

U.S. Department of Education
2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Emma Vera Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2015 North US Highway 83
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Roma TX 78584-0187
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Starr County

Telephone (956) 849-4552 Fax (956) 849-1118

Web site/URL https://www.romaisd.com/ev E-mail yguerrero@romaisd.com

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. Carlos Guzman
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail cguzman@romaisd.com

District Name Roma Independent School District Tel. (956) 849-1377

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. Clarissa Alvarez
(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

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. 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 2019 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 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
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

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 9 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	24	35	59
K	28	30	58
1	28	32	60
2	35	33	68
3	32	30	62
4	15	57	72
5	33	30	63
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
Total Students	195	247	442

*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 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 100 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 0 % White
 - 0 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 7%

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.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	20
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	28
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	418
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 95 %
419 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 88 %
Total number students who qualify: 389

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %
31 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.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>7</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>14</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</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: 14
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	26
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., school 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 17:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	97%	96%	96%
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 2018.

Post-Secondary Status	
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.

Emma Vera Elementary is committed to students' academic excellence by providing a dynamic instructional program that is conducive to learning and addresses all students' needs.

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

Emma Vera Elementary is one of ten campuses that comprise the Roma Independent School District. It was named after a strong and dedicated woman who made it her life's goal to impact education in the area. Emma Vera served the Starr County area from 1935 to 1977. She supported the educational needs of her students as a teacher as well as the needs of her campus as a principal. Ms. Vera had a deep care for the students who passed through her classroom, campus, and for her staff as well. Her commitment to student excellence and her leadership contributions are what spoke to the hearts and minds of those charged with the task of choosing a name for this school, which was erected in 1994.

Roma is a historic community on the banks of the Rio Grande River. Emma Vera Elementary extends a mere 1.6 miles north of this natural boundary between Texas and Mexico. Roma's culture is derived from multicultural immigration. Currently, the total population is made up of 11, 425 residents of which 99.54 % are Hispanic or Latino, and more than 9, 000 residents speak Spanish. Of its residents, 20.56% are high school graduates, 10.43% have some college education, 2.96% obtained an associate's degree, 8.31% have a bachelor's degree, and 2.62% obtained a graduate degree.

This area is not immune to barriers. Most of the students at Emma Vera Elementary are English Language Learners and come from a low socioeconomic status. The mobility rate is high due to seasonal migrant families in the community and family ties extending across the border into neighboring Mexico. While these barriers are present, Emma Vera Elementary does not use them as a possible excuse to foster low expectations for its students. On the contrary, these very same barriers cultivate a deep desire to rise above the normal standards and give students the best opportunity that can be offered.

High expectations are something that permeates at Emma Vera Elementary. Each child is seen through the eyes of someone who cares enough to believe that they will succeed in their classes, their lives, and their future. Emma Vera Elementary is a family consisting of administrators, teachers, and parents who will stop at nothing to embrace all students and guide them until achieving their highest potential. Everyone pulls together, thus making Emma Vera Elementary stronger. For it is by coming together that students' success is achieved. Everyone shares the same goal of fostering social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of all students.

Emma Vera Elementary is committed to helping students develop in all aspects of their life. Programs that have been successful include daily read alouds. During these read alouds teachers explore social-emotional themes with their class. Discussion always follows read alouds, giving students the opportunity to express their feelings about topics being addressed. Besides read alouds, daily journal writing is also done with the purpose of students not only practicing their writing skills, but giving them the opportunity to freely express themselves. In addition, students complete weekly book reports, where students are free to choose any book of their choice. These reports serve a dual purpose. They provide students the opportunity to practice writing and help students make connections between their book and real life. Furthermore, monthly projects are also assigned to every student. The topics for these projects change from month to month. The topics covered are the following: My Favorite Literary Character, A Day in the Life of a Veteran, Making Ornaments Out of Recyclable Material, Science Fair, Presidents, The Universe, My Favorite Author, and All About Texas. Character education is also implemented at Emma Vera Elementary, in an effort to make sure that at a very young age all of the students learn about kindness, compassion, loyalty, responsibility, integrity, patriotism, self-respect, perseverance, and honesty. Aside from these practices, the students also participate in activities done through the physical education department. Some of these activities include an annual cross country meet, the Juanita Cantu Relays, the Breast Cancer Walkathon, the Autism Walk, the Red Ribbon Parade, and the Easter Egg Hunt. Students are also encouraged to join community sponsored clubs such as the swimming, softball, basketball, and baseball teams. Emma Vera Elementary also offers several programs students can join such as the University Interscholastic League (UIL) events, Battle of the Books competition, Robotics, Ballet Folklorico, and the Talent Show. Several celebrations take place during the year. These include Grandparents' Day, 16 de Septiembre, Halloween Parade, Open House, Christmas program, Storytime Day, Awards Assembly ceremonies, Cinco de Mayo, and Mother's Day.

Emma Vera Elementary has found success in this combination of approaches. The combination of all of the above-mentioned activities and events has contributed to the overall success of the students at Emma Vera Elementary. These have helped students develop academically, emotionally, physically, and culturally.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

The standards used to guide instruction at Emma Vera Elementary are based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The English language arts curriculum concentrates on developing fluent readers with the ability to analyze, make connections, interpret, and understand literary and informational texts. The balanced literacy approach has proven to be effective. Emma Vera Elementary chose this approach because it allows teachers to provide a combination of strategies that encompass the best of whole language and phonics and are beneficial to students with different learning needs. To enhance this approach, the following practices are done: Read Aloud, Guided Reading, Shared Reading, Independent Reading, Word Study, and Interactive Journals. The reading block is allotted 90 minutes. Within this time the teacher provides whole group, individual, and small group instruction and monitors literature circles. In grades pre-K through second, the focus is primarily beginning reading skills: Print Awareness, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. Teachers concentrate on students' reading fluency with vocabulary development and comprehension. Focusing on these areas has shown consistent academic growth among students and remarkable gains on the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) and the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) scores. Character Day, Read to Succeed, eBooks, Literacy Celebrations, Storybook Theater, Favorite Author Research Projects, and the Little Free Library are initiatives taken to promote reading among our students. Writing curriculum concentrates in providing instruction that enables students to compose clear written texts, with both organization and detail. Emma Vera Elementary chose the Process Writing Approach, which focuses on the process of composing texts. This approach is practiced by Emma Vera Elementary because it is TEKS-aligned, and enables students to brainstorm ideas, write rough drafts, and revise and edit those drafts. Students are required to participate in written activities that enhance writing techniques explained during the guided, shared, and independent writing. Daily Oral Language (DOL), journal writing, interactive journals, and warm up activities take place every day. These activities target areas such as sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and sequential order.

1b. Mathematics:

The mathematics curriculum focuses on procedural fluency, developing foundational skills, necessary in the use of math to solve problems in everyday life. The TEKS are supported by the district's resources to facilitate the delivery of high quality instruction for all students. Teachers work diligently to develop lessons geared toward student success. Procedural fluency activities are brief and include daily activities that are inviting, engaging, and repeatable. Pre-kindergarten through first grade students use chants to learn procedural fluency for addition and subtraction, along with open ended activities and math TEKS sorting cards. In grades second through fifth, students work on one-minute basic facts drills that build up from addition to multiplication problems and daily math warm ups. Foundational skills are developed through the use of speed drills, spiraling, manipulatives, centers, supplemental aids, and charts for problem solving strategies. Math interactive journals are used in order to provide a visual representation of skills and vocabulary terms. Acronyms are used in grades third through fifth to aid in the retention of mathematical vocabulary and formulas. Students also participate in role playing activities that help in understanding the connection between academic math and real life scenarios. Targeted areas include Number Sense and Operations, Algebraic Reasoning, Geometry, Measurement, Data Analysis, and Personal and Financial Literacy. Process standards are embedded in every lesson in order to enrich mathematical understanding. At the heart of all math instruction is the importance of demonstrating concrete examples before moving on to representational and more abstract examples. This curricular approach is standard practice and has been proven successful. In addition to this approach, best practices are at the core of all math instruction. Teaching on grade level is emphasized consistently. The student expectations are taught at the rigor that is expected.

1c. Science:

Curriculum alignment is paramount to the success of students. Teachers continuously place time and effort in each and every Professional Learning Community meeting to ensure that what is being taught and what is being assessed in all areas including science, is aligned. All lessons and activities are purposely chosen with this end in mind. In addition to curriculum alignment, teachers use the science performance level descriptors to consistently guide their instruction and ensure that student understanding of these concepts is mastered. Science curriculum concentrates on facilitating mastery of the scientific process and science concepts. The main areas of focus for the science curriculum are Matter and Energy, Force, Motion and Energy, Earth and Space, and Organisms and Environments. Process standards (Scientific Investigation and Reasoning Skills) are embedded into all science lessons to foster the use of science as inquiry and scientific tools. An array of instructional activities is used by all grade levels. Interactive journals play an important part of these activities because it allows students to apply vocabulary terms in various ways: (visual and written). Students have field days in which they have the opportunity to analyze specific science skills by walking outside, observing, and using science tools, all while documenting information on their science journal. Hands on activities, science fairs, and favorite planet project are other instructional activities used at Emma Vera Elementary. Students in the fifth grade have a fully equipped science lab that consists of hands on activities aligned with lesson sheets. Students attend the lab daily. Teachers align the computer lessons with classroom instruction in order to facilitate student mastery. Digital videos for each science skill are available for each teacher. Science workshops are provided to both teachers and students. Elementary science specialists provide enhancing hands on activities to the students, while providing teachers with effective approaches.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Prior to the start of the academic year, teachers meet by grade level and prepare curriculum guides and topic maps based on the TEKS. Each grade level determines the curricular sequence based on the readiness and supporting standards. Local assessments are also created for each six weeks. Because each grade level builds on the next, readiness standards are prioritized. The process standards are embedded throughout the curriculum and assessments. Social studies curriculum includes History, Geography, Culture, Government, Citizenship, Economics, and Technology and Society. In the district's adopted basal, every chapter's targeted reading skill, 21st century skill, and myStory Book writing activity is aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for English language arts. The social studies curriculum is set out to incorporate maps, writing, reading, video, and online geographic applications to engage learners of every learning preference. Students are required to participate in practices that encourage them to become responsible citizens and demonstrate respect for their country. This curricular approach brings awareness to cultural diversity while encompassing understanding of academic content. Small group activities range from mapping, graphing and role playing, to read alouds and analyzing primary sources. Innovative hands-on activities are generated for each chapter. Engaging leveled readers that tie directly to chapter topics are available in print and digital formats. Students are required to report on the leveled reader for the week by developing a word web to list important events and facts. Year round projects such as Favorite President Project, daily recital of pledge of allegiance / Texas pledge, cultural celebrations, field trips, guest speakers, mock voting for presidential and local elections, and the use of social studies tools are used to reinforce concepts. The librarian incorporates biographies, provides newspapers with current events, and other reference material to make learning relevant. All instruction and activities are TEKS aligned and varied to engage all learners.

1e. For secondary schools:

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:

The pre-kindergarten curriculum consists of guidelines aligned with the district's kindergarten Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). These guidelines offer support to successfully prepare students for kindergarten. Engaging student centered activities expose students to phonemic awareness, foundational math skills, and the development of fine motor skills. The correlation of activities provides a vital foundation along with promoting school readiness. The merging of these skills form the building blocks that

students will be required to master in future grades. The guidelines concentrate on the following domains: Social-Emotional, Language and Communication, Emergent Literacy-Reading and Writing, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Development, Fine Arts, and Technology. Formal and informal assessments measure young children's literacy and language skills. This identifies students who might be experiencing learning difficulties and allows for early intervention to take place.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The fine arts curriculum is based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The purpose is to provide students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade with instructional activities that will promote freedom of expression, appreciation of culture, arts, music, and creativity, while promoting both reflective and critical thinking skills. The fine arts curriculum in Emma Vera Elementary aligns with the TEKS by having students participate in activities that enrich their creativity and critical thinking skills. It also provides students with the opportunity to express themselves. These TEKS and student expectations are fostered through reading/writing activities which increase students' academic achievement, higher-order thinking, communication and collaboration skills while developing a student's intellect. Once a week, all students are encouraged to use molding clay, colored pencils, finger paint, tempera, wax colors, acrylic paint, etc. to create varied projects. Students in fourth and fifth grade are encouraged to participate in Art Smart, an event that is part of the University Interscholastic League (UIL) Program. Students in Art Smart study the history, artist name, title, and art element of numerous art selections. The school's initiatives to promote this aspect of the curriculum include Pumpkin Story Book Decorating Contest, Art Walks, Green Christmas Ornament Decorating Contest, and trips to Painting with a Twist.

Music is used in all classrooms and is always encouraged. It is used to engage and motivate students. Emma Vera Elementary aligns the music curriculum to the TEKS by using chants and songs at least four times a week to teach content area concepts. The chants/songs include a variety of repetitions, beats, and rhythms which make it easy for students to learn skills and recall them at a future time. Music of all styles is used during cultural activities. During these celebrations, students' exposure to different styles of music encourages acceptance of diverse cultures while learning different music techniques.

Dance is not only used to promote student learning, but it is also used to boost student self-confidence. At least twice a week during instruction, dance steps to instructional songs are modeled by teacher and mimicked by students. The steps or gestures help young children develop knowledge, skill, and better understanding of the world. The dance movements provide the cognitive loop between ideas, problems, and outcomes/solutions. Emma Vera Elementary encourages dance by showcasing student participation in local talent shows, district promotional educational videos, and dance teams.

The theatre arts curriculum in Emma Vera Elementary promotes leadership, communication, and comprehension skills. Students in second through fifth grade are encouraged to participate in Story Telling. Once a week all students are encouraged to role play in order to promote learning in a fun and motivational manner when the following reading skills/genre are being introduced: sequence, cause/effect, inference, drama and poetry. Emma Vera Elementary initiatives also include student participation during Veteran's Day, Christmas Program Presentations, Dress Up as Your Favorite Character, and the Kinder Talk.

The Physical Education (P.E.), Health, and Nutrition Program at Emma Vera Elementary follows the state standards. The focus is to promote physical activity and social development to instill a healthy lifestyle. Campus initiatives include the Autism Walk, Cancer Walk, Juanita Cantu Relays, Jump Rope for Heart, Nutrition Week, and Health Awareness Week. Students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade attend daily physical education classes. Along with promoting academics through physical activities, the physical education coach reinforces the importance of team building. Third through fifth grade students are assessed with Fitness Gram. The physical education coach assists in preparing the students for this assessment just as they do for any other content area exam.

The technology curriculum in Emma Vera Elementary is aligned to the TEKS. The technology strands are embedded into daily instruction in all content areas. Concentration is placed on communication, research skills, digital innovation, basic technology operation and concepts. As part of the reading initiative, all pre-K

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and kindergarten classrooms are provided with Hatch Pads and iPads with educational applications that reinforce teachers' lessons. All classrooms are equipped with smart boards, document cameras, and computers. Students have the opportunity to create PowerPoint presentations, internet research activities, and online assessments to foster technology skills. First through fifth grade students attend the computer lab daily for 35 minutes. All content areas have digital resources that are whiteboard compatible available to enhance instruction. These resources allow students to actively engage with the content being taught. Campus initiatives include: Robotics Team, eBooks, and simulation models.

3. Special Populations:

Emma Vera Elementary has high expectations for all students. Administrators work collaboratively with teachers to promote high levels of learning. Teachers meet during their weekly Professional Learning Community meetings to discuss effective strategies that have proven successful. Emma Vera Elementary uses graphic organizers, read naturally, choral/paired/silent reading, buddy reading, tutorials, and hands-on real life opportunities to enhance student learning.

In order to maintain high levels of achievement, students' growth is constantly monitored. The State of Texas of Academic Readiness (STAAR) assessment is administered every year. The STAAR data helps identify gaps in student performance. If the gap is significant, the staff works toward modifying instructional methods, interventions, and assessments. This assists in closing the achievement gaps, thus improving student mastery. Additionally, teacher observations, assessment data, progress reports, and computer scores are considered to determine the instructional path to gear students into academic success. Summative assessment data is analyzed, and areas that indicate low levels of achievement are flagged. This information is used to develop enrichment activities leading to student mastery.

Emma Vera Elementary also uses a multi-tiered approach called Response to Intervention (RtI) to assist in early identification and support of students with academic and behavior needs. This approach is available to all students. The RtI begins with Tier 1 where all students receive high-quality instruction and a universal screening that establishes both academic and behavior baselines. Tier 2 is initiated with students not making adequate progress in the regular classroom. These students are provided with more intense interventions to improve their learning. Progress continues to be monitored. If students continue to struggle, they are considered to scale up to Tier 3. If after extensive interventions students continue to experience learning difficulty, then they are considered for eligibility in Section 504, Dyslexia, or Special Education (Tier 4).

The use of technology motivates students to have powerful learning experiences. All classrooms at Emma Vera Elementary are equipped with hardware and software that enable students to have access to these resources. Teachers create classroom environments that encourage students to communicate, collaborate and acquire knowledge through technology. Teachers access interactive lessons that actively engage all learners and prepare them for college, future careers, and civic life.

Emma Vera Elementary provides English Language Learners (ELLs) with explicit vocabulary instruction and extended language support. Initiatives include visual support, word walls, picture dictionaries, labels, and cooperative grouping strategies. Linguistic instructional accommodations are provided to all ELL students. These are assigned on an individual basis and monitored for fidelity. This practice has been effective with ELL students.

Every student has diverse needs, experiences, and learning styles. Teachers improve student learning by developing and providing differentiated and personalized instruction. Emma Vera Elementary teachers proactively plan not only instruction but practices and assessments using a student-centered approach. Instruction and activities are created with students' interests and needs in mind. The student centered approach helps students feel at ease and less frustrated. It also allows them to gain an understanding of their own learning style. Content delivery includes songs, chants, and digital resources for the auditory and/or visual learner; hands-on activities, interactive journals and activities that require mobility are included to help the kinesthetic learner; picture cards and anchor charts are used for the visual learner.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Emma Vera Elementary believes that creating a nurturing and positive environment is essential for the success of students and staff. The school makes sure its students and staff feel welcome, safe, empowered, and loved. This message starts from day one and is reinforced throughout the school year. Before the new school year starts, Emma Vera Elementary hosts pre-registration with the purpose of not only getting all necessary forms completed, but with the intention that parents, students and teachers meet beforehand. Parents are also given the opportunity to express any concern that they might have for the upcoming year. During this time teachers relate their classroom expectations about the new school year and emphasize the importance of parental involvement. This practice has proven effective in starting the year as smoothly as possible, for if the students and teachers feel at ease, learning can take place. The school also helps students who may not have the necessary resources to have a successful year, providing them with school supplies, uniforms, backpacks, etc. Motivational speakers are contracted throughout the year to motivate and encourage both students and teachers. Emma Vera Elementary celebrates all students' accomplishments. It celebrates identifiable achievements by providing motivational rewards to all students who have either met or exceeded an academic goal. Some of these rewards are given weekly, by six weeks, or by semester. These rewards include dances, snacks, educational games, principal rewards, certificates, and trophies.

Several activities take place to promote a positive environment. Character education is implemented, where character building activities that promote good citizenship such as honesty, responsibility, compassion, perseverance, loyalty, justice, self-reliance, self-discipline, integrity, and leadership skills are emphasized throughout the school year. In addition, all students attend guidance lessons that promote kindness, anti-bullying, friendship, and unity. Students participate in activities that promote safety, such as fire safety, bus safety, drug awareness and prevention, and healthy practices. These are done sporadically throughout the year and include make-and-take informational activities.

At the beginning of a new school year, Emma Vera Elementary welcomes its teachers by receiving them with a home cooked breakfast provided by administration and a motivational activity. Each teacher receives a welcome back teacher "survival" kit. This kit is meant to show appreciation and consists of essential supplies (pens, post-it notes, stapler), snacks, and motivational books. Throughout the school year teachers continue to receive unannounced tokens of appreciation. Emma Vera Elementary has an extremely low teacher turnover mainly because teachers feel comfortable, safe, and appreciated.

Having a positive environment is one of the factors that makes the students and staff at Emma Vera Elementary successful.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

"It takes a village to raise a child" is a saying that Emma Vera Elementary takes to heart. The school believes that parental and community involvement plays an essential role in the success and well-being of its students. It is for this reason parents and community members are encouraged to take an active role in the school.

Established campus committees such as the Migrant Committee, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee, and the District wide Educational Improvement Committee require parents and community members to take an active role. Their input and participation in these committees is of great value. It is as active members that both parents and community members can help the school in student success.

Emma Vera Elementary encourages parental involvement. Parents and community members are always welcome to volunteer in various school functions. Parents' eagerness to help out contributes to the success of Emma Vera Elementary. Parents are encouraged to attend events such as Meet the Teacher Night, Open House, and daily conferences to discuss students' progress, achievements, and learn ways that they can help

their children at home. These countless hours of support are recognized during the End of Year Assembly.

Emma Vera Elementary hosts different activities throughout the school year where community members and parents are encouraged to participate. Some of these activities include the Welcome Back to School Bash, where businesses donate school supplies to children; Career Day, where different professionals talk about their career in an effort to educate the children about potential career options; Read Across America Celebration, where members of the community and parents are encouraged to read to the students, thus promoting the importance of being good readers. All of these events help students grow academically, socially, and culturally.

Communication with parents is of the utmost importance. It is of utmost importance that parents are informed of their child's academic progress and of upcoming events. Communication is provided in both English and Spanish and take place in the form of letters, memos, phone calls, face-to-face conferences, home visits, information posted on the campus webpage, parent portal, and social media. In addition to keeping parents informed about school activities and their children's progress and/or concerns, parental meetings are held every month. Each month a different topic is covered. Topics covered include school policies and procedures, special programs designed to help out children with specific needs, health, and technology.

It is through the help of school personnel, parents, and community members that student success is possible. Emma Vera Elementary is an advocate for parental and community involvement in the pursuit of student success.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development at Emma Vera Elementary takes place with a clear goal in mind: it must directly or indirectly positively impact student learning and student achievement. Professional development is provided to campus administrators, classroom teachers, and support personnel.

Several professional development sessions take place before the first day of school. Administrators attend workshops that address assessment results, Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) updates, research-based strategies, and curriculum alignment. These workshops guide campus administrators in deciding what approaches, teacher training, campus initiatives, and modifications need to take place to improve in all areas. Campus administrations also provide on-going training to all teachers.

Goal setting workshops consists of administrators and teachers setting up realistic and achievable goals for the new year. Teachers and administrators must ask themselves what they want students to achieve by the end of the year. These goals serve as a guide towards ensuring students' success. Goal setting has proven to be fundamental to the long-term success of Emma Vera Elementary. Staff development for teachers includes core area topics and updates. These workshops provide teachers with effective learning approaches that address and cover the TEKS.

Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions also form part of the staff development taking place at Emma Vera Elementary. Every teacher is expected to contribute in these weekly sessions. These sessions allow teachers to share approaches and activities that have been effective in their classrooms. It also allows teachers to share concerns they might have. As a group, the committee comes up with possible solutions to address these concerns. As a result of these PLC sessions, teachers walk out with tools that enhance student learning.

Professional development that takes place during the school year is based on campus needs as highlighted by campus data. For example, if the campus feels that the students need to improve their writing scores, then a writing consultant will be hired to address this need. Professional development is meant to provide teachers with research based strategies to help strengthen students' reading comprehension, math, science, and writing skills. Professional development is provided to students as well. In these, presenters are asked to prepare workshops which are student-centered. This has proven to be very effective because students'

activities are aligned with teachers' instructional approaches.

Whatever the campus needs assessment and campus data show is needed to improve on is what will be addressed during professional development at Emma Vera Elementary.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership team at Emma Vera Elementary consists of the campus principal, assistant principal, counselor, and facilitator. As a team they share the same philosophy: "[Their] philosophy is to promote excellence and equity simultaneously to insure that all children can achieve at high levels. [They] supply clear, coherent guidance to all people in every role, including parents, to help children perform at grade level and beyond. [They] also celebrate by recognizing and rewarding achievements. In addition, [they] implement efforts for continuous improvement."

The campus principal's primary role is to serve as the campus leader, and as a true leader, she strongly believes in the capacity of her staff. The principal empowers her staff with the right to participate in instructional decisions. The principal takes an active role in providing an instructional program that focuses on meeting the needs of all students. As a leader, the principal assists in the professional needs of the staff by fostering team building practices.

The role of the assistant principal is to work beside the school principal and carry out the principal's administrative and educational decisions. The assistant principal oversees instructional decisions and ensures that they are implemented accordingly. She coordinates support programs such as 504/Dyslexia, Bilingual, and RtI, and makes sure that they are followed through appropriately in order to provide services to qualified students.

The counselor fosters the career and social/emotional development of students. Through group and/or individual lessons, counseling and guidance sessions, and events, the counselor promotes positive character traits and helps find social support through healthy peer relationships. The school counselor is also in charge of overseeing parental involvement. With the help of the entire administrative team, the topics that are addressed during the monthly parental meetings are discussed and approved.

The facilitator provides teachers with appropriate resources to deliver successful, high level instruction. Also, the facilitator ensures that teachers have accurate curriculum information with aligned resources. Any time teachers feel they need additional resources to facilitate their teaching or to help specific students, they address these concerns to the facilitator, who in turn, consults with the principal and assistant principal in order to fulfill the teacher's request.

Even though each campus leader at Emma Vera Elementary has a specific role, it is through collaboration that the campus succeeds. No leader works alone. Each member understands that the success of the school depends on everybody working together.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Teachers at Emma Vera Elementary have remarkable academic success because of meticulous data analysis, productive Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, and effective teacher/administrator collaboration.

Analysis of data is crucial because it enables teachers to observe students' progress, strengths, and weaknesses. Assessment data is reported through the Curriculum Instruction and Assessment and Alignments, Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) and the Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum System.

Curriculum Instruction and Assessment is used primarily with pre-kindergarten students. It measures progress and growth in reading and math. This assessment is administered at the beginning and end of the school year on an individual basis. Teachers analyze the results and use them to modify, differentiate, accommodate, and strengthen their instruction. Administrators and teachers meet with the parents to inform them of the results and to discuss strategies to maximize student achievement. In addition, the results of the assessment are sent to the parents via mail.

The TPRI is a highly reliable early reading assessment designed to identify the reading development of students in kindergarten through second grade. This one-on-one diagnostic assessment is given three times during the year and allows teachers to provide targeted instruction so that students improve as readers. Targeted interventions are based on data received from TPRI individual and summary reports. This permits teachers to make appropriate instructional decisions and plan lessons and assessments to differentiate student needs.

The Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum System yields assessment results that are analyzed by subject, campus, grade level, class, and demographic group. Teachers analyze these results and meet with campus administrators to discuss students' progress. The reports track student performance and recognize the questions and student expectations students struggle with the most. Data is meticulously analyzed by teachers in PLC meetings, allowing them to make the necessary adjustments on timelines and assessments. Students scoring higher than 90% are recognized for their achievement. Students scoring lower than 70% are identified to properly address their needs. Teachers modify instruction and interventions. They come up with strategies and enrichment activities to help the students master their areas of weakest achievement. Conferences with administrators, teachers and parents are scheduled to discuss students' progress and assessment results. In addition, they discuss strategies that will help students succeed academically and reach their full potential.

All campus assessment results are shared and compared at the district level during school board and Site Based Decision Making Committee (SBDM) meetings.