



School LEA: 6401001

School Name: WALDRON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Submitter Information

Submitter Name: Ryan Walker
Submitter E-mail: walker.ryan@waldrond.org
Submitter Phone: 4796372454
Date of application: 3/15/2017

District Information

District LEA: 6401000
District Name: WALDRON SCHOOL DISTRICT
Superintendent Name: Roy Wayman
Superintendent Email: wayman.gary@waldrond.org

General Questions

Special Conditions: Rewards School for Performance
School Rating: D
Is this a brand new LEA? False
Is this an ALE School? False

Vision and Mission

As a citizen of the Waldron Elementary School Community, we will wisely enter a future full of courage, bravery, and ambition. We will strive to excel in the adventurous path before us and face each challenge heroically.

The vision statement was created with input from the faculty at WES. Each learning community is represented in the vision statement. We communicated with the students and community or mission and it is posted in the building.



Rational and Innovation Goals

Rationale for Innovation

Why do Waldron Elementary School want to be a school of innovation? The faculty and staff at WES have worked diligently at transforming our school into a Community of Learning for the past year. We successfully implemented this model in five months and are now looking at ways to improve what we have started. One of the guiding questions we have and are focusing on for this process is, "What is best for kids?" Even though there is a lack of research supporting this model, we feel that students' academic and social needs are being met more successfully, and students are becoming part of a "family" of learning. Mary Brown, first grade teacher stated, "In my 20 years of teaching, this is one of the best things that we have done at Waldron Elementary," she continued by saying, "The morale of the school is better than I have ever seen, and the teachers and staff are working together for the success of our students."

The overall goal of the Community of Learning model is to meet the students' academic needs at their level. In order to successfully implement this model, students will be allowed to transition into a classroom, within their community, that best meets their core academic needs. For example, if a second grade student is performing on a third grade level in reading, he/she would transition into a third grade classroom for reading instruction. Also, if a student was in second grade, but was lacking in a first grade skill, the teacher would collaborate with the first grade teacher for lessons to address that need, and at times the child would go into the first grade classroom as a "peer tutor."

Not only is our focus on academics, but we are also providing our students with opportunities to experience innovative practices through art, music, physical education, technology, and STEM. When students leave WES, we want them to have received a superior education that focused on academia and a sense of belonging.

Goal	Goal Description	
1	To build a learning community of K-4 students and teachers that will focus on vertical and horizontal academic goals in a differentiated classroom environment.	
2	To promote a family atmosphere that will foster a sense of belonging and acceptance for all students.	
3	To promote compassion and leadership skills for all students.	



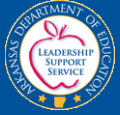
Innovation Plan

Plan Date	Action	Expected Outcome
02/16/2016	Conversations began with District Administration and Waldron Elementary Administration on creating a Community of Learning.	The purpose of the community of learning and how it will be implemented.
03/03/2016	School Reform Committee (Council of Innovation) has first meeting.	Shared vision of Community of Learning model. Asked committee to gather input from grade level teams.
03/17/2016	School Reform Committee (Council Of Innovation) has second meeting.	Committee members shared concerns from staff members and made suggestions on changing the model.
03/18/2016	Community of learning team members are announced.	Relief!! Community members begin collaborating with each other.
06/01/2016	Movers begin moving classrooms to their new locations.	Teachers begin organizing their new classroom.
07/15/2016	All classrooms are in their new locations.	All teachers begin organizing their classrooms.
07/28/2016	Student placement is complete.	Teachers and parents are sent classroom placement letters and list.
08/11/2016	Meet the Teacher Night.	Students meet their community teachers and classmates.
08/15/2016	First day of school.	Student and teachers are experiencing the new Community of Learning Model.
03/15/2017	Council of Innovation begins planning schedule for phase 2 of Community of Learning model.	Collaboration between staff on creating a schedule where the communities attend special classes at the same time.
05/26/2017	The new schedule is released to staff and expectations are discussed with teachers.	Teachers begin planning with their community common instruction time.
08/14/2017	First day of school.	Phase 2 on the Community of Learning model is in place.
08/14/2017	Grade level teams begin reviewing previous years data to place students in grade level enrichment/intervention groups by pods.	Enrichment/intervention groups are created.
09/05/2017	Enrichment/Intervention time begins.	Students will receive two 30 minute sessions per week.



Requested Waivers

Code section, Rule, or Local Policy	Goal	Rationale
We are not requesting any waivers at this time to meet any goals	1	At this time we are meeting all required accreditation standards and no waivers are needed.



Council of Innovation

Minority at School

8.00%

Council Member Name	Representative Group	Minority	Position	Date Elected
Misty Guerrero	K Teacher	N	Member	3/3/2016
Lindsey Young-Stinson	K Teacher	N	Member	3/3/2016
Rachelle Watkins	1st Teacher	N	Member	3/3/2016
Alisha Moad	1st Teacher	N	Member	3/3/2016
Crystal Newman	2nd Teacher	N	Member	3/3/2016
Alisha Moad	2nd Teacher/Interventionist	N	Member	3/3/2016
Deborah Rogers	3rd Teacher	N	Member	3/3/2016
Connie Crotts	3rd Teacher	N	Member	3/3/2016
Teresa Malone	4th Teacher	N	Member	3/3/2016
Jessica Williams	4th Teacher	N	Member	3/3/2016
Robin Bowles	Special Education Teacher	N	Member	3/3/2016
Darla Jeffery	Media Specialist	N	Member	3/3/2016
Sherri Wright	Interventionist	N	Member	3/3/2016
Gary Wayman	Superintendent	N	Member	3/3/2016
Ryan Walker	Principal	N	Chair	3/3/2016
Toni Dozier	Assistant Principal	N	Vice-Chair	3/3/2016
Tammy Maden	Director of Instructional Improvement	N	Member	3/3/2016
Steve Ewing	School Board Member	N	Member	3/3/2016
Eddie Harrison	School Board Member	N	Member	3/3/2016
Angela Hunsucker	Parent	N	Member	8/8/2016
Holly Byford	1st Teacher	N	Member	8/8/2016
Gina Efurd	Paraprofessional	N	Member	8/8/2016
Zoe Richardson	Student	N	Member	8/8/2016
Lauri Richardson	Community Member/Parent	N	Member	8/8/2016
Justi Hunsucker	Student	N	Member	8/8/2016



Shared Leadership

Meeting Date	Meeting Purpose	No. of Teachers Present	No. of School Staff Present	No. of Parents Present	No. of Community Members Present	No. of Students Present	Meeting Outcome/Planned Next Steps
3/3/2016	School Reform Exploratory Committee	6	6	0	2	0	Discussed Community of Learning. Communicate idea with teams and report back to committee
3/17/2016	School Reform	11	6	0	2	0	Discussed staff concerns about community of learning and additional proposals
4/14/2016	School report card, lunch and recess schedules, suggestions for indoor recess, horizontal and vertical team planning	9	6	0	1	0	Communicate with grade level and provide input at next meeting.
5/12/2016	Community identification ideas, common school rules	5	5	0	1	0	Created guidelines for community names and common school rules/communicate with teams to create community name and rules
8/8/2016	School rules, schedule, community t-shirt design, "WE" Host ambassadors	10	6	2	1	0	Discussed school rules and schedule, approved t-shirt design



Meeting Date	Meeting Purpose	No. of Teachers Present	No. of School Staff Present	No. of Parents Present	No. of Community Members Present	No. of Students Present	Meeting Outcome/Planned Next Steps
10/19/2016	School Visits, enrichment time	9	7	2	2	0	Discussed purpose of enrichment time and expectations to share with teams
3/15/2017	Discuss SOI Plan, 2017-18 schedule ideas, enrichment time, concerns	9	7	2	1	2	Discussed issues and concerns from they year and reviewed ideas for next year's schedule.



Election Results

Number of certified and classified on staff:	73
Number of staff who voted:	53
Number of staff who voted for proposed Plan:	50
Number of staff who voted against the proposed plan:	3
Percentage of staff voting in favor of the proposed Plan of Innovation:	94

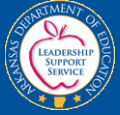


Professional Development Scope

Professional Development Plan Part 1

Date	Audience	Purpose of the Session
2/15/2016	Administration	Vision, Vehicle, & Viability = Victory for Students; How Do I Get There?
2/16/2016	Administration	Using Effective Schools Research to improve Student Success; Innovative Classroom; Extreme Equality: Closing the Achievement Gap in Math
2/17/2016	Administration	Leading the way to More Effective Grading Policies and Practices; Let's Walk..Not Just Talk:A Leadership Perspective on Innovation
7/25/2016	All Instructional Staff	Developing Effective Learning Community Teams
7/26/2016	All Instructional Staff	Student Engagement
8/9/2016	All Staff	Larry Bell Power Strategies for Success
9/12/2016	Leadership Team	Larry Bell- Fundamental Strategies
11/1/2016	Leadership Team	Larry Bell - Fundamental Strategies
1/2/2017	All Staff	Team Building, Educational Technology - Classworks, Health & Wellness
1/11/2017	Leadership Team	Larry Bell - Fundamental Strategies
1/18/2017	All Instructional Staff	Robert J Marzano - The Highly Engaged Classroom Book Study
2/13/2017	Leadership Team	Larry Bell - Fundamental Strategies
2/15/2017	All Instructional Staff	Robert J. Marzano - The Highly Engaged Classroom - Book Study
2/20/2017	Administration	A+ Schools Getting Teachers at the Heart of Improvement
2/21/2017	Administration	Dr. Larry Lezotte - Using Effective Schools Research to Improve Student Success, Effective Schools In Action; Dr. Darryl Adams - Leave No Child Offline
2/22/2017	Administration	John Antonetti - Real Engagement: When the Work Has Meaning
2/23/2017	Administration	Dr. Anthony Muhammad - The Will to Lead: Working Together to Create a Healthy School Culture
5/9/2017	Leadership Team	Larry Bell - Fundamental Strategies

Professional Development Plan Part 2



Date	Audience	Purpose of the Session
7/24/2017	Instructional Staff	A+ Educators - Student Engagement
8/7/2017	All Staff	Larry Bell - School culture and climate
8/8/2017	Instructional Staff	Classworks - Successful Implementation of the program
8/8/2017	All Staff	Melissa Hillier-Hanna - Dyslexia Characteristics
9/14/2017	Leadership Team	Larry Bell - Core Program Plus - Maximizing student success
9/15/2017	Instructional Staff	Larry Bell - Core Program Plus - Maximizing student success
9/18/2017	Administration/Leadership Team	FOCUS - Classroom Focus Walk Training
11/1/2017	Administration/Leadership Team	FOCUS - Followup on Focus Walk Training and implementation
11/16/2017	Leadership Team	Larry Bell - Core Program Plus - Maximizing Student Performance
11/17/2017	Instructional Staff	Larry Bell - Core Program Plus - Maximizing Students Performance
1/18/2018	Leadership Team	Larry Bell - Core Program Plus - Maximizing Students Performance
1/19/2018	Instructional Staff	Larry Bell - Core Program Plus - Maximizing Students Performance
3/15/2018	Leadership Team	Larry Bell - Core Program Plus - Maximizing Students Performance
3/16/2018	Instructional Staff	Larry Bell - Core Program Plus - Maximizing Students Performance
5/18/2017	Leadership Team	Larry Bell - Core Program Plus - Maximizing Students Performance

A question that is asked by all educators is, "What is best for our kids?" This is a question we at Waldron Elementary School (WES) have been seeking to answer. WES has approximately 600 kindergarten through fourth grade students, with 80 percent of those students qualifying for free and reduced lunches through the National School Lunch Program. Even though our teachers and staff work hard to ensure our students are receiving a high quality education with a personal touch, standardized test scores have plateaued and begun to drop the last few years, partially due to the changes in standardized testing. There are many programs in place to facilitate student learning, but what can we do to help our students be more successful? How can we meet the needs of **all** students? After a presentation, by Dr. Larry Lazotte, at the Effective Schools Conference, the administration began thinking of ways to educate our students, in the Information Age, using an "out of the box" approach. Discussions and research began, on establishing a community of learning model at WES, with school improvement specialists, the school's administration team, the local school board, fellow administrators, Arkansas Department of Education personnel, and a school leadership team (Council of Innovation) consisting of teachers, interventionists, parents, and students. Ongoing conversations with Karen Young, President of A+ Educators, facilitated the development of the implementation plan.

Through collaboration from the faculty and staff, conversations began in grade level teams on how to effectively implement this concept into our school. Sherri Wright, Literacy Coach, stated, "I was very excited when we began discussing the community model because I had attended a workshop in which the work of Dr. John Hattie had been discussed. The positive results cited were numerous, including student achievement and student self-esteem. I feel the community model will benefit our students, and I am excited to be a part of this change." By dividing our school into smaller multi-grade level "communities," multi-grade level teachers and staff will be working collaboratively with the flexibility of providing students the instruction they need at their academic level, as well as, building closer relationships among students, teachers, and families. When a student enters into their community of learning at WES, he or she will belong to a group of professionals working together to ensure their success until they move into the fifth grade at Waldron Middle School. Each of our six hallways were transformed into a different learning community consisting of kindergarten, first, second, third, and fourth grade classrooms with support staff rooms located at the beginning of each community. Teachers and staff were highly involved with the process, creating their own community identity and mascot based on character traits: Wisdom Way, Adventurous Avenue, Ambitious Drive, Courageous Boulevard, Heroic Highway, and Leadership Lane. Each community has a specific wall color (red, orange, green, yellow, purple and blue) to provide students an additional way to locate their new classrooms. Teachers, who need resources to work on lower level skills, have specialists at each level in their hallway, to help them meet the needs of those students. This community network assists all students, regardless of grade level or homeroom placement, to be successful and to grow.

The next phase of the implementation of the Learning Community Model at WES is to create a schedule that will allow for communities to attend special classes together. This will allow communities to have the same schedule of teaching core classes, which will in turn allow students to receive instruction at their academic level. For those students who are achieving at a higher level, they will have the opportunity to attend small group instruction, in another teacher's classroom, that is at their level. This multi-age level classroom approach will be used for small group literacy and math centers. Another component of the next phase is to remodel the current enrichment/intervention time. Currently students are grouped according to the standard being taught in each community classroom. Next year,

students will be grouped by grade level on the east and west side of the building. This will allow the grade level teacher to have more detailed instruction based on data from the ACT Aspire Interim Assessments and Classwork's Modules

Waldron Elementary School offers six special classes. Students attend these classes once a week for at least 40 minutes. The six classes include art, keyboarding/computer skills, music, physical education 1, physical education 2, and STEM.

- In art, students are exposed to different eras of artwork through an online art walk before completing projects on their own. Students are also self-evaluating their work and compiling art portfolios of their superior work from each era studied. Some art projects include sculptures, still life, and portraits.
- The K-4 keyboarding lab contains Dell touchscreen desktop computers and utilizes software from www.learning.com to teach prescribed keyboarding lessons, online safety lessons, and computer applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, presentations and databases. Students also engage in coding using www.code.org as a resource. Students visit the lab each week and spend 20 minutes working on typing skills and 20 minutes working on other assigned computer skills or activities at code.org.
- In the elementary music class, all students begin learning about music through use of digital pianos. Every student has their own piano in class. Kindergarten uses the piano as a discovery tool for sounds (high and low), movement (up and down), instruments, etc. 1st grade continues by integrating rhythm into their learning. We spend a lot of time learning steady beat, notes and rests, and creating rhythm patterns. Starting in 2nd grade, students continue the music learning process by actually learning how to PLAY the piano. They begin by learning important piano skills such as, hand position, sitting position, and finger numbers. They continue building upon skills all the way through 4th grade, where, by that time, they have learned to read music from a music staff using both hands. This innovative method of learning continues through to middle school to help build the band and choir programs all the way through high school and beyond.
- The new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) lab is addressing Next Generation Science Standards using the engineering design process. Our lab is set-up without chairs, only lab tables, so students walk in and know this is going to be a hands-on experience! We are discovering programmable robots, Smarthubs, and sensors. We are coding, designing motors, and using all types of building elements to solve real-world problems. Students use Ozmo, WeDo, Makey Makey, and many other STEM related technology tools. We also partner with the University of Arkansas Extension Service to provide our students with nutrition instruction and interactive adventure called Farm to You. Also, on odd numbered years they provide The Body Walk Exhibit for second through fourth grade students to view. In partnership with the Dr. Curtis Varnell, from the Guy Fenter Educational Coop and Arkansas Tech University, students in kindergarten and first grade experience Space Adventure and all students visited an interactive Planetarium.

- In Physical Education, teachers use many innovative approaches throughout the year engage students and get them active and excited about their health. Music and physical education combine music and movement each year to engage in dance, parachutes, black light rhythm showcases, and use Wii technology to engage students. Students also love to throw objects at bugs projected on the wall, from an iPad, to make them disappear. Another favorite is a mini golf course set up for the students to experience a visit to a putt putt course. Each year, the students also participate in the FitnessGram Program, setting personal goals at the beginning of the year, working towards that goal throughout the year, and using self-assessments to show progress at the end of the year.
- Another innovative hub in WES is the media center. The media center houses our Makerspace Area which is used as an incentive and materials are shared with our new STEM classroom. Item in the Makerspace Area include a Lego Wall, Ozmo interactive games, Makey Makey Circuits and Circuit Maker, and Lego WeDo building and coding technology to name a few. Teachers may award students time in the makerspace area for good behavior or for meeting a goal in the classroom. The library also offers a weekly AR incentive. If students take an AR quiz and score 80% or greater, the classroom teacher provides a ticket and student bring their tickets to the library when exchanging books. Each Friday a drawing is held and winners are awarded 30 minutes of makerspace time. Makerspace materials are primarily funded through book fairs, recycling ink cartridges, Box Tops and DVD sales from recorded student performances.

When researching this model for guidance and data, it was found there was a lack of resources available on grouping students into a community of learning. We have looked at research on multi-age classrooms, but this did not follow the total vision of what we wanted to do. However, for the 2017-18 school year, we are planning to have special classes (pullouts) by communities instead of grade level. This will allow the community to have a similar schedule for core instruction freeing students to transition into classrooms that will best meet their educational needs. The student's transitions will be based on data from formative and informative assessments.

Another concept of the plan was to create a family atmosphere for our students. According to Arkansas statistics from Kids Count Data Center, in 2015 there were 234,000 or 36% of kids living in single parent families (2016, p.1), and 20.1% of families in the county live under the poverty level. We feel that creating smaller schools within our school will give students a sense of belonging and increase student morale and self-confidence.

Change also brings challenges. As far as we know, there are no other schools, in Arkansas, fully implementing the "community of learning" approach; we are establishing the model. Last spring, we developed a reform team of teachers, administrators, and school board members to look at possible pitfalls and ways to overcome them. This team, transitioned into the Council of Innovation will stay in place to help meet any challenges we may face. The majority of our 70 teachers and support staff changed classrooms and/or grade levels over the summer. Our teachers have worked extremely hard to organize new classrooms and plan with grade level teams and community teams. They also attended professional development provided by A+ Educators on team building and meeting the needs of all students. One of the biggest hurdles has been scheduling. An entirely new master schedule was created; communities have been able to create their own schedules that work for their students, a

paraprofessional has been assigned to each hallway, and additional planning time has been added for each community. Gary Wayman, Superintendent, stated, "I am amazed by the way our elementary teachers and staff have embraced the learning communities concept. After the initial shock, they have dug in their heels and are committed to making this a success for our students."

The first week went very well. Even returning students had to familiarize themselves with the new building layout, but quickly became adept at finding their way. There were no longer grade level hallways, as they had always known, but community hallways. Mary Brown, a 20-year veteran first grade teacher said, "The kids are so excited about being a part of a community and all the changes. Parents I have talked to also love the idea." Parent, Angie Hunsucker, stated, "Waldron Elementary is setting standards high and making incredible strides to be a leader in progressive advancements that meet the needs of every individual student. Being a parent of a Waldron Elementary student, I recognize and appreciate the changes and see our teachers and administration encouraging our students to be more inventive, responsible, skillful, and successful. Student success is definitely at the nucleus of Waldron Public Schools and their decisions to implement modifications to education."

We remain a "work in progress," but we believe this is what is best for our students. Our school is really good, but good is not enough for our kids. We want our school to be great and are so excited about the direction we are headed.



Third grade teachers representing each community are wearing T-Shirts given to all staff and students.



In summer professional development, teachers learned new student engagement strategies and were involved in team building activities.



Third graders helping first graders with Christmas project.



Heroic Highway Thanksgiving Feast.