

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Greg Solano

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

Official School Name Hidalgo Park Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 8700 South Veterans Boulevard 8700 S. "I" Road

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

Pharr TX 78577-8454
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County HIDALGO COUNTY

Telephone (956) 834-4275

Fax (956) 781-4631

Web site/URL https://www.hidalgo-isd.org/

E-mail grsolano@hidalgo-isd.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Xavier Salinas

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail xasalinas@hidalgo-isd.org

District Name Hidalgo Independent School District Tel. (956) 843-4401

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. Blanca Lara

(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 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
 - 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	34	54	88
K	22	28	50
1	28	25	53
2	19	17	36
3	11	25	36
4	17	32	49
5	28	18	46
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	159	199	358

*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: 12%

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	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	26
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	43
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	370
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.12
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 73 %
260 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: 89 %
Total number students who qualify: 320

8. Students receiving special education services: 4 %
14 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>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
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.	19
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 19:1

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	98%	98%	96%	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.

Hidalgo Park Elementary staff facilitates the learning process through a well planned, culturally rich curriculum that fosters each child's 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

“One Vision - One TEAM!” is the message resonating along the hallways of the transformational journey of a neighborhood school which sits among the rows of dirt waiting to be cultivated and farmed. Soon those empty rows will have beautiful cabbage, corn or cotton; but for now Hidalgo ISD’s Hidalgo Park Elementary School stands majestic among the surrounding farms in the southernmost city limits of Pharr, Texas. Just 2.6 miles south of the school is the Pharr International Bridge, one of the busiest international transportation corridors between Mexico and United States. Five miles north is the City of Pharr bustling with businesses, restaurants, and libraries. Fifteen years ago, in 2004, Park opened its doors to the families of the community of Las Milpas – situated in one of the poorest areas in South Texas. Hidalgo ISD had recognized the need for the growing community and built a second school to reduce class sizes in the school close by as well as bring back students who were traveling on school buses to a district school in the City of Hidalgo. This school serves a high need neighborhood with demographics which include a 62% poverty rate and at least 40% of its adults having less than a high school diploma. It consists of mostly low-income, multi-family households who have worked tirelessly to bring running water, sanitation and other basic services to their community. Although it is difficult for parents to help their children at home due to limited resources, they instill a strong work ethic which supports Park’s initiative to ensure every student reach their full potential in preparation for college and beyond. All student populations have consistently shown increase on state assessments and achievement gaps have been closed. Its targeted initiatives in the academic areas focus on rigorous instructional practices that teach 21st century skills and give every child an opportunity to acquire mastery in the state standards. Its core commitment is to provide diverse learning opportunities, which emphasize collaboration and innovation to develop lifelong learners and responsible citizens. The staff collaborates with parents and the community to create a multi-faceted, cohesive environment where everyone works toward achieving the “One vision, One team” culture. Park emphasizes the concept of transformation, transparency, and teamwork where everyone works to achieve a common goal. Every student is provided with a challenging and dynamic educational program that nurtures their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth through a positive and challenging state-aligned curriculum. Despite the challenges, the school’s leadership team has established traditions which include a relentless commitment to encourage all students to reach their full potential, strive for academic success, and prepare for the transition to high school and beyond. Through targeted initiatives in and out of the academic arena, students participate in rigorous instructional programs focused on developing mastery knowledge in the core curriculum: language arts, math, science, social studies, as well as in fine arts and health/physical education programs.

Celebrating teacher, student, and parent success has become a tradition across the campus. These celebrations include academic recognition, Hall of Fame, Student of the Month, Masters Walk of Fame, attendance, and reading incentive ceremonies. Through the consistent implementation of these key traditions, students have developed and fostered a growth mindset to become lifelong learners, and it has allowed teachers and parents to develop strong partnerships. As a result, this past school year, Park reached a milestone by receiving all six Distinction Designations in the three eligible subjects for the performance in the State Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR), an astonishing feat after having had zero distinctions just three years prior. Students also participated in University Interscholastic League (UIL) competitions placing 1st in the district, which was another breakthrough for the campus. These accomplishments validate the hard work and dedication of the entire student body and staff and contribute to the goal of boosting academics and self-esteem. Students’ socio-emotional needs are targeted through school supports such as the Positive Intervention Behavior System (PBIS) framework, including character education, counseling programs and Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies. These programs use positive reinforcements which promote self-discipline creating an environment conducive to academic learning. Cultural traditions play a critical role in the development of language and academics. The one-way dual language model has been a key strategy of the Park educational program since its inception. Using native language instruction through the content areas ensures students use what they know to acquire content. Multicultural activities like Cinco de Mayo, Día de la Independencia de México, and Día de los Muertos allows the school and families to share elements of their culture to build connections and identity. Likewise, the American culture is honored through Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. activities. Other community events that promote physical wellness and citizenship include the annual

community walk, the City of Hidalgo Borderfest, Friendship Festival and Superintendent Tournaments. The “whole child” approach ensures that students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged in both their personal and academic lives. Park sets the standard for a comprehensive, sustainable school improvement model for long-term success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Hidalgo Park is committed to implementing the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and guaranteeing a viable and rigorous curriculum and instruction to ensure all students master these state standards. In order to ensure mastery of these standards, the Hidalgo Park staff delivers a strong comprehensive reading program based on balanced literacy due to its intensive, systematic, small group, blended approach to instructing reading and writing. The prekindergarten classrooms provide explicit phonological awareness and phonics programs supplemented with the state-adopted basal reader. Pre-Kindergarten to 1st grade continues to strengthen phonological awareness and phonics lessons within their reading block to ensure students are meeting on-grade level language arts TEKS. The Park instructional team believes that a focus on foundational reading skills, as required by the TEKS, enable students to read words (alphabetic), tie those words to their oral language (in students first language - L1), and read connected text with accuracy and fluency to understand what they read. These foundational practices in alphabetic, fluency, and vocabulary in students' L1 strengthen reading and comprehension skills which is a non-negotiable component of Park's reading program. The focus on L1 in the school's dual language program ensures that English learners (ELs) and non-ELs begin the steps towards mastery of academic Spanish and English through the content areas. Every grade level identifies expected fluency goals per six weeks and students are assessed monthly on foundational skills, fluency, and comprehension. At Park, writing is implemented through written reflections, essays, compositions, and writing portfolios. Writing camps held four times a year with the other elementary schools in the district, bring expert teachers together to support each other in revising, editing, and composition skills, as required by the TEKS. Literacy night and sight word camps enhance reading fluency as well as build a "love for reading" across the campus. Read Alouds provide opportunities for teachers to strengthen intonation and comprehension skills.

1b. Mathematics:

The Hidalgo Park Pirates' success in mastery of the state-mandated TEKS in mathematics is the fidelity of aligning fundamental concepts to the process and readiness standards. With this alignment, teachers can provide explicit and skill-based instruction aimed at supporting students when learning formal geometric language or personal financial literacy as required by the TEKS. Since numeracy and literacy go hand in hand, the teachers found that sentence frames, cooperative learning activities and frequent problem-solving tasks linked to real-world examples ensure that students master the language of math. Fluency in the vocabulary and basic numbers and operations has increased scores across the campus. The spiraling of the required TEKS throughout the year allows students to review critical concepts and skills such as measurement and algebraic reasoning. The key components of Park's instructional math block include numerous opportunities for students to read, think, write, and speak the academic language of mathematicians. This explicit, consistent, and challenging instruction allows students to read complex word problems and express sophisticated ideas independently. A strong math curriculum has effectively guided the teachers' instruction in three critical approaches: teaching for conceptual understanding; developing procedural literacy; and promoting competence through meaningful problem-solving investigations. In addition, the focus on using thinking maps to increase math comprehension and math literacy, along with equipping classrooms with hands-on manipulatives to meet the needs of all learning styles, has proven to support learning and mastery. By integrating songs and chants during math class, music and physical education has elevated numeracy skills. The use of anchor charts and supplemental aids have given ALL students the concrete support needed to excel on campus, district, and state-mandated formative assessments. With the assistance of the special education department, implementing a co-teach model has allowed special needs students to extend their learning and meet on-grade level demands and beyond. Since math is solely taught in English, the continued fidelity to implementing the dual language model ensures that English learners language needs are met.

1c. Science:

Hidalgo Park teachers have worked on strengthening their content knowledge and instructional delivery in the area of science learning and teaching. Sharpening their teaching skills and having a clear understanding of the required science TEKS has been a process embarked upon over the past years. Reflecting on the process of teaching and learning, the staff has a clear understanding of how students can actively construct knowledge the same way scientists do by allowing them to demonstrate that repeated investigations increase reliability by actively engaging in scientific inquiry, individually and as a group. This has led to facilitating science investigations, hands-on lab experiences, and use of computer-based, science software as required by the TEKS. Journaling, foldables, and note-taking support all students in meeting the standards of the science TEKS and state-mandated tests. Educational field trips and science camps are another way the school enriches real world experiences necessary for long-term learning of physical, earth, and life science. The district science teachers plan a science camp four times a year with their district counterparts, to create hands-on tasks focused on targeted TEKS. Students rotate through all the tasks, acquiring concepts and skills taught by four science experts. This has been a practice for five years and has proven to be effective because Science scores have elevated up to 20 percentage points each year. The core of the Park science program is also its dynamic science lab run by innovative, energetic staff members. This lab has all necessary science equipment, materials and resources aligned to deliver engaging daily lessons. Project-based learning instruction is another way to empower students as they prepare for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) practices at the secondary level. This approach is effective and supports rigorous instructional practices. Pirateers' practice science by working collaboratively to create student-created science anchor charts, interactive journals and word walls, as well as science projects aimed at aimed at deepening academic knowledge and skills.

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

Social studies' TEKS are a required component of a well-balanced, civic-minded instructional approach. This has been developed because of the need in the surrounding community of Hidalgo Park. With its rich and diverse demographics in the area, strong farming community as well as deep-rooted history, Park focuses on teaching citizenship, shared history, culture, and language connections across the curriculum. The dual language program sparks a sense of multiculturalism and acceptance of diversity in both culture and languages. Park teachers supplement the TEKS-aligned curriculum by immersing students in a rich educational program, materials and resources as well as real-life civic learning experiences. For example, school elections are held yearly for student council. Students participate in real-life campaigns, speeches, and casting ballots. This experience is supplemented by discussions in current events and gives opportunities for students to voice opinions, disagreements, and formulate solutions as would their real-life elected officials. For example, Pirateer students and parents have been invited to be part of the Superintendent's Roundtable to represent the campus in district decisions related to food services, transportation, campus safety, etc. District board members are invited to visit Park to spend time in the cafeteria where they speak to students and gather vital feedback to make changes to policies and processes. Social responsibility is important to Hidalgo Park and keeping a sense of community is advocated by all campus stakeholders. For example, students participate in canned food drives, anti-bullying and anti-drug rallies, toy drives, and others. Annual patriotic celebrations, college and career awareness presentations help Pirateers develop citizenship and begin the vision of college and career pathways. Preparing students for the global market is part of developing educated and well-rounded, productive citizens. Social studies lessons cover the history of Texas as well as discussion about the events happening along the border and how that influences their neighborhood.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

The Hidalgo Park early childhood program is an integrated approach that focuses on thematic units engaging early learners in all core subjects. This has a significant impact on language and literacy instruction in children's school readiness. The curriculum used serves as a platform to scaffold key foundational concepts and skills in early literacy, fluency, numeracy, early writing, social-emotional, and technology. Through the

alignment of Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines to the TEKS, teachers provide group instruction, and learning centers to increase rigor and develop proficient readers across all disciplines. By the time Pirateers reach 3rd grade, they are academically ready and successful on state-mandated TEKS.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Hidalgo Park has created an environment where creative expression, music literacy, and performance, as required in Fine Arts TEKS are actively happening. Once a week, for 45 minutes, Pirateers (PK-5th) receive TEKS-based instruction in the area of the arts including choir, creative expression, dance, and musicality. These programs aimed at supporting fine arts at the campus include choir, dance club, drumline, arts and crafts, cheerleading, and UIL. The Pirateer Choir participates in the community annual Christmas Program, report card nights, talent shows and curriculum nights. In addition, the creative expression that students attain supports the UIL in the areas of oral reading in English and Spanish, music memory, storytelling, Spanish poetry and creative writing. These programs allow for students to develop public speaking, communication and problem-solving skills which are an integral component of daily lessons. Student artwork is displayed across the campus for all to see. Classrooms have designated spaces where student authentic art is displayed to showcase visual literacy skills, original artwork, and appreciation in other disciplines. Park provides an extended day arts and crafts club where students are empowered to explore through innovation and creativity. Dance club is an extracurricular activity used to promote self-confidence, discipline and student learning by enhancing collaboration, leadership, creativity, and comprehension skills necessary to support the “whole-child”. Park has a cheerleading dance team that actively participates in community parades, school assemblies and district rallies aimed at increasing family and community engagement, teamwork, and self-esteem.

Pirateers participate in physical education (P.E.) class four times a week. Students engage in activities aligned to the state P.E./Health TEKS which ensures they acquire skills for movement that provide the foundation for enjoyment, continued social development and access to a physically-active lifestyle. For the early childhood program, the P.E. program ensures that learning relates to mobility and motor skills. Physical activity not only promotes cognition but enhances children’s social skills and self-esteem through group participation. Health topics addressed are obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes prevention, self-management, and decision-making - all which empower Pirateers to make healthier life-long choices. Park has found that there is a direct correlation between physical fitness and academic achievement. Upper grades are assessed with Fitness Gram, which assesses components such as aerobic capacity, body composition, muscular strength, endurance and flexibility. The physical education teacher incorporates a cross-curricular approach by integrating academic concepts and skills through physical activities. Topics addressed in P.E. are collaborated with the counselor, which include anti-bullying, bus safety, red ribbon week, character education, and conflict resolution. Pirateers are participating members of the district Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC) which holds an annual health fair and Superintendents Roundtable which meets monthly.

Park implements an integrated technology applications program, which is aligned to the required TEKS and Pre-K guidelines. It offers PK-5th grade students time in computer labs five times a week for 45- minutes. Students interact with online educational software, research, learn keyboarding skills and practice for real-world online tests. Digital literacy skills are put into practice as Pirateers find themselves researching for the literacy fair, science camps and class projects. Critical thinking and inquiry-based learning are goals which the Park staff embeds in daily lessons. In conjunction with rigor, building digital citizenship requires students to act responsibly and safely with courtesy and respect as they navigate the digital world. This is a non-negotiable for every Pirateer.

The Hidalgo Park library is the heart of the school. PK-5th grade students attend library twice a week supported by a certified librarian who cultivates the love for reading and strong literacy skills with focus on fluency and comprehension. The librarian works hand in hand with teachers to implement the required technology application TEKS through information literacy and integration of technology across the curriculum. Students are encouraged to look for credible sources, factual data, and primary sources when using online databases. In addition, annual book fairs and literacy events open the doors for parents to take advantage of the services offered in the library.

Character education classes are offered to all students at Hidalgo Park. A certified school counselor provides services to students twice a week and as needed. The curriculum offered embeds the seven pillars of character into its weekly lessons and activities. The counselor offers responsive and academic services, testing, identification and placement services in addition to the social-emotional component. Students also participate in activities such as career fair, cyber bullying presentations and drug prevention rallies support the overall well-being of students.

3. Special Populations:

Hidalgo Park students thrive in an inclusive, collaborative, data-driven environment where their individualized needs are targeted and addressed. Tailoring the needs of all students begins with those with the greatest need who score below grade level. Instructional planning is initiated by aligning instruction, curriculum, and assessment to the state standards based on student needs. Meeting the needs of the special populations, which include ELs, Gifted & Talented, At-Risk, Economically Disadvantaged, Special Education, Migrant, 504, and RTI, is centered on four critical approaches which have proven to close all sub-group achievement gaps.

In the first approach, staff determines how each student learns, what skills they've already mastered and what skills require additional development. Students' needs are met by formulating a "prescription" which includes targeted interventions. For example, teachers review student records at the beginning and end of each year to formulate a plan based on student profiles which include demographics, educational history, programs/services, and academic data. Teachers then review TEKS resources, lesson plans, and timelines to generate an academic plan for each special population group.

The second approach is an evidence-based instruction. Hidalgo Park staff reviews student data, including progress monitoring reports, on-going formal and informal assessments, and teacher observation anecdotes in a hierarchy model of data analysis. For example, the data is then displayed in the Pirateer Data Room by sub-groups and subjects across all grade levels (PK-5th). All special population groups are monitored by individual committees on an on-going basis to monitor students' overall achievement and growth.

The third approach is student-centered which ensures students are engaged via interactive activities aimed at building self-learners and problem-solvers. For example, teachers' daily lesson plans integrate hands-on experiences, academic games, learning centers, anchor charts, differentiation, and quality resources. Implementing a strong balanced literacy program has allowed for teachers to build learning centers that meet the different modalities of learning thus increasing opportunities for students to achieve targeted reading and writing goals.

A fourth approach is that of collaborative-teaching, where learning reflects the hard work of the staff to work towards targeted instruction where students learn from ALL classroom teachers. Co-teachers plan together and deliver an array of strategies and activities aimed at elevating mastery of TEKS through differentiation. For example, classrooms are carefully designed to maximize space, bring master teachers together to co-teach and provide tiered learning to meet the needs of all students at different reading and academic levels.

To maintain a high level of academic achievement in all special population groups, a focus on all accountability performance levels is a critical component. Teachers plan activities that engage learners in targeted standards to provide a comprehensive, multi-tiered instructional process. Daily morning interventions, in-class supports, science and writing camps, as well as after-school tutorials are offered to all students to ensure success. Computer labs are also used to provide students opportunities for robust, digital lessons and explicit instruction. Teachers meet every week to discuss strategies implemented and share student successes and challenges while they collaboratively plan solutions aimed at meeting every child's needs. These approaches help teachers analyze their instructional practices and come up with effective solutions. Hidalgo Park's methods has continuously proven to be effective as historically, all sub-groups of students have performed within 10 percentage points of the general population therefore, ensuring closure of achievement gaps.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The Hidalgo Park culture of high expectations for rigorous student achievement across all populations is “felt” as well as “seen” from the moment you walk in the building. It is a testament to the hard work and commitment of ALL stakeholder interactions centered on performance, challenges, and strategies aimed at ensuring every Pirateer succeeds. The hallways showcase samples of outstanding student work and visual artifacts which speak about the amazing teaching and learning happening inside every class. This creativity builds self-esteem and is an avenue for expressing feelings. Park has a compelling and aligned vision, mission, goals, core values which are focused on maintaining a safe environment for every student, a culture of high expectations for every staff member, and an open-door policy for every parent. Teamwork, which builds a strong sense of belonging and collaboration, is exemplified and expected - it is the fabric of the school community. Daily announcements of attendance rates of individual classes are made to engage motivate and boost morale. Selecting and announcing a Pirateer Student of the Month recognizes outstanding students for their academic, social, and emotional growth. These motivational activities build a strong school community and ownership of their own learning. Accelerated Reader Scholars are selected as well as Master-level students who are recognized at the Master’s Walk of Fame celebration and breakfast at a local restaurant. Students’ and teachers’ birthdays are announced daily as well as posted on social media, helping to create a sense of value and support for everyone. Field trips to such places as bookstores, restaurants, museums, and zoo boost students’ self-esteem and morale. Park teachers are recognized through Teacher of the Month and Teacher of the Year nominations and celebrations. Weekly-At-A Glance meetings give administrators and teachers an opportunity to talk with each other about weekly activities, expectations, look fors, and training topics. To meet the challenges and successes shared among all stakeholders, building transparency, communication, and trust supports the goal of connectivity. Connectivity creates a culture of sharing around the successes and struggles of teaching and learning. Teachers meet the needs of students because they participate in professional learning and are highly motivated. An evaluation tool is implemented to measure teacher and leadership goals, student success and growth as well as a collaborative development process. Park has continually aimed at restructuring and improving processes, and as they work together, they create a unified vision, making collaborative decisions, follow a viable and guaranteed curriculum, engage in deep discussions, sharpen their caring attitudes for every child, celebrate responsive leadership and instruction and provide ongoing support. This cumulative process, step by step, action by action pulls in a constant direction toward --- an academically strong “whole child”.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Hidalgo Park creates an inclusive and welcoming environment where families and communities are integrated in all aspects of teaching and learning. This support system aims all efforts towards improvement and success of all students. Since the opening of the school in 2004, Park has understood that this school is an intricate part of the neighborhood. The school is surrounded solely by homes and farmland - it is truly the center of the neighborhood. The campus family and community engagement plan are aligned to the expectations and goals from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act). One approach used is the family-to-family support which is fostered through the efforts of the Pirateer Family Center – where parents learn together on how to help their children. Through the family center, the parental liaison coordinates activities where parents work on creating hands-on resources to strengthen reading and math literacy. Community led “teach backs” are designed to educate families about topics that matter to them such as dentistry, immunization, diabetes awareness, photography, and financial literacy. Meaningful school events bring parents and children together to strengthen relationships and support systems for every child. Events such as read aloud day, career day, a parent-student reading program in Pre-K, meet the teacher night, open house, curriculum and literacy nights, cultural festivals and academic camps play an important role in welcoming families and keeping them involved and informed about programs, services, and academic progress. These have helped the students achieve better grades, strengthen attendance and lower discipline incidents. The establishment of a Family and Community Engagement Committee (F.A.C.E.) has been an additional school improvement strategy

aimed at increasing communication and personal connections. This parent-leadership committee involves parents through an educational platform where information is shared, issues are discussed, decisions are vetted, and parents' voices are heard. Park parents attend district F.A.C.E Institutes where presenters from the district and community are invited to train, inform and review data with parents to adjust current plans. The voice of the parent is very powerful, and building strong partnerships with the group promotes trust, communication, transparency, and collaboration - all tools of successful schools. Parent Education classes focus on learning English and obtaining a General Education Diploma (GED). However, increasing family participation in decision-making begins with increased membership of parents in committees such as in the Site-Based Decision- Making Committee (SBDM) and Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC). Family participation is monitored by the campus principal and the parent liaison. An annual parent survey offers a way for the voices of families to be included in school decisions.

3. Professional Development:

Hidalgo Park professional development (PD) plan is aligned to the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (TTESS) and the district and campus improvement plan. Through this process, the administrators at the school seek to develop habits of continuous school improvement which has increased student achievement and impact staff capacity. Targeted and focused professional development, which is developed in response to data and is aligned to the TEKS and TTESS, ensures teachers are prepared to teach effectively and purposefully. Park teachers have received trainings in the creation of thinking maps, sheltered instruction, compliance and program updates, dual language, gifted and talented, state TEKS, co-teaching model, high yield strategies, and writing. These topics are aimed at addressing solutions to the challenges facing teachers when looking for the best instructional practices to meet the high needs of the student population served. Book studies conducted at the district and campus levels empower teachers toward improving performance and enhancing student learning through deliberate TEKS-based, instructional practices. The Park principal participates in district bi-weekly leadership meetings where he learns from others and shares best practices. Building Leader Academy is offered to current leaders, grade level chairs, and aspiring administrators has been an ongoing commitment at the school. Through this academy future leaders are trained on research-based frameworks, TEKS strategies, and other data-driven strategies aimed at improving leadership skills and knowledge. Working with academic consultants and district staff, teachers and leaders learn strategies to develop a common vision of excellence. This outcome-based training gives teachers a platform to experiment with innovative instructional approaches and practice leadership skills. In addition, support is given to novice and experienced teachers through monthly teacher induction and mentor trainings. These trainings focus on topics such as classroom management, academic vocabulary, lesson planning, etc. Due to the high number of at-risk students, in one of the highest poverty areas in the county, it is important for the staff to continually monitor student progress, adjust pacing charts, and modify instruction to meet student needs and push for elevated instructional rigor. Vertical alignment planning across subjects and grade levels has been a recurring, effective practice amongst Hidalgo Park teachers and district colleagues. Teachers have deep conversations about best practices, share resources, and brainstorm new ideas to elevate their teaching and student achievement. Building teacher capacity, in instruction and social-emotional supports, has paved the way for increase in student performance levels and campus accolades.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership team at Hidalgo Park includes the principal, assistant principal, counselor, lead teacher, grade level chairs, each with clear, written, and transparent roles and responsibilities aligned to meet needs of all students and increase student achievement for ALL Pirateers. The leadership philosophy is transparency, trust, and teamwork and it is the common thread in every plan and every decision made across the campus. The principal understands that as an effective instructional leader he must set a clear sense of direction in order to achieve all goals, state standards and meet accountability standards at the highest level. As a leader the principal shares a common understanding of the organization, the vision, mission, goals and activities by building transparency through weekly Monday morning meetings where core leadership tasks are scheduled, targeted and focused. The leadership TEAM works diligently to ensure the implementation and evaluation of initiatives, programs, compliance requirements and policies. The assistant principal collaborates with the principal to implement all performance expectations by setting

measurable goals at every grade level, across subjects, and special programs. These consistent written goals and protocols are aimed at supporting the departments, grade-level chairs, and other programs/committees. The unified efforts of the leaders and staff promote a culture of accountability, responsibility, flexibility, high expectations and rigor. The TEAM strives to achieve the goal - achievement for ALL. The assistant principal sets up the processes used during weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) where the teams come together to model best practices, dig deep into formative data, create and evaluate quality lesson plans aligned to TEKS, and have meaningful conversations about how to improve their teaching and improve student learning. Lead teacher and grade level chairs participate in the task of mentor and coach. For example, teacher leaders serve as coaches when they share their expertise about aligning activities to standards when they sit and discuss lesson development every six weeks during vertical team planning. As mentors, they understand that trust and communication is key to building rapport, so they practice this strategy during PLCs when they are grouped by grade level or subject to discuss teaching refinement ideas. Throughout the year, teachers serve in various campus committees such as RTI, 504, Student Assistance Committee, etc. These leadership opportunities develop teacher leaders and build capacity as well as support collaboration and ongoing professional learning for all staff in support of the TEKS. Campus leaders provide ongoing monitoring to ensure that evidence of effectiveness is consistently evaluated and adjusted to meet the needs of students and track progress towards intended outcomes.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Hidalgo Park has many attributes which have contributed to the success of their students. The leaders, staff, parents and community have transformed the school into a vibrant place where teachers want to teach, and students want to learn. One of the most instrumental practices to the school's success has been the Professional Learning Community (PLC). The PLC is a professional development effort toward integrating teacher learning into communities of practice with the focus on improving student outcomes. Teachers work shoulder-to-shoulder on reviewing their daily teaching practices in a collective manner. For example, at the beginning of the year the core leadership brings the team together to develop a collective set of shared goals and initiatives. The Park team discusses their views about children and their ability to learn to dispel misconceptions and set high expectations, review the school's goals and initiatives, conduct data review, and come up with agreed upon roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders. This overview begins the process of having a clear understanding of who is doing what, developing shared norms and values for all staff, as well as engaging in reflective dialogue leading to deep conversations about curriculum, standards, instruction, assessment, interventions, programs, and services. The PLC is held weekly, with fidelity, in the Pirateer Data Room, where the interactive walls become visual representations of where every child is at in relation to programs, services, assessments, and interventions. The PLC evolved from just simply a grade level meeting to a job-embedded professional development practice where everyone works to improve student learning. Teachers create and deliver presentations on topics such as lesson design, high yield strategies, differentiation, fluency, student grouping, tracking student data, and progress monitoring to name just a few. The purpose of displaying data at Hidalgo Park is to promote transparency – where every data piece is on display for every child, teacher and program. Data is analyzed at the beginning of the year and ongoing updates are posted to track progress. The school has experienced dramatic changes in leadership and teacher practices as a result of the work done in the PLCs. Leaders have become teachers and teachers have become leaders. Collectively leaders and teachers have come to understand the importance of working as ONE team to impact and improve student achievement. The very reason that Hidalgo Park teachers work together in teams and engage in collective inquiry is to serve as catalysts for action for EVERY CHILD EVERY DAY.