2004-2005 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet

Type of School: ✓ Elementary __ Middle __ High __ K-12

Name of Principal Mr. Patrick James
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name George West Primary
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 405 Travis Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

George West TX 78022-3418
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Live Oak School Code Number* 149-901-102

Telephone (361) 449-1914 Fax (361) 449-1426

Website/URL www.gwisd.esc2.net/gwps E-mail pjames@gwisd.esc2.net

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____ Date_____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. James Stansberry
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name George West ISD Tel. (361) 449-1914

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date_____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Richard R. Brown
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date_____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

[Include this page in the school's application as page 2.]

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2004-2005 school year.

3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.

4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 1999 and has not received the 2003 or 2004 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award.*

5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

6. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

7. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school, or the school district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
   - 2 Elementary schools
   - _____ Middle schools
   - 1 Junior high schools
   - 1 High schools
   - _____ Other
   - 4 TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: $7,157.00

   Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: $7,088.00

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

   [ ] Urban or large central city
   [ ] Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
   [ ] Suburban
   [✓] Small city or town in a rural area
   [ ] Rural

4. 6 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

   _____ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total		Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	10	6	**16**		**7**			
K	39	39	**78**		**8**			
1	43	46	**89**		**9**			
2	40	36	**76**		**10**			
3	37	49	**86**		**11**			
4					**12**			
5					**Other**			
6								
		TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →						**345**

[Throughout the document, round numbers to avoid decimals.]

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:

41 % White
2 % Black or African American
55 % Hispanic or Latino
_____ % Asian/Pacific Islander
_____ % American Indian/Alaskan Native
100% Total

Use only the five standard categories in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of the school.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 32 %

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

(1)	Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	71
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	42
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	113
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1 (same as in #5 above)	345
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	32
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	32

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 5 %
20 Total Number Limited English Proficient
Number of languages represented: 1
Specify languages: Spanish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 59 %

Total number students who qualify: 204

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: ___11___%
___39___Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

_1__Autism	__0__Orthopedic Impairment
_0__Deafness	__6__Other Health Impaired
_0__Deaf-Blindness	__9__Specific Learning Disability
_0_Hearing Impairment	__25_Speech or Language Impairment
_0_Mental Retardation	__0__Traumatic Brain Injury
_0_Multiple Disabilities	__3__ Visual Impairment Including Blindness
	__3__Emotional Disturbance

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	Full-time	**Part-Time**
Administrator(s)	__1____	_____
Classroom teachers	_19____	_____
Special resource teachers/specialists	__3____	_____
Paraprofessionals	__9____	_____
Support staff	__2____	_____
Total number	_34____	_____

12. Average school student-"classroom teacher" ratio: _1:19_____

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. (Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.)

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Daily student attendance	95.6 %	95.4 %	95.0 %	95.0 %	95.0 %
Daily teacher attendance	94.0 %	96.0 %	95.0 %	94.0 %	91.0 %
Teacher turnover rate	0.0 %	5.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	-------%	--------%	--------%	-------%	-------%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	-------%	--------%	--------%	-------%	-------%

PART III - SUMMARY

George West Primary is a small school in George West, Texas, a rural town of approximately 2,500 people located about halfway between San Antonio and Corpus Christi. The demographic makeup of our school consists of 55% Hispanic, 41% White, and 2% Black. Additionally 59% of our students come from economically disadvantaged homes.

The mission of our school is very simple. We expect all children to reach their academic potential, regardless of who they are or from where they come. We expect them to acquire the knowledge base, the character traits, and the work ethic they will need to be successful adults.

We strive to accomplish our mission by plain, simple hard work. Our staff takes a personal interest in the life of every child. Our staff goes above and beyond the call of duty as they work with our children. It is not uncommon to see teachers working at lunch, during conference periods, and after school with students who need extra help. Many schools express the belief that "all children can learn". At our school we make that a reality.

We have learned that, when provided the necessary assistance, all students can and do learn. Much of our success can be attributed to the additional opportunities we provide for our students who are at risk of failing to perform on grade level. Four years ago, we started a summer reading program we call Jump Start. We bring in our at risk students at every grade level for four weeks preceding the start of school. We have found this "jump start" readies students for the new year by reviewing skills taught the previous year. We also provide after school tutorials four days a week for students who need extra help.

We have a highly qualified staff of professionals and paraprofessionals. Our professional staff is very experienced due to a low turnover rate. We are fortunate to have highly qualified teachers in our community and in the surrounding areas eager to work at this campus. We believe our paraprofessionals are the best in the state, and have contributed a great deal to the improvement of student performance at this campus. Primarily, they work with students rather than perform clerical duties. They are very knowledgeable in the areas of curriculum and instruction as a result of the training provided by our staff. All of our paraprofessionals have a bachelor's or master's degree, or have attended Treasuring Our Professionals training, a rigorous professional development that teaches reading and mathematics through research-based practices.

Parent involvement plays a big part in our success. We have many parents and community members who volunteer at our school on a daily basis. These volunteers help teachers with routine clerical duties. This assistance allows the teachers more time for working with students and for planning instruction. Many of our volunteers also work in the classroom, under the supervision of the classroom teacher, providing assistance such as listening to students read, helping students take Accelerated Reader tests, etc.. Even the parents who are not able to come to school support our efforts by encouraging their children to work hard and expecting them to succeed. It's a great feeling to have parents who appreciate the time and effort we put forth for their children.

We are very proud of student achievement at this campus and the accolades we have received. Being named a Texas Business and Education Coalition and Just For The Kids (TBEC/JFTK) Honor Roll School for the last three years is the most prestigious award we have earned to date. This recognition is important to us since the TBEC and JFTK evaluate a school's data against a higher standard than does the Texas Education Agency. This is a great accomplishment since we work very hard at motivating all our students to perform at a higher level than the minimum standard required by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the State's assessment.

We have also been named a Distinguished Title I campus for the last three years and have been identified as an Exemplary campus by the Texas Education Agency. We feel great about the things we are doing for our children at this school because the assessment data shows that the hard work of our school community has resulted in student success for all!

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Our school administers the state-mandated Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Texas public schools are required to administer the TAKS test, beginning in 3rd grade and continuing through the 11th grade at which time students take the exit level TAKS, which is a graduation requirement for all Texas students. At some grade levels, such as 3rd grade, passing the TAKS is a requirement for grade advancement. The TAKS test measures students' understanding of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), our state-mandated curriculum. Students not only have to know the TEKS, they have to be able to apply that knowledge using higher level thinking skills.

The State has defined different levels of performance on the TAKS – one level for meeting the standard requirements and the other for performing at the "commended" level. To pass the TAKS reading test in 2004, a student needed a scale score of 2064. To meet minimum requirements, or pass the TAKS math test, a student needed a scale score of 2041. To achieve commended performance in reading, a student needed a scale score of 2400 or 94% correct. To achieve commended performance in math, a student needed a scale score of 2400, or 93% correct. All of our students have passed the TAKS math test the last four years. On the reading TAKS test, 100% passed in two of the last three years, with our lowest score being 96% passing in 2001. Scores show no disparities among ethnic or economically-disadvantaged subgroups.

We are proud that in 2004, 48% of our students met the commended performance standard in reading. Additionally, 83% scored 85 or better while the average score of all students was 91% correct. In math 45% of our students met the commended performance standard while 78% of the students scored 85 or better, and the average score was 88% correct. These scores prove that our students are not just meeting the performance standard; rather, they are consistently performing at higher levels. We attribute our outstanding assessment results to:

Effective instruction – The teacher presents each skill using a variety of methods in order to reach all learning styles. The teacher provides many examples for modeling and explaining the skill. The students are given multiple opportunities to practice with guidance and ultimately experience success. The skill is taught using problem-solving situations. Skills are continually reviewed, assessed, and re-taught, if necessary.

Collaborative planning – Collaborative planning is essential in our school. Our district releases students 25 minutes early one day each week to allow time for additional grade-level planning. We also have staff development days to disaggregate scores and test data. During these times our staff plans and aligns instruction both horizontally and vertically.

Instructional leadership – Instructional leadership has played a major role in our success. The principal is actively involved with the learning and success of our children. He conferences with each student after every benchmark test, and spends time in classrooms every day working with the children. The students know he cares about them and expects them to do their best. He is an excellent role model. He supports, encourages, and praises the teachers, and expects them, also, to do their best. He "rolls up his sleeves" and becomes actively involved in planning instruction such as writing math benchmark tests.

Benchmark tests – To insure that we monitor the student's progress in math; we administer benchmark tests each six weeks. We disaggregate this data to form our skills groups for re-teaching. We also assess our skills weekly to give more immediate feedback to individual classroom teachers and students.

Math strategies – Our students know we expect them to do their best. We will not accept papers without

strategies for problem-solving clearly defined. The students soon learn that the strategies help them solve the problems correctly, and math becomes fun. As they begin to experience success and feel good about themselves, their achievement soars.

Our school's performance data can be found on the Texas Education Agency website at www.tea.state.tx.us/. High performing schools data can be found at www.just4kids.org. For a complete list of TBEC/JFTK Honor Roll Schools go to www.tbec.org.

ASSESSMENT DATA

Our school uses the data from various types of assessments to identify students who are at risk of failing to perform on grade level and to identify objectives or skill areas that students have not mastered.

In kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade, we administer the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI). The TPRI is a state-developed reading inventory we are required to give twice a year to kindergarten students and three times per year to first and second grade students. The TPRI measures phonemic awareness, graphophonemic knowledge, reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers utilize this data for early identification of struggling readers and to provide intervention for them. We use these results to set instructional objectives, to form teaching groups, and to determine the need for targeted assistance for particular students. We provide early intervention regularly through the use of flexible, skill-based groups that are identified according to skill deficits. In these small groups we are able to provide struggling readers more intense instruction than their more successful classmates. TPRI data, along with progress reports and report card grades, is also used to identify students who need after school tutorials and our summer reading program.

At second grade, we administer a comprehensive TAKS benchmark assessment at mid-year to identify students and skill areas that need to be emphasized for the remainder of the year. As in 1st grade, this data is used to form skill groups for remediation activities during an in-school tutorial period as well as in after school tutorials. Students are assessed again at the end of the year to determine summer reading program placement and to provide detailed progress information to their future 3rd grade teachers.

At third grade, we administer a comprehensive benchmark assessment every six weeks with the first one given the second week of school. Data from the first assessment is used to form the instructional calendar for the year. Teachers also assess students on a weekly basis to identify those who have not mastered the skill or objective taught that week. Students who have not yet mastered the objective for the week are re-taught and provided with targeted assistance in small groups. Previously taught objectives are continued throughout the year to prevent any learning regression.

COMMUNICATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA

Student performance data is communicated to parents in the following ways:

- Daily notes are sent home in student homework folders.
- Weekly papers are sent home for parent review and signatures.
- Progress reports are sent home every three weeks.
- Mandatory parent conferences are held after the first six weeks to review student progress.
- Additional parent conferences are scheduled as needed.
- Report cards are sent home for parent review and signature every six weeks.
- TPRI reports are sent home after every administration.
- Benchmark results are sent home every six weeks.

Performance data is shared with students in the following ways:

- Individual student/teacher conferences.
- Individual conferences with the campus principal. Students are sent to the campus principal to receive positive reinforcement for doing good work, as well as to discuss areas where improvement is needed.
- Principal/student conferences. The campus principal conferences individually with every student after every benchmark assessment to review the student's progress and to set goals for them to accomplish.
- Group conferences. The principal meets with grade level groups after every benchmark to discuss their progress as a grade level and to motivate future performance.

Performance data is shared with the community in the following ways:

- School Board meetings.
- District newsletter.
- Articles in the local newspaper.
- Articles on the district and campus website.
- Region 2, Education Service Center (ESC) Newsletter, as data warrants.

SHARING OUR SUCCESS WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

We have shared our success with other schools in many ways.

We have participated in the TBEC/JFTK Honor Roll Schools "Sharing the Success Seminar" for the last two years. Information compiled from this seminar, along with data collected by TBEC/JFTK personnel during their visit to our campus and other high performing campuses, is published in the Texas Best Practice Framework. The results of this study can be found at www.just4kids.org.

We have participated in the Region 2, Education Service Center's Distinguished Title I Schools Ceremony the last three years. At this ceremony, we share our tenets of success with other successful schools, as well as with those schools identified as "needs improvement". The ESC compiles a booklet of information collected from the distinguished schools and disseminates it at this seminar. The ESC also sends the booklet to all schools in the region, and specifically to those schools needing improvement.

We have participated in a Special Education/Reading Interface Study conducted by faculty and graduate students at Texas A&M University. Researchers visited our campus and interviewed faculty to find out what we are doing to successfully teach diverse populations and struggling readers to read. Results of this study were forwarded to school districts across the state and to the Texas Education Agency.

Administrators and teachers from schools in our area visit our campus to observe our teachers in action, to review our curriculum, to review instructional practices, and to ask questions about what we do to consistently drive high student performance. The ESC coordinates many of these visits by sharing our successes with schools in the ESC region.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The curriculum at George West Primary focuses on the students' demonstrating exemplary performance in reading and writing the English language, as well as in understanding mathematical concepts. Units in Science and Social Studies are integrated into and correlated with the English/Language Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the state's mandated curriculum.

Reading is central to learning, and success in reading provides the foundation for success in all core areas; thus, much emphasis is given to teaching Language Arts. Students are instructed in and tested over the dimensions that are considered the most important research-based aspects of teaching reading: phonological awareness, graphophonemic knowledge, listening comprehension, reading accuracy, and reading comprehension. Using information gained from the testing, explicit and systematic instruction is provided in the context of many and varied opportunities in reading and writing. Instruction targeting specific concepts is designed and carefully sequenced, building on what the students know, and structuring what they don't know, as they work towards mastery. Support is given as the students need it, and is gradually withdrawn as they become more proficient with new concepts and skills. Our primary goal is to help all of our students read and comprehend proficiently while using higher level thinking skills.

The core of the math curriculum is built around the use of manipulatives and strategies to teach the content through problem solving, reasonableness, terminology, and cooperative learning relating to the TEKS. Educational research offers compelling evidence that students learn mathematics well only when they construct their own mathematical understanding. Students are given the opportunity to work in groups, to engage in discussion, to make presentations, and to take charge of their own learning by "examining," "applying," and "proving" concepts in their lessons. We strive to produce students who can successfully and confidently apply math principles in problem-solving situations.

Science and Social Studies objectives are aligned with the TEKS and are integrated and correlated with units in Language Arts. Students are provided the opportunity to investigate and learn science concepts and experience success in science as they develop the knowledge of and the ability to use the tools and processes of scientific inquiry. Our emphasis is for the students to experience success in science as they develop age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of the life, earth, and physical sciences. The social studies curriculum teaches good citizenship skills, map and globe skills, as well as history, through biographies, and current events. Reading strategies are integrated with a multimedia approach to teach citizenship, cultures, economics, geography, government, and history. Students are taught to build on their background by accessing prior knowledge and to extend language by using word banks and activity ideas. We expect all of our students to be respectful, responsible, good citizens.

Our fine arts curriculum is largely integrated into our reading, science and social studies curricula. Theatre Arts is integrated into our language arts curriculum through charades, plays, and acting out stories. Art is integrated into every core curriculum and aligned with the TEKS. Many different types of media are used and freedom of expression is encouraged.

READING CURRICULUM

George West Primary believes in a phonetic approach to teaching reading because research has demonstrated that successful readers rely on letter-sound correspondences in sounding out words, have reliable strategies to decode words, and read words a sufficient number of times to ensure that words become quickly and automatically recognized. Our reading program adheres to an explicit and systematic approach to teaching and reviewing sounds which include: blending letter sound correspondences in words, letter combinations, spelling and syllablic patterns, recognizing high frequency words as whole units, and using structural clues, word order, and context clues. Instructional texts used in the classrooms for early readers include books that are predictable, transitional, and decodable, as well as authentic literature. The students' reading levels are calculated and considered as students are placed in reading groups. Students are given multiple opportunities to read, to practice decoding strategies, and to read decodable texts. Students are grouped according to needs and taught from instructional-level texts that reflect what the student is learning. As the students become more fluent readers, they are taught strategies to improve their comprehension. The students are required to use these strategies consistently on all reading passages in all subject areas. We teach skills in isolation, and then we apply the skills in reading stories. We use extra resources to focus on these skills. We use a variety of research-based and teacher-made games and activities. We assess regularly and re-teach, as needed, using a variety of learning styles approaches. We teach heterogeneously, however, we reinforce skills homogenously as data warrants. We read orally to students daily to reinforce comprehension skills, listening skills, and visual imaging. We use higher level comprehension questioning in all subject areas. Accelerated Reader is also used to enhance the regular reading program. This program assists us in determining students' ability levels and in monitoring their progress. The students are continually challenged as they work to meet their monthly goals. We have an outstanding incentive program that rewards and motivates students as they progress from struggling, to emergent, to fluent readers.

ONE OTHER CURRICULAR AREA

George West Primary School is committed to nurturing successful, lifelong learners in Math. In order to succeed at our goal of achieving mathematical literacy, we encourage our students to take risks and communicate using higher-level thinking as they work to solve problems. Our teachers are committed to teaching the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills to achieve success on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills.

At George West Primary, various resources are used to teach the math essential skills and knowledge. McGraw Hill is our state adopted textbook, but it is not our only resource. Some grade levels supplement with Touch Math, Saxon Math, Kamico, Measuring Up, and materials gathered from workshops. Other grade levels have written their own curricula using various adoptions, as well as privately written math programs by mathematicians such as Joshua Horton and Michael Eaton that were purchased by the school district.

Our teachers continually provide maintenance and re-teach. We feel these are the most important aspects of our math program. It is very important to maintain previously taught objectives throughout the year. Teachers continually teach a new objective while also reviewing previously taught objectives to ensure students are retaining important concepts. Another vital component of our Math program is having students work through corrections on a daily basis. The teachers provide assistance and re-teach as needed. It is important to provide immediate feedback with each child on all lessons to ensure they are learning and are successful before moving on to a new lesson. Our curriculum has the spiraling component built in.

In our experience there are no perfect math programs. The key to making math work in our school is our teachers ability to utilize many different resources and instructional strategies.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS USED TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

At our school, teachers employ many and varied techniques as they teach the students. Initial instruction is whole class/direct teach with the teacher presenting the material to the class using classroom textbooks, the dry erase board, the overhead projector, and other appropriate teaching tools. Teachers also utilize homogeneously-grouped, small group instruction, as well as one-on-one instruction. Data from scheduled benchmark tests is utilized to form skill groups to re-teach skills students have not mastered. We also assess weekly the skills taught so that we are able to give students immediate reinforcement in areas in which they are weak. We have a scheduled TEKS enrichment period during the school day. During this time we have instructional aides who work in the classrooms daily to assist the students in learning. This extra help allows us to work with students in small groups and use activities designed to meet individual learning styles of the students. Our school provides teachers with many different programs and manipulatives to use with the children. Some of these programs include the following: Lexia, Kamico computer math, Accelerated Reader, Hooked on Phonics, Accelerated Math, and Voyager Reading. These programs and manipulatives help us challenge all of our students. We have also made numerous learning games and activities that the students use in cooperative learning groups and centers. All students are taught strategies in problem solving to help them throughout life. Students are required to use these strategies daily. Teachers are constantly observing and assessing student achievement. We expect all students to complete work using the strategies we have taught, and if they do not, we require them to do the work again.

In order to achieve all curricular and instructional goals, we feel it is important to maintain a positive school climate by greeting each student at the door when he or she enters our classroom. We also do group affirmations. We acknowledge all students who succeed, no matter how small the accomplishment. Each six weeks “On a Roll” awards are given to at-risk students to recognize those who have worked extremely hard. Our counselor has provided us with “kindness strips” which are given to students who exhibit good character, manners, and behavior. Students also learn valuable lessons by working hard to earn and accumulate Accelerated Reader points, and learn about choices as they decide how and when to spend their points.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Our professional development program is more of a process than a plan. The process includes identifying weaknesses or gaps in our school program by studying data, by listening to teacher input, and by investigating new programs. Then we search for methods or programs to improve upon those weaknesses.

The most significant professional development we participated in occurred seven years ago when we worked with Brazosport ISD to learn their 8-step process for improving student achievement. At the time we had a need to become more focused in our efforts to improve student achievement. We experienced immediate results as we became familiar with and perfected Brazosport’s **plan – do – check – act** instructional cycle.

Another important aspect of our professional development process is participating in training required by

the State of Texas. The Texas Teacher Reading Academies for first through third grade were instrumental in improving reading instruction at our campus. Our teachers learned about research-based reading strategies. They came back with effective techniques to use in the classroom to teach reading. Since one of our teachers was an instructor for the Texas Reading Academies, we have utilized her strengths to provide the same training for our para-professionals who work directly with students in the classroom.

Another significant staff development in which our teachers have participated has been Capturing Kids Hearts, which is presented by the Flippen Group(www.flippengroup.com). It focuses on the importance of teachers having a positive, personal relationship with students and a positive classroom management system in place. We have learned that no higher level learning can take place until students' basic needs of safety and security are met. Since many of our students don't have these basic needs met at home, we felt it was important for us to focus on this issue. When this program was implemented, our entire school climate changed to a warm, safe, loving, positive place to learn. Attending this training also has provided our staff with a renewed enthusiasm for teaching. Many of the principles focused on in Capturing Kids Hearts training also directly correlate with the teachings of Ruby Payne in Dealing With Students From Poverty.

We regularly take advantage of our own experts to provide training in areas identified as needing improvement. Several years ago we identified problem solving as a weak area in our math department. The data indicated we had a staff member whose students performed well on that objective. We took advantage of that expertise and had her train the rest of our staff. Since that time we have had remarkable improvement in the area of problem solving.

Our plan is very simple. If the data indicates a deficiency in any area, we will find a way to address the problem. Our philosophy has proven to be successful as our student achievement results indicate.

George West Primary TAKS/TAAS Reading Scores
3rd Grade

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Test	TAKS	TAKS	TAAS	TAAS	TAAS
George West Primary Scores					
% Met Standard	100	99	99	98	94
% Commended Performance	48	49	35	36	45
Number of Students Tested	83	72	68	90	90
Number of Students Alternatively Assessed	5	8	4	5	7
Subgroup Scores					
1. White					
% Met Standard	100	97	100	96	96
% Commended Performance	59	67	46	40	57
Number of Students Tested	37	36	35	55	48
2. Hispanic					
% Met Standard	100	100	97	98	92
% Commended Performance	33	31	25	29	30
Number of Students Tested	42	36	32	35	42
3. Economically Disadvantaged					
% Met Standard	100	97	97	98	92
% Commended Performance	31	31	11	25	41
Number of Students Tested	42	39	38	40	49
State Scores					
% Met Standard	91	89	87	86	87
% Commended Performance	35	26			

Note: 3rd grade is the only grade tested at our campus.

George West Primary TAKS/TAAS Math Scores
3rd Grade

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Test	TAKS	TAKS	TAAS	TAAS	TAAS
George West Primary Scores					
% Met Standard	100	100	99	100	92
% Commended Performance	44	36	16	14	32
Number of Students Tested	85	69	69	87	91
Number of Students Alternatively Assessed	3	6	3	7	7
Subgroup Scores					
1. White					
% Met Standard	100	100	100	100	96
% Commended Performance	58	39	19	18	41
Number of Students Tested	38	33	36	57	51
2. Hispanic					
% Met Standard	100	100	97	100	89
% Commended Performance	30	33	16	1	18
Number of Students Tested	43	36	32	30	40
3. Economically Disadvantaged					
% Met Standard	100	100	97	100	90
% Commended Performance	30	24	10	1	27
Number of Students Tested	43	38	39	41	49
State Scores					
% Met Standard	90	90	87	82	80
% Commended Performance	25	18			

Note: 3rd grade is the only grade tested at our campus.