



Johnie R. Daniel Elementary, Northwest ISD  
N2 Learning Innovative Schools Application  
1907 Tye Street Northlake, TX 76247

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### [Johnie R. Daniel Elementary Video Link](#)

#### **Overview and Background**

Daniel Elementary opened in 2023 and is one of the fastest-growing elementary schools in Northwest ISD. The campus serves a highly diverse population, representing more than 20 languages, making it essential to intentionally understand and respond to the unique needs of our students and families. Over the past two years, the student population has doubled in size. With rapid growth comes the need for strong organizational systems, adaptive structures, and a clearly articulated vision that is consistently communicated to all stakeholders.

As a PI 6 member, I utilized *Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas* to develop the foundational framework for Daniel Elementary. This framework intentionally emphasizes campus culture and climate, purposeful technology integration, student voice, teacher empowerment, and authentic community partnerships. While the words *new* and *transform* are not often paired together, the mindset behind opening a new campus can—and should—be transformed. Daniel Elementary was intentionally opened with alignment to the long-standing vision for Texas public education established by visionary leaders more than two decades ago.

#### **Alignment of Daniel Elementary's Practices with the Texas Visioning Document**

At the heart of Daniel Elementary's work is a deep commitment to student voice and choice. Students are active participants in their learning through goal setting, reflection, and leadership opportunities embedded within classrooms and across the campus. Examples of student leadership include students co-hosting a leadership conference for elementary schools across the DFW area, leading Friday morning assemblies, and creating the video featured in the *Schools Transforming Learning* presentation. Student surveys are administered multiple times throughout the year to gather feedback on engagement and learning experiences. Teachers consistently provide opportunities for students to make choices in how they demonstrate learning, engage in academic discourse, and reflect on their progress. This approach aligns directly with the Texas Visioning Document's emphasis on learner agency and personalized learning experiences that prepare students to think critically and take ownership of their growth.

Daniel Elementary also prioritizes individual goal setting with visual representation to ensure learning is transparent, meaningful, and student-centered. Academic and personal goals are clearly communicated, tracked, and celebrated using student-friendly tools and visible data. Students share their goals with their families through a QR code placed in their daily folders. Families can scan the code to access a student-created video in which the child explains their goals and reflects on progress.



This practice builds motivation and accountability, reinforces a growth mindset, and helps students clearly understand where they are, where they are going, and the steps needed to achieve success. Additionally, this practice reflects the Texas Visioning Document’s emphasis on authentic family engagement and meaningful communication between schools, students, and caregivers.

Collaboration is a cornerstone of Daniel Elementary’s success and is embedded through strong Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Teachers engage regularly in data-driven dialogue, instructional planning, and collective problem-solving to ensure high levels of learning for all students. PLCs focus on curriculum alignment, effective instructional strategies, and targeted interventions, supporting a culture of continuous improvement. Teams also participate in “State of the Grade” presentations, during which grade levels and departments share student data, instructional practices that have led to success, and identified areas for growth. Every team participates, including specials, special education, interventionists, early childhood educators, and grade-level teachers. This shared responsibility fosters collective celebration of success and collaborative problem-solving to address challenges.

Beyond the classroom, Daniel Elementary fosters belonging and leadership through its house system, referred to as our *family system*. Students are placed in one of three families—Loyal, Trustworthy, or Hardworking—and remain in that family from Pre-K through fifth grade. This structure promotes cross-grade collaboration, strengthens relationships, and builds a strong sense of identity and belonging. When families meet, older students help lead chants, cheers, the school song, and character lessons. This system aligns with the Texas Visioning Document’s focus on social-emotional learning and cultivating a positive school culture where every student feels valued and connected.

Daniel Elementary also actively cultivates community partnerships to enhance learning and student well-being. Strong relationships with families, the Pecan Square HOA, PTA, community leaders, local organizations, and stakeholders create authentic learning opportunities and shared ownership in student success. These partnerships include student artwork displayed in community model homes, HOA volunteers supporting academic events, choir performances at community celebrations such as the town square tree lighting, and a first-day-of-school community walk escorted by the Northlake Police Department. These experiences reinforce the importance of public education as a central and celebrated part of the community and reflect the shared responsibility for student success emphasized in the Texas Visioning Document.

In summary, Daniel Elementary’s practices demonstrate intentional and cohesive alignment with the Texas Visioning Document through student voice and leadership, collaborative professional practices, purposeful goal setting, a strong sense of belonging, and meaningful community engagement. Together, these elements create an environment where students are empowered to learn, lead, and thrive—both now and in the future.