

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2016 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 Mrs. Carla Rodenbucher

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

Official School Name Grace L. Roxbury Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 6795 Solon Boulevard

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Solon State OH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 44139-4128

County Cuyahoga County

Telephone (440) 349-6220 Fax (440) 349-8048

Web site/URL http://www.solonschools.org E-mail carlarodenbucher@solonboe.org

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/solonschools Facebook Page http://facebook.com/solonschools Google+ \_\_\_\_\_

YouTube/URL \_\_\_\_\_ Blog \_\_\_\_\_ Other Social Media Link \_\_\_\_\_

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\*Mr. Joseph Regano E-mail jregano@solonschools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Solon City Schools Tel. (440) 248-1600

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 Mrs. Julie Glavin  
(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, write N/A in the space.*

## Part I – Eligibility Certification

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The signatures 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. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
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 most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
  - Suburban
  - Small city or town in a rural area
  - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

| Grade                 | # of Males | # of Females | Grade Total |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| PreK                  | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| K                     | 36         | 42           | 78          |
| 1                     | 46         | 39           | 85          |
| 2                     | 45         | 29           | 74          |
| 3                     | 51         | 35           | 86          |
| 4                     | 41         | 50           | 91          |
| 5                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 6                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 7                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 8                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 9                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 10                    | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 11                    | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 12 or higher          | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| <b>Total Students</b> | 219        | 195          | 414         |

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 21 % Asian
  - 14 % Black or African American
  - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 55 % White
  - 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 2014 – 2015 school year: 8%

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

| Steps For Determining Mobility Rate  | Answer |
|--|--------|
| (1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year   | 11     |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year | 20     |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]  | 31     |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014   | 388    |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)   | 0.080  |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100  | 8      |

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %  
41 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Romanian, German, Urdu, Ukranian, Chinese, Spanish, Hindi, Arabic, Panjabi, Korean, Polish, Malayalam and Russian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16 %  
Total number students who qualify: 66
8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %  
37 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. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 10 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 1 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 4 Other Health Impaired
- 12 Specific Learning Disability
- 10 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

|   | <b>Number of Staff</b> |
|---|------------------------|
| Administrators  | 1                      |
| Classroom teachers  | 18                     |
| Resource teachers/specialists<br>e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.  | 7                      |
| Paraprofessionals   | 4                      |
| Student support personnel<br>e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 2                      |

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 23:1

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

| <b>Required Information</b> | 2014-2015 | 2013-2014 | 2012-2013 | 2011-2012 | 2010-2011 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance    | 97%       | 97%       | 96%       | 96%       | 97%       |
| 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 2015.

| <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.

Focusing on every child, every day, Roxbury ensures all students achieve and become contributing, ethical citizens with the support of our collaborative learning community.

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

## PART III – SUMMARY

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Roxbury School is located in the heart of the Solon City Schools' campus area. A walk through the halls of our elementary building is a reflection of the long-standing tradition of our school as the first dedicated elementary school in the Solon school district. Roxbury is the quintessential "old school" meets "new school." We are a neighborhood school, with many of our students walking to and from school with their parents each day.

While the Roxbury tradition in our district is strong, our school has evolved significantly in recent years to ensure our students receive the best possible academic foundation. With the academic rigor of today's learning standards, the level of intellectual thinking needed to master the skills and content is more complex than ever before. For our youngest students, putting developmentally appropriate supports in place is critical to their learning. Their future will be one of collaboration, communication, and interdependence, and we ensure that they have a myriad of opportunities throughout the school day and year to cultivate these skills and competencies.

This interconnectedness and ensuring all students are prepared for the future is underscored through our district Mission Statement: Solon City Schools, a diverse collaborative learning community of families, staff and community members, will ensure all students attain the knowledge and skills to succeed and become contributing, ethical citizens in a global society, through our unwavering commitment to inspire every student to achieve personal excellence.

In addition to our pursuit of fulfilling the mission, our Solon district Beliefs (derived through a community-based strategic planning process) clearly articulate our school mindset that learning thrives in a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment and diversity enriches our community.

At Roxbury, we embrace these partnerships and put systems in place to promote success for all students. For example, to foster students' love of learning and ensure students are learning at the appropriate and most challenging instructional level, Roxbury differentiates instruction based on each student's needs. Using varying types of assessment data, teachers target instruction to close learning gaps and extend achievement when students master content knowledge and skills. A unique feature of our instructional model is the No New Instruction time built into our building schedule. This dedicated time to focusing on any needed re-teaching or enrichment yields significant instructional growth for our students. Developing students' intellectual pursuits and leadership skills outside the classroom environment is also important at Roxbury. Students participate in a range of extracurricular activities such as Science Club, Chess Club, intramurals and Junior Leadership Council.

Equally important for student growth and development are the social and emotional supports the Roxbury team facilitates for our students. These programs, which range from ongoing mentoring programs to assemblies and engaging activities, help students develop and maintain healthy and respectful friendships and relationships. The education, guidance and support students receive through these programs is key to their overall development and well-being, and conducted in partnership with parents to promote reinforcement of these ideas and ongoing discussion at home. Our Rainbow of Friends program for kindergarten and first grade students, teaches students about tolerance and acceptance through lessons that celebrate diversity, including differences among students with learning or physical disabilities. Students also participate in a Friendship Club to enhance interaction and relationships with students whose needs require them to spend their educational day in our Intensive Instructional Resource Room. The Roxbury administrative, guidance, and psychology team facilitates ongoing small support groups for students during lunch and other times during the school day to help students cope with anxiety, behavior issues, home-based stresses such as divorce or parent illness, among others.

Additionally, Roxbury has built a school culture of growth mindset among our students to nurture their love of learning and encourage their perseverance in tackling difficult tasks and challenging work. Every week at Roxbury starts with Mindset Monday and an opportunity for an engaging activity to advance students' growth mindset, ability to embrace challenges, and risk-taking in their learning.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

In all subject areas, we focus daily on what we want students to learn (“I can” statements for each subject area), how we know they are learning (progress monitoring/assessments), what we will do when we know they are not learning (response to intervention process), and what we will do if they demonstrate that they have already learned the material (enrichment). The core curriculum is derived from the state of Ohio Learning Standards. Our professional learning teams collect and use data from formative and summative assessments to inform our instructional decisions and strategically act on the data to achieve our results. These goals drive our professional learning and results-oriented mindset.

As elementary level students, our students spend a large part of their day in a literacy block working on the foundational skills of reading, writing, and developmental spelling. Our school staff is grounded in theoretical reading and writing best practice research. All new teachers complete a full year of monthly professional development classes taught by our district elementary literacy coordinator. Additionally, all of our teachers receive training and continued support in implementing the reading and writing workshop model in their classrooms.

Our reading program includes bench marking with the developmental reading assessment (DRA) and developmental spelling assessment (DSA) two times a year. These critical data points allow our teachers to confirm that students have access to text at expected grade and achievement levels. Pre- and post-assessments in reading are administered each quarter and provide information to help teachers create appropriate instructional groups for guided reading.

All students at our school have a two-hour literacy block as part of their daily schedule, which includes 15-30 minutes of uninterrupted time for daily independent reading in grades K-2 and 30-40 minutes in grades 3-4. Our school media center specialists also work with students and staff to find accessible materials for all reading and interest levels.

The basics of our workshop and process-oriented writing program include quarterly writing pre- and post-assessments to provide information for teachers on possible student goals for improving their writing skills. With teacher support, students set their own writing goals throughout the year. Our writing block provides 20-30 minutes of daily writing time for students, which is focused on specific genre studies such as narrative and expository writing. Students are encouraged to find their writing “voice.” Texts are used to help support students in the writing process along with peer and adult writing feedback and progress monitoring.

Our professional learning communities conduct monthly professional development sessions to help support the use of reading strategies, text analysis and utilizing text-dependent questions during guided reading for all students.

**Math** – Our math curriculum is heavily focused on students’ conceptual understanding of math standards with an emphasis on problem solving. During the daily one-hour math block, students first work on a math problem that introduces a new concept or builds on previous math learning. Students collaborate to construct an understanding and application of strategies using critical thinking and problem solving skills.

While students work, teachers observe and process student responses. After this activity, students watch a short video clip of the day’s lesson and work through similar guided practice problems. The teacher circulates the room to listen as students share their math thinking with peers and uses the observations to differentiate for students. Once students have shown understanding of the concept, they are given an independent formative assessment, which drives the instruction for the “No New Instruction” (NNI) time at the end of the school day. During NNI, students will work with the teacher for intervention, practice the concept of the day, or engage in enrichment.

Science – Ohio’s Model Science curriculum is the basis of our Solon comprehensive units of study in Earth, Physical and Life Science. Reading skills aligned to Ohio Learning Standards in reading and writing are embedded in the instruction. Students acquire scientific ideas while working on inquiry-based projects. Additionally, students work in teams, which provides opportunities to practice their oral and written communication skills. Technology is another key component of students’ science learning as a tool for carrying out the research and design process of the scientific method. During science labs, students work on team learning, relationship building, and interpersonal social skills.

Social Studies – Ohio’s Model Social Studies curriculum is the foundation for our social studies program with an emphasis in History, Geography, Economics, and Government. Like science, reading skills aligned to Ohio’s Learning Standards in English/language arts are embedded in their learning. Classes are not lecture-based; instead students learn experientially through engaging activities such as simulations and debates. Across the grade levels, students also learn about citizenship and how to be good citizens themselves. Global awareness and understanding of other cultures are also root content.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

While some schools are cutting out specials education to make more time in the school day to adjust to increased rigor in the classroom, Solon has renewed its emphasis on the importance of balance in a student’s educational day. Students have the opportunity to access specials daily for 50 minutes on a rotational schedule. Across the district from kindergarten through high school, students at Roxbury and all Solon schools have access to high-quality educational programming in not only academics but in the arts, athletics, and activities as well. Ohio’s Learning Standards in these areas are the basis for strong instruction in physical education, art, music and media.

Physical Education - Within the elementary PE curriculum, students learn and develop a wide variety of skills to develop their fine and gross motor skills. Units such as soccer, throwing and catching, volleyball, softball, and basketball all help students learn a range of skills that build their hand-eye coordination as well as their ability to combine skills during drill work and game play.

Throughout the course of the year, students’ basic fitness is monitored and they set both short- and long-term goals, with the intent of achieving these goals by year-end. Each student first learns basic fitness exercises, such as sit ups, push ups, jumping jacks, and squat jumps, which are incorporated as warm ups and cool downs during the school year. During our fitness unit, students are challenged to achieve their personal best while setting realistic goals moving forward. Other fitness units geared toward developing a healthy lifestyle are jump rope for heart, gymnastics, and the pacer test.

Art – Our goal for art education at Roxbury is developing curious learners who develop ideas and are creative problem solvers. We work to foster learners who understand and demonstrate the foundational skills and principles of art. We use a variety of mediums and materials to develop technical skills and exposure to the art making process.

Students draw connections from other disciplines and subject areas, particularly math, science and music. They use geometric shapes and units of measurement during art class, and also expand on other elements commonly used in art and music, like patterns. When exploring different artists or themes, students encounter historical connections to their lessons as well.

Music – Music is an integral part of the fine arts curriculum, and at Roxbury the instructional emphasis is on the enjoyment of music and the part it plays in students’ everyday lives.

Students in kindergarten through fourth grade sing, play a variety of instruments (pitched and unpitched), dance, and develop improvisational skills through movement and instrumental exploration. Performance opportunities for soloists and small ensembles (vocal and instrumental) are encouraged in the general music classes. Roxbury fourth graders can choose violin, viola, and cello lessons. The violin ensemble rehearses during the school day as an alternative to general music classes.

All genres of music encompassing pieces from the Renaissance through the 21st century are introduced through listening maps, movement, and studying composers' lives and their influence in music throughout the ages.

The five elements of music – rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and timbre/tone color – are emphasized at all grades through movement, rhythmic exercises, score reading, notation, instrument study, Solfege and listening and singing folk songs, spirituals, Broadway repertoire, and orchestral music.

Each year, all fourth grade students attend a concert presented by the world-renowned Cleveland Orchestra at Severance Hall. The students preview the concert repertoire and conduct an in-depth study of each piece, the composers' lives and their influence on music throughout the ages.

Media – Media lessons for all Roxbury students are designed around Ohio's Learning Standards for English/language arts. Students engage in various reading activities that reinforce comprehension, use of reading strategies, and selecting books at their instructional reading level. Students also spend time in the computer lab biweekly building their keyboarding skills for speed and accuracy to prepare them to utilize Google Docs during writing workshops. Students have access to hard-bound and electronic books to make choices in fiction, non-fiction, and other genres. Students also are able to read their electronic book selections in the classroom using iPad apps.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

To ensure all students are learning, and making both academic and behavioral progress, our Roxbury team utilizes the district's model for Response to Intervention (RTI), called the Pyramid of Strategies. This Pyramid of Strategies is a district-wide approach to accessing and acting on student data to meet student needs and ensure academic growth. The Pyramid is built on targeted action goals based on student data from the previous school year (end-of-year diagnostics, state assessments, DRA level), quarterly assessments, and other relevant student data. The process involves individual teacher or group coaching sessions to set targeted learning goals, as well as check-back meetings to monitor student progress.

A key component of the process is communication with families. The team works collaboratively through the process until students are progressing. When we are unsure of what to do next, or are looking for more expertise related to a reading issue, we consult with our curriculum teacher leader. Similarly, we rely on our building math teacher leader for assistance with students who are struggling with math concepts.

In Solon, we believe in the importance of early intervention. Students not on target in either math or reading receive our most individualized and intensive support in first grade. This includes a daily 30-minute intervention with a specialized instructor for 10 weeks. We also believe that intervention may occur at any point when a student is not making progress. We then rely on our Pyramid process to identify the student's specific challenge and create an intervention plan to move the student forward. These interventions do not happen in isolation; they are embedded in our professional development through video recording, school day visits to other classrooms, and "behind the glass," an opportunity for classroom teachers to work with students to receive real-time coaching and feedback on instructional practice.

For students who may already be at or above grade level benchmarks, differentiated instruction is embedded throughout the core curriculum. Our No New Instruction time, a 30-minute intervention at the end of the day, provides for enrichment opportunities for all students as well.

### 4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

The district-wide commitment to ensuring all students achieve at high levels and experience growth each year is predicated on a sophisticated monitoring of all students' progress through common assessments. Prior to taking each assessment, teachers collect anecdotal and formative assessment data through exit slips as a predictor of how each student will perform on the common summative assessment. If students are not on track for passing the assessment (using a percentage of 80% or higher), they receive additional instruction using a different strategy during the No New Instruction time.

All students at Roxbury take the same assessments for math, reading, social studies, and science. After each assessment, data is entered into the district Student Information System, which generates spreadsheets providing detailed reporting on how each student and teacher performed on the assessment. The data reports can be manipulated to analyze each item of the assessment, each indicator of the assessment, and longitudinal data for the entire subject. The instructional team – including the grade-level teachers, interventionist, pyramid coach, instructional coach and principal – meet to review the data. These data meetings usually begin with an item analysis for all assessment questions and reviewing data for each teacher to identify successes and disparities among teachers. Discussing the strategies teachers used with students might be helpful to other teachers when they provide students with corrective instruction. Time is also taken to celebrate what teachers have taught well, tying it to specific planning that may have occurred to prepare for a particular unit or topic. Additionally, teachers reflect on their teaching, highlighting what was successful and what challenges they might still have with individual students, while staying focused on the data and things that are “within our circle of influence.”

Next, teachers analyze specific student successes and failures. Students who are making improvement are recognized and students who have received corrective instruction along the way are checked on to make sure demonstrate understanding. If students failed to meet the 80 percent benchmark, time is taken to troubleshoot where they have fallen short. Their assessments are analyzed for patterns in the types or content of the questions they answered incorrectly. We may ask probing questions such as: Is it conceptual understanding? Are they not reading the questions carefully enough? Is there one concept they simply did not understand? From this information we are able to plan for corrective instruction and set goals for the student.

The academic success of Roxbury students underscores the commitment to excellence and partnership among Solon students, staff, and parents. A critical facet of this educational partnership is our commitment to continuous and open communication with all our stakeholders – students, staff, parents, community members, legislators, and elected officials at the local, state and federal levels, as well as the media. The focus of this ongoing communication is the creation of dialogue regarding educational goals and initiatives, particularly academic learning standards and student achievement.

Specifically, Roxbury families receive information about upcoming state assessments through letters and school newsletter items from the principal. Throughout the year, Roxbury, like all Solon schools, shares information about best practices in our classrooms and how the learning standards are implemented in classrooms. Parents receive information through the Learning Standards reports to the PTA, which focus on academic and instructional practices, as well as support systems in place for students. Additionally, reports on student achievement are routinely included in press releases issued to the media and posted on the district’s web page and social media sites. A critical key component of the district’s communications efforts revolve around the development and nurturing of ongoing media contacts to ensure coverage about standards, assessment results, and accountability that is accurate and better understood by our public.

Roxbury utilizes email as its main communication vehicle with families. In addition to school-specific communication, all Solon families (as well as the community at-large and all businesses) are able to read about assessment results and student achievement in the district’s community-wide newsletter, Know Your Schools. Reports related to assessment data are also made regularly during district Board of Education meetings, which are broadcast on Solon Education Television, a cable access station for the Solon Schools funded by the city of Solon’s cable franchise fees. Families can stream SETV to their phones, tablets, or home computer through a convenient link on the district and school home pages.

Together, these coordinated communications assist students, parents, and the community in more clearly understanding today’s standards-based educational system.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Our Roxbury motto is “Every child, every day.” Our vision is to create a safe, nurturing and caring environment in which students strive to do their personal best. We focus on the social, emotional, and academic growth of all of our students. Students are able to set goals and work toward meeting these objectives with the support of staff and the students’ families. Our school embeds a “growth” mindset for both staff and students.

Our Roxbury staff willingly supports students beyond the four walls of the classroom. Throughout the building it is not unusual to see a teacher having lunch with a former student, secretaries giving comforting words to a student or the custodians interacting with students during lunch times.

We have a school-wide behavior plan, which was developed through research on positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). The following Roxbury rules reflect our committed efforts as a school to set high expectations for all members of our learning community:

I choose to do my best.

I choose to follow directions.

I choose to use kind words, kind hands, and kind feet.

Through a long-standing tradition each year, the guidance counselor visits classrooms to share a story in which students learn how to give "warm-fuzzies," not "cold pricklies," to other students. This lesson continues into students' everyday experience at Roxbury. To receive a warm fuzzy a student might say a kind word, help another student, or show effort to complete a difficult task. The principal and guidance counselor each have jars of fuzzies (pom poms) to give throughout the year.

Student recognition occurs in various ways, and all students are recognized for their talents and supported in this atmosphere of learning. Once a month, Roxbury celebrates Spirit Day. Students wear shirts with our Roxbury Rocket school logo and receive snack treats from our PTA. Every month during the school year, one student from each grade-level homeroom is recognized as “student of the month” and enjoys a pizza lunch with the principal and guidance counselor. In awarding the student of the month nominations, teachers share the student successes that prompted their selection and the students share this feedback with the group during the lunch.

To honor the ongoing work of all our students, staff members present students with Rocket Rewards based on student’s actions in relation to our school rules. Students are able to turn the awards in every Friday for a drawing and the student names are read during morning announcements to congratulate them on their accomplishments and share their successes with the school community. Students are also rewarded with a special treat, such as lunch with a Solon High School athlete, popcorn with the principal, extra recess, or sitting in the teacher’s chair for the day.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Students at Roxbury Elementary School experience significant academic achievement and growth each year. However, this student success would not be possible without ongoing partnerships and collaboration with parents and organizations in our community at-large. In Solon, and Roxbury by extension, we believe that engaged families are critical for student success and development. For example, when students at our school require academic intervention in time or instructional support, our administrative and teaching team meets monthly (or as often as is necessary) through our Pyramid of Strategies process with parents and the child to check progress, set goals collaboratively, and outline detailed action steps the teacher, parent and student will each undertake to be certain intervention goals are met. Family member input and commitment to our Pyramid process is expected and necessary.

Helping to support our Roxbury building culture of developing the whole child is our active parent volunteer program. Family members volunteer their time to work with students in one-on-one situations. Additionally, parents and other adults in our community work at our building as recess and lunch monitors and activity facilitators. As part of our district wellness program, these active parents and employees are trained to facilitate active movement on the playground and to appropriately interact with students to resolve conflict. Hiring parents from our community increases their “stake” in our school and assists in having informed parents within the larger community about school issues.

Our Roxbury PTA is very active in supporting school goals as well. Our PTA committees assist in planning and operating student-based activities, including COSI programs, assemblies, visiting author programs, career days, fun fests, book fairs, and more. A Roxbury PTA Facebook page engages parents via social media and provides an additional forum for two-way communication.

We also forge partnerships with various local businesses to conduct student education programs, such as the Trees Into Cartons, Cartons Into Trees recycling program for Earth Day and the Cleveland Cavaliers for our Right to Read Week celebration.

### 3. Professional Development:

To ensure each student achieves at high levels, Solon teachers participate in Professional Learning Communities, through which they collaborate on curriculum, instructional practices, and goals for students that support our district mission. Monthly professional development meetings provide forums for the grade-level teams to analyze teacher data and look at student results for individual assessment questions to inform future instruction. The team also monitors students’ value-added growth over time and the growth for students in accountability sub-groups, such as our special education students.

Teachers work together during common planning time or through in-house professional development to focus their instruction to ensure student success. Using their own professional expertise, they are purposefully and actively engaged in collaborative and reflective dialogue with other colleagues, continually striving to find the best teaching approach for each of their students. Student data drives all of these conversations as our team looks to identify patterns and trends. Questions about why individual students might be struggling are discussed and then targeted student learning goals are crafted and monitored consistently over time. Student growth is expected, and the collaborative team maintains that focus from the start to the finish of the school year.

Faculty members attend monthly district-wide grade level meetings to promote collaboration between buildings to support instruction. Together with their colleagues from the other K-4 buildings, our teachers also attend quarterly grade-level half-day learning sessions with our district literacy and math resource leaders. This structure promotes shared responsibility and accountability.

Our systematic approach to professional development is embedded in daily life at Roxbury. The focus is on learning outcomes for students. Collaborative teams of teachers meet regularly to plan instruction, develop common assessments, analyze student and assessment data, and develop action plans for intervention and enrichment work in student learning or teacher instruction. We support one another by sharing strategies and materials to improve student learning and accomplish goals that would be impossible if we were working in isolation. To improve learning for all, we learn from each other and focus on results. This cooperative learning allows us to meet the needs of all of our students, regardless of ability, race, gender, or economic status.

### 4. School Leadership:

At Roxbury, leadership is deliberate and thoughtful in its planning, purpose, and outcome. Leadership is developed among our entire building team. We expect our entire Roxbury team to take individual responsibility for themselves and their actions and support all team members through making difficult decisions.

Our building leadership team includes the principal, guidance counselor, curriculum and gifted resource teacher and school psychologist. Just as students are facing the increased rigor of academics, our school leadership continues to face the challenges of managing a diverse learning community. Our weekly leadership team meeting gives us an opportunity to "trouble shoot" and collaborate on a variety of issues that we may be facing as a school. The team understands and recognizes the unique perspectives we each bring to the table that help us meet our goal: the academic progress of all students at Roxbury.

Beyond our leadership team, the principal meets with grade-level teacher curriculum reps on a monthly basis to work on a variety of projects from building positive behavioral supports to developing the growth mindset structure in our school. We conduct leadership team meetings, monthly Watch List meetings, quarterly Special Education meetings, as well as Response to Intervention (RTI) coaching and check-back meetings – all to support our building leaders helping students reach their full potential.

Equally important for us at Roxbury is our commitment to nurturing young leaders within our student body. The leadership we emulate as adults presents a clear model for our students. As adults we make positive choices and focus on individual and collective goals. We help our students to do the same. Toward that end, we have a Junior Leadership Council at Roxbury, which plans and implements school-wide philanthropic and service-oriented programs.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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As Rick DuFour states: To create a professional learning community one should focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively, and hold yourself accountable for results. For Roxbury, ensuring students learn through collaboration with a focus on results is what drives our purpose for the work we do with students on a daily basis. The interdependence of these three things is what we believe to be the heart of our success and the number one practice that makes this happen.

Advanced student learning cannot occur in the absence of job-embedded teacher learning and collaboration. The professional learning communities in our schools are providing the necessary structure for this type of advanced learning and shared responsibility to take hold. Using student instructional data in the form of assessments and student work samples, teachers reflect on how well each of their students has mastered the required skills and content. They engage in deep-level thinking and collaborative discussions that lead to concrete action plans for re-teaching where necessary to close achievement gaps or extending instruction for students who need additional challenges.

Similarly, the professional learning teams work to create powerful building blocks of student learning. Our Roxbury classrooms are vibrant learning environments infused with a culture of differentiated instruction and real-time assessment to measure students' progress. With a laser-like focus on learning, teachers provide a blueprint for the day's concepts and expectations to their students at the beginning of class.

As educational research shows, children are more motivated and task-oriented if they understand what is expected of them. This is why our teachers explicitly share the learning target or goal for the day before each lesson begins. Posting and calling attention to the daily learning target represents a significant paradigm shift to a shared focus on accountability and ensuring student understanding by helping students develop skills to take responsibility for their own learning.

Teachers design opportunities embedded in the classroom instruction to collect real-time evidence aimed at determining if students are actually learning. They analyze that data on the spot to make decisions about what they need to teach next and exactly what feedback each student needs to move his or her learning ahead to the next level. Within this classroom context is where some of our most important collaboration actually occurs – with and among our students.

Again, using the collective expertise of their colleagues – even anecdotally just after they complete a lesson – our teachers are constantly collaborating and troubleshooting to ensure that all students, whether they are struggling, need more challenges or just need a little support to master the content or skill, will learn.

The outcome is continuous improvement through quality instructional practice, collaboration, a focus on results and doing whatever it takes for all students.