PART III SUMMARY

Walnut Hill Elementary School is an oasis of excellence in Dallas, Texas. In 1916 farmers, living in a rural area thirteen-miles north of Dallas, wanted the finest school possible for their children. They constructed a three-room brick building with pot-bellied stoves on an acre of mowed wheat field. Walnut Hill was named for the lovely walnut-laden trees shading the roads. Almost a century later, this school remains a stable force, while providing academic excellence for the community.

The current building was completed in 1937 and additions were made in 1952 and 1955. The campus now has four portable buildings. Light floods the classrooms from double-hung solid oak windows. Spanish mission architecture, complete with arched doorways and red tile roof, sets this school apart. A central courtyard of native plantings, which bloom continually throughout the year, serves as an extended classroom. Landscaping by students, teachers, staff, parents, and community enhances the beauty of the facility and creates a sense of ownership. The school enjoys the benefits of technology and modern conveniences while preserving the heritage of the Walnut Hill community. The school community is proud to maintain the integrity and architecture of this building as a legacy for the twenty-first century.

Four hundred eighteen unique three-to twelve-year-old children learn under the guidance of fifty-seven devoted adults. The student population is composed of twelve nationalities speaking six primary languages. This includes ninety limited English proficient students. Walnut Hill has approximately 289 neighborhood children. An additional 129 children choose to transfer to the school, attracted by its unique programs, high academic standards, and a nurturing school community. One hundred five students are special needs learners ranging from mild disabilities to autism. Teachers/staff structure for the success of each student and build lifelong learners. Children are the priority of this Pre-K -6 school.

Teachers, staff, and community work proactively to meet the needs of the whole child. Everyday high expectations of all adults foster academic achievement. The faculty goes beyond academics and is mindful that all dimensions of each individual must be nurtured. Learning extends beyond the curriculum with opportunities in arts, technology, physical education, and character education. Children create pottery in art classes, learn keyboarding in the computer lab, become fit through aerobics, and learn tolerance through character lessons. Cultural experiences bring the world onto this campus for student, teacher and staff enrichment. Ballet Folklorico, classical guitar concerts, jazz bands, and theatrical productions offer opportunities that heighten the impact of the school experience.

Supportive adults facilitate the learning process, design and implement innovative initiatives, and maintain focus on child-centered learning. Walnut Hill builds on each child's strengths. Sensitive to a variety of learning/ teaching styles, Walnut Hill offers traditional, mixed-age and departmentalized classes. Qualified faculty and specialized programs are available to ensure that individualized needs are addressed. Whether structuring active learning through play for young children using developmentally appropriate practices, providing teacher-directed projects for talented and gifted students, or enriching the reading program by developing a Literacy Library, children's learning flourishes.

Inclusion of special needs learners in general education classrooms is an excellent example of promoting a healthy peer climate. Children previously separated now grow up as friends. Teachers/staff minimize differences in blended groups through developmentally appropriate activities. The Meadows Foundation is providing a specifically designed playground to further promote inclusion for young children. All school efforts are directed to ensure success through child-centered learning.

Walnut Hill provides a solid foundation of academic skills and builds higher-level critical thinking skills. Formal/informal assessments, standardized testing, and teacher observation validate success in the learning process. Teacher, staff and student voluntarily transfer into the school indicating recognition of Walnut Hill's success. Teachers attribute student achievement to the recognition of reading and mathematics as essential foundations for learning. The curriculum maintains this focus while integrating these basics into the content areas of science, social studies, physical education, and the arts. Every teacher is a reading and math teacher. Recognition at district and state levels for exceptional student growth confirms the school's effectiveness. Walnut Hill's progressive media center is the instructional center of the

school. It supports all facets of the curriculum and offers enrichment opportunities. Technology, through the Internet, increases instructional resources and links each classroom with the worldwide community. One hundred two computers enhance instruction and provide opportunities for children to be active participants with technology. Teachers/staff provide strong academics, technology, innovative programs, and all available resources to give children tools for a successful future.

Changing societal needs require that children be knowledgeable and ethical. The school supports families in the difficult task of clarifying values. By providing students with opportunities to practice appropriate decision-making in a safe environment, children are empowered to act with responsibility. Children learn through the Character Counts pillars of respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and citizenship. The school's goal is this: that children develop a sense of self, and that their actions reflect who they are. This is reflected in the school motto: Enter to better yourself. Depart to better your world.

A high degree of professionalism, solid academic credentials, and a focus on children describes the professional community. A commitment to excellence in education results in on-going training as teachers/staff enhance effectiveness and share knowledge and strategies with colleagues. Adult success facilitates the success of children. Walnut Hill's principal encourages the quest for excellence. As an advocate for children, she empowers the teachers and staff to maximize the total school experience. This high-performance team implements innovative strategies and initiatives to strengthen learning.

The principal shares leadership by working with the neighborhood and business communities. She facilitates a powerful partnership with IBM. This enhanced partnership provides effective training and enables teachers/staff to apply business skills of leadership and teamwork. IBM also provides materials, financial support for specific initiatives, student, teachers and staff incentives, cultural opportunities for students/ families/staff, and hundreds of hours of student tutoring by IBM employees. Other partnerships with Raytheon, Kiwanis, senior citizens, and private schools directly increase student learning through tutoring, mentoring, and donations. The PTA, dads' club, and the School Community Council are vital partners in the success of Walnut Hill. They provide extra pairs of hands, strong backs, and caring hearts. The school collaborates with all partners on behalf of children.

The words of Lyndon Baines Johnson reflect the vision for Walnut Hill. "We must open the doors of opportunity. But we must also equip our people to walk through those doors." Walnut Hill's teachers, staff and school community gladly assume the mission of equipping students with the tools they will need for the future. The faculty teaches them how to use those tools, how to make wise decisions, and how to walk with pride through the doors of opportunity.

PART IV VISION/MISSION STATEMENT

Eighty-two years ago farmers in North Dallas wanted the finest school possible for their children. They lovingly constructed a three-room brick building, which still maintains its positive presence in the community. Excellence in teaching was their original vision then and remains the same vision Walnut Hill Elementary School exemplifies. The Walnut Hill mission statement proclaims:

> Children are our priority. Walnut Hill uses creativity, technology, innovation, and all available resources to raise the bar of excellence in academics. Quality instruction allows every child to be successful and become a lifelong learner. As educators with heart, we uplift the values of character, integrity, and community to provide lasting tools for building citizens of tomorrow.

Today, Walnut Hill continues the same desire for excellence in academics. To be successful, teachers/staff recognize the mission goes beyond academics. As citizens of tomorrow, students will need to acquire the skills of character development, problem solving, and technology. The children of Walnut Hill will be ready for the new millennium.

PART V

A1. How would you describe your student population? What are your students' needs? How do you assure that the needs of all students are met?

Walnut Hill Elementary is a community in which children are the priority. Four hundred eighteen unique three-to twelve-year-old children, joined by a dedicated staff of fifty-seven and eight enthusiastic student teachers, compose the current Walnut Hill family. The student population reflects twelve nationalities speaking six different primary languages. Approximately 289 children live in the immediate neighborhood. One hundred twenty-nine students choose to participate in district transfer options under the federal court desegregation order. These options are: (a) minority-to-majority neighborhood option; (b) curriculum transfers for academic programs, including mixed-age classrooms or traditional calendar, rather than year round school; (c) individually declared family hardships, such as childcare and/or transportation. One hundred five special needs students representing an array of challenges are a part of the Walnut Hill community. These include children with Down syndrome, Fragile X, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, orthopedically challenged, muscular dystrophy, visually impaired, other health impaired, autism, Asberger's syndrome, pervasive developmental disorder, failure to thrive, fetal alcohol syndrome, emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, speech or language disorder, and talented and gifted (TAG).

Demographics	1993	1998
Limited English Proficient	21	90
Hispanic	33.41%	50.24%
Black	12.50%	17.77%
Anglo	52.37%	30.81%
Other	1.29%	1.19%
Economically Disadvantaged	26.2%	42.0%

In response, teacher certification in English as a Second Language (ESL) has increased 300%.

Specialized populations require "specialized" programs. A multidisciplinary team analyzes needs and develops an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for seventy certified special education students. Implementation of these plans ranges from the least restrictive environment to the most restrictive: general education with/without modifications, small group instruction, specialized self-contained classrooms, and 2:1 adult-to-student assignment. The school meets the needs of eight autistic students in two self-contained classrooms with four highly-trained adults. The needs of one emotionally disturbed, one mentally retarded and three autistic students are met in general education classrooms. Six multi-handicapped preschool students develop basic skills with two adults in a self-contained classroom. Forty-eight talented and gifted (TAG) students gain enrichment through weekly experiences with an advanced academic instructor. Thirty-six students needing acceleration in learning receive daily specific instruction from two certified specialists as stated in the IEP. Classroom teachers modify instruction after collaboration with the specialists. Adaptive materials support learning for one visually handicapped child. Fifty speech/language impaired children benefit from intensive therapy with the speech/language pathologist for a minimum of one hour per week. Assuring each student's needs are met, the school implemented the Walnut Hill Project. (C3,E1) This has led to the successful full inclusion of one autistic and three Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (B2) students into general education classes. As the LEP population has increased to ninety students, teachers have responded by offering general classroom instruction with modification, general classroom instruction with trained support personnel, and intensive small group reinforcement.

In response to faculty concerns, a new initiative will begin in 1998. Individual Improvement Plans (IIP) will be developed and implemented for approximately thirty-five at-risk students (as identified by standardized test scores). Mentor teachers will shepherd and monitor these children by serving as advocates. Individualized strategies will be put in place to structure each child's success.

A Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) is utilized as a road map giving focus, specifying areas needing direction, and ensuring all students' needs are met. Decisions are research-based, data-driven, and designed

to provide growth for each child. For example, in 1995-96 data indicated a 63% TAAS mastery rate in the area of summarization. A specific summarization framework was taught twice weekly for two years in all K-6 classrooms. The 1996-97 data indicated a 13% increase in TAAS mastery rate in summarization.

Walnut Hill embraces the whole child, celebrating differences and recognizing similarities. Combining the teaching of character, integrity, and community with academic excellence, Walnut Hill provides lasting tools for building productive citizens of tomorrow.
The motto is ENTER TO BETTER YOURSELF. DEPART TO BETTER YOUR WORLD.

A2. What non-academic services and programs are available to support students, and how do they relate to the student needs and school goals identified?

Each adult at Walnut Hill - administrator, teacher, teacher assistant, office staff, cafeteria worker, and custodian - is an integral part of every child's school experience. Meeting the needs of the whole child is a goal shared by the entire faculty and community. The faculty is proactive in offering an array of non-academic services to children.

The counseling program is designed to support the mental and emotional wellness of all students. Societal conditions have resulted in increasing needs for professional interventions. A 1996-98 district allocation for a part-time counselor resulted in school families petitioning the school board and securing a full-time position. This counselor provides classroom guidance lessons to each K-6 class every two weeks. The counselor works with about thirty students in weekly individual/group sessions. She enhances interpersonal relationships through character development, building self-esteem, assisting students with appropriate decision-making skills, and offering formal programs such as Character Counts. The counselor provides immediate intervention in crisis situations. As an advocate and mediator, she works with social services, school district services, and families. She selects and provides programs from the community, such as the Junior League's Handicap Awareness Puppet Show. The counselor is the liaison to the Kiosco Youth and Family Clinic, run by the district and Dallas County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services. This clinic provides physical examinations, vision and hearing evaluations, psychological/psychiatric services and the Family Youth Interaction (FYI) program. FYI is a program offered to parents whose children are experiencing academic and/or behavioral problems. Counselors, therapists and trained teachers have taught more than thirty families how to enhance relationships and increase cooperation.

Tips on Child Parenting, sponsored by the counselor and dads' club, is a special evening program open to all Walnut Hill families. In spring 1998 speakers presented entertaining and educational sessions to approximately twenty-five parents. Police officers and health care providers addressed concerns impacting the neighborhood and dilemmas facing students and families.

The Pupil Assistance Support System (PASS) is a campus-based process facilitating the identification of students with academic and/or behavioral needs. Teachers meet with other professionals and discuss strategies to provide early intervention for children at risk. The Student Support Team (SST) is composed of teachers, the PASS chairperson, counselor, administrator, diagnostician, psychologist, and health specialist who meet every other week assessing and addressing the needs of students referred by PASS. The team evaluates approximately ten percent of the enrollment annually and determines necessity for additional specialized evaluations. Results are used to determine and implement individualized plans to promote student success.

One strategy ensuring student success is the school-wide tutoring program. Every teacher and assistant provides tutoring after school twice weekly during the second semester. This opportunity is open to students identified through test data/teacher observation to be at risk of failing. In 1998 approximately seventy-five grades 3-6 students were tutored in reading and math. Resulting from tutoring, 1998 TAAS data indicate only fifteen students did not master reading/math. Teachers offer tutorial assistance throughout the year, and/or mentor students needing extra support.

Since truancy is a precursor to dropping out of school in upper grades, attendance is closely monitored. An office clipboard reminds teachers and staff of specific student absences. Each absence results in a parent phone call the day of the absence. The Attendance Committee aggressively pursues

truancy. Walnut Hill took six families to court for excessive student absences. Five of the six families responded positively. A hallway bulletin board and weekly graphs keep students abreast of class attendance percentages. In 1998 daily student attendance averaged 96.4 %.

Two programs addressing challenges that students face in urban situations include:

• Law Enforcement Teaching Students (LETS) - a partnership between the school and law enforcement officers to teach all fourth and sixth grade students about the impact of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Decision making, confidence building, and character education are strategies providing positive alternatives.

• Gang Awareness and Intervention training - sessions conducted for teachers and staff by local experts. While there is no reported gang involvement among the students, gang activity is present in this area and teachers are equipped to provide intervention should a need arise.

The Safe Schools Committee advises the teachers/staff of safety issues and crisis management techniques. A disaster program is in place, covering a multitude of contingencies. All teachers/staff are trained and crisis drills are conducted on a regular basis. Each room has a red clipboard containing disaster codes, maps marked for evacuation, class rolls, student medical information, and parent phone numbers. Teachers send students to the office with a Red Emergency Pass which alerts administration that additional adult assistance is needed. Visitors, volunteers and parents sign in at the school office to receive a required visitor badge. A safe environment is maintained due to the positive force of this committee.

The Safety Patrol consists of volunteer fifth and sixth grade students, directed and trained by the physical education teacher. These students guide orderly movement through the hallways and redirect inappropriate or unsafe student behavior.

The school partners with the community for several non-academic presentations. Dallas Parks and Recreation personnel present swimming and water safety assemblies. The Dallas Fire Department provides information on fire safety for home and school. Texas Utilities offers programs, distributes calendars created by students and provides literature on electrical safety. The Red Cross shares the Scrubby Bear Program to inform Pre-K - 2 about germs and hand washing. The Lions' Club works closely with the school nurse to provide glasses for needy students. Ten local private school students from Jesuit College Preparatory School and The Episcopal School of Dallas present safety information to K-2 students.

Emphasizing the wellness of children, the school's nurse and clinic assistant administer vision, hearing, height, weight, scoliosis, and blood pressure screening to all students. In special cases, chest and heart assessments may be done at age appropriate intervals to identify any suspected problems. The nurse coordinates dental health programs with the Public Health Department and handles specialized health issues as needed. In 1996, the clinic assistant was honored by the Board of Education for performing CPR and saving the life of a child.

A3. How does your school determine and address the developmental needs of students as they move from grade to grade?

Walnut Hill curriculum practices and services are developmentally appropriate to meet the needs of all students. The school population includes 28% special needs learners in general education classes. This reminds adults to be cognizant of the small milestones that constitute growth. Teachers/staff are committed to developmentally appropriate practices. Through more than 800 hours of training, teachers/staff refine skills and strategies by applying the High Scope philosophy. The High Scope initiative is research-based and focuses on student-initiated active learning with people, materials, events and ideas. These strategies bridge early childhood and emerging literacy.

Each year, teachers share writing portfolios, reading running records, teacher-made assessments, academic profiles, health assessments and referrals. Teachers use daily observations, pre- and post-test evaluations, higher-level questioning techniques, and vertical teaming to ensure mastery and ease transitions. Data from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) are used to assess growth and mastery. Students who score below the 40th percentile on ITBS or do not master 70% of the TAAS objectives are provided with support. At the beginning of each year, the Diagnostic Skills Profile (DSP) is administered to grades 3-6 to determine appropriate paths for learning. The ESL (A1), TAG (A1), and resource classes are additional options for special needs learners. Teachers

of these three programs are all early childhood specialists and embrace developmentally appropriate practices.

Walnut Hill welcomes the large number of transfer students (A1) and accepts them into the school community. The counselor meets with transfer students a minimum of once a month to monitor progress and provide support. Teachers assign student buddies to acquaint and assist new students. Teachers assess the progress of new and transfer students at grade-level meetings. Formal/informal conferences with parents provide opportunities for communication to ease transitions at the beginning of each year. First-year students and parents attend an orientation in which the principal and counselor review the campus handbook, policies and procedures. Guided campus tours and curriculum overviews are available to visitors. The Parent Teacher Association's (PTA) annual Welcome Breakfast allows parents and teachers to meet in a casual setting. The counselor provides new student orientations to answer questions and diffuse anxieties. The principal presents grade level assemblies, reviewing and highlighting policies and expectations for new/returning students at the beginning of the school year. Prospective Pre-K and kindergarten families are invited to a spring Round-Up in preparation for fall enrollment. These activities inform and welcome new families to school.

A number of activities bridge the transition between elementary and middle school. The middle school choir and band, including many of Walnut Hill's former students, perform at the school to promote their middle school. This has proven to be an excellent recruitment tool. The district's magnet middle schools come to Walnut Hill to recruit students. Middle school counselors meet with each sixth grade student to select courses for seventh grade. Tentative course selections are sent home for parent review and approval. Teachers and staff walk students to the middle school for a tour. These activities facilitate a smooth transition to middle school.

A4. What co-curricular activities are available for students and how do those activities extend the academic curriculum?

Active involvement in co-curricular activities strengthens the impact of the school experience. One hundred percent of students, including special needs, LEP, and transfer, participate in one or more activities. Students are urged to participate through personal encouragement from teachers/staff, announcement, flyers and informational meetings. Extension activities include:

THE ARTS

Reflections Contest -Twenty-five percent of the K-6 boys and girls submitted work in 1998. This annual cultural arts competition encourages entries in photography, printmaking, painting, collage, poetry, computer art, and drawing. Two special needs students are recognized national winners.

The Olympics of the Imagination Art Contest - A sixth grade girl became a national winner, earning a trip to the Atlanta Summer Olympics. Designing a new Olympic sport, she painted and wrote about how the sport could foster world cooperation.

Community art contests- Dallas Mavericks Basketball Calendar, Texas Utilities Calendar, Southwestern Bell Cotton Bowl Classic Art, State Fair of Texas, Partnership For Arts Culture and Education, and Japan America Society hold contests to which more than 30% of the boys and girls submit entries.

Youth Art Month - Children's work is displayed throughout the city. More than 100 pieces of students' artwork are featured annually.

Art Festival - This annual school festival showcases paintings, sculptures, pottery and drawings created by 100% of the girls and boys.

The Dallas Museum of Art - IBM funds a docent to visit and provide 68% of the girls and boys with activities and slide presentations.

Share the World - This multicultural program, piloted here by Young Audiences of Dallas, introduces children to cultural traditions. A culminating program featuring 100% of the boys and girls singing, dancing, playing instruments, or presenting art work shares the experience with the community.

Dallas Children's Theater Residency - Actors collaborate with teachers during five classroom sessions to ensure an academic focus for 96% of the girls and boys.

Classical Guitar Society - An artist performs a concert at the school for 100% of the students.

Talent Show - Approximately fifteen parents, ten faculty members, and twenty-five (17%) students annually entertain.
Symphony YES - A quintet from the Dallas Symphony demonstrates instruments at an annual program for 68% of the boys and girls.
Texas International Theatrical Arts Society (TITAS) - As of 1993, IBM funded tickets to allow approximately 25% of the families to attend professional performances. In 1994, an African percussionist held a residency with twenty TAG boys and girls.
Dallas Black Dance Theater - IBM provides yearly tickets for 25% of the girls and boys to attend performances.

ACADEMICS

Math Olympiad - Three teams of five boys/girls each participate in a district-wide competition of math concepts and computation.
Odyssey of the Mind - Teams of seven boys and girls competed in creative/problem solving competitions.
Computer Olympiad - Four grades 3-6 boys and girls demonstrate computer knowledge, keyboarding and word processing skills. The school has had team and individual winners.
Science Fair - Seventy percent of the boys and girls participate in individual/group projects with many winners advancing to the Regional Math, Science, and Technology Fair.
Texas Math and Science Coaches Association (TMSCA) Contests - Fifteen boys and girls participate in these contests consisting of number sense, mathematics, calculator and science problem solving.
Econoville - Sponsored by Consumer Credit Counseling Services, this program provides lessons in economics for 20% of the boys and girls.
Chess Club - In 1993, adult volunteers coached 5% of the boys and girls enhancing advanced math and problem-solving skills through chess strategies.

CHARACTER ENHANCEMENT

Champs Have And Model Positive Peer Skills (CHAMPPS) - All forty-four sixth grade boys and girls (11% of the students) receive training in leadership and peer relationship skills. Student teams serve the school by conducting weekly recycling programs, tutoring children, assisting with distribution of materials, updating the school marquee, daily managing the school store, and assisting with daily announcements.
Safety Patrol - 16% of boys and girls in grades 5-6. (A2)
Scouts - Daisies, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts utilize the facilities. (Percentage not available)

The Walnut Hill community shares a desire to educate the whole child by promoting wellness. The school is adjacent to the City of Dallas Walnut Hill Recreation Center and shares the same playground. Families enjoy soccer, golf, baseball, football, tennis, kick ball, and basketball making this campus the playground of the community. With playgrounds accessible to everyone, play is meaningful and available to all children and families.

A5. How does your school address the accessibility of its facilities to students and others with disabilities?

Students and visitors with mobility impairments have easy access to all facilities and areas of the campus via ramps. The bathrooms, water fountains and doorways are accessible to wheelchairs. Buses equipped with appropriate lifts and securing devices are used for daily transportation and field trips.

In the spring of 1998, The Meadows Foundation awarded the school a $62,000 grant. These funds are being used to construct a playground promoting cooperative play and inclusion among younger grades. The playground design includes paired equipment to allow a merging of regular education and special needs learners. Selected equipment equalizes play opportunities. Included in the plans are tricycle paths, a pavilion for group activities, easels with wheelchair access, playground equipment with wheelchair adaptations, and a molded plastic climbing mountain. All new equipment will be in place by January 1999. The entire playground will be developmentally appropriate and accessible to all. Since children are the priority, teachers/staff make any modifications necessary for children to be successful participants in all activities.

B1. How does the culture of your school support the learning of all its members and foster a caring community?

Walnut Hill teachers/staff define culture as the total pattern of human behavior, reflected in educational excellence, acceptance of others, within an atmosphere of respect. The school has an atmosphere where acceptance and tolerance are the norm. When a substitute teacher mistreated an autistic student in his general education class, his classmates wrote letters to the principal stating their concern. By accepting each child at his point on the continuum of learning, teachers/staff identify needs and focus on strengths to ensure mastery of skills. A student with low self-esteem and school phobia transferred from a private school. The teacher identified the student's need to be successful and focused on her mathematics strengths. Within six weeks the school phobia vanished, the child was eager to come to school, and the parents were relieved. Families seek to be a part of the community, as demonstrated by the high number of voluntary transfer students to this school. (A1)

The Character Counts program (C1,J) provides problem-solving skills for today's students and tomorrow's adults. For example, all K-6 classes role play and discuss strategies for dealing with violence during A Week Without Violence. Teachers direct efforts through Discover Skills for Life curriculum activities, so that children learn to identify, define, and overcome obstacles.

Students graph their individual TAAS pre-assessment results. These graphs provide individual and collective information from which responsible decision-making occurs about learning. Students are able to understand what their strengths and needs are, how they compare with other students, and set realistic goals for skill mastery. Additionally, many classes utilize Quality Tools (D2) to draft classroom rules, resolve behavioral issues, and collect peer input.

B2. What opportunities do students have to build sustained and caring relationships with teachers and other adults? How does your school promote a healthy peer climate among the students?

Each day reflects positive interactions between students and adults. The facility supervisor and cafeteria manager open the school welcoming early students for breakfast. Teachers/staff members direct traffic, open car doors, greet families, or supervise the playground. The principal, teachers, and staff greet students as they enter the building. Teachers, standing at classroom doors, set a positive tone for the day. Children are greeted or hugged by at least three adults by 8:00 a.m. Students regularly come to the office to read to the principal, recite a poem, celebrate a grade, or share birthday cake. The Facility Supervisor is the Hispanic Ambassador, encouraging students in their native language, translating for parents, and acting as the resident *abuelo*, or grandfather. A science teacher chooses to spend her duty-free lunch period interacting with Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) students, just as other teachers elect to interact at lunch with a class. The principal's continuous visits to classrooms, library, and lunchroom make her visible and readily accessible to children. Students can visit with the counselor during classroom guidance, small groups, individual guidance or by placing a note in her clown mailbox. At the end of the day, teachers walk students out of the building, while staff place students in cars. Adults remain outside until all children leave. A Walnut Hill staff member directs an on-campus after-school program. (G3)

Teachers and staff reach beyond traditional roles and are found coaching Odyssey of the Mind, math or computer teams, performing in the annual Talent Show, or doing the electric slide at a school dance. Returning at night or on weekends for competitions, community plays, family cultural outings, field trips, or sporting events, the adult/child relationship transfers from classroom to community. Students attend baseball games, rodeos, movies, and go camping or skating with teachers/staff. The annual Field Day finds teachers/staff engaging in the sponge throw, participating in a balloon toss, or running a three-legged race. During the spring Family Picnic, teachers, staff and families share blankets and dinner.

More than 275 adult tutors and volunteers build and sustain caring relationships. This translates to over 10,000 volunteer hours each year. Children are the beneficiaries of positive associations with good role models.

Mixed-age classrooms deepen the adult/child relationship. This configuration allows children to grow with the same teacher for two years and sustains teacher/child/parent relationships. Furthermore, it

facilitates a healthy peer climate and the opportunity for older students to become role models and leaders. Another avenue for building student relationships is cross-peer tutoring. Third grade students become reading partners with kindergartners.

A fifth grade boy who transferred to Walnut Hill had learned to react to conflict with aggression. His responses resulted in rejection by his peers. His teacher discussed alternatives to aggression, provided role -playing situations, and mediated the conflicts. Peers reinforced appropriate behaviors and included him in activities as he modified his behavior.

Inclusion of special needs learners in general education classrooms is the ultimate example of healthy peer climates. In 1993, the parent of an autistic student was distressed that her son was not included with age-appropriate peers. The response was to create a self-contained fourth grade classroom, structuring it for the success of all. Collaboration with family, district specialists, local teachers and staff, and classmates led to positive relationships and academic success. The entire school community gained from this solution. Inclusion continues today with more than twenty similar success stories in the past five years.

B3. How are teachers hired in your school? How are teacher assignments made?

Walnut Hill's reputation for excellence is the best recruitment tool. Grade level or departmental teams assist the principal with candidate interviews. Many strong candidates apply to this school. A new employee must be more than proficient in a particular field to be selected to join the high-efficiency team. An applicant must also possess the same philosophy and expectations of teammates. Team interviews help to ensure critical compatibility and enable members to develop mutual trust. The principal recommends the selected candidate to the district's personnel department for hiring. When the teachers/staff have input and invest in the selection process, the team will more likely support and ensure success for the new teacher.

Teachers annually conference with the principal to analyze current assignments and discuss future options based on teacher strengths and student needs. A grade-level team may request a person be added to their team. Individual strengths and areas for growth are considered. Team members strive to reach decisions by consensus. Walnut Hill believes an employee, happy with an assignment, works more efficiently. Offering teachers further training enables them to move into different assignments with enhanced ability.

Walnut Hill enjoys the benefits of nurturing its own new teachers. Texas A&M University at Commerce (Texas A&M) recognizes this school's strong academic focus and places student teachers here for quality experiences. The school selects one representative from each class and now employs three former student teachers.

Strengths and interests enhance a teacher's effectiveness. Programs are created based upon student needs and teachers with complementary backgrounds and skills are matched. Programs and initiatives evolve in response to student needs. Due to commitments to children, the school now provides mixed-age classes, Pre-K, and a Literacy Library. In 1995, addressing a quest for excellence in scientific investigation, the school opened a science lab. As a result of this decision one teacher returned to graduate school and now holds a Master's degree in science.

B4. What is your school's plan for school safety, discipline, and drug prevention? What was your record for the past five years?

Teachers, staff and students are empowered with knowledge and training to keep them safe and informed. A Safe Schools Committee establishes a crisis plan to cover possible scenarios. The teachers and staff receive training and participate in periodic drills. Teachers prepare students for possible mishaps and create classroom procedures in case of fire, bus accidents, strangers on campus, guns on campus and noxious fumes. When confronted by ten actual crisis situations in the past five years, the school responded quickly and appropriately. Walnut Hill was selected, with its feeder middle and high schools, to simulate a major drill with city utility services in concert with police and fire departments. The school's response earned a commendation, validating the safety performance. The Safe Schools Committee maintains the seriousness of its role by holding bimonthly meetings. Current research identifies clean schools as safe schools and this immaculate facility supports the safe school efforts.

Through classroom guidance, the counselor fosters safe practices using puppets, discussions, safety experts, big books and role playing. Health instruction in the classroom promotes personal safety. The student Safety Patrol (A2) is an active part of the school plan. External organizations providing safety materials/instruction include The Red Cross, Colgate, Gatorade, American Heart Association and McGruff, the famous "Take a Bite Out of Crime" spokesdog. In the past five years, only four children have been involved in accidents at school.

Discipline is derived from the word disciple, which means one who receives training from another. Therefore, teachers/staff see it as their responsibility to model principles of self-discipline. Character education (C1,J) permeates the school. Weekly strategy lessons enable students to be self-disciplined. School bulletin boards reflect basic character principles.

As the year begins, the principal reviews expectations in grade-level assemblies. Teachers continue to reinforce expectations in the classroom with their own standards. Many students are encouraged to develop behavior guidelines within their classroom. The counselor assists in this endeavor by providing guidance lessons with additional strategies to help meet expectations. Teachers meet periodically to review the school's discipline plan. The Student Responsibility Campus Plan reflects the district design with four categories of student infractions. This customized plan meets the cognitive, behavioral, and social needs of K-3 and 4-6 students. Each K-3 student carries a red behavior folder with a calendar. This is a communication tool which links home and school and addresses minor infractions. The folder is marked daily by the teacher and sent home every Tuesday for a parental signature. A notation of "1" indicates a need to follow oral and written directions, and "2" indicates a need to demonstrate non-disruptive behavior. A student planner, provided by the PTA, allows the same process for 4-6 students. Positive actions are acknowledged as well as areas for growth. For infrequent, more serious infractions, options include: parent/teacher phone conference, principal conference with student and/or parent, principal returns the student to the teacher with suggestions, referral to guidance counselor, referral to Student Support Team (SST) or the Kiosco Youth and Family Clinic (A2), in-house suspension, suspension up to three days, or assignment to an Alternative Education Placement. Major infractions result in expulsion and referral to the Dallas County Juvenile Justice Program. Walnut Hill has not needed this option.

Every child deserves a fresh start. District policy requires that student records be purged of referrals at the conclusion of each school year. The principal estimates approximately 10% minor infraction office referrals and 0% major infraction referrals per year. In 1994-95 the principal estimates there were 100 office referrals for minor infractions. Due to the implementation of the Character Counts program (C1,J) referrals have declined to fewer than thirty.

CHAMPPS (A4) is a sixth grade leadership program for the prevention of drug/alcohol/tobacco use and other negative behavior. Sixth grade students develop skills in goal setting, communication and self-esteem empowering them to respond positively to societal pressures. Character Counts enables students to build self-esteem and make appropriate decisions. Red Ribbon Week celebrates personal decisions to be drug-free. Drug prevention is part of the health curriculum at every grade level. These effective practices are substantiated by no reports of drug usage during the last five years.

C1. How does your curriculum serve the broad goals for student learning and development that the public generally expects education to achieve: personal and intellectual growth, citizenship, and preparation for work? What relative emphasis do you place on these goals in your curriculum?

Using creativity, technology, and innovation, teachers/staff team to raise the bar of excellence in academics. High academic standards are the foundation of curriculum goals.

BASIC SKILLS - The district's goal for reading and mathematics is 90% of third/eighth grade students will be on grade level by 2001. Utilizing data from standardized testing, teachers identify basic skills in the CIP (A1) to be targeted. The components of the curriculum are reading, writing, speaking/listening, language usage, literature and the Dallas Reading Plan. The Dallas Reading Plan addresses the benchmarks of book and print awareness, phonemic awareness, decoding and word recognition, spelling and writing, oral reading, and text comprehension. The components of the math curriculum are problem solving, mathematical ideas and reasoning, everyday applications, reasonableness, estimation, computation,

algebraic thinking, measurement, geometry, probability and statistics, and number relationships. The components of the science curriculum are inquiry, concepts, technology, and assessment. Social studies components are knowledge, skills, attitudes/values and citizenship. Teachers use staff-generated six-week Instructional Targets to design teaching plans that ensure critical curriculum components are addressed. The school created this innovative tool to inform parents what will be taught in the classroom and specify which Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) will be addressed.

LEARNING IN THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES - It is critical to present material from disciplines on multiple levels to ensure individual needs are met. K-3 students learn in self-contained classes and 4-6 students learn in modified departmentalized classes. Addressing learning styles, the school offers mixed-age and traditional classes. Specific examples of innovative programs that address basic skills and academic disciplines include Everyday Mathematics (C4b), hands on science lab, Enrichment Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI) (C3), and the Dallas Reading Plan (C4).

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND ETHICAL JUDGMENT - Character Counts, a daily program providing knowledge, skills, and experiences, enhances abilities to make healthy choices. (J)

PREPARATION FOR LIFE IN A COMPLEX AND DIVERSE SOCIETY - Walnut Hill places great emphasis on preparing students to better their world. Technology, communication, acceptance of diversity, and a solid academic foundation provide tools for life. Classroom computers and a computer lab involve children in daily technological applications. Internet connectivity opens the window to the world's resources. (D4) Ethnic diversity and infusion of special needs children prepare students to live and work in a diverse society.

PARTICIPATION IN THE PRACTICES OF DEMOCRACY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE - Students participate in pledge activities, student council, national and state mock elections, and service projects. Successful projects are Cans Across Walnut Hill and The Giving Tree through which children collect food and socks/hats/mittens for the needy.

SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE - Every child participates in cooperative learning experiences. This emphasis offers support to LEP students, special needs learners and at-risk peers. From the computer lab to the playground, from ages three to twelve, students work in multiple group settings each day. Within a normal day, one child could work in a mixed-age classroom, move to TAG (A1) for small group enrichment, attend articulation therapy, play ball at recess with older students, or listen to a younger student read. Basic statistical Quality Tools, including plus-deltas, fishbones, or consensograms from the business world transfer to the classroom (D2).

The words of Lyndon Baines Johnson reflect the vision for Walnut Hill: "We must open the doors of opportunity. But we must also equip our people to walk through those doors." Teachers and staff willingly take the responsibility to equip children for the future. Walnut Hill gives children a foundation of academics, values, technology, and a sense of community, that empowers them for life.

C2. How is your school organized to provide for differing student academic needs within the school's goals, priorities, and curriculum?

Walnut Hill offers a variety of programs to meet the needs of children. Individuals are assigned to classes based on the collaborative efforts of teachers, parents, counselor and the principal. Heterogeneous groupings and classroom configurations maximize student potential. Walnut Hill provides four types of classrooms; traditional self-contained, mixed-age, modified departmentalization, and self-contained for specialized needs. Teachers use TEKS (C1), CIP (A1), textbooks, and teacher-made materials to address the academic needs of the general education students, above/on/below level. Progress of these students is monitored through the use of portfolios, inventories, and teacher evaluations/observations.

Support programs address individual needs. Teachers may utilize classroom computers or place students in a different classroom for challenging work or specific skills instruction. At-risk students are tutored twice a week after school by teachers/staff. An IIP (A1) outlines strategies to accelerate their learning. TAG (A1) is a weekly teacher-directed program for forty-eight K-6 students emphasizing problem-solving, higher-level thinking, and group/individual projects. The ESL teacher and two assistants collaborate daily with general education teachers to meet the needs of ninety LEP students. Curriculum

modifications and supplemental materials enhance instruction in this program. The Resource Room provides daily support for thirty-six qualifying students by offering from fifty minutes to three hours of modified reading and/or math instruction. The speech/language pathologist offers biweekly small-group language development for fifty students. Total Communication (TC) classrooms support ten autistic students through a highly structured, task-oriented, communication-intensive program. A Pre-K half-day program is offered for thirty-two four-year-olds who qualify as educationally deprived (based on language skills) or economically deprived (as determined by guidelines for free or reduced lunch prices). The Walnut Hill Project involves Pre-kindergarten, Kindergarten, PPCD (B2), and early childhood TC students. These children, rotating through centers, learn in mixed-age and mixed-ability groups under the direction of early childhood specialists.

Inclusion varies from partial to all-day, allowing 100% of special needs students to interact with age-appropriate peers. Walnut Hill organizes for integration, and does not tolerate segregation in any form. Children are the priority, and this commitment continues to be reflected through the goals and curriculum.

C3. How do you ensure that diverse learners (for example, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, students with limited English proficiency, migrant students, and students placed at risk) all have the opportunity to learn challenging content and achieve at high levels?

The mission statement affirms a desire to "raise the bar of excellence in academics for each child. We use creativity, technology, innovation and all available resources." Whether adjusting the organizational model or adding initiatives, the faculty maintains focus on high levels of achievement and challenging content while "we uplift the values of character, integrity, and community to provide lasting tools for building citizens of tomorrow."

Walnut Hill supports effective inclusion of special needs children. Every child deserves solid academics and positive social experiences. The Walnut Hill Project was designed because of a belief that early childhood is the logical time to develop acceptance and tolerance. Teachers searched for exemplary practices. The resulting project provides rotations of teachers and staff, experiences, and materials for students in PPCD (B2), Pre-kindergarten, Kindergarten, and early childhood TC (C2). Differences disappear as developmentally appropriate activities occur within blended groups and the negative image of inclusion is overcome. Children who were previously separated now grow up as friends. Initial success leads to continued inclusion experiences.

PPCD serves children ages three to five with varying degrees of disabilities in developmentally appropriate settings. The goal of PPCD is the preparation of students for success in general education or in a least-restrictive environment by the age of six. The unique needs of these students are met by a structured daily routine in a play-based environment. This routine stresses active learning, independence, social responsibility, and emerging academics. Specific needs are met for individuals according to their IEP (A1).

Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped CHildren (TEACCH) is a nationally recognized program serving students with autism. As a TEACCH site, Walnut Hill implements this research-based program through staff-intensive Total Communication (TC) classes. This program emphasizes "structured teaching" components of the Mayer-Johnson picture/word communication system, behavioral interventions, and specialized strategies for children with autism. All special needs learners are eligible to participate in extended-year services if specified in their IEP.

Some learners require support beyond a general education setting. Help is provided through a Resource Room, which presents essential academic skills through intensive small-group instruction. Children set goals in a positive climate and progress is reviewed weekly. Resource teachers utilize components of High Scope (A3) and ECRI (C1) strategies to move students to mastery. ECRI provides multisensory reading experiences in phonics, comprehension, grammar, writing, spelling, and other critical language arts components. If children demonstrate communication challenges, the speech/language pathologist evaluates and offers remediation. By working in the classroom or in therapy sessions, she effects positive changes in communication behavior. Consultation is available for teachers, staff, and parents.

Walnut Hill is sensitive to the needs of families whose primary language is not English. With a 50.24% Hispanic population, the ESL program seeks to provide a bridge between English academics and limited English proficiency. ESL teachers/staff daily support general education classroom instruction with identified LEP students for at least fifty minutes. By district policy, a child may exit ESL after second grade if certain qualifications are met. These qualifications include scoring above the 40th percentile in reading or language on ITBS, or 70% mastery on TAAS and recommendation by the Language Proficiency Acquisition Committee (LPAC).

All students receive challenging instruction and are held to high expectations. A TAG committee, consisting of a TAG teacher, faculty members, and a nominated student's current classroom teacher, determine placement in TAG (A1). This weekly program emphasizes problem-solving and critical-thinking skills through individual/group self-motivated projects that stimulate and challenge academic abilities.

General education classroom teachers shepherd at-risk, LEP, and special needs learners in their classrooms through modified materials/instruction, peer/adult tutoring, and heterogeneous groupings. Mentors monitor progress and assist with student IIP (A1) development and implementation for at-risk students. Talented, gifted, and high-achieving students have classroom support through cooperative groups, teacher-directed specialized experiences, projects, and computer enhanced instruction.

Teachers/staff ensure that special programs not only provide excellence in education, but equity for all learners. Walnut Hill firmly believes that all children deserve the appropriate academic and social tools, to ensure their effectiveness as citizens of tomorrow.

C4. Successful schools offer all students opportunities to be engaged with significant content. How does your school ensure that students achieve at high levels in the core subjects?

Walnut Hill realizes the mission statement through a rigorous curriculum, raising the bar of excellence to exceed district and Texas standards. Utilizing TEKS (C1) to fulfill state standards and the CIP to address district/campus goals. Teachers/staff dare to take instruction to a higher level.

a. English (Language Arts) Immersion in a language-rich curriculum provides a solid foundation for each learner. Reading, writing, spelling, speaking, and listening are integrated into all curriculum areas. A phonemic base builds from daily use of a variety of materials helping to make sure that children apply these skills using quality literature. Beginning with labeling objects in Pre-K, using word walls or story maps in all general education classrooms, analyzing *The Giver* in sixth grade, or summarizing an experiment in the science lab, all boys and girls are immersed in literacy. Listening and speaking skills are taught and used in all core subjects. When children leave Walnut Hill the expectation is that they will be on or above grade-level. Responding to analysis of norm-referenced data, vocabulary is addressed school-wide each day. Pre-K through third grade teachers participate in the Dallas Reading Plan, a balanced literacy program. Individualized instruction provides intensive focus, via read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading, use of prescriptive data from running records, and literacy groups. Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) ensures each Pre-K - 6 child a daily reading encounter. Parents as Partners In Literacy (G2) provides take-home literature to strengthen the home-school literacy connection. An on-site Literacy Library provides a plethora of resources, including big books, puppets, leveled readers, novel sets, books on tape, reading manipulatives, and professional resources.

The New Jersey Writing Project (NJWP) integrates critical thinking and creative writing in third and fourth grade. The project combines literature and proven writing strategies to focus student writing on content rather than isolated skills. The NJWP will expand to other language arts classrooms in fall 1999.

Language arts classes use thematic units, integrating language arts into other content areas. Units of study meld content and creativity to transform classrooms and hallways into an outer space museum or a rain forest. *The Egypt Game* begins a great adventure for a 5/6 mixed-age class as they explore Egyptian culture. By mummifying chickens, writing a musical, designing costumes, and investigating the mathematical principles of the pyramids, students integrate knowledge across the content areas. When students have meaningful experiences, learning is internalized.

b. Mathematics The district Research and Development Department commends the school's success in teaching mathematics. Using TEKS (C1) and the national Professional Standards for Teaching

Mathematics as a base, teachers provide instruction in essential components of mathematics including higher-level problem solving to basic computation (C1). Computation has its place while critical thinking skills allow children to move into more complex, advanced processes. K-6 teachers include higher-order problem analysis in daily plans to ensure skill mastery. Teachers provide opportunities for practical life-experience applications. District research indicates high-performing mathematics classes have teachers with a thorough understanding of mathematical processes. Recognizing this, teachers seek training to enhance understanding and strengthen skills. In 1995 training with Dr. George Fair, a University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) mathematician, he introduced extensive use of manipulatives for hands-on exploration of mathematical principles. This same quest for mathematical excellence continues through the latest initiative, Everyday Mathematics. The University of Chicago provides this cutting-edge program, which couples comprehensive experiences with mathematics. The district honors Walnut Hill as a pilot site to implement this K-6 experienced-based opportunity. Key features include: problems presented in everyday contexts, projects and explorations to introduce new ideas, verbalization of processes leading to clarification, practice through games, repeated exposure to key ideas, and home links to invite family participation in the experiences.

With the identified need to improve multiplication skills, all Pre-K -6 classes practice skip counting daily. The school goal is for every student to master multiplication facts by the end of second grade so they may apply those facts in grades 3-6.

Project SEED provides mathematicians and scientists who socratically teach an annual six-week course of advanced, conceptually oriented mathematics to fifth and sixth grade classes. Girls and boys successfully discover concepts from algebra, calculus, and other higher mathematics, resulting in significant growth in risk-taking, academic confidence, and critical thinking skills. This format encourages participation by LEP, at-risk and special needs students.

c. Science All grade 4-6 students receive daily instruction in the science lab. Sixty percent of instruction is hands-on laboratory experiences in cooperative groupings. These experiences allow LEP, at-risk and special needs students to engage in significant content. Pre-K-3 students participate in science explorations through integrated thematic instruction. All students focus on the strands of life, earth, physical and environmental science as determined by National Science Standards and TEKS. Sensitive to current research, science and classroom teachers ensure all children have meaningful laboratory experiences. Full Option Science System (FOSS), *Great Exploration in Math and Science* (GEMS), and *Activities Integrating Math and Science* (AIMS) kits integrate science, math and language arts. Students utilize weather instruments, electronic planetariums, microscopes, and balance scales to further discovery. Children access technology using CD-ROM; the Internet; or Windows on Science, a laser-disc series allowing students to view photos, stills, and videos of scientific occurrences. The ultimate lab addition is a menagerie of more than forty animals. St. Stephen, a ten-foot albino Burmese python, and Iggy, a five-foot iguana, allow students exploration and responsibility. Birds, fish, turtles and rabbits thrive throughout the building.

Imagine Africa, a unique program for sixth grade students, integrates reading, writing, math and science. Participants write persuasive essays stating the reasons they should be chosen as “field biologists.” The class studies Africa's geography, ecosystem, environmental issues, endangered animals, customs, laws, and literature to complete research projects. Students travel to the Dallas Zoo and become “field biologists.”

d. Social Studies Building citizens of tomorrow, Walnut Hill promotes social studies education that is historically accurate, culturally inclusive, and emphasizes understanding and eradication of discrimination. Ongoing cultural awareness begins in Pre-K as children learn about families/neighborhoods and evolves into sixth grade girls and boys comparing communities of the world. Assemblies, performances, and community resources support cultural studies. Drawing from the school’s diversity, families share special elements of their heritage broadening cultural perspectives and demonstrating similarities/differences among cultures. Walnut Hill moves beyond the textbook using thematic units that allow multidisciplinary integration, of language arts, math, science or fine arts. The twenty-foot long painted United States playground map allows all 418 students to kinesthetically explore the geography of the country. Share the World (A4) unites the school by celebrating diversity of the world, country, and

community. Trunks of artifacts, costumes, and music provide hands-on opportunities for every child to experience selected cultures.

A sixth grade focus on world history and culture provides opportunities to study the atrocities of the Holocaust and read such novels as *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Studying the birth of the nation, fifth graders analyze novels such as *Johnny Tremain*. Students personalize American history by developing timelines and walking to a nearby historic cemetery.

Texas is the focus for fourth grade. Using the novel *A Paradise Called Texas*, history, geography, government, economics, diversity, and current events are integrated, culminating in performances depicting Texas pioneer culture. Thematic units are vehicles for hands-on projects including student-prepared Thanksgiving feasts, performances, and multicultural activities providing meaningful Pre-K-3 social studies instruction.

During a recent project, sixth graders restated Walnut Hill's philosophy by saying, "One nation equals many cultures." This demonstrates that children internalize the importance of social studies in the global village.

e. The Arts With a commitment to the whole child, the curriculum offers challenging opportunities in the visual and performing arts. As they enter this building, visitors see multimedia examples of student creations. The art teacher instructs children in developmentally appropriate activities allowing every K-6 child and inclusion student opportunities to develop fine motor skills and creative expression. Students regularly work in the art studio with a ceramic kiln, a pottery wheel, leather-working and wood-burning tools, and a weaving loom. The PTA has recently purchased a printing press. Responding to parents' requests and the principal's desire to expand art experiences, choral music is now a part of the curriculum. Classes receive instruction in basic music theory and vocal techniques. Walnut Hill offers strings and band for students in grades 4-6 with performances throughout the year.

An annual Arts Festival (A4) provides opportunities for students to present creations that exhibit the integration of the arts into social studies, reading, science, and mathematics. Walnut Hill has several staff members trained in discipline-based arts education from Northwood Institute (E1). This allows teachers daily infusion of the arts throughout the curriculum.

C5. What other content areas play essential roles in your school-wide curriculum goals?

Preparing students to be productive citizens is not a new goal, but preparing today's students to be productive in a technological world requires a new initiative. In 1993 there were fewer than five computers for all classrooms. In 1998 the school now boasts of three computers in every general education classroom. A Meadows Foundation Grant (A5) enables PPCD children (B2) to interact with technology via specialized software and keyboards. In 1993 the twenty-eight lab computers sat idle due to the lack of a computer teacher and a minimally trained staff. Today, students learn terminology, keyboarding skills and word processing as well as multimedia techniques from the computer teacher. A digital camera, scanner, and web site (www.dallas.isd.tenet.edu. /ES/t_z/walnut_hill/wh_home.html) move Walnut Hill toward the future. The computer teacher brings the once silent computer lab to life. She ensures district standards are met and assists teachers with incorporation of the TEKS (C1).

With the help of parents, community, and industry, the school is on the threshold of connectivity to the Internet (E2). Every classroom has Internet capabilities. Students, teachers, and staff await completion of this project so that the information highway runs throughout the building. Walnut Hill empowers students with technology to carry them into the next century. Technology, as a critical part of the mission statement, enhances curriculum.

Another critical area is physical development. The physical education teacher coordinates an assortment of skills, games and activities to challenge children of all ages. Formal assessment occurs through the Fitness Youth Test (FYT) for students in grades 4-6 and the President's Test for K-3 students. This teacher guides children through experiences with volleyball, kickball, indoor/outdoor soccer, basketball, tee ball, and softball. Exercise stations and structured exercise activities enhance fitness. Non-competitive games provide opportunities to practice the character skills taught school-wide. Multi-cultural dances, such as the Mexican folk dances and square dancing, offer enjoyment while students learn about

cultures. Motor skill development is critical for each child. With sensitivity to the large special needs population, this teacher modifies activities to ensure positive inclusion of all students.

C6. What requirements must be satisfied before a student is promoted to the next grade or level of schooling?

District promotion policy requires 70% mastery in subject areas and Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) mastery for sixth grade students. For the last two years Walnut Hill's promotion record has been 99%. With children as the priority, teachers/staff work in collaboration with parents to determine the best instructional placement. Teachers/staff review attendance, assessments, IEP when applicable, parental input, and any recommendations from the Promotion/Retention Committee.

Instruction is adjusted to challenge students needing enrichment through activities within the classroom, moving into a different classroom for particular skills, or even being double promoted. TAG classes also provide advanced studies. Walnut Hill believes in continuous progress, structures for success and challenges children to achieve far beyond minimum standards.

C7. What is the process for continuous curriculum renewal at your school? What questions about curriculum is your school currently addressing?

The process of continuous curriculum renewal begins with thorough planning. The Campus Instructional Leadership Team (CILT) focuses on a balanced holistic approach to planning. This team, representing administration, all grade levels and special areas, enables teachers to identify needs, renew curriculum goals, and select appropriate staff development. Prior to the start of school, twelve faculty members attended a CILT Academy to analyze student data, review state and district standards/initiatives, and incorporate best practices of recognized schools. The culminating activity resulted in the first draft of the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP), which correlates with the District Improvement Plan (DIP). During the summer staff retreat, this draft was refined creating the final CIP framework for the year. This plan includes data from standardized tests, strategies for program modifications, target timelines, and formative/summative evaluations. For example, the 1998 CIP documented a need based on TAAS math scores in the area of estimation. Weekly strategies include K students estimating the number of apples in a basket or sixth grade boys and girls estimating the cost of a meal for a family of four.

Data from ITBS and TAAS tests indicate K-6 students across grade levels need to improve in higher-level problem solving. The school selected Everyday Mathematics as a strong curriculum framework to ensure this skill mastery. Teachers plan instruction based on the CIP, the DIP, TEKS (C1), and the national Professional Standards for Teaching Mathematics.

Objective test data help teachers set professional goals, resulting in development of an Individual Improvement Plan (IIP). Teachers analyze specific data for their students and determine personal and classroom goals for the year.

Parents are an integral part of the planning process that leads to curriculum renewal and development of the CIP. The School Community Council (SCC) is a site-based decision-making committee composed of parents, staff, and community members. Meeting monthly, it advises the principal in goal setting, improvement planning, curriculum renewal, and CIP monitoring.

The CIP is an effective tool enabling the school to fulfill its mission. While satisfying district requirements, it ensures appropriate curriculum renewal. The school will continue to use assessment results, teacher analysis, and parental input for future CIP development.

Textbooks are an obvious component of any instructional plan. While using some state-adopted texts, teachers enrich the curriculum through additional innovative selections. The state-adopted sixth grade social studies textbook did not address the TEKS. After reviewing alternatives and selecting appropriate materials, the PTA funded an alternate textbook selection.

D1. How are teaching practices and learning experiences in your school consistent with current knowledge about successful teaching and learning?

Teachers at Walnut Hill stay abreast of best practices for teaching and learning. They recognize learning styles and celebrate active learning through manipulatives, cooperative groups, laboratory experiences, technology, an integrated curriculum, and art adventures. Quality instruction, incorporating critical thinking skills, is the daily norm. Evidence of successful practices may be seen daily in each K-6 classroom. These include Everyday Mathematics (C4b) activities, hands-on science experiences (C4c), vocabulary word of the day, vocabulary word walls, computer-assisted instruction, and Character Counts (C1,J). High standards are met in regular classroom experiences for all learners.

Research by David and Roger Johnson (1991) indicates participation in cooperative learning groups increases student learning. K-6 students spend a minimum of 50% of the day in cooperative learning groups. Walnut Hill has discovered this strategy supports all students but is particularly helpful to LEP, at-risk, and special needs students. Cooperative groups assist students through language modeling, exchange of ideas, opportunities for input, and team building. LEP students receive additional support when ESL teachers/staff reinforce instruction within the general education classroom. Walnut Hill includes LEP, at-risk, or special needs students in every possible opportunity.

Texas Education Agency's Educational Service Center (Region X) provides resource services to a large geographic education population. Region X refers early childhood professionals to Walnut Hill for observation of successful teaching practices. Teachers, administrators, and parents come to observe High Scope (A3), the Walnut Hill Project (C3), mixed-age and TEACCH (C3) classrooms for effective implementation of these initiatives. One family relocated from as far away as Hawaii to be part of the TEACCH classroom.

D2. In what ways do your teaching practices support student-initiated learning?

Teachers encourage student-initiated projects in all content areas to increase personal ownership and student responsibility. For example, in one mixed-age classroom the teacher offers open-ended choices for homework assignments. A first grade child may choose to create a pattern of common objects, draw a picture showing four signs of fall, or sequence pictures. A third grade teacher allows students to select their own weekly spelling words. All grade 4-6 science fair entrants select independent projects based on personal interest, and fulfill contracts for projected completion. In some classrooms, students contract for grades by determining the relationship between desired grades and required work. In 1996, TAG students determined what projects they would complete and what grade they would receive from criteria supplied by the teacher. These choices reflect the TEKS and learning styles.

Langford Quality Learning Tools provide opportunities for student-initiated decision making through brainstorming, consensograms, fishbone diagrams, Gantt charts, frequency charts, and the "five whys". Classroom rules have been created in seven classrooms using this strategy which supports student-initiated input and ownership. A fourth grade class analyzed classroom behavior problems by brainstorming, used "five whys" to find the origin of the problem, and made fishbone diagrams of possible solutions.

Recognizing that mathematics is often taught through isolated skills/concepts, Walnut Hill sought a new direction. Teachers construct daily teaching experiences through the Everyday Mathematics (C4) initiative. Children have daily encounters with decision-making, problem solving, and real-life situations. For example, kindergarten students graph everyday life observations such as numbers of pets, while third grade students graph daily sunrise and sunset times. Sixth grade students graph daily temperatures. Each classroom integrates math into the daily curriculum.

Students also initiate bulletin board ideas, displays, and projects throughout the school. These creations demonstrate student expressions and collaboration. Student responsibility and initiative are the norm at Walnut Hill.

D3. How are resources made available to teachers and students for gathering information and sharing the results of their efforts?

The Walnut Hill Library Media Center (LMC) is the instructional heart of the school. It pumps the lifeblood into the curriculum. Beyond mere circulation, the LMC infuses a love for reading throughout the

school. The visual appeal of the LMC is apparent from the displays of books and seasonal decorations. A cockatiel chirps cheerfully. Storybook characters look out from the shelves. This is the place where information gathering and sharing begins.

To the rear of the story area is the "pit," a recessed amphitheater style area where classes view videos, read in window seats, and perform class dramas. This wheelchair-accessible area provides seating for sixty to seventy children on the steps and ramp. A door from the LMC opens onto a courtyard, landscaped by parents, where learning continues. A rabbit habitat built by the dads' club, picnic tables donated by the PTA, and cabana umbrellas purchased by the sixth grade enhance its usefulness and appeal.

In both scheduling and technological amenities, the LMC has been on the cutting edge of media services for the past five years. A presentation station is attached to a library computer for large-screen viewing of Internet and other technology application lessons. There are four Internet-accessible computers in the LMC. Teachers/staff are able to obtain lesson plans, research for instruction, and contact professional colleagues in other schools. Participation in the state-of-the-art DALLINK systemwide circulation and cataloging system affords faculty/students unlimited resources across the city while providing on-site tracking and availability.

The school has immediate access to 7,209 resources, with a ratio of 17.8 media per student. There were 10,780 checkouts during the 1997-98 school year, an average of 26.4 checkouts per student. The 418 Walnut Hill students have weekly opportunities to access LMC resources. Teachers find the LMC resources invaluable for extending classroom learning and providing professional books and journals. Library information skills are an integral part of the LMC program. The LMC sponsors programs to promote the love of reading. Reading is Fundamental (RIF) gives each child a new book three times each year. These gift books are purchased using both federal money and library funds. Every child has daily opportunities to be immersed in literacy.

In 1996, The Episcopal School of Dallas (ESD) joined Walnut Hill to promote reading. Once a week, thirty eighth graders from this private school donate their time to Walnut Hill. They read one-on-one with selected K-3 students and children in PPCD (B2). This allows children to form a bond with positive older role models and encourages a love of reading. In spring 1998 the First Lady of Texas, Laura Bush (a former school librarian) visited Walnut Hill to observe this mentoring process and was pleased to note the success of this partnership.

The PTA joins with the LMC specialist twice yearly, during Children's Book Week and National Library Week, to sponsor a Book Fair. Children enjoy the excitement of shopping for new books at school and receive the real-world experience of making decisions. The profits go toward the purchase of new books and materials for the LMC.

The LMC also sponsors participation in the Texas Bluebonnet Reading program. A list of ten nominated books is provided from the Texas Library Association, and children in third through fifth grades must read at least five of these books to vote. A CHAMPPS (A4) team participates weekly in activities to enhance literacy awareness by producing book reviews and reading with individual kindergarten students during the year. The LMC promotes literacy enrichment programs during National Library Week and Children's Book Week. Parents and teachers enlist community members to read in all twenty-two classrooms. Guests have included school board members, district administrators and community business professionals.

Walnut Hill involves community partnerships to motivate children and promote literacy. The LMC supports the Six Flags 600-Minute Reading Club, Pizza Hut's "Book-It" promotion, and Braum's Dairy "Book Buddies". For the past two years, the LMC has participated in the Dallas Public Library's poetry contest. Students write their own poems, and winning selections are published in a poetry anthology. Walnut Hill has had winners both years. Children also participate in the Dallas Public Library Summer Reading Program.

The lifeblood of the LMC flows throughout the school and nurtures the learning process. The elements of a positive environment, innovative technology, literacy programs, flexible scheduling, and community support unite to create a powerful atmosphere for gathering and sharing.

D4. What technology applications are you using? How do they relate to your curricular goals and how do they support teaching and learning?

Walnut Hill incorporates its computer programs into daily lessons in the computer lab and in the classroom. There are 102 computers in the building. Each classroom has at least three computers so that all children have a minimum of two opportunities each week to access appropriate programs. Teachers integrate TEKS (C1) and district benchmarks with computer instruction. More than fifty different software programs allow students and teachers to create multi-media presentations, reinforce academic skills, and collect or analyze data. Students practice reading with interactive Discis books, Reading Maze, and Reader Rabbit. Math students practice computation and problem solving with Word Problem Square Off and Treasure Math Storm. Science curriculum is enriched by Sammy's Science House or Gizmo's and Gadgets. Carmen Sandiego, National Inspirer, and Oregon Trail provide enrichment in social studies. Comfy Keyboards, an adaptive device, offers successful computer experiences for PPCD (B2) and kindergarten students.

Technology supports curricular goals for kindergarten through sixth grade. Students come to the computer lab for instruction by the computer teacher, addressing computer applications and techniques. Classroom teachers also bring their classes into the lab for additional computer enrichment. Inclusion students come to the lab with their regular class. Other special needs students work daily in the computer lab and/or LMC with their teachers.

Technology is a major tool for raising the bar of excellence in academics, as stated in the mission statement. Walnut Hill's technology currently consists of a lab with twenty-eight Macintosh LCII computers. The lab contains a teacher workstation and a Computer On Wheels (COW); a computer linked to a TV used as a teaching aid. Encyclopedia software applications, e.g. Encarta, facilitate research for K - 6 students. Using Clarisworks, students reinforce word processing and writing skills by annually sending letters to armed service personnel stationed all over the world. E-mail, through Internet access, allows instant contact with the White House, soldiers stationed on a ship, or pen pals in other states. The dads' club is in the process of linking every classroom to the Internet (C5) by running cables throughout the building. With the awareness that Internet access must be monitored, the school is working toward placing COWS in each classroom, enabling teachers to monitor student access at all times.

Technology training enables teachers/staff to effectively utilize computers. The Teacher Technologist offers workshops on campus. Teachers also attend staff development led by specialists from the district's Instructional Technology Department and Region X (D1). The district's First Contact initiative provides training, hardware, and software to all first grade teachers. This year, second grade teachers will attend Second Generation workshops. Each grade level member attending Urban Systemic Initiative training receives a COW, laser disc, printer and software. Technology is an integral tool for both the students and faculty of Walnut Hill.

E1. What opportunities do teachers and other staff have to build professional community that enhance their collective capacity to work together to support student learning?

A high degree of professionalism, solid academic credentials, and a focus on children describe the professional community of Walnut Hill Elementary. Teachers/staff constantly seek innovative ways to strengthen abilities and enhance the learning process for children, teachers and staff. Adults must be lifelong learners, also.

Professional development is determined by data and driven by needs. 1996 ITBS data indicated a need for increased phonemic awareness and word attack skills. Nine teachers and the principal selected and attended a phonics workshop to gain strategies. Grades 1-3 showed an increase in 1997 ITBS reading scores.

Since 1994, the school adopter, International Business Machine (IBM) annually provides executive trainers to teach team-building strategies. IBM also funds annual faculty retreats and provides professional development presenters and facilities allowing for off-campus seminars. As a supporter of the arts, IBM

annually subsidizes two staff members' attendance at the Northwood Institute for a two-week summer training seminar to integrate the arts into education.

Since decisions are data-driven, students are assessed on standardized testing instruments for baseline data. K-6 students are evaluated by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), a norm-referenced test. Additionally, grades three through six are given the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), a criterion-referenced test. The district disseminates the results of these tests in varied formats enabling the school to annually develop the CIP (C7). Teachers meet weekly by grade level/departmental team to discuss strategies, time lines and evaluations. Teachers also share current research and student data to improve effectiveness. Twice monthly faculty meetings allow CIP by the entire faculty. This constant CIP analysis provides a sense of collective responsibility for student outcomes. For example, teachers and staff structure for success by providing after-school tutoring. Due to this total staff involvement, students receive individualized instruction and all staff members share ownership in student achievement. Walnut Hill is convinced that positive outcomes result in academic gains and strengthen a sense of community within the school.

As a small school in a large urban district, Walnut Hill's population differs from the district composition. Dallas is a school district of minorities, and this school's minority population is increasing. (A1). The teachers and staff recognize the importance of remaining sensitive to cultural differences. In 1996, 1997, and 1998 in-service sessions led by Clarence Glover, District Director of Intercultural Relations, took the faculty to new levels of cultural understanding.

Since one-fourth of Walnut Hill's population has been identified as special needs students, the staff responds to the challenges of inclusion. Teachers/staff designed the Walnut Hill Project because early childhood is the logical base for developing acceptance and tolerance. In 1994, teachers dreamed of an environment where all children learn together and searched the state for best practices. The resulting effort provides rotations of staff, experiences, and materials with classrooms of PPCD (B2), Pre-K, and Kindergarten students. Differences disappear as developmentally appropriate activities occur for blended groups in the Walnut Hill Project. Children who were previously separated now grow up as friends. Initial successes lead to continued inclusion through the sixth grade. Walnut Hill collectively assumes the responsibility of preparing all children to be citizens of tomorrow.

Team building begins at the summer retreat as the faculty reconnects. A tone of collegiality is established for new teachers and staff. Vertical and horizontal teams, content groups, and support groups begin discussing possibilities. Previous experiences with David Langford's Continuous Improvement Training provide efficient tools (D2) to promote collective problem solving. These techniques have resulted in greater responses and increased ownership by all, supporting a climate of vision and risk-taking. Whether by peer support during a family reading night or offering ideas to a colleague after hours, teachers/staff support each other. E-mail has proven an effective new avenue for communication as teachers research weekly from their homes and share new best practices. Walnut Hill is a team which consistently works together to keep the focus on children.

E2. How does a coherent approach to professional development for teachers and other staff ensure their ability to implement effectively the school's curriculum, instructional strategies and support system? How do organizational arrangements, such as time and teaching assignments, and school norms and culture, make professional development a priority?

Teachers at Walnut Hill are constantly seeking to refine their performance in order to produce better student outcomes. Effective curriculum planning is an ongoing process. Teachers/staff correlate planned in-service with needs assessment. The CIP provides the annual framework for the school goals, which is a component of the district five-year plan. A week prior to the start of school, the Campus Instructional Leadership Team (CILT) reviews data, best practices, and goals for the CIP. The staff continues the CIP process at the faculty retreat. Through teams and committees, this effort evolves and culminates in the instructional plan for the year.

A belief in the critical nature of early childhood experiences results in developmentally-appropriate classrooms. High Scope (A3) and the Walnut Hill Project (E1) are evolving as teachers/staff hone their

skills in best practices. Due to collaboration with Region X (D1), Walnut Hill is a designated site for the High Scope approach, both within the school district and for the eighty-four public school districts within Region X. This distinction resulted in an invitation to attend the 1995 and 1996 Region X Early Childhood Summer Institute.

This same commitment to best practices prompted the decision to begin a new mathematics approach in 1998. Teachers/staff are piloting Everyday Mathematics (C4b). Walnut Hill believes this program encourages an active participatory approach to higher-level learning. Teachers/staff want to go beyond computation and teach children to think. The commitment is so strong that K-6 teachers attended a week of training this summer and they now continue with on-going training each six weeks.

Literacy is another critical component. Under the leadership of a district reading specialist, teachers/staff continue the process of weekly on site training. Teachers and teacher assistants learn to administer running reading records, facilitate shared/guided reading, and utilize balanced literacy to merge phonics with literature. Three teachers attend a weekly graduate course on the implementation of balanced literacy. Professors from a local consortium present best practices for classroom application. These educators serve as mentors to their assigned grade-level teams.

Technology is a powerful tool. Dallas Public Schools, IBM, and the local community assist efforts to prepare for the new millennium. The school is growing from minimal computer utilization to a staff who finds technology indispensable. On-campus training, district training, and Region X seminars enable teachers to meet the needs of their students. In 1998 Winstar Communications will enable Walnut Hill to become an Internet pilot site, provide staff training, and give every classroom access to the world.

Teacher/staff collaboration occurs during bimonthly faculty meetings and weekly grade level/departmental meetings. Professional trust and friendships are fostered through potluck meals, secret pal exchanges, birthday recognition, staff parties, talent show skits, faculty volleyball, and peer-to-peer recognition. Blue Apple Awards allow weekly written expression of appreciation for kind deeds or professional support. As these morale boosters are implemented, the faculty supports and appreciates each other. Long-term school goals include earning a second exemplary status from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Walnut Hill has had an exemplary rating once and a recognized rating twice. The most immediate goal is to be recognized as the first Dallas Blue Ribbon Elementary School in the 1990s.

E3. How does the school tailor professional development and support to take account of differences in career experience or professional responsibility?

Newly hired or beginning teachers participate in a three-day district orientation and thirty-five additional hours of staff development. Mentors are assigned to teachers/staff new to the school and grade level teams/departments offer weekly formal support. Their ideas are immediately sought as they join committees. Walnut Hill structures for the success of adults as well as children. Veteran teachers offer informal support to colleagues through observation and collaboration. Since teachers/staff assist in the campus interview and selection process, they are vested in the success of each staff member. When needs indicate assignment changes, every effort is made to ensure a smooth transition. Colleagues provide assistance in room arrangement, lesson planning, and by sharing materials.

To meet the needs of professionals at different stages of their career path, the district and school provide various levels of professional development/training. As an example, technology training options range from “Meet Mr. Mouse” to multimedia productions.

All teachers and staff have input into initiatives and decisions. As an example, everyone from the principal to the custodial staff joins to implement the Character Counts program. At Walnut Hill, all adults are considered “teachers” and valued as equal stakeholders.

Committed teachers/staff seek to enhance effectiveness in their chosen careers. Every person participates in professional development and shares knowledge with peers during grade-level/ department meetings, committee or faculty meetings, or when mentoring new employees. Non-certified staff gain information about custodial skills, food service delivery, first aid, computer applications, budgets, guided reading, multi-lingual instruction, and testing of LEP students. Certified staff gain skills in developmentally appropriate practices, literacy implementation, content area integration, discipline management, testing

strategies, technological applications, mentoring student teachers, learning styles, inclusion of special needs students, and accelerating learners.

Seeking opportunities to refine skills, teachers/staff attend professional development through the Dallas Public Schools, IBM (E1), Region X Educational Service Center (D1), universities, national presentations, participation in Leander Continuous Improvement Institute, conferences, workshops, seminars, and faculty presentations. Teachers/staff make presentations for state conferences, local schools, school board meetings, district departments, and mixed-age conferences. Teachers have delivered seminars as far away as Denver, Colorado; Murfreesboro, Tennessee; and Big Bend, Texas.

After analyzing data, a desire to increase mathematics scores brought opportunities through Dr. George Fair (C4b) that resulted in 640 hours of staff training. After seeing positive results, teachers have continued with the current initiative, Everyday Mathematics (C4b), and have to date logged more than 355 hours of training. David Langford's Quality Learning Through Continuous Improvement (D2) provides tools for students and staff to better use data. More than 800 hours of training have enabled teachers to effectively implement these tools. As advocates for developmentally appropriate practices, the early childhood teachers and staff refine skills through more than 800 hours of High Scope (A3) training. Student needs are correlated with staff development activities to achieve student success.

Opportunities for teachers to lead occur through rotations of responsibilities within grade levels, departments, committees, SCC (G3), presentations, textbook adoption committees, offices in professional organizations, mentoring staff in neighboring schools, vertical team membership, curriculum writing, task forces, student competitions, and districtwide committees. The principal and counselor provide leadership and share best practices from their professional training opportunities. Whether attending Stephen Covey training, Boys Town parenting training, suicide prevention training, or making professional visits, ideas are shared with the faculty for consideration and enrichment. Teachers and staff continue to evolve in their quest for professional excellence.

E4. How does your school use the processes and results of student assessment, staff evaluation, and school review to support professional growth? How has teacher professional development improved teaching and resulted in higher student achievement and success?

An ongoing dialogue between instructional leaders and those implementing school goals is essential. Construction of a viable CIP (C7) is based on student assessment and school review. Evaluation of norm and criterion-referenced assessments results in school/grade-level/class effectiveness indices in reading and math. These indices reflect academic growth from year to year. This valuable information provides a direction for professional growth, higher student achievement, and success in teaching and learning. Teachers/staff merge raw test data with this information to indicate areas of achievement and need. Additionally, teachers receive High Scope (A3) training gaining strategies that facilitate effective inclusion of special needs learners. Since 1994 Walnut Hill has increased the number of special needs students in general education classrooms from four to fourteen.

Since decisions are based upon assessment data, teachers have accurate reflections of previous teaching and are able to pinpoint areas for growth. Teachers develop Individual Improvement Plans (IIP) to refine their techniques and strategies as they work toward CIP goals. Needs are identified and strategies are collaboratively developed with the principal. The principal's ongoing informal observations support the process. An annual review conference between principal and teachers/staff evaluates success. This collaborative process allows for individual input and personal growth. Non-certified personnel also share collaborative reviews. By correlating curriculum needs and teacher IIPs (C7), professional development is customized. For example, in 1997 twenty-five percent of the teachers indicated in their IIPs a need to improve guided reading. The lead reading teacher conducted reading training a minimum of two times a month. This staff appears Staff development effective since there has been 80% student mastery on standardized testing.

The community honors exceptional teaching efforts. An annual vote by the staff selects a Teacher of the Year and an Excellence in Teaching honoree. These candidates become representatives in district competition. Walnut Hill has had four district finalists in both competitions. Honors also are awarded for

Service Above Self and Support Person of the Year. These persons are honored annually by IBM with monetary awards and mementos. Walnut Hill's PTA honors teachers and staff with luncheons, breakfasts, incentives, and support. Parents and community consistently provide support and encouragement as Walnut Hill continues the quest for excellence.

F1. How does leadership move your school toward its vision/mission? How is the instructional leadership role defined and implemented? How are resources aligned with goals?

The principal provides primary leadership as the CEO and charts the course towards excellence. By supporting district policies, maintaining school focus, and motivating the entire school community, the principal leads the school to fulfill its mission. As an early childhood educator, she is an active advocate for appropriate educational experiences and maintains high academic standards without compromising childhood. Children are her priority.

The principal is a catalyst for positive change. Since 1994, she has worked to:

• Enhance the appearance of the school. An inviting campus of child displays, shining floors, plants, animals, and comfortable chairs create a home-like environment. Landscaped grounds and courtyard, along with new playgrounds, make this a special place for everyone.

• Build a high-performance team. She models and expects excellence.

• Seek recognition of excellence by challenging her faculty to submit a winning 1998 Blue Ribbon application.

• Restructure the staff. She recruits and recommends for hiring teachers/staff who share the school's vision and quest for excellence.

• Select initiatives that enhance the mission and enable teachers/staff to be innovative. Reviewing best practices, the principal promotes appropriate curriculum initiatives such as High Scope, hands-on math through UTD, Everyday Mathematics, designs a science lab, assists with development of a Literacy Library and directs the Walnut Hill Project. Utilizing astute budget management and strong community/business relationships, in 1997/1998 she has accessed resources and funding to maximize instruction. Over $12,000 for the new Literacy Library materials come from combining school budget, campus fund raisers, donations, funds from the Dallas Reading Plan, and gifts from IBM.

• Include special needs students. She is a guardian angel for each child. By building relationships with parents, supporting teacher efforts, and structuring for success, the school has grown from minimal inclusion in 1994 to every child learning with age-appropriate peers in 1998.

• Create a child-friendly Media Center. In 1994 the Media Center was not functional. Recruiting a master librarian and infusing the Media Center with resources, the principal directed a renaissance resulting in an attractive, vital center for learning.

Nothing is more compelling than leadership by example. The principal empowers teachers/staff to move into leadership roles. The CILT (C7) represents the school at districtwide curriculum meetings and disseminates district policies and information. Teachers/staff share responsibilities with the CILT in developing the CIP. (C7) Department/grade level chairs provide direction and facilitate communication with the principal. Grade levels meet weekly to plan, make decisions and review the CIP. Teachers/staff chair committees, which seek to strengthen the school program. These leaders use their creativity and talents to realize the school vision.

F2. How does the school engage its internal and external stakeholders in leadership and decision making? What is the relationship between the principal and stakeholders?

Collaboration between internal and external stakeholders plays a vital role in the decision-making process and success of the school. The principal works closely with the teachers, staff, parents, students and community to reach the mission of enhancing students' potential. The School Community Council (SCC) is a site-based decision-making committee consisting of a diverse group of six teacher/staff and six parent/community members. The SCC offers collaborative planning and data-driven decisions to direct and improve student achievement. The SCC meets monthly and encourages input through surveys, discussions, research, and an open forum. For example, this council conducted an extensive school climate survey in

1997. This survey indicated a desire for choral music and a teacher was added the following year. The SCC reviews, advises, and supports the CIP.

The principal analyzes testing data and reviews district goals with the CILT (C7) to create a foundation for the CIP (C7). The team brings a draft of the CIP to the faculty for input and expansion. Grade levels, departments, and specialists form teams and specify strategies to attain goals and objectives. The result is an instrument implementing the vision and realizing high academic standards. Throughout the year, weekly grade level/departmental meetings ensure success. Chairpersons document key points to share with the principal. All members have opportunities for input. The principal reviews and responds to successes and concerns.

The Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) is another avenue for staff input. Representatives from Pre-K-3, 4-6, and other areas meet to discuss local campus concerns. The chairperson brings issues to the principal for resolution. In the event local campus resolution is not available, the concern goes to the district's Operation Involvement (OI) meeting. This provides issue resolution at a higher level. These forums are available, but are rarely used due to successful grade level/departmental meetings.

The PTA (A3) is a formal home/school connection with the PTA Executive Board serving as its voice. The principal attends monthly meetings and provides input for their planning and decision-making. Individual parents may request formal or informal conferences at any time with the principal or teachers.

A nurturing staff encourages open communication. Teachers/staff are available to listen, advise, mentor, support, and advocate for students. Every stakeholder has a voice in formulating the school's goals and priorities.

F3. What kind of participatory school improvement process operates at your school? How did your school prepare its Self-Assessment for the Blue Ribbon Schools Program and how did this initiative relate to other school improvement and planning efforts?

A coordinated effort among all stakeholders culminates in effective school growth and success. Walnut Hill values all ideas as teachers/staff seek consensus. Every available resource is used to keep the focus on children and enhance the school. Walnut Hill is a Recognized school according to TEA (E2). Teachers/staff are further refining the instructional program and school to obtain Exemplary and Blue Ribbon status.

The Assistant Superintendent introduced the Blue Ribbon Schools Program to principals. The principal contacted a professional with knowledge of the program and invited him to speak to the staff. Fifteen teachers attended a voluntary meeting to discuss possibilities. Staff enthusiasm resulted in a commitment to seek information and participation in a Region X (D1) workshop. The faculty was convinced of Walnut Hill's viability as a candidate.

After meeting as a team, strategies and a time line were drafted. The dream was presented at the summer retreat and a positive response was unanimous. With application questions on chart paper, the staff began a brainstorming session. The volume of information overwhelmed teachers/staff. The process was repeated with parents and community at a SCC (C7) meeting. Groups were responsible for compilation of sections. This first draft was submitted to an editing and writing committee. Teachers, staff, students, parents, SCC, district officials, IBM, and other community members offered comments and suggestions.

This application process identifies possibilities for future initiatives. Teachers/staff recognize a need to strengthen the school by increasing bilingual faculty, increasing students' involvement in decision-making and community service, improving acquisition of books and materials, seeking adult education classes, and enhancing the science program.

F4. How does your school leadership use the most current information about education to promote continuous improvement in your school? How does such evidence influence decision-making?

The principal leads the teacher/staff toward instructional excellence by utilizing best educational practices and seeking innovative initiatives. She analyzes current educational research and investigates appropriate programs to meet the needs of the school. The principal brings many programs and ideas to

teachers. Teachers, committed to professional growth, stay abreast of recent trends and strategies. All ideas are welcome and considered for implementation.

Since decisions are data-driven, teachers match all initiatives to address specific needs. Analysis of data, based upon formal and informal assessments, surveys, inventories, and anecdotal observations, targets these specific needs. In 1997 teachers reviewed ITBS and TAAS scores and found only 77% of the students mastered estimation and 79% mastered solution strategies. Data identified these higher-level mathematics understandings and applications as a need for growth. In 1997 seeking best practices, the principal and two mathematics teachers observed a school whose students excelled in these areas. From this visit, the innovative University of Chicago's Everyday Mathematics program (C4b) was selected. The district recognized Walnut Hill's commitment to excellence by selecting the school to pilot this program. In 1996 the Director of Accountability and Training, Research and Evaluation commended Walnut Hill's success in teaching higher-level mathematical thinking by designating the school's 4-6 grade math teachers as master teachers. After analyzing their techniques she published her observations for replication in other district schools.

The continual focus on children and best educational practices results in Walnut Hill's modeling numerous initiatives and programs, including: Everyday Mathematics (C4b), mixed-age (B2), Disney's *Family Fun* Children's Choice, High Scope (A3), Walnut Hill Project (A1,E1), Share The World (A4), Character Counts (C1j), TEACCH (C3), Lessons in Character (J), Better Kids-Better Dallas (J), Off Our Rockers (G1) tutoring initiative, and Parents as Partners in Literacy (G2). In support of Governor George W. Bush's Texas Reading Initiative - "All students will read on grade level or higher by the end of third grade" and the district's goal "90% of third grade students will read on grade level as measured by ITBS by the year 2001", teachers/staff intensified the school focus on balanced literacy. Eighteen campus teachers/staff extended their professional growth by participating in study groups. In 1997-98, teachers/staff reviewed *Guided Reading* by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell. Group members disseminate new ideas to peers through grade-level meetings for cross-curricular connections.

The 1998 summer retreat resulted in new insights. IBM trainers administered the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to teachers and staff. The resulting information enables more effective teaming, provides greater understanding of individual strengths, and results in superior decision making. Walnut Hill constantly reevaluates and refines data to make the school exemplary.

F5. As you look back over the last five years, what conditions or changes have contributed most to the overall success of your school?

Five years of significant change at Walnut Hill can be attributed to dynamic leadership, teachers/staff dedicated to continuous improvement, supportive parents, and a strong community partnership. The principal is instrumental in securing developmentally appropriate programs and initiatives that support the school mission and curriculum (F1, F4). The principal leads by example, empowering the faculty to do whatever is necessary for children to succeed. She extends her effectiveness by offering leadership opportunities and delegating responsibilities. Teachers chair inclusion, phonics, and grant committees. In 1997 two teachers chaired a grant committee that secured a 1998 $62,000 grant from the Meadows Foundation (A5). Through teamwork and collaboration Walnut Hill develops a viable CIP (C7) and effectively implements all strategies to achieve the school's goals. A TEA Recognized status exemplifies the team's overall success.

Yearly, each teacher averages fifty hours of instructional training. Training sessions include reading, writing, science, social studies, mathematics, cooperative learning, higher-order thinking skills, technology and modification strategies for special needs students. For example, 1994 was the first year autism students were fully included in general education classes. A full day of training enlightened teachers/staff of the characteristics and strengths of people with autism. This information gave teachers new insight and increased confidence when working with students with autism.

Walnut Hill parents support students daily by providing snacks to the thirteen K-3 classes. The PTA yearly provides $8,000 for educational materials including a $12,000 playground and $300 per classroom for books. Every day there are at least ten parents helping at Walnut Hill.

Walnut Hill is the pride of the community. A wonderful partnership between school and external stakeholders contributes to the effectiveness and success. More than 10,000 documented volunteer hours each year demonstrate significant community commitment to the school. IBM provides forty academic tutors, yearly professional growth training, $3,000 for instructional materials, facilitation of home/school communication, annual tickets for fine arts performances, and $1,000 for student/staff incentives. Twenty field day coordinators, five science fair judges, three oratorical contest judges, and forty campus beautification volunteers yearly support the endeavors of the school. This partnership contributes to the overall accomplishments of Walnut Hill. This success is reflected in 80% student mastery of the TAAS test (H5). Five years of dynamic leadership, a dedicated faculty, supportive parents, successful partnerships and high expectations carry the school into the new millennium.

F6. What is your vision for integrating technology into your school, including benchmarks that guide your plans, problems that must be overcome, and training approaches? To what extent and how is technology used to improve management efficiency and effectiveness?

Nine years ago, the staff was overwhelmed by technology. Five years ago, technology was beginning to pique the interest of some teachers. Today, technology is integrated throughout the curriculum and management systems. A solid foundation in basic computer technology and applications is the vision of teachers/staff and students.

MANAGEMENT: Technology increases the management efficiency of Walnut Hill and provides a database for school improvement. Data analysis provides information used to develop the CIP and ensures instructional targets are accurately focused. For example, the district provides the format for the CIP on computer templates that the school downloads. The district database is also available for individual student's profiles and school analysis of norm- and criterion- referenced assessments. The school is able to access student academic information from other Dallas schools, such as test scores and placement in ESL or TAG classes (A1). Correlating attendance statistics and student achievement increases an awareness of high-risk students.

Weekly computer-generated attendance graphs enable both faculty and parents to track classroom attendance. Whether ordering groceries for the cafeteria, floor wax for the custodial staff, or crayons for kindergarten technology increases efficiency and effectiveness of school operations. The office staff uses computers to handle registration, scheduling health records, test scores, grade reports for grades 3-6, e-mail, and purchasing. It used to take two weeks to receive supplies ordered from the district. Due to the new computer purchasing system, supplies are now received in forty-eight hours. The principal utilizes both desktop and laptop computers for communication, budget development, personnel data, staffing, and Internet access to professional resources. DALLINK (D3) allows the media specialist to manage student library activities, monitor overdue/lost books, and access resources across the city. Staff usage includes scoring WMLS (H1), generating lesson plans or homework, developing management forms, averaging grades, communicating with parents, completing applications/grants, creating multi-media presentations, developing IEPs (A1), and enhancing instruction.

INSTRUCTION: The district has extensive technology benchmarks that are aligned with TEKS (C1). In 1996, the number of computers increased to one per classroom. In 1996 a district specialist presented a workshop outlining strategies to integrate technology into the curriculum. These strategies increased the efficiency of instruction in the one-computer classroom. Walnut Hill now has 102 computers in the building. This allows three computers per K-6 classroom and a computer lab. Students discover that computers are basic tools. Computer experiences include keyboarding, word processing, multi-media presentations, Internet research, e-mail, and content area reinforcement/enrichment. For example, Trudy's Time and Place in Spanish or English reinforces map skills for LEP students. Technology is available to enhance instructional effectiveness through the use of laser discs, graphing calculators, COWS (D4), digital/vides cameras, and scanner.

TRAINING: Technology training occurs at the campus, the district, and Region X. The campus Teacher Technologist attends training sessions that allow her to maintain hardware. She conducts teacher/staff training in software usage and curriculum applications. In spring 1998, she demonstrated the

use of ClarisWorks Slideshow. Seven teachers now have slideshows on their computers. Other training includes Internet access, ClarisWorks, and the district management system.

VISION/GOALS: The Walnut Hill technology committee is working toward classroom Internet/Intranet access, individual e-mail capability, an updated computer lab, and full-time computer teacher. With the help of twelve Do-Dads, the school is wired for Internet access. In 1999 the PTA will purchase a server. The school's goal is to have Internet capability to allow instant communication among all faculty members. An eight-year-old computer lab is functional but lacks CD-ROM, adequate memory, and processing speed. The school has a vision of a lab filled with current computer technology. Additionally, the school would better use this technology if the part-time computer teacher position could be expanded to full-time.

F7. What do you consider the major educational challenges your school must face over the next five years, and how do you plan to address them?

Challenges facing Walnut Hill over the next five years include:

- Changing societal needs. Walnut Hill must empower students by giving them information and strategies for responsible decision-making regarding sex, AIDS, drugs, alcohol and gangs.
- The need for students to develop responsibility, respect, citizenship, trustworthiness, caring, and fairness. Teacher/staff began piloting Character Counts (C1, J) in 1997 and must continue this focus.
- Changing demographics. More ESL services, bilingual education, and Pre-K classrooms must be provided. Walnut Hill is seeking adult education classes in citizenship and English. As Walnut Hill interviews for future teacher/staff positions, decisions will reflect sensitivity to the emerging diversity of the population.
- More effective communication with Spanish-speaking parents. PTA meetings will be presented in Spanish through the use of earphones and radio-transmitted translations. Walnut Hill has begun translating Tuesday Packets (G2) in 1998.
- A need to incorporate foreign language and sign language into the curriculum. This will be investigated for the 1999-2000 school year.
- Continued optimum success for all special needs learners. Ongoing teacher inservice opportunities will ensure application of best practices when working with these students.
- Changing family structures. Walnut Hill will continue to provide after school care for the growing number of latchkey children.
- Acquisition of updated technology. Teacher/staff must find ways to upgrade computers, enhance the technology initiative and continue technology training. .

G1. What are the goals and priorities of your school, family, and community partnerships? How have your school and community both improved as a result of these partnerships and how did you measure the improvements?

The school and community partnerships at Walnut Hill are as diverse as they are numerous. IBM came to Walnut Hill offering support for dreams. From a 1994 conversation between the principal and an IBM executive, a partnership began and IBM assigned managers to campus teams. These executives teach better ways to use data and formulate Campus Improvement Plan goals. Noting a need for increased student attendance, the school teamed with IBM to offer student/faculty incentives. IBM provides weekly attendance graphs to be sent home with every child. This support has allowed Walnut Hill to maintain at least a 96.1% student attendance rate. IBM also copies a multitude of materials to facilitate home/school communication. Their contribution of time, effort, money and motivation is immeasurable.

The school values a range of affiliations, from individual volunteers to corporate sponsorships. This reflects positively on the school and public education. From individual retirees to multi-million-dollar corporations, Walnut Hill is enriched.

Walnut Hill's welcoming environment invites neighbors who are not related to children to volunteer. Last year a retired professional decided he would like to do some volunteer work. This former government employee has worked in the White House; yet he said that nothing in his professional life made

him as nervous as walking into a school in 1996 for the first time to volunteer. He is now part of the family; he uses his expertise to tutor, and also serves on the School Community Council. It is hard to judge who has profited most.

Off Our Rockers, a senior citizens' group, enriches literacy. In 1997 three senior citizens tutored children using reinforcement techniques such as story mapping of classic children's books. The one-on-one assistance is priceless for the students. The success of the program resulted in a 1998 award from The United Way. One Kiwanis member tutored the same child from third through sixth grade. These bonds are measured in tears, laughter, and memories. Other community partners of Walnut Hill have included: The Episcopal School of Dallas (E.S.D.) book buddy program (D3), local donors of furniture, cabinets and a clinic refrigerator, a retired neighbor who donated bicycles, and Raytheon/ Home Depot who have given the school plants, trees and flowers. The school's success can be measured in the test scores that led to the repeated designation as a TEA Recognized and Exemplary School.

G2. How does your school involve families in their children's education?

The doors of Walnut Hill are always open. On Saturday morning, one can find fifteen Do-Dads hanging curtain rods, seven teachers working in classrooms, five PTA members placing decorations, two mothers engaged with the Daisy Scouts, or someone assisting in the Helping Hands room. The warm environment is nurturing and supportive to adults and children.

Walnut Hill encourages parents to learn about their role as partners in the school. The newest innovation, "Give Us 10", is a challenge to families to donate ten hours to the school. For example, parents can volunteer ten hours by working in the Helping Hands room, a workstation where teachers leave materials/projects for parents to complete. Whether using the Ellison letterpress or making activities and games, the Helping Hands room strengthens the ties between home and school. These parent hours are a major part of the more than 10,000 volunteer hours each year. In the first six weeks of the 1998 school year parents of ten Hispanic, twenty-three Anglo, five Black, six LEP, four special education, and two TAG students volunteered 1,178 hours.

Teachers/staff willingly schedule conferences at parents' request and offer a listening ear or word of advice. The principal has an open door and is available to counsel, problem solve and facilitate. When the situation indicates, the principal, teachers, or counselor refer parents to the Family Youth Interaction parenting classes. The teachers involve parents in improving reading skills. A 1997 and 1998 training for seventy-six parents of low achievers (below the 40th percentile on ITBS) was held. Parents were shown strategies to improve their children's reading skills. Twenty-five percent of these students' reading scores were raised above the 40th percentile on ITBS.

Homework is assigned a minimum of four nights per week. Reading every night is encouraged as part of this homework. Parents as Partners in Literacy, a grant funded in 1997 by the Junior League of Dallas, established a take-home reading program for K-1 students. Each night a child enjoys a book, tape and tape recorder, big book, non-fiction selection or a volume of poetry. One hundred thirty-two students, including LEP, TAG, special needs and at-risk, participate in this program. This opportunity promotes literacy and family involvement.

In an urban school, positive male role models are often lacking. Walnut Hill is blessed with sixty-three Do- Dads, including dads of LEP, TAG, special needs, and at-risk boys and girls, who bring freshness from the eyes of a "Daddy". These men add a special dimension by providing inspirational Wednesday announcements, grilling hot dogs for the Family Picnic, assisting with the annual auction, sanding and staining benches, building shelves, creating rabbit habitats, painting playground equipment and supporting every component of the school. They are now an integral part of the school.

The Walnut Hill PTA has a strong presence in the school community with 217 members. PTA parents represent ninety-four Anglo, sixty-six Hispanic, nineteen Black, eleven TAG, nine special education, nine LEP, and three Asian students. Membership includes 100% of the faculty. The PTA sponsors a Talent Show, Red Ribbon Week celebrating drug prevention, book fairs, new parent orientation, Field Day athletic competition, Family Picnic Night, food drives and the sixth grade awards banquet. PTA provides student incentives, playground equipment, instructional materials, student planners, seasonal decorations, monthly

newsletters, meals for teachers during workdays, and assistance with the Art Festival. This indeed shows the extent of family involvement at Walnut Hill.

The foundation of parental involvement is communication. Every week, Tuesday Packets are sent home. The packets include pertinent information regarding school events and opportunities. Weekly sheets are included to inform parents about their child's positive behavior. Parents sign to acknowledge receipt of this information. Reading logs and students planners (grades 2-6) are used to facilitate parent involvement in the learning process. Teachers send home Instructional Targets every six weeks so parents remain abreast of the learning.

The School Community Council (SCC) composed of six teachers/staff, five parents, and one community member functions as a committee for site-based management. One Black, one Hispanic, one Asian, and two Anglo parents are represented. All parents may attend meetings and speak to the council. A current goal of the council is to increase parent involvement. The 1998 Hispanic Parent Night, promoting the value of parent involvement, drew more than one hundred people. The result was three new Do- Dads, twelve translation earphones utilized at PTA meetings, and requests for additional meetings. This is a prime example of the successful parental involvement at Walnut Hill.

G3. How does the school support the needs and concerns of families?

Professionals collaborate to support the needs and concerns of families. Teachers/staff refer families to PASS and SST (A2), the school's formal process to determine needs and provide assistance to support children/families. Resources are accessed throughout the city to ensure quick resolutions to emerging challenges. A visiting teacher is available for home visits and serves as a community liaison. In 1997-98 the school referred four families to Kiosco Clinic (A2), ten families to Salvation Army for family assistance, two children to the Lions' Club for eyeglasses and one child to Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

The school offers programs to support families. Breakfast and lunch are provided to 109 students who qualify for free and reduced lunch prices. Special bus transportation is provided for fifteen special needs students and ten transfer students.

Parents and teachers share concerns through informal or formal conferences. Formal conferences are scheduled twice a year. Teachers are also available before and after school for parents who cannot attend these scheduled conferences. PTA meetings are held each month in the evening to allow most working parents to attend.

The SCC (B1), ever attuned to family issues, responds as situations indicate critical needs. Issues of year-round school, uniforms, inclusion guidelines, whole language vs. phonics, and after-school care have been past concerns resolved by ad-hoc committees. In 1996, responding to parent needs, a committee evaluated three after-school programs and selected the YMCA, a quality vendor. Their on-site childcare provides structured activities, character education, and homework support for twenty-eight Walnut Hill children.

G4. How are educational resources in the school and the community used to extend learning opportunities for students, teachers, and families?

Walnut Hill embraces learning opportunities. The high number of co-curricular activities offers support and extends the educational program. In addition to numerous performing art institutions (A4), the curriculum is extended by attendance at Dallas Symphony, Dallas Opera, and Kid Film Festival. Classes leave frequently on field trips to the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas Aquarium, The Science Place, Old City Park, Samuell Farm, Dallas Zoo, Dallas World Aquarium, Frontiers of Flight Museum, Dallas Arboretum, district Environmental Center, Baird's Bakery, Imagine Africa, The Jason Project, Museum of Natural History, The Planetarium, Dallas Public Library, The Holocaust Center, and Farmers' Market. For example, in 1997 after reading *Number the Stars*, sixth grade classes went to the Holocaust Center to experience the impact of this book. Learning is brought into the classroom through museum outreach. The National Council of Jewish Women annually shares information about Israel. The Dallas Museum of Art brings the Van Gogh program and The School Zoo Connection brings unique animals. Career Day and the annual

Reading Festival extend real-world connections between school and community by providing forty-four positive role models. IBM and the DART bus system provide tours in exchange for student entertainment.

Summer opportunities include summer school for enrichment or remediation, the Dallas Public Library reading program, and Dallas Parks and Recreation activities. In summers of 1997 and 1998, St. Mark's School of Texas, a local private school, offered scholarships to one Black and two Hispanic sixth grade males.

Walnut Hill's facilities are available to the local neighborhood. The Boy Scouts of America, The Quilter's Guild, and the Walnut Hill Homeowners' Association enjoy a reciprocal relationship with the school. Athletic teams utilize the school's playgrounds year round. The school is used by Texas A&M University at Commerce, Odyssey of the Mind (A4), IBM, and Region X (D1) as well as by many district departments.

Families also utilize a variety of learning opportunities. Since 1994, approximately seventy-five parents have participated in training/seminars covering such topics as Character Counts, High Scope, autism, Down syndrome, consensus building, and leadership development. IBM funds cultural opportunities for family enrichment. Whether chaperoning field trips, participating in staff training, or attending TITAS performances (A4), families participate in extended school experiences.

H1. What is your school's overall approach to assessment? How do your methods align with your educational vision/mission and curriculum? What questions about assessment is your school currently addressing?

At Walnut Hill, assessment is used to raise the bar of excellence in academics by measuring the mastery of skills and identifying areas for improvement. K-6 students take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), a district-mandated norm-referenced test. This assessment measures student academic achievement in reading and mathematics. The kindergarten assessment measures word analysis, vocabulary, and mathematics.

Students in grades 3-6 take the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), a state-mandated criterion-referenced test. This standardized assessment measures critical thinking and essential elements in reading, math and fourth grade writing. Mastery is obtained by correctly answering 70% of the items.

Students who enroll in the district with a home language other than English are assessed with the Woodcock-Munoz Language Proficiency Test (WMLS), a measure of English language proficiency to determine their need for special language education services. Annually, all LEP students are assessed to determine progress and placement or program exit. ESL students are evaluated with the ITBS mathematics computation and WMLS language ability measures. Teachers use data from these assessments to determine academic needs leading to the development of goals, objectives, and strategies for the CIP (A3).

Teachers use individual pupil effectiveness indices (E4) to determine how they are meeting the needs of all students. These data identify groups of students not progressing at expected rates, and classroom adjustments are made.

Teachers review the TAAS item analysis to identify the percentage of responses to each question. This enables teachers to determine whether students have problems discriminating between similar answer choices or merely lack the knowledge to correctly answer the question. This is the first year the school has received an ITBS item analysis and teachers are currently reviewing the results.

The school-wide assessment program allows teachers to monitor and profile student achievement. Prior to the availability of released TAAS tests, commercial practice tests were given. Teachers hand-scored the tests, creating class and individual profiles. This labor-intensive process gave teachers much data and insight to improve instruction. In 1996 the district developed the first Diagnostic Skills Profile (DSP) to assist classroom teachers in diagnosing student needs on the TAAS reading and mathematics objectives. The DSP is administered during the first and fourth six-weeks so that teachers have an initial and intermediate measure of student performance prior to the actual TAAS administration. Teachers share data with students who learn to profile their DSP scores. This personal investment increases student motivation to achieve mastery. In 1996 the state began releasing copies of the previous TAAS test. The released TAAS is administered twice a year as a formative assessment. This also provides test-taking practice for the

students. Teachers compile data, and students create profiles. The counselor meets with students to review scores and point out how performance may be improved. Students gain confidence from this review.

Formal assessment is only one of the components used to analyze instructional needs. Teachers informally assess students to determine developmental needs and instructional objectives. Lessons often begin with pre-tests to determine student or class needs. Other forms of assessment include teacher-made quizzes, oral reviews, student-created projects, portfolios, informal inventories, hands-on activities, and end-of-unit tests. Accurate data allow appropriate decisions for instruction and enables Walnut Hill to raise the bar of excellence in academics, thereby fulfilling the school's mission.

K-3 teachers use running records to determine reading levels. The district reading specialist makes weekly visits training teachers/staff in the use of assessment tools. She also coordinates literacy activities and models effective reading techniques. These efforts complement the state goal to have every child reading on grade-level by the end of third grade and the district's goal to have 90% on grade level by 2001.

Assessment occurs in non-academic areas as well. In physical education, K-3 students take the President's Test for fitness and grade 4-6 students take the Fitness Youth Test (FYT) twice a year. In music, orchestra and band, students are assessed through bimonthly "playing exams" and performances.

For special needs students, assessment is based on their level of achievement and includes the Diagnostic Skills Profile, released TAAS, Brigance, GIFT and the Renzulli. Diagnosticians and school psychologists evaluate referred students with a variety of instruments to identify qualifying handicapping conditions. Each student with an IEP (A1) has a formal end-of-year review where goals are formulated for the following year.

Walnut Hill's assessment program is correlated with national standards, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), textbooks, and other resources. An overall approach to assessment ensures an emphasis on national, state and district objectives. With a commitment to the Texas focus on literacy, Walnut Hill is exploring new directions. The new Diagnostic Literacy Profile (DLP) provides a skill-based tool to diagnose functional literacy. Walnut Hill is participating in the district's field trials. The DLP will be implemented districtwide in fall 1999.

H2. How do you use assessment results to understand and improve student and school performance? How do data influence decision-making?

Effective planning begins with thorough data analysis. Walnut Hill feels it is important to understand data before implementing strategies that may or may not make a difference. Assessment data focus the school on current academic needs. Teachers compare grade to grade, campus to campus, campus to subdistrict, and campus to district, to understand the needs of particular groups of students. Cross-grade analysis may indicate schoolwide deficits or particular grade-level deficits.

Data derived from each test are provided by the district in several different formats. Teachers review the reading, writing, and math TAAS data by grade, grade span 3-6, objectives by grade and compiled for grade span 3-6; overall passing rates, and specific low objectives. Feeder middle and high school data are reviewed to ensure that objectives at higher grade-levels are assessed. A spring 1998districtwide student deficiency in Algebra I mastery resulted in the review of a three-year analysis of the math skills leading to algebra. Another area of data review is an analysis of school improvement necessary to meet the district's goal of 90% TAAS mastery.

In 1994, Walnut Hill recognized the value of data but did not know how to utilize it effectively. The school called upon the districts' Institutional Research staff to provide campus staff development on disaggregation of data and how to interpret it for schoolwide and classroom use. Teachers realized the school still lacked effective strategies for data interpretation.

The next year Walnut Hill, as part of an Enhanced Partnership with IBM, joined schools with similar partnerships to determine how businesses could best support the schools in the analysis of student achievement. The principal was part of a focus group in this partnership, developing new tools to assist teachers in interpreting the volumes of available data. IBM began disaggregating additional data for ITBS in a graph format, making it easy to understand and use. As a result of this focus group, graphs of individual

student achievement denoting school effectiveness indices as well as teacher effectiveness indices are now being used districtwide.

The district currently provides ITBS data in varied formats, including reading comprehension and math (total) by grade level, all grades total (1-6), percent above 40th percentile, percent of students above various percentile ranks. This information is provided for all ethnic groups, LoSES, and BE/ESL. Data also reveal student scores both below the 40th percentile and above the 80th percentile

Data from the state accountability system, TAAS reports, ITBS scores, WMLS scores and schoolwide survey information determine the needs leading to the development of goals, objectives and strategies for the CIP. Integration of data analysis and strategy development makes the planning process powerful. Analyzing data and discussing academic needs in faculty and grade-level meetings ensures a content-rich curriculum. From this data analysis teachers determine needs and develop improvement strategies. For example, in 1998 a vocabulary word is introduced during morning announcements and all students while waiting in line practice skip counting. Individual Improvement Plans (IIP) (C7) are being developed and implemented for students identified as needing acceleration. An important strategy is small-group/ individual tutoring. Walnut Hill is fortunate to have volunteers who mentor and tutor the students. Their dedication is documented by more than 10,000 volunteer hours.

H3. What assessment data are communicated to students, parents, and the community? What is the purpose of these communications? How does the school ensure that these stakeholders understand the standards for judgment and the meaning of the data?

Communication is a critical tool used to link school and home. Arrival of TAAS and ITBS test scores is a cause for celebration. Teachers immediately share test results with students and parents. Scores are formally distributed in the Tuesday Packets (G2). During parent conferences, assessment scores and objectives are explained and discussed in detail. Test scores are shared with the SCC (C7) to facilitate planning and development of the CIP (A1). A PTA meeting is held to disseminate information about spring standardized testing. The Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Campus Report is discussed. This question-and-answer session provides a forum to review the "state report card". Copies of the report are made available to every Walnut Hill family, prospective families, and interested community.

Walnut Hill feels that knowledgeable parents and community members will support the school's efforts, which will result in more meaningful education for all children. Home/school communication is essential in the structure for success. Teachers inform parents and students about specific testing criteria, content, format, and standards. Additionally, the school counselor and teachers encourage families to prepare their children for positive testing experiences by providing a good night's sleep, healthy breakfast, and nutritious snacks.

Teachers send home six-week Instructional Targets (C1) to inform parents of academic criteria and goals. Teachers regularly share results of classroom tests and inventories with parents. Students in need of closer monitoring receive three-week progress reports. All students, including special needs students, receive a six-week report card. For special needs learners in self-contained classes, teachers prepare daily anecdotal accounts, facilitating parent communication and dialogue. Walnut Hill proclaims the school's status as a TEA (E2) Recognized School with a 10-foot banner. The community shares in the success.

H4. What standardized tests (norm-referenced) developed on the national, state or district level has the school given in the last five years? What are the results for the last five years?

a. ITBS is a norm-referenced test published by Riverside in 1993. The district uses alternate forms of the Survey Battery J and K every other year.

b. The test is administered to students in grades K - 6. Kindergarten is tested to establish a baseline. Kindergarten test scores are used for planning purposes only and are not reported.

c. Refer to Tables A-F.

d. Refer to Tables A-F. Documentation shows 86% LoSES (6 of 7) first grade students were tested in 1995. It also shows 88% Black (7 of 8) and 85% LoSES (11 of 13) fifth grade students were tested in 1997. Walnut Hill believes these are valid results for the small number of students tested.

e. Refer to Tables A-G. There is disparity among subgroups. The results for Black students fluctuate and it is difficult to draw any conclusions, due to the small number of students represented. In the four-year comparison of the quasi-cohort analysis, math scores have increased for White and Hispanic subgroups, with the latter increasing at a greater rate. Reading scores increase for the first and second grades and remain stable for the third grade.

Student exemptions from testing

	97-98	96-97	95-96	94-95	93-94
# Special Education	65.00	55.00	61.00	55.00	61.00
% Special Education	16.30	12.60	13.60	12.50	13.10
# LEP	12.00	13.00	16.00	12.00	10.00
% LEP	.03	.02	.03	.02	.02

f. Special education students, based on decisions documented in the IEP (A1) are exempt from ITBS. Diagnosticians and psychologists evaluate them individually every three years by to determine continuing placement. Their progress is assessed through alternative assessments such as Brigance Developmental Inventory, Diagnostic Skills Profile, released TAAS or commercially developed tests.

LEP students are exempt from ITBS, based on the WMLS and Language Proficiency Acquisition Committee (LPAC) decisions. District policy requires that students with a score of "1" or "2" are exempt from English language testing. Testing potential of students scoring a "3", is determined by the LPAC. LEP students who are receiving English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) instruction have an alternate assessment to measure their growth if they are unable to participate in the systemwide-testing program. ESL students are assessed with the ITBS math computation and WMLS language ability measures. Due to the addition of a bilingual class in 1998, the Spanish Assessment of Basic Education (SABE) will be administered for the first time to Spanish-dominant students at Walnut Hill. Walnut Hill ensures that all students have a measure of progress each year.

g. Test scores fluctuate over the five-year period, with no discernible pattern. Staff attrition may be a contributing factor. In October 1994 a first grade teacher took an extended leave for health reasons. Several different substitute teachers negatively impacted 1995 achievement.

Scores average one-third of a standard deviation above the mean or greater, based on district reports. Quasi-cohort analysis of ITBS indicates a reduction in the achievement gap between Hispanic and Anglo students. Refer to Table G.

H5. What nonstandardized (criterion-referenced) or alternative assessments of student performance do you use? What are the results for the last five years?

a. The Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) is a state-designed criterion-referenced test updated annually. Results are reported as percent passing by grade and sub-group.

b. The TAAS is given to students in grades 3-6.

c. Refer to Tables H-K.

d. Refer to Tables H-K. Mastery is obtained by correctly answering 70% of the items. Although the district report prepared by Institutional Research states in 1995 third-grade testing data show 88% Hispanic and 85% LoSES students were tested on the TAAS, the state's TAAS Campus Roster and Summary Report indicates 100% of each subgroup was tested. Walnut Hill has always tested more than 90% of all eligible students.

e. Refer to Tables H-K. In 1995 there was a noticeable disparity between third-grade Black students and other subgroups. 1996 cohort comparisons for these students indicate the achievement gap dramatically narrows. A specific example is in 1995 when 33% of third-grade Black students mastered the reading portion of TAAS and 17% mastered TAAS mathematics. As fifth graders in 1997, 50% of these Black students mastered the reading portion of TAAS and 83% mastered TAAS mathematics. In 1995 64% LoSES students mastered reading and 55% mastered mathematics. As sixth graders in 1998, 90% LoSES students mastered reading and 100% mastered mathematics. Walnut Hill attributes these increases to individual tutoring/mentoring by teachers, staff, and volunteers. A current strategy is the implementation of

an Individual Improvement Plan (A1) monitored by a mentor teacher. Data indicate the achievement gap between subgroups narrows the longer students remain at Walnut Hill.

f. Refer to H4e. Special education students, based on decisions documented in their IEPs (A1) are exempt from TAAS. Diagnosticians and psychologists individually evaluate them every three years. Their progress is assessed through alternative assessments such as the Brigance Developmental Inventory, Diagnostic Skills Profile, released TAAS, or commercially developed tests.

LEP students, based on the WMLS and the Language Proficiency Acquisition Committee (LPAC) decisions, are exempted from TAAS. District policy states a student with a score of "1" or "2 " is exempt from English language testing. Testing potential of a student scoring "3", is determined by the LPAC. LEP students, who are receiving ESL instruction, have an alternative assessment program if they are unable to participate in the systemwide-testing program. ESL students are assessed with the WMLS language ability measures, Diagnostic Skills Profile, released TAAS, and commercially developed tests.

g. Refer to Table K. Fluctuations in scores may result from testing different groups of children each year and/or teacher attrition. Quasi-cohort analysis indicates the longer a student remains at Walnut Hill, the more his scores increase. Walnut Hill consistently scores above the district and state-passing rate. Refer to Table K.

To produce lifelong learners teachers use a variety of alternative assessments. These assessments provide frequent benchmarks of student achievement. Writing portfolios, teacher-made assessments, or performance-based assessments/projects are routinely implemented by teachers. As of spring 1998 K-3 teachers use reading running-records to systemically document an individual student's level of reading fluency. In concert with The Dallas Reading Plan (C4a) this is accomplished at least three times a year using established criteria to demonstrate competency and mastery. Significant improvement has been made by teachers to accurately assess student-reading levels. It is anticipated this accurate assessment will lead to increased student achievement.

H6. What was your school's record for the past five years in the following areas that may serve as quantitative indicators of school climate and engagement?

	97-98	96-97	95-96	94-95	93-94
Daily student attendance	96.4	96.1	96.8	97.1	96.8
Daily teacher attendance	98.4	94.8	96.9	96.8	No data
Teacher turnover rate	12.0	6.0	20.0	11.0	No data

The unusual 20% teacher turnover rate in 1995-96 included five teachers moving out of town and one teacher staying home with a new baby.

H7. What awards received by your school, staff, or students are most indicative of school success?

Walnut Hill's awards demonstrate excellence. Examples of the recognition and honors the school, students, teachers and staff have received are:

- Walnut Hill received the Dallas Public Schools' Excellence in Education Outstanding School Improvement Award, Gold Level in 1994-95, Silver Level in 1995-96 and 1996-97. In 1996-97, Walnut Hill ranked sixteenth out of 118 Dallas K-6 schools, as determined by cohort gains on standardized testing. This district recognition documents that students are achieving more than one year's growth during one school year.
- Texas Education Agency named Walnut Hill a "Recognized School" in 1995-96 and 1997-98. This state recognition honors the school performance and improvement efforts.
- The school was honored for exceptional academic performance by Texas Monthly magazine in a November 1996 article, "Our Best Schools".
- Two special needs learners won national recognition in the 1997 PTA Reflections Contest. Walnut Hill celebrates full integration of special needs learners in all aspects of the school. Everyone is encouraged to participate and become winners.
- In the 1996 USA Olympics of the Imagination Art Contest, one student won a trip to the Atlanta Olympic Games by designing a new Olympic sport and illustrating how the sport could promote world peace and

unity. This exemplifies student application of a focus on character and demonstrates the commitment to higher-level thinking skills in the arts.

- Walnut Hill students consistently win district honors in Science Fair, Math Olympiad, Computer Olympiad, and Odyssey of the Mind competitions. Teachers prepare children to compete and succeed academically and creatively with their peers.
- In 1995-96, a K-1 mixed-age teacher was named Dallas Elementary Teacher of the Year. This typifies the caliber of teachers and devotion to excellence at Walnut Hill.
- In 1995 a Preschool Program for Children with Disability teacher was named Down Syndrome Guild Teacher of the Year. With a high number of special needs learners, Walnut Hill prides itself on highly skilled specialists.
- A Walnut Hill teacher was named a Dallas Excellence in Teaching Award semi-finalist in 1995, 1997, and 1998. Teachers receive consistent recognition in a large urban school district with more than 9,300 teachers.
- In 1995, the Rotary Club Service Above Self Award named a 2-3 mixed-age teacher as a semi-finalist, and in 1997 honored a science teacher as a finalist. This is evidence of these teachers' service to the school and the Dallas community.

PART VI SPECIAL EMPAHSIS AREA

J2. Character Education

The character and conduct of our youth reflect the character and conduct of society; therefore, every adult has the responsibility to teach and model the core ethical values and every social institution has the responsibility to promote the development of good character. Aspen Declaration, 1995

Walnut Hill is an island of excellence in an increasingly diverse society. Teachers and staff are responsible for 418 unique three-to-twelve year-old children. One hundred five special needs students and seventy-two speakers of other languages represent a microcosm of Dallas, Texas. It is the school's task to create an environment of tolerance, responsibility, and unity for the school community. Teachers/staff have a mission to teach all children the values of caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect for self and others as preparation for entering the diverse society. It is imperative that children develop a sense of self, and it is critical that they realize their actions are a direct reflection of self.

In 1995, teachers and staff recognized the need to offer assistance to some of the children and families in crisis. There was a clear need to teach ethical values through a sequential, systemic, schoolwide initiative. With a desire to support the difficult role of parents in raising children in a complex society, the school sought solutions. After reading the Aspen Declaration and learning of the Character Counts Coalition, the principal reviewed research and learned of a budding Wellness Initiative in Dallas. She brought that information to the faculty.

Twelve persons, including one Black, one Anglo, and two Hispanic parents, attended training in Character Counts principles and drafted an action plan for Walnut Hill. This committee determined that effective implementation required involvement by the entire faculty, from custodial to administration. Teachers and staff attended a one-day intensive training seminar and made a commitment to the program in February 1997. Then classroom teachers tried a variety of activities and techniques gained from the training. Initially there was a lack of consistency and continuity, but the children were very responsive. In the fall of 1997, teachers received *Discover Skills for Life*, a formal curriculum, implementing Character Counts schoolwide. This curriculum became an integral part of the atmosphere of the school, not merely another subject to teach.

This special program recognizes that there are universal moral truths, principles of thought and conduct that distinguish right from wrong and define the essence of character. Character Counts is based upon six pillars: respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Each six weeks the school focuses on one pillar while continuing the infusion of the other five. Schoolwide music, reinforcing character pillars, greets students as they enter the building. Hallway bulletin boards offer visual reminders, make concepts more concrete, and set a positive atmosphere. To motivate adults, the principal regularly shares character proverbs on an office communication board. Lesson plans document the *Discover Skills for Life* curriculum and its integration into the content areas. Students practice responsibility and citizenship as they manage the school store, make morning announcements, or take turns cleaning the cafeteria tables. In 1997 the school's talent show theme was responsibility and in 1998 the theme was respect. Children creatively incorporated these pillars into their performances. Teachers/staff shift from focusing on problems to focusing on positive behaviors.

The counselor joined the faculty, in part, because of a shared belief in Character Counts. After extensive training, she utilizes the philosophy of Character Counts in classroom sessions, small group/individual counseling, and parent/staff training activities. The counselor will implement an enhancement, Lessons in Character, during the 1998-99 school year as a pilot project. This curriculum represents worldwide cultural differences. For example, the first grade curriculum is based on the alphabet and each letter represents a different country. The character lesson is based on that country's population, geography, values and beliefs. One of the more popular components is the Word of the Week featured in

morning announcements and on bulletin boards. The media specialist collects appropriate materials to provide inspiring examples from history, science, and literature. Adults continually model and teach positive behaviors and decision making. Recognition walls in classrooms, journal writing, and role-playing provide avenues for dialogue.

Students practice and internalize each of the six pillars of character. Mixed-age classes and cross-age tutoring/mentoring provide opportunities for accommodation, consensus, and community building. CHAMPPS (A4) is a sixth grade leadership program building self-esteem and responsibility, which empowers students to respond positively. Working in teams, these students practice leadership by providing recycling programs, cross-age tutoring, material distribution, marquee updating, school store management, birthday recognition, and morning announcements.

Classes draft mission statements and contracts for personal responsibility. Students assist in classroom decision making and the development of rules of conduct. Children participate in yearly service projects of food/clothing drives and letters to servicemen. Annual participation in National Kindness Week activities occurs schoolwide.

The school provides teachers, staff, students, and families with written rules and expectations to support the strong philosophy of values. Handbooks stating guidelines and expectations are given to all teachers and staff. The school district provides handbooks containing codes of conduct that are signed by parents and students. A campus handbook contains information and clarification about Walnut Hill's policies, procedures, and expectations.

Teaching character is a partnership involving families, school, and community. Families provide the foundation for morals and values; however, character is everyone's concern. Parents remain active in their support of the school's initiatives. The vital PTA models character pillars by taking ideas and turning them into realities. Caring, involved parents direct food and clothing drives, provide shoes for needy students, and furnish food for families in times of crisis. The PTA provides dinner on teacher workdays, staff development days, and parent conference nights.

Sixty-three Walnut Hill fathers, seeking more involvement, form the Do-Dads Club. This caring group meets regularly to find ways to make a difference in the school. Every other month they hold a workday to hang curtains, build shelves, repair furniture, plant trees, create animal habitats, lay walkways, and offer a strong back or a helping hand. One significant project is the connectivity to the Internet for the campus. By providing materials and working many days during the hot Texas summer, they are making the dream of Internet access a reality. All of these projects demonstrate and model a sense of responsibility and caring. In the wake of school district controversy, the Do-Dads saw a need to boost morale. They spoke to the school during announcements, encouraging and supporting the teaching and learning at Walnut Hill. Response was so overwhelming that a new tradition began. Each Wednesday the school enjoys inspirational messages from positive male role models reinforcing the curriculum's character pillars. And, of course, dads take great pride in mentioning the name of their child when making these announcements.

Extending opportunities for appropriate adult-child interactions, teachers/staff partner with the community through Kiwanis, Off Our Rockers, IBM, Raytheon and neighborhood volunteers. These caring adults provide far more than tutoring. They also offer friendship, listening ears, and positive role models. These community members support school efforts and increase the effectiveness with children. Teachers pair older students from a nearby private school with younger students as cross-age tutors. Teachers/staff use innovation, creativity, quality instruction and all available resources to allow every child to be successful and become a lifelong learner.

When selecting an on-site after-school program, Walnut Hill sought caregivers who share the school's philosophy. The YMCA integrates structured experiences with Character Counts activities. The school is confident this YMCA program provides students with continuity and reinforcement of character values.

A community resource, Kiosco Youth and Family Center, provides family support through Family Youth Interaction (FYI) training. These sessions, held on campus, provide conflict resolution, problem solving skills, and effective parenting techniques. One latest innovation pairs a liaison from the Kiosco

center with small after-school groups. While working with pottery, this volunteer provides a setting conducive to positive social interaction and character building. This program focuses on high-risk students.

Dallas Public Schools supports the character initiative and recognizes Walnut Hill's leadership in promoting character education. The district provides the school with additional materials and training to expand the program. The successful character education program encourages others to offer opportunities for additional character initiatives. Walnut Hill is proud to begin an extension of the character program, Better Kids, Better Dallas, in cooperation with the Dallas Police Department. This program provides police officers who work with selected at-risk students in grades 2-6. The officers encourage these students to improve their grades and behavior.

Teachers and staff are sought by the district to be on panels and make presentations about the school's effective implementation of character education. Teachers and staff are firmly committed to character education and seek new strategies, additional training and effective techniques through peer collaboration. Five core staff members receive on-going district training to enhance their skills. They share these skills with the teachers and staff. Forums for faculty discussion and training include inservice sessions, teacher and staff meetings, grade level meetings, teacher and staff retreats, and informal discussions. In 1998, The Dallas Coalition on Character and Values invited three staff members, two Anglo and one Black, to serve on a panel at the Fourth Annual Community Forum. The teachers declined the honor of being on this panel in order to gain knowledge by attending sessions of other presenters. All forty-four sixth grade boys and girls will participate in a citywide Character Counts rally. This rally recognizes students who exhibit good character and honors schools with effective character education programs.

Walnut Hill empowers parents with information and strategies gained from character education training. Information is disseminated through formal and informal parent conferences, conferences with the school counselor or principal, and PTA newsletters. A spring 1998 Tips on Parenting information night was sponsored by the counselor the Do-Dads. The response was so positive plans are being made to offer two sessions this year.

Walnut Hill has tools for communication, documentation and assessment of positive behaviors. The teachers designed a form to graphically show appropriate student behaviors. This behavior folder provides concrete evidence of successes or challenges during the school day. Parents acknowledge receipt of this folder with a weekly signature. This powerful medium helps communicate goals and standards of character.

The district's wellness team evaluated Walnut Hill's implementation of character education in spring 1998. Their report commends Walnut Hill's implementation of the *Discovery Skills for Life* curriculum suggests added emphasis in the area of Human Growth and Development. This fifth grade curriculum addresses human growth and development, AIDS prevention, and other health-related topics. Teacher and staff training is scheduled and this curriculum will be taught in the spring.

School is an obvious arena to continue the development of a child's character. Anne Frank's diary states "The final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands." Walnut Hill fulfills the mission statement by empowering students with lasting tools to become exemplary citizens.

Grade 1
Edition/publication year: 1993
Scores reported as *NCEs*

Test: *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*
Publisher: Riverside Publishing Co.
Mean 50 Standard Deviation 21

Year Tested 1994	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	32		17	9	53
Percent Tested	94		100	100	97
Reading	64.0		54.5	52.4	60.8
Mathematics	68.4		56.0	57.4	63.8
Year Tested 1995	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	31		10	6	46
Percent Tested	91		91	86	96
Reading	65.2		28.7	24.0	53.4
Mathematics	64.4		32.9	31.5	53.6
Year Tested 1996	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	37	9	16	14	62
Percent Tested	100	89	100	93	98
Reading	57.2	46.2	43.5	43.7	52.9
Mathematics	56.7	48.7	49.9	49.3	54.4
Year Tested 1997	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	24	6	22	10	53
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	66.3	43.3	58.7	50.8	59.8
Mathematics	63.2	26.5	46.3	36.0	51.4
Year Tested 1998	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	28	7	25	18	62
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	63.9	69.0	49.5	54.2	58.8
Mathematics	72.2	61.7	53.9	54.8	63.6

Note: Categories with fewer than 6 students are excluded.

TABLE A

Grade 2 Test: *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*

Year Tested 1994	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	45	7	12	10	67
Percent Tested	96	100	100	100	97
Reading	57.0	42.6	50.8	45.2	53.6
Mathematics	60.9	36.7	43.1	42.0	54.8
Year Tested 1995	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	20		17	13	41
Percent Tested	91		100	100	95
Reading	57.5		42.6	34.4	50.7
Mathematics	54.8		45.0	40.4	50.5
Year Tested 1996	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	30		7	14	41
Percent Tested	97		100	100	98
Reading	65.5		37.6	50.2	58.8
Mathematics	67.3		43.1	59.8	61.1
Year Tested 1997	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	31	10	12	14	54
Percent Tested	94	100	100	93	96
Reading	59.7	52.0	47.5	50.2	56.3
Mathematics	61.6	52.4	52.4	59.8	58.0
Year Tested 1998	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	17	9	17	14	44
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	64.7	50.2	46.3	46.5	54.0
Mathematics	64.5	47.1	48.1	43.8	54.3

Note: Categories with fewer than 6 students are excluded.

TABLE B

Grade 3 Test: *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*

Year Tested 1994	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	24	9	20	14	55
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	61.4	47.7	49.6	44.8	54.4
Mathematics	62.0	46.7	49.4	48.1	54.6
Year Tested 1995	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	37	6	15	11	61
Percent Tested	100	100	94	92	98
Reading	61.6	35.2	44.7	50.1	54.0
Mathematics	65.0	43.5	45.9	53.5	58.0
Year Tested 1996	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	15	9	18	15	42
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	58.2	43.0	37.5	33.4	46.1
Mathematics	60.1	50.6	45.6	42.4	51.8
Year Tested 1997	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	24	7	9	8	40
Percent Tested	100	100	90	100	98
Reading	71.3	41.6	51.5	44.5	61.7
Mathematics	65.5	48.8	44.1	48.5	57.8
Year Tested 1998	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	23	12	11	13	47
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	61.5	44.5	50.9	46.3	55.5
Mathematics	66.8	58.1	51.9	58.2	61.8

Note: Categories with fewer than 6 students are excluded.

TABLE C

Grade 4 Test: *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*

Year Tested 1994	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	34		21	11	59
Percent Tested	100		100	100	100
Reading	61.3		58.8	59.3	59.4
Mathematics	66.4		66.1	62.0	65.9
Year Tested 1995	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	20	10	15	14	47
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	62.7	54.5	58.3	65.1	60.0
Mathematics	63.7	52.4	64.3	57.5	61.5
Year Tested 1996	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	28	7	13	11	50
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	61.4	52.9	51.1	56.1	57.9
Mathematics	73.5	61.2	60.9	67.5	68.8
Year Tested 1997	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	14	8	16	13	39
Percent Tested	100	100	94	93	98
Reading	56.9	42.5	48.1	47.0	51.0
Mathematics	61.2	51.5	61.5	55.4	59.9
Year Tested 1998	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	18		8		30
Percent Tested	100		100		100
Reading	65.5		50.2		59.3
Mathematics	77.0		63.2		71.6

Note: Categories with fewer than 6 students are excluded.

TABLE D

Grade 5 Test: *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*

Year Tested 1994	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	18	6	13	10	37
Percent Tested	95	100	100	91	97
Reading	63.2	48.7	52.6	48.8	57.1
Mathematics	60.0	47.9	49.9	49.3	54.5
Year Tested 1995	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	31		19	12	55
Percent Tested	100		100	100	100
Reading	68.1		68.3	60.0	66.2
Mathematics	69.8		71.1	65.4	69.4
Year Tested 1996	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	15	8	14	10	39
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	60.8	55.9	54.6	57.5	57.2
Mathematics	71.9	66.9	66.6	66.7	69.1
Year Tested 1997	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	21	7	15	11	45
Percent Tested	100	88	94	85	96
Reading	61.0	42.5	52.3	49.5	55.8
Mathematics	73.0	57.9	65.8	63.3	68.5
Year Tested 1998	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	12	7	15	13	34
Percent Tested	100	100	94	93	97
Reading	62.5	49.5	52.0	51.1	55.2
Mathematics	70.2	55.9	63.1	60.8	64.2

Note: Categories with fewer than 6 students are excluded.

TABLE E

Grade 6 Test: *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*

Year Tested 1994	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	28	9	15	10	54
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	69.1	60.6	52.4	53.3	63.0
Mathematics	71.0	65.2	62.3	62.8	68.7
Year Tested 1995	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	17	6	16	13	39
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	61.4	52.4	60.1	53.7	59.5
Mathematics	72.9	62.3	75.8	72.8	72.4
Year Tested 1996	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	27	6	19	11	52
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	66.0	60.9	67.2	59.4	65.9
Mathematics	84.0	72.1	82.3	79.0	82.0
Year Tested 1997	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	11	9	15	13	37
Percent Tested	100	100	94	100	97
Reading	66.1	64.4	56.4	69.8	62.0
Mathematics	85.7	78.1	71.6	66.1	78.4
Year Tested 1998	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Lo-SES**	**ALL**
Number Tested	15		14	10	35
Percent Tested	94		100	100	97
Reading	62.7		44.3	46.3	53.6
Mathematics	72.3		59.7	62.9	65.9

Note: Categories with fewer than 6 students are excluded.

TABLE F

Quasi-cohort analysis Test: *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*

Four year comparisons

The following table presents quasi-cohort data for three groups. First graders in 1995 are compared to second graders in 1996, third graders in 1997, and fourth graders in 1998. Likewise, the second and third graders in 1995, are compared to the subsequent classes in the following years. The data are quasi-cohort as they include the entire classes at each grade level. Anglo students have consistently scored high. Hispanic student scores have increased dramatically over the past four years resulting in a reduction in the achievement gap.

First Grade in 1995			Second Grade in 1995			Third Grade in 1995		
READ	White	Hispanic	READ	White	Hispanic	READ	White	Hispanic
1995	65.2	28.7	1995	57.5	42.6	1995	61.6	44.7
1996	65.5	37.6	1996	58.2	37.5	1996	61.4	51.1
1997	71.3	51.5	1997	56.9	48.1	1997	61.0	52.3
1998	65.5	50.2	1998	62.5	52.0	1998	62.7	44.3
MATH	White	Hispanic	MATH	White	Hispanic	MATH	White	Hispanic
1995	64.4	32.9	1995	54.8	45.0	1995	65.0	45.9
1996	67.3	43.1	1996	60.1	45.6	1996	73.5	60.9
1997	65.5	44.1	1997	61.2	61.5	1997	73.0	65.8
1998	77.0	63.2	1998	70.2	63.1	1998	72.3	59.7

TABLE G

Grade 3 Test: Texas *Assessment of Academic Skills*
Pub. year: updated annually Publisher: Texas Education Agency,
Scores reported as *Percent Passing* Harcourt Brace, National Computer Systems

Year Tested 1994	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	23	9	19	13	53
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	95	78	74	69	84
Mathematics	96	44	63	62	75

Year Tested 1995	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	35	6	15	11	59
Percent Tested	95	100	88	85	94
Reading	83	33	73	64	76
Mathematics	86	17	53	55	69

Year Tested 1996	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	15	9	18	15	42
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	93	56	56	47	69
Mathematics	80	56	50	40	62

Year Tested 1997	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	24	7	9	8	40
Percent Tested	100	100	90	100	98
Reading	96	71	78	75	88
Mathematics	100	71	78	75	90

Year Tested 1998	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	23	12	11	13	47
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	87	58	82	69	79
Mathematics	87	92	82	85	87

Note: Categories with fewer than 6 students are excluded.

TABLE H

Grade 4 Test: Texas *Assessment of Academic Skills*

Year Tested 1994	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	33		20	11	57
Percent Tested	100		100	100	100
Reading	97		100	91	96
Mathematics	85		95	73	86
Writing	94		100	91	95

Year Tested 1995	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	20	10	15	14	47
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	90	50	80	79	79
Mathematics	80	50	93	86	79
Writing	95	70	100	86	91

Year tested 1996	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	27	7	13	11	48
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	98
Reading	89	100	92	100	92
Mathematics	89	71	75	90	83
Writing	96	100	100	100	98

Year tested 1997	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	13	8	16	13	38
Percent Tested	93	100	94	93	95
Reading	100	75	81	69	87
Mathematics	86	63	88	69	82
Writing	79	88	82	79	83

Year tested 1998	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	18		8		30
Percent Tested	100		100		100
Reading	100		100		97
Mathematics	100		75		93
Writing	100		89		97

Note: Categories with fewer than 6 students are excluded.

TABLE I

Grade 5 Test: Texas *Assessment of Academic Skills*

Year Tested 1994	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	18	6	13	10	37
Percent Tested	95	100	100	91	97
Reading	94	67	69	60	81
Mathematics	89	33	38	20	62

Year Tested 1995	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	31		19	12	55
Percent Tested	100		95	92	98
Reading	100		100	100	100
Mathematics	94		100	100	96

Year Tested 1996	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	15	8	14	11	39
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	93	75	93	73	90
Mathematics	87	88	86	73	87

Year Tested 1997	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	21	6	15	10	44
Percent Tested	95	100	100	100	98
Reading	90	50	93	90	86
Mathematics	95	83	73	100	86

Year Tested 1998	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	12	7	14	14	33
Percent Tested	100	100	93	93	97
Reading	100	86	86	79	91
Mathematics	92	86	86	79	88

Note: Categories with fewer than 6 students are excluded.

TABLE J

Grade 6 Test: Texas *Assessment of Academic Skills*

Year Tested 1994	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	27	9	15	10	53
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	93	78	80	70	87
Mathematics	89	67	73	80	81

Year Tested 1995	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	17	6	16	13	39
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	100	67	94	92	92
Mathematics	94	83	94	92	92

Year Tested 1996	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	27	6	20	12	53
Percent Tested	100	100	100	100	100
Reading	100	100	100	100	100
Mathematics	100	100	100	100	100

Year Tested 1997	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	11	9	13	11	35
Percent Tested	92	90	100	100	95
Reading	100	100	92	90	97
Mathematics	100	100	100	100	100

Year Tested 1998	White	Black	Hispanic	Lo-SES	ALL
Number Tested	14		14	10	34
Percent Tested	93		100	100	97
Reading	93		93	90	94
Mathematics	92		93	100	94

Note: Categories with fewer than 6 students are excluded.

Campus /District / State Comparisons - Percent Passing

		Campus	District	State
1994	Reading	88	58	76
	Mathematics	78	46	61
1995	Reading	87	61	79
	Mathematics	84	52	70
1996	Reading	88	65	80
	Mathematics	84	62	77
1997	Reading	89	66	83
	Mathematics	89	65	83
1998	Reading	89	73	87
	Mathematics	90	69	85

TABLE K