

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Patricia Lea  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name William Roberts ECE-8 School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2100 N Akron Way  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Denver State CO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 80238-3087

County Denver

Telephone (720) 424-2640 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://billroberts.dpsk12.org/ E-mail Patricia\_Lea@dpsk12.org

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Alex Marrero E-mail alex\_marrero@dpsk12.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Denver Public School District Tel. (720) 423-3200

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Dr. Carrie Olson  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The electronic signature on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. 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 OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. 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.
11. 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

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Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
  - 115 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 31 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 59 High schools
  - 2 K-12 schools

207 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

- Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	10	6	16
K	57	51	108
1	48	62	110
2	59	48	107
3	49	51	100
4	53	52	105
5	60	39	99
6	43	38	81
7	36	41	77
8	41	25	66
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	456	413	869

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 3.5 % Asian
  - 6.7 % Black or African American
  - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 71.9 % White
  - 6.7 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 3%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	16
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	13
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	29
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	932
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Amharic, Arabic, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Mandarin, Russian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %  
38 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8 %

Total number students who qualify: 67

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

72 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>5</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>11</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>7</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>35</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>10</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 15

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	41
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	15
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	0%	0%	0%	0%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Bill Roberts K-8 is a creative, safe, and dynamic community of learners that nurtures and educates the whole child. Our high-caliber staff, in partnership with our supportive parents, provides students with challenging and innovative learning opportunities through exploring the arts, educating for character, and fostering vigorous thinking – all essential for success in our changing world.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

#### Elementary

We have had to pivot many times during the pandemic year. As we were creating our "Safe to Return to School Plan" in August we were notified that the elementary school would be remote until at least Labor Day and we did not return in person until Oct 21st for our k-5 students. We were able to bring our Kindergarten and 1st grade students back two week earlier. Seven days after our 2nd through 5th grade students returned in person, due to rising Covid-19 numbers in our City, our 3-5 students were sent home and back to remote learning. Our k-2 students remained in person. Even though our youngest students were in person, they had to have their Special’s classes live streamed in order to adhere to cohorting guidelines. All Elementary students returned to in person learning after the Winter Break. Because our students and teachers committed to wearing masks, hand washing and social distancing we had only five classes quarantine due to a positive Covid-19 case within the classroom. During all of our quarantines no other teacher or student showed symptoms. This shows that our safety procedures were working. If a class was quarantined they would go back to remote learning during that time. Teachers, families and students are aware that things can change at any time.

#### Middle School

The middle school portion of Roberts K-8 began the year strictly under a virtual learning model. We had separate schedules for 6th grade and 7/8th grade for a number of reasons. First, 7th and 8th grade students take up to three additional core classes; Spanish is considered a core class, but the time is reserved for targeted, specialized instruction and intervention for some students. Moreover, 7th and 8th grade students take science and social studies as separate classes, with the addition of STEM as a core class. 6th grade students take Literacy, Math, and a social studies/science hybrid class as part of their core instruction. Core instruction refers to academic classes only, not electives or specials. The structuring of the school day necessitated a separation of humanities and math/science classes into alternating days for 7th and 8th grade (Social Studies, Literacy, and Spanish/ Math, Science, and STEM); whereas, 6th grade maintained the same “bell” schedule each day of the week with their three core classes. There were additional scheduling differences in how we used our time across the middle school grades. All grades, 6-8, followed the same start and stop times; however, 6th grade used a 90 minute consecutive block class for core classes. With teacher input, 7th and 8th grade students had two classes per subject each day, with a 45 minute class in the morning used primarily for direct instruction and a 45 minute class period in the afternoon that was used for independent practice, group work, and teacher-directed small group instruction. All of this instruction was delivered virtually until January 19.

Beginning January 19, the middle school returned to school via a Hybrid model, with a mix of in-person and virtual learning. Our district kept the option of learning virtually for families; therefore, teachers were expected to continue with virtual instruction in addition to in-person instruction. We divided each grade level into two cohorts, with 2 classes per cohort. Understanding that some disruption was inevitable due to quarantining guidelines at the time, the Hybrid model had to offer fluidity between in-person and virtual learning for cohorts of students or individual students. After teacher and community input, through surveys and town hall meetings, our middle school returned at 50% in-person capacity. In 6th grade, we had one Cohort present for four consecutive days in-person for one week, with the other Cohort virtual, and alternated on a weekly basis. 7th and 8th grade followed an AABB schedule, where Cohort A was present on Monday and Tuesday, with Cohort B virtual; whereas, Cohort B was present on Wednesday and Thursday, with Cohort A virtual. All middle school teachers taught two 90 minute block classes in-person and held a dedicated 90 minute block class virtually each day. The dedicated virtual block continued use of the same platforms of instruction (Google Meets, Schoology) and ensured we were able to maintain the same level of teacher-student and student-student interaction. Beginning on February 19, we added Friday as a fifth day, alternating between Cohort A and B in-person.

Beginning on April 6, 6th grade will be returning to full in-person classes. The option to remain virtual still exists; however, virtual instruction will shift towards live streaming for those students. On April 19, 7th and 8th grade will continue with the gradual phase-in approach to a full in-person return.

**17. For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

This school is part of the Central Park Elementary School Zone for grades K-5 and the Greater Park Hill/Central Park Middle School Enrollment Zone for grades 6-8.

An enrollment zone is a geographic area where students living within it are guaranteed a seat at one of several schools, not just one particular school.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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When the old airport relocated, Denver was left with approximately 7 ½ square miles and 2,935 developable acres of land. Forest City was selected as the master planner and developer in 1998 to turn the once airport and vacant land into an urban oasis that fostered community. Approximately 77% of housing units are single family homes; whereas, the remaining 23% are multi-family units. Most of the homeowners in the community are white; however, the 25% low-income requirement for development helps ensure that the neighborhood can be diverse and resemble the rich, cultural make-up of Denver. Regardless, approximately 99.98% of all housing units are within a half mile of a park. With small yards for homes, parks become places of gathering in the community. In many ways, like our outdoor spaces in the community are intentionally placed to bring people together, schools are similar beacons of inclusiveness. Bill Roberts remains very intentional about ensuring all of our families are welcome in the school, regardless of race or socio-economic status.

The process of navigating a diverse community, and ensuring all families feel safe and welcomed in the school building, begins with our staff. Our school's ongoing work in culturally responsive teaching and learning has helped ensure we have the language, the understanding, and the appropriate processes to help dismantle barriers for some of our families. We have a weekly early release day every Friday for professional development. A major focus of our professional development is equity and culturally responsive teaching. We have begun with the difficult work of personal, deep reflection and assessment to uncover any implicit biases we may hold; these might inadvertently make their way into our lesson plans, assessments, teaching methods, and how we facilitate family engagement. Following this work of personal and collective understanding, we were then only able to look at our school and systems from a perspective of inclusiveness.

At Bill Roberts, we do not ignore the economic disparities and the racial differences that contribute to our families' experiences, both in and out of school. We recognize and validate this diversity. We understand that there may not be equal access to opportunities in the building for students. Through our work with our PTA, as well as local community foundations, and volunteer efforts from families, we provide Thanksgiving meals to families, organize a holiday outreach program for gift giving and food during the holiday season, and fundraise to provide scholarships for students to go on field trips, end of year trips, and have all necessary school supplies. Not all our efforts, however, are geared towards ensuring access is equal from a financial perspective. Building our community means bringing people together. Much like the parks in our neighborhood, we create numerous events that do just that. We have annual Family Dances, chili cook-off competitions, an annual carnival, and student performances. Class parents help organize volunteers for classroom or instructional support, and our school maintains an open-door policy for our families.

Bill Roberts has a strong culture of inquiry, where learning is about seeking understanding, answering challenging questions, and growing at both a holistic and cognitive level. Our early release Friday program is reserved for the professional development and growth of our teachers so that this culture of inquiry is alive in our classrooms. An early focus of our plan was to create the best learning environment where students can have the space to think. We had the primary assumption that thinking was not linear or hierarchical; rather, if the goal of thinking was to understand, the processes in which students engaged in their learning needed to be fluid between knowledge, comprehension, and application. Moving beyond Bloom's taxonomy, we engaged in the work of creating a culture of thinking to promote engagement, understanding, and independence for all learners. We had that 30,000 ft. perspective of what the overall learning environment would look like. Using the thinking strategies developed by Ron Ritchart, we began to identify the concrete steps to get there. With consistent language and structures across grade levels, our students were able to articulate their thinking and teachers were able to facilitate this process by: (1) Making meaning; (2) Activating Schema; (3) Asking Questions; (4) Making inferences; and (5) Determining Importance. If these strategies remind an integral part of our students' learning experience across all grades, we felt confident that we would establish a learning community around fostering thinking and a deeper understanding. Our students were engaging in the same high level of inquiry as our teachers.

The nature of our culture of inquiry continued to pose questions around the gaps that were emerging as we



were looking at our data on a regular basis. We understood that as a root cause, phonemic and phonological skills must be present among all of our students to truly level the playing field and close any gaps in reading. This work of open inquiry into our own teaching practices eventually led to the training of all of our teachers in Orton Gillingham. It seems as though this adjustment to our literacy program was ahead of the emerging trend in the Science of Reading as an informative theory into our district's approach to early literacy.

One can look no further than technology to see just how its influence in our lives has changed over the years. It's difficult to state what kind of role technology will play in our kids' lives when they are older; yet, we can agree that technology will play a vital role. When we speak of technology, we refer to how people use it to interact, think, create, and innovate. To this end, we understood that it was important to ensure all students had access to the tools necessary to engage in their learning in different ways. To this end, Roberts was the recipient of Denver Public Schools' (DPS) last two major technology grants through the DPS Foundation. The first was sponsored by Campos EPC Foundation to place SMART (Science, Math, Art, Robotics, and Technology) Labs into schools. The SMART Lab opened in the fall of 2016 for students in grades K-8. Throughout that year, even our youngest students were able to learn computer coding, problem-solving, and project management. Our middle school students engaged collaboratively in engineering, with bridges to solar powered cars; while making use of 3-D printing to strengthen their designs.

The second grant was a 1:1 computer initiative made possible by a Mil Levy increase voters approved. Through the Mytech program, DPS launched its pilot initiative in the fall of 2016 for a first cohort of recipients. Roberts was among the first cohort of schools, and the only K-8 to be awarded the grant to place Chromebook into the hands of all students. With the addition of prepaid and preloaded hotspots, all students had internet access in the home and we began to break down any physical barriers that might inhibit student learning, focusing on closing the technology gap. A key part of our grant proposal was a legacy initiative, where any computers that were currently designated for middle school students would be shifted to lower grades. At the time, Roberts maintained a 1:2 student-computer ratio. Therefore, moving down approximately 90 existing computers to elementary grades in order to make way for the new Chromebook enabled the student to computer ratio to be 1:1 in grades 4-8. The experience using technology on a regular basis provided our school community with a smoother transition to virtual learning. Even as abrupt as it seemed, teachers and students had a familiar foundation from which to build upon.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

As a DPS school, we use the district approved curriculum in all contents as a base and add other researched based resources to supplement. As a whole, we believe in standards based instruction that emphasizes thinking strategies and inquiry in addition to direct instruction. We lean on the work from Ron Rictchart and PEBC for embedding thinking into all our learning. We strive to give students agency in their learning experiences and have students do the “heavy lifting” by using the following thinking strategies: Activate Schema; Monitor for Meaning; Ask Questions; Draw Inferences;

Determine Importance; Create Sensory Images; Synthesize Information; and Solve Problems.

Literacy: In our K-2 program we use Benchmark Literacy (primarily the non-fiction units) and backwards plan from the writing assessments. In 2017 our entire K-5 staff was trained in the OG approach and now each class has a dedicated phonics block of 20-30 minutes. We collaboratively decided to use Recipe for Reading as our primary resource for this block and have created a scope and sequence from their recommendations. Our current literacy block in K-2 is about 2.5 hours and includes 60 minutes of shared reading and writing, 30 minutes of phonics and 60 minutes of guided reading/small group time. We progress monitor using Istation monthly and DRA three times a year. Teachers also analyze writing tasks for each unit to focus on writing skills needed to be reinforced during the next unit.

All teachers and Administration are now taking a Science of Reading course through the Colorado Department of Education as a way to keep up with the latest research. The literacy block will begin to look different as we move away from guided reading into more small group instruction.

In grades 3-5 the adopted curriculum is Expeditionary Learning (EL); and, since 2018, we have added a dedicated phonics block as well. As students come with fewer phonological gaps the curriculum shifts to morphology. There are 2-3 interims (created by the district) in literacy which are used as a formative assessment. We use an assessment internalization process to plan for instruction and after the teachers analyze the results of these assessments to plan for next instructional steps as they think through whole group, small group and individual instructional needs.

Our middle school adopts the EL curriculum as a foundation. We have supplemented areas of this curriculum in text choice in order to provide access to more rigorous texts, but have leaned heavily on the vocabulary and text dependent questions from EL. We do not necessarily follow the curriculum in a sequential manner, but have moved units around according to specific standards assessed in our interim assessments. We were a pilot middle school in 2018-2019 in the development of middle school specific assessments, and began adjusting our units (narrative, non-fiction, etc.) according to these benchmarks.

Math: All elementary grades use the Bridges math curriculum and we often will supplement for rigor using some Engage NY resources. We progress monitor in math using the Number Corner check points which cover all standards. Math blocks are about two hours and are divided into whole group and small group (differentiated instruction). Teachers have had professional development around the book Taking Action and are competent in teaching beyond the algorithm to deeper mathematical understanding.

Our middle school math program is backwards designed to ensure all of our students have access to Algebra in 8th grade. Therefore, we are a standards-based program that utilizes Open-Up Math and Math in Focus to drive our instruction. Similar to how our scope and sequence in literacy is developed according to our benchmark assessments, our math curriculum aligns the teaching of standards in a similar fashion. Open-Up provides student and teachers with practice problems and "cool down" exercises on an online/virtual platform. This curriculum ensures foundational skills are taught and works gradually towards the application of skills and procedural understanding and number sense. Math in Focus tends to be more conceptual, focusing on extended practice with the application of procedural knowledge.

Science: We are excited to use the NGSS science standards and adopted the Amplify Science Curriculum  
NBRS 2021

which we hope will bring some consistency, rigor and focus to our science block. Teachers like the immersive nature the program brings as well as the inquiry elements and the greater focus on reading and writing. There are hands-on activities as well as units that use problem based learning that deepen student engagement.

Social Studies: We follow the CAS for social studies and standards as well as instruction are supported and embedded into the non-fiction units. Students across the grade levels learn about civic responsibility, technology and what about positive people in a community.

**1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):**

**1b. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

We offer one ECE 4 year old classroom. We use the Creative Curriculum from Teaching Strategies as our base curriculum along with a robust social emotional curriculum called Conscious Discipline. These two programs working in tandem provide a rich experience for students both academically and emotionally. Units are project oriented and inquiry based and at the end of each unit parents are invited in for a celebration of learning. At the end of a Reduce/Reuse/Recycle unit students are able to share the Art they created from trash.

We monitor all learning through a holistic assessment tool called TS Gold. It assesses all domains: social emotional, oral language development, cognitive, math and literacy. With the use of Conscious Discipline, students learn how to manage the big feelings they have as well as learn how to be part of a school community/family. Our kindergarten teachers report anecdotally that students who participate in our ECE program show more school readiness behaviors and are able to engage in learning activities at higher levels. Our Istation Fall data show 83% of our kindergarten students at grade level in early reading.

Students have adapted remarkably well to the COVID-19 environment. They don't have issues with masks or with staying socially distanced during lunch. We continued our Home Visit Program with 100% participation even if those visits were done via Zoom. Our teachers have made modifications by meeting with children in smaller groups this year.

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

The arts are a vital part of Bill Roberts and what we represent. While we believe in rigorous academics, challenging students to push their thinking, the importance of each and every child to be successful, we feel as strong about the importance of the arts. Many students shine in the arts, perhaps more so than in a traditional classroom and they deserve to have their talents recognized. There is a strong collaboration between the specials and classroom teachers because of the intentional integration that occurs between the classroom and the arts. At any time you can find dances being performed because of regions being studied, artists being learned about because of their hidden messages expressed through their art. Quite often one can observe cultures being demonstrated through drama and dance while certain social studies modules are being taught and students are immersed in musical cultures from around the world.

During the typical school day, the community at Bill Roberts has access to a variety of special classes including Music, art, dance, drama, physical education, Steam Lab and a resourceful library. We employ two full time P.E, teachers because of our belief that a healthy body stimulates a healthy mind. Elementary kids have Physical Education at a minimum of twice weekly but often every other day. We have a strong connection (through our PE program) with healthy habits such as:

Fuel up to Play 60:

This program's primary focus is to help schools meet their wellness goals and encourage youth to consume nutrient-rich foods (low-fat and fat-free dairy, fruits, vegetables and whole grains and lean protein foods and

achieve at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

\*Bill Roberts has been a #1 Fuel UP school for 8yrs. We have reached their max level of participation and have been rewarded with Bronco player visits 2x's, 8 times we have been an advanced touchdown school and celebrate at the stadium with the NFL, Western Dairy and Fuel up.

UberGrippen Climbing Class:

1st official climbing program within our daily class offerings within PE. Students become belay certified and move onto the BR Climbing team.

Kids Heart Challenge | Jumprope for Heart:

Participating in a service learning project since 2006. The last 5yrs we have been in the top 5 schools for participation and fundraising for American Heart Association. We have raised over \$100k in the last 5yrs.

As a school that supports the whole child, we believe these are important parts of the daily school experience. Each grade level has at least one performance for the community to watch every year. We have a public kindergarten dance as a year-end culmination which concludes with parents joining their child for a final celebratory dance. Musical plays, as well as singing performances are rotated by grade levels each year and presented publicly.

Our middle school advanced drama program organizes an annual dinner theater, where students prepare food, serve, and put on a performance for our community. The two night event sells out quickly, and becomes one of the highlights of the year. We have begun an advanced math track for students beginning in 6th grade as a way to push our higher achieving students. Spanish is a core class for middle school that provides a two year program to prepare students for Spanish 2 in high school. Regarding math, combined with our algebra ready math curriculum, our students can enter high school with two high school classes already passed, instead being placed in 10th grade classes.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

Despite our schools' academic success, including our subgroups' performance outpacing district averages, we still have work to closing achievement gaps. We experience significant (10 points) between the test scores of all students and our African American students and Students with Disabilities. To address these gaps, we have implemented a number of strategies at the student and collective level.

During this pandemic the gaps between our subgroups and our general population have grown and our largest gap is with our EL subgroup. As a group there are more EL students who opted for remote learning than in person.

Change in Early Literacy Data from Spring 2020, Fall 2020 to Winter 2021

SBGL Students: All: 3%-3%-4%; Black: 7%-18-4; Latinx: 10%-5%-18%; and EL: 10%-5%-8%

Early Literacy Data: Classroom teachers are doing their best to provide tier 2 interventions and support and we have varied levels of expertise and implementation for those supports. We have a dedicated phonics block in our K-2 classes as well as small group instruction and although our k-2 teachers are ELA certified we have missed the support of our ELD teacher who has been on maternity leave.

Because our special population students are small in number we have taken an individualized approach to closing the achievement gap. We highlight these students during our grade level data

meetings and discuss instructional strategies to implement, reteaching opportunities and making sure we have high expectations.

We have the same achievement gaps in our 3-5 and MS populations as demonstrated by our interim assessments.

In 3-5 Literacy 25% of our students with disabilities and Black students are not meeting the standards. In Math, the data is similar with 23% for Students with Disabilities and 19% of Black students. We have asked teachers to keep up with the pacing of the curriculum as well as provide consistent tier 2 interventions in the classroom.

MS Math: Our Hispanic students are closing the gap and showed 72% proficiency compared to 81% of their white peers. We will prioritize our 9 black students who scored approaching in order to close the gap. Teachers are planning on intentional reteaching missed standards as well as working 1-1 with those students.

MS ELA: In literacy the gap for our black students is even bigger with 63% of our students demonstrating mastery, still behind our white students at 92%.

We have a consistent MTSS process to identify students falling below grade level. Any student identified in K-8 receives small group instruction at their instructional level to help accelerate growth and get caught up to grade level. We have dedicated staff for either math or literacy support at the primary, intermediate, and secondary level. To support our students in the general education classroom, our teachers adopt the workshop model of instruction and leverage small group instruction for additional support to provide access points to rigorous tasks for all students; however, this strategy is useful for providing Tier 2 support for students. Students selected for Tier 3 supports, not including special education students, are pulled out of class during any activity that is not whole group instruction or necessary for grade level success; i.e. independent reading, station work, etc. Students are progress monitored at their instructional level for 6-12 weeks to assess whether they are responding to the intervention. Often, with consistent intervention, students are able to demonstrate growth. If growth is not seen with consistent intervention, students might be recommended for a special education evaluation.

## Special Education

The special education program at Roberts is robust, but focuses on the inclusion model of instruction for all students. There are pull-out services to provide specialized instruction for students to reach IEP goals. However, in the general education classroom, the same differentiation practices that support students at the Tier 2 and 3 levels are applied to students with disabilities. Students are progress monitored regularly by the special education teacher toward reaching IEP specific goals, and the classroom teacher collects ongoing data on grade level performance. Through regular meetings and consultations, our teachers work together to ensure students are growing academically.

## African American Students

At the collective level, we have embraced the work around equity and dismantling systems of racism. The work toward providing a culturally responsive teaching and learning experience for our students has provided a strong theoretical foundation from which to better inform our practices and interactions with our African American students and families. We have engaged in meaningful professional development since the 2018-2019 school year around uncovering our own biases,

looking hard at our own systems and levels of involvement and pushed our thinking around what practices we can engage in to provide culturally responsive teaching to our students.

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

At Bill Roberts, we believe that building and solidifying relationships within our community are at the core of engaging students. Hosting ten different grade levels within one building provides us with endless probabilities to build and grow relationships, focus on cultivating partnerships between students and adults, and to provide continuous options for student leadership opportunities.

Adults model positive attitudes, humble consideration for race and a quest for learning that we desire to be replicated by our students. Our work is fostered within a collaborative environment, where adults are continuous learners. This is supported by our weekly early release where the entire staff participates as pupils in professional development to improve their craft and become better facilitators of learning.

The climate and culture of Bill Roberts is firmly outlined and supported by our PBIS structure, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System. Our focus behavioral traits include PROUD P:Prepared R:Respectful O:Outstanding Effort U:United Community D:Determined

Students receive golden tickets from any adult when they exhibit extraordinary behaviors supporting these traits. Each trimester we host a “wild” celebratory assembly for the school where the collected golden tickets are pulled out of buckets to celebrate those that have earned tickets. Many prizes are presented, treasure chest rewards are given, spontaneous and silly relays occur with staff and students, and a fun time is shared.

Our Middle School Students have an important role in co-facilitating and assisting in creating these assemblies.

Middle School students are given the very much in-demand leadership opportunity to become student assistants where they work in a primary classroom as an educational assistant. If compatible, students and teachers meet to discuss the opportunities around the student assistant job. This can reconnect them with former teachers, who usually provides an amazing experience. This has the potential to build wonderful relationships between middle school students and our littles and instills confidence and self-reliance for our young adults.

Random Acts of Kindness is another philosophy we use to build our school climate and culture. The mission of Random Acts of Kindness is to create environments in schools, homes and work atmospheres where kindness is the norm. Students learn and display actions that demonstrate kindness toward others and learn important social and emotional skills that strengthen the school climate and culture. Students learn important social and emotional skills. The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation is to make kindness the norm in our schools, workplaces, homes & communities. They work toward that goal by creating free content that promotes kindness toward others & teaches important social emotional responsibilities.

Bill Roberts participates in the Academic Mentors Program through Community Resources. Each year, the GT teacher solicits applications from students hoping for a mentorship. There are limited opportunities, but we have been fortunate that each year we have successfully placed students with a mentor. Mentorships allow students to pursue an area of interest and learn about what a career in the field looks like as well as form connections with the mentor and others in the field

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Bill Roberts has established bonding partnerships with parents, community members, businesses, local colleges and the district (most recently) to support student success and foster school improvement. The relationships that have grown between the school and the outside public have provided dividends that would be unattainable if these relationships did not exist.

Our ongoing affiliation with the Stapleton Foundation is just one example that has provided not only monetary gifts (through written grants) but also intentional professional development supporting our culture and equity studies endorsing the needed training in recognizing our staff's own unconscious biases. Another successful strategy has been our ongoing partnership with the UNC Graduate Education Program where the students must complete 160 voluntary hours in a classroom co-teaching and assisting small group instruction. During a semester, we usually house 10-12 graduate students and have found this partnership to be a win-win situation. We have even hired two of the students who are now some of our top performing teachers.

Our parent affiliation is the bridge that binds our goal of engaging families. We realize it takes a village to assist children in becoming successful and a piece of that is to assist with in families feeling respected and highly regarded. The staff develops trusting relationships by conducting family curriculum nights, hosting student led conferences, home visits, cultural dinner nights, and providing ongoing, strong communication.

Families have opportunities to partake in active roles through our rigorous PTA, the CSC (Collaborative School Committee composed of administration, teachers and parents) family orientations and open houses, and GT nights. Throughout the year, school-wide parent and student surveys are administered so we can receive honest feedback to determine any needed changes.

Throughout the pandemic, the school has engaged parent participation and communication by hosting remote town halls, virtual open-houses and school tours, and presented videos created by students. This year we embraced our first virtual auction which raised a substantial amount of money. We have increased communication by sending out mid weekly communications as well as a Friday message to every family. Whenever there was a positive case of COVID in a class, administration made the decision to personally call each and every family that would be affected by the case rather than just sending the district generated letter.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Bill Roberts is a school aiming to go from good to great. In order for this to occur, we are committed to being a staff that participates in ongoing adult learning. This is supported by our weekly early release where all staff members partake in ongoing professional development. In the past we have partnered with PEBC. They offer all teachers professional development through coaching, sit and get, creating and visiting lab classrooms, and offering on-site modeling around targeted instructional practices.

Our staff visited many schools in order to observe our focus around the thinking strategies, making meaning, activating background knowledge, asking questions, determining importance and inferring so that they could see these strategies being instructed during a live classroom environment. Currently Bill Roberts now offers two lab classrooms of our own that are supported by PEBC.

We have also concentrated our time on developing healthy classroom teams where kids are at the center of everything we do. We divided the school into three distinct buckets, primary (E-2), intermediate grades (3rd-5th) and middle school, each supervised by an administrator and coach. We have created multi-faceted tiered teams that are composed of mental health support, interventionists, and coaches to improve engagement of all students, boost instructional practices, increase collaboration, enhance data analysis which has the potential to increase academic gains and narrow the learning gaps.

Within the school setting, we have dedicated a majority of time to create effective, competent data teams. The content teams (math and literacy) meet every other week with their content-like teammates, their bucket administrator, a coach to that helps to desegregate data and determine next instructional steps, reteaching strategies and supports that may be needed for students. We develop a short, measurable, attainable re-teaching goal that is quickly observed by the coach or administrator and feedback is quickly provided to the teacher.

It is proven that the most valuable practice to show student growth is the effectiveness of a teacher. Small instructional tweaks, feedback for teachers, based on valuable data has proven to be a mammoth tool for the staff. Our coordinated efforts have indicated success for students but also have had a positive impact on the



instructional practices we see in the classrooms.

Our intensive training in O.G. (Orton Gillingam philosophy) for all K-4 teachers has been one of our greatest success stories. It supports the foundational teaching of phonics. It is teacher directed and driven. It is taught on a vertical continuum by grade level and students move upward as demonstrated by student mastery. It has made significant positive changes in our reading fluency, spelling, and comprehension scores. This has navigated teacher understanding on an equal ground and forced their hands to learn about reading standards that need to be mastered at the grade above and below their current teaching grade level.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

The school leadership structure at Bill Roberts represents one of “imperfection.” That is simply stated and truthful because human behavior is not perfect and we are always modifying it and attempting to make it better. There are times when it may be blemished, but regardless, there are more instances when it is enriching and fostering. The team consists of one principal, two assistant principals, and three teacher leaders. All of these people are in supervisory positions, and have roles in coaching and evaluating others. The structure is also supported by a school leadership team made up of five team specialists who teach in different content areas and a new teacher ambassador. They provide information to the staff, to the leadership team, bring the staff perspective into conversations and decision making.

They also help develop and plan some of the professional development that is offered to the staff. The titles within the team are simply that, and are not significant in terms of power, dominance, or clout. In general, the teachers at Bill Roberts take on many leadership roles; we are a teaching school so it is not uncommon to find four or five student teachers in the building during a trimester. Many of the senior teacher’s mentor new teachers and each teacher is committed to be on two committees for the school year. Teachers volunteer to coordinate school wide events throughout the year. The school is divided into “buckets,” the primary bucket, intermediate and the middle school and each administrator is responsible for one bucket.

While specific responsibilities of the principal are directed by the district, school responsibilities are decided within the building. The philosophy at Roberts is that the administrative team views the big picture and makes meaning out of that. We realize we cannot lead in seclusion. We know where we want to get to and what we must achieve but the road to get there is most often a staff embedded and supported decision. The structures in the school are set and well defined but the leaders' missions are about attending and ministering to its people; the staff, the students and the parents. We are a culture of inclusivity, where gratitude is lived out, commitments are strong and alive.

We are committed to ensuring that policies, programs, and relationships focus on student achievement and the whole child. We host weekly grade level meetings, data team meetings, kid talk meetings, (dealing with social/emotional issues), special education meetings which include our mental health team. These are just some of the examples of how we continue to place students at the center of what we do, despite the past untypical COVID 19 year.

We have needed to shift some of the usual responsibilities of the administrative team to ensure safety for everyone. Administration has spent more time subbing in classes because of low availability of visiting teachers. Lunch is served outside or in classes, no longer in the lunchroom. Cohorting has become a norm, along with desks and the need to be distanced; rather than occupying cozy areas and sitting at tables. We have become masters at google meets and have held countless town halls for parent updates, all necessary during a worldwide pandemic.

#### **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

We began our work in Culturally Responsive teaching three years ago. As a staff we collaborated to create promises around teaching and learning that support all students. These promises show up across the school.

They are:

I will build meaningful relationships with all of my students by learning about students' and their families' backgrounds and I will provide joyful and personalized learning in my classroom.

I commit to embracing all students for who they are and understand that my lessons need to meet the needs of each individual learner.

I will build relationships with families, particularly with families who may not be present at school often.

I will foster a questioning attitude and persistence in solving problems in my students. As we work to create a safe classroom community, we will value growing and learning through risk taking and mistakes.

And, we will celebrate student successes.

I will work to speak out to dismantle systems of power and privilege that impact my students, my practice and myself.

I will commit to maintaining and communicating consistent and clear high expectations for all students to drive their learning. I will focus on student ownership of learning and design lessons that place a cognitive load on students so that they can continue to grow.

I am responsible for the academic and social-emotional success of all of my students. I will honor "student voice" and use student feedback and input to design instruction that meets students where they are.

As we work to make our classrooms more culturally responsive, as a staff we continue to develop our own racial identities, understand white privilege and dismantle our own biases and learn more about ways to combat the systematic racism within public education. We have engaged in several book studies: *Waking Up White*, *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*, *How to be an Anti-Racist* and *Raising White*

Kids.

This year we are going deeper by hosting a listening tour with our families of color and hosting a panel of parents and teachers of color from our school to describe their experience to our staff. During the 2021-2022 school year all faculty and staff will take the IDI (Identity Development Inventory) so we can better differentiate our PD for our staff based on the themes and patterns of the survey as well as track our adult progress along the IDI continuum.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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We often say to prospective families that our whole child approach does not have to sacrifice a strong social/emotional learning program for rigorous academics; the two are not mutually exclusive.

According to the Denver Public Schools Whole Child Survey, our school received over a 90% positive response rate from students around various measures of their well-being. Our focus on supporting the whole child, with an equal and integral focus on the social/emotional well-being of students continued when school closures began. We have grounded our practices in a number of curriculum (Random Acts of Kindness, PBIS, Second Step) for the preceding years of the Pandemic.

When school closures began, we had this foundation (content knowledge, curriculum, instructions focus) as a school-wide practice. We believed it was essential to continue this practice as we broke for remote learning, and structured our school day, from K-8 to include intentional support for students each day. This led to relationships being developed in a virtual setting, even among students and teachers who did not know each other yet; this was especially true for the beginning of school year 2020-2021.

To identify the specific needs and ensure our teachers had the opportunity to know their students, we administered the Behavioral Emotional Screening System (BESS) as a screener. The data we collected in our survey administration process provided extremely valuable data on our students. Given the difficulty of the pandemic and remote learning had on our Nation's students, the survey enabled our staff to better understand the totality of the pandemic's effect on the social/emotional well-being of our students. From the data, we set up specific groups for students to meet with our social worker, our psychologist continued to meet with students and targeted her support accordingly, and our teachers were given some general areas for classes and individual snapshots of students. Having this information accelerated the relationship building in the remote environment. Despite the closure of schools and the lack of physical interaction, our focus on the Whole Child did not waver despite the disruption the pandemic caused to the way we do our work.