



Woodridge Elementary in Alamo Heights ISD
100 Woodridge San Antonio, Texas 78209
Principal: Gerrie Spellmann
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Woodridge Elementary is a part of the Alamo Heights ISD. Our mission states we are the heart of the community whose passion is excellence, will educate and empower each student to excel academically and as a confident, compassionate citizen with impeccable character and a global perspective through engaging, personally challenging and relevant experiences that inspire learning for life. Woodridge educates over 900 students 1st-5th grades with Dual Language and Spanish Immersion at each grade level with a range of 8 to 10 teachers per grade level. Our population consists of 19% economically disadvantaged, 10% English Language Learners with over 35% of our total student population considered At-Risk.

We are guided by the AHISD Profile of a Learner, which sets forward the attributes our students will need to positively impact the world upon graduation. The Profile states students will: Develop a Healthy Sense of Self, Communicate and Collaborate, Employ Skills for Life, Seek Knowledge and Understanding, Think Critically and Creatively, and Engage Socially and Globally. Our approach to designing engaging work embedded with technology that captures the hearts and minds of our students is the focus of the Engaged Classroom initiative. Four years ago, the district began the implementation of 'Engaged Cohorts', in which the physical and academic structure of classrooms are centered around student engagement and profound learning. WE is moving toward 100% of classrooms that qualify as Engaged. In these classrooms, students' individual funds of knowledge are availed through positive relationships, classroom environment with flexible seating, carefully planned pedagogy with the intentional technology tools, and best practices for learning. Engaged Cohort members have bi-monthly coaching to hone the craft of creating student-driven, challenging experiences for their classrooms, allowing for student voice and choice using the Blueprint for planning tool. A commonly used practice is a blended learning station rotation model where students have a weekly Menu/Hyperdoc to use as a guide through new learning. Students can pace themselves through learning activities and as part of the stations, they meet with the teacher to get feedback on their progress, clarify any misconceptions and/or to be assessed on their knowledge mastery.

Technologies are used as tools to support and connect learning for students beyond the four walls of the classroom. Profound learning occurs when students are able to create a deeper knowledge of content and apply their learning through collaborative solving problems using Project (or problem) Based Learning (PBL). Our AHISD Teacher of the Year (and Trinity Prize Nominee), Lisa Barry's students created a Tweens for Tolerance school organization that has made WNL (Woodridge News Live) commercials and received local media attention to raise awareness and money for children that have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. This call to action occurred after a novel read aloud where students applied their learning at a deeper level. Using Merge cubes and a coding app called co-spaces, students in 5th grade created games that allowed other students to practice mastery of fractions where students applied their learning to cultivate the learning for others. The same 5th grade teacher has a buddy class in Mexico where his students practice their Spanish and collaborate about learning through Google Hangout. The WE students noticed how their friends in Mexico were limited to resources that seemed abundant in their own class. Our WE 5th graders developed/created a campaign to collect supplies for their buddy class. As part of the PBL, students mapped out the route, calculated speed, mileage, gas consumption and money needed to get the supplies to their buddy class. This year our 5th graders hosted a "Coding Party" where they helped younger students learn how to code a dance party. Our first grade students enjoy the hands on learning in their classes by using green screens for video production and ozobots learning about maps, line graphs and story lines. A group of teachers came together and inventoried the tools for technology that were on campus such as Merge cubes, Ozobots, Spheros, etc. and wrote a grant for additional funding to add to our inventory and created a STEM Lab for next year. This will be a place where classes and class buddies can learn together with hands-on technologies where the digital world is possible at Woodridge.

Character education is the heart of our school where students apply their learning to new situations. WE recently received recognition as a School of Character from Character.org and our community celebrated

the heart work that our staff and students have done, and also reflected on how we can improve. Since the beginning of the school year, we have redefined our campus values with the input from teachers, students and parents with the Be The WE Creed: “At Woodridge Elementary, WE all benefit from **SELF CONTROL**, WE strive for excellence through personal **Perseverance**, WE are **ACCEPTING** of others, WE Show and receive **RESPECT** through **KIND** words and actions, and WE value **SERVICE** to our community. This is who WE are, even when no one is watching.” SPARKS, an acronym from the bold words, helps students to remember our creed and live it everyday. Our students have become familiar with SPARKS through morning meetings where they learn about important character traits and values, use their Be the WE journals to reflect and discuss important life topics as a class. Another way students at WE connect is through buddy classes across grade levels. They meet with buddy classes to read, share written letters and collaborate on service projects in our community. The Be The We Crew is a leadership opportunity that allows 5th grade students to have a voice and choice as they can sign up to be Student Ambassadors, in the Lost and Found Crew, Campus Improvement Crew, Safety patrols, or be a member of the Principal Advisory Crew. Each Be the WE Crew committee allows students to be a leader, give back to the school and have a voice. The PAC meets at least once a month and share their insight and ideas with the Principal about how to make the learning experience at WE better. They discuss everything from before school activities to homework concerns and even how to redesign Manner Banner points which we use in the cafeteria to recognize positive behavior. At WE, we believe Growth-mindset is the centerpiece of academic success - students value learning over outcome, which allows staff to address academic integrity in developmentally appropriate ways. We’ve even revised grading policy on a district level as a result of reflecting on practices that best foster this aspect of our creed. As a result of the Engaged Classroom and School of Character.org work, we have seen a change in the culture and relationships across campus. Teachers and students are working together to design engaging learning experiences and making our school and community a better place.

Teacher voice is held to a high degree as WE recognize that the teachers know the students needs based on relationships and data collected from multiple sources. WE teachers regularly meet as grade level teams with interventionists and specialized instruction teachers to ensure that students' needs are being met so that every student can succeed. WE teachers also collaborate to analyze student work and growth in writing, which is one of our campus wide goals, by bringing work samples together and using protocols. The result is teachers have been able to determine how to support student writing in all content areas and areas of focus for writing workshop mini lessons. The Campus Design Team is comprised of teachers that volunteer to create engaging professional development of best practices and the newest technology ideas to share during our monthly professional development. Our teachers have shared how to use Screencastify as a teacher to record short instructional flipped videos and as a student to record your understanding or reflection of learning a new concept. We use feedback from teachers to prepare subsequent sessions for our professional development so that it meets their needs, just like we do for our students. The Character Team has spent quality time together composing our Character.org documents which led to revisions in our BE The WE Creed, campus wide behavior expectations and communication systems, and training for our staff so that we all share the same message and expectations with our students. Our Character Team provided each teacher and student with A Be The WE journals for us to reflect on our character and values which lends itself to our school goal embedding more writing opportunities for students to improve writing fluency. WE teachers are continuously engaging in learning and conversations to help our students have a better learning experience.

Finally, our district has embarked and developed a systematic way to evaluate progress towards achieving the Profile of a Learner goals through multiple data points in a Community Based Accountability System where our campus looks at key questions to determine profound learning beyond any standardized test. Teacher, parent and student feedback is highly regarded with helping us continuously improve our students' experiences at Woodridge Elementary. This defines the work and who WE are. This results tangible attributes our students have to positively impact the world upon leaving Woodridge Elementary and ultimately graduating high school!