Other fun events such as Grandparent Day, Fall Festival, Thanksgiving Family Feast and track and field day occur throughout the year to keep both families and the community engaged. The librarian holds a book fair at least once a year and parents are invited to attend Donuts for Dads, Muffins for Moms and Goodies for Grandparents during Public School Week. Bynum ISD has an active Parent Teacher Association that relies on the collaboration of parents and teachers.



Bynum's secondary school Career Class has invited parents and community members to share information about the career path they chose. Enlightening students to the job and education requirements and real life experiences guide students towards their own career goals. Many school clubs have involved the community with activities such as a toy drive for needy families in our district, clothing drives for a family who lost their home in a fire and other school fundraising activities.

Several businesses in the community have helped the school in numerous ways. Local retail businesses and churches have sent home food for the weekend for disadvantaged students and warm winter coats are provided for any student in need. In addition, local businesses and churches provide snacks and meals for teachers and staff. Local foundations have helped with the purchase of technology in the classrooms as well as playground equipment. School supplies and books are donated from neighborhood stores and the retired teachers organization. The Lions club has provided vision screening and a community dentist has provided dental education and supplies to the elementary school.

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

A school culture where teachers feel valued, supported, and accomplished is important at Bynum ISD. Meals, snacks and treats are a regular part of the school year and teachers are even treated to a chair massage on occasion. Teachers are recognized weekly in a student newsletter publication and a "shout out" bulletin board allows administrators and peers to recognize others with notes of appreciation. Teacher input is highly regarded when devising our Campus Improvement Plan (CIP). The committee also includes parents and administrators which creates the CIP to not only improve the campus but to make it a welcoming environment for all.

Transitioning to remote and hybrid learning brought many challenges and opportunities for technology integration growth. Teachers received training on delivering remote instruction and to improve their technology skills. One-to-one technology was implemented when remote learning began and this allowed teachers the ability to individualize lessons for students who were unable to be in class more efficiently and effectively.

Professional development is meant to assist educators in improving their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness and is vital for meeting student's ever changing needs. High quality teaching to ensure student success requires specialized training in content specific areas. Throughout the year, administrators assess and discuss with teachers about professional development that would be beneficial to them to take their students to the next level academically. Whether it is additional or new training in skills or content, the regional educational service center is a focus for guidance and the availability of workshops to attend or opportunities for professional development to be delivered to the campus.

At the beginning of each year and throughout the school year, teachers and staff attend several district-wide professional development sessions. These sessions are based on the school improvement plan as well as specific needs that address demographics. Many of these sessions are conducted by the regional educational service center or other outside professionals.

The strength of the professionalism is solidified through a continuous cycle of improvement which includes reflective practices that rely on an authentic and professional level of introspection as well as dialogue with colleagues and campus leadership. All professional development efforts are evaluated based on student needs. This wholly-supported team mentality has resulted in increased student engagement and better identification and instruction of students performing below grade level. The expectation for professionalism has become ingrained in the campus culture and has evolved into an individualized and self-monitored system in which everyone is held accountable.

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

The leadership team at Bynum ISD leads with a servant heart. The team works together to ensure budgetary items, curriculum, and all student socioemotional needs are all met. The principal and assistant principal

work beside teachers to research and develop curriculum and instructional practices that will meet the needs of the diverse student population. Developing and maintaining positive relationships with teachers and students are placed at the forefront of the campus administrators' philosophies. The administrative team has maintained an open door policy, and all staff members are welcome to visit throughout the day.

Bynum ISD leadership consists of a supportive board of trustees, superintendent, one district wide principal and a counselor. In following our philosophy that great teachers make a difference, the principal in collaboration with teachers ensures that the total curriculum is cohesive in nature and allows for academic growth through each grade level. The principal also assures that the school environment, including student discipline and school aesthetics, provide a safe and enriching atmosphere for learning. Bynum ISD is part of a special education cooperative which provides services to our special education students. The administrative team works with the special education director to ensure all student needs are met. The district works with the local education service center for technology needs to provide an up-to-date campus system that meets the needs of the students and the instruction happening in the classrooms. Together, this team strives to meet the challenges of the total student population and provide teacher preparation that can weave all educational programs for the benefit of the entire student body, yet create an individualized environment for students. Furthermore, the administrative team meets monthly to discuss academic progress, opportunities and concerns that are necessary in the on-going assessment required for improvement. The principal meets routinely with teachers and is able to provide support where needed. Administration is able to make academic adjustments as needed to ensure that programs continually and effectively assist students and faculty. Student progress is monitored through weekly grade reports, the student data system and online parent portal. Parent conferences are based on finding solutions to ensure long-term progress. The superintendent ensures that the school budget is derived and driven from its program's educational needs rather than the budget driving the school's programs. Needs assessments and evaluations allow the administration to discuss and prioritize each year to ensure that improvements are made appropriately.

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

Bynum ISD comprises three small towns. Each has its own center and history. The economic level of the students here are highly varied, and more than half of the students are considered at risk. We have English Language Learners and a significant population of students who are entitled to special education services. In this time of polarized political rhetoric and misinformation, it is worth noting that many of our students and their families exist on opposite ends of the political spectrum. The district has African American students who have proudly worn homemade black lives matter shirts on campus sharing classrooms with students who have confederate flags decorating their vehicles. Bynum ISD has students who are the children of immigrants or who have come here themselves from other countries to learn and collaborate with others who openly support closed borders and deportation. In an ordinary place, this school would be a hotbed of hurt feelings and divisive action; however, Bynum is unique and this is not the story.

Many of the district's students have been together in classes smaller than fifteen since early elementary, and some have been together in school since they were three years old. These students are more like siblings than classmates, and many have families that have been connected in various ways for generations. To say that Bynum boasts an inclusive and tolerant culture is a vast understatement. Young students are included in pep rallies and extracurricular activities. Students with differences, be those physical, emotional, or intellectual are shown enormous patience and inclusion by peers and given the freedom to be their true selves. Many adults on this campus are instructed by this example.

Most of the students here have small dreams. The district does what it can to show them a wider world to make early college classes or upper level coursework worth their efforts. Students are taken on visits that show them careers and universities outside of ordinary rural living. Access to the internet is provided to everyone at home who can't afford it and the device ratio is one-to-one so that all students can access online classrooms and electronic textbooks.

Staff turnover is common and outsiders are not immediately trusted, even if they are made to feel welcome.

When newcomers do decide to stay, they become like family, and there is nothing the people of this community will not do for one another.

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

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One strategy that has been instrumental for academic success at Bynum ISD is the acquisition and retention of highly qualified teachers. District administrators and the school board know that academic success starts in the classroom. Together, they have worked hard to provide competitive salaries, a supportive professional and academic atmosphere, and retention stipends to attract recruitment and encourage long term teacher retention.

To aid in teacher retention, Bynum ISD has concentrated on creating a supportive atmosphere for staff. Administrators frequently gather feedback focused on instructional needs, professional development and classroom wants to assure that teacher voices are valued. Professional development days have been strategically placed throughout the school year to provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate, vertically align instruction, and create rigorous lesson plans. In addition, mentor teachers have also been utilized to provide new to district teachers with advice on navigating the daily challenges of the profession, as well as assistance with established school policies and procedures.

Experienced teachers at Bynum ISD are familiar with district policies, school needs, current instructional programs in place, and especially the students and are therefore poised to better serve and instruct. Furthermore, qualified teachers know how to create lesson plans and activities that are not only aligned to state curriculum standards, but keep students engaged and excited. Veteran teachers are familiar with students and their families and are better adept for communication and building positive academic relationships.

Due to small district size, teachers at Bynum ISD are able to form relationships that extend beyond the classroom walls. Teachers that remain in the district long term, are able to watch students grow physically, academically and socially as they progress through their educational experience and beyond. Such strong relationships are forged through small class size, the ability to attend extra-curricular activities, and the fact that our small campus allows for daily interaction between all students and staff regardless of grade level. These types of connections have a positive impact on student academic achievement, including increased attendance, retention of academic skills and motivation, as well as fostering student self-esteem.

Title I schools, such as Bynum, are susceptible to high turnover, and often lose teachers to larger districts with more competitive salaries. Teacher turnover can be costly and has negative effects on student achievement, motivation, and behavior. In addition, high turnover can require extensive and repetitive training. The district administration has focused on feedback from departing staff to address areas of need and strengthen retention approaches.