



## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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

1. 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

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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):
- 14 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 3 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 21 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	22	29	51
K	14	23	37
1	28	28	56
2	44	27	71
3	35	30	65
4	33	26	59
5	42	38	80
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	218	201	419

\*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: 23%

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

The mobility rate is above 15% due to housing arrangements and family employment.

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	50
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	57
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	107
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	475
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.23
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	23

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 45 %  
189 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: 373

8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %  
24 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>3</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>12</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: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
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 20:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	98%
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.

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

Escobar/Rios Elementary will prepare students to be equipped to excel and dominate 21st century skills.

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

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Hilda C. Escobar/Alicia C. Rios Elementary School is a PreK-5th grade campus surrounded by farmland, colonias (low-income informal housing), trailers, and humble homes, located in the lower Rio Grande Valley just north of the United States/Mexico border at the southernmost part of Texas in a city appropriately named Mission. The city earned its name as the original site of La Lomita (Little Hill) Mission, which belonged to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The oblates were a mission-sending society of priests and brothers who dedicated themselves to serving the poor and needy. Grounded in faith, the city grew and established Mission Consolidated Independent School District (MCISD) in 1910. Almost 100 years later, in August of 2008, Escobar/Rios Elementary joined the district as the 14th elementary school earning its name in the same historically rich manner that the city did. Named for two exceptional sisters, Hilda C. Escobar and Alicia C. Rios were key figures in the development of MCISD. By committing themselves to the needs of the community, both dedicated their educational careers as teachers and administrators to the district. H.C. Escobar was the first Hispanic female administrator in MCISD, serving Pearson Elementary; under her leadership, Pearson became one of the top 20 performing elementary schools in the state. With the road to success paved by her sister, A.C. Rios also built campus success as principal of Mims Elementary, earning academic honors and the only Blue Ribbon School nomination and award to date in MCISD.

Escobar/Rios Elementary is close to Mission's main street, Conway Boulevard, on FM-1924 and Trosper Road. With diverse economic backgrounds, students are predominately Hispanic with more than half coming from Spanish-only speaking homes. As an open-enrollment school, the campus welcomes students from different cities throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

The educational philosophy at Escobar/Rios Elementary is high expectations yield high student achievement; everyone from teachers to paraprofessionals to custodial staff, cafeteria staff, and bus drivers is vital to student success. This philosophy contributed to Escobar/Rios Elementary becoming a dominating educational force in MCISD. In 2015-2016, an Academically Unacceptable Performance rating under the state's new accountability system, "What if" report was presented to the staff. Targeting student achievement, student progress, and closing the gaps between subpopulations, the "What If" rating served as a catalyst for the campus to reflect, rethink, and clearly redefine its purpose, goals, and desired student outcomes; the message changed and the goal became clear: everyone plays an equal part in the education of all students at Escobar/Rios Elementary. In keeping with H.C. Escobar and A.C. Rios's life model of hard work and dedication, a plan was created to ensure academic success. With the end in mind, Escobar/Rios Elementary has become a top performing campus, earning an Exemplary Performance in 2018 with an overall score of 93. Within each domain, scores exceeded the goal: 1) Student Achievement: 82; 2) School Progress: 90; and 3) Closing the Gaps: 100. Closing the Gaps was the most honored and celebrated recognition because it showcased the campus vision: to prepare and equip every child to excel.

Multiple strategies have been implemented to encourage and challenge all students to develop to their fullest potential academically, emotionally, socially, culturally, and physically. Students receive daily instruction toward a solid academic foundation in all contents through rigorous, district-created curriculum. With diverse learners, academic needs are met through critical thinking, language support, and interventions. Careful monitoring of student success led to implementing early identification for students possibly in need of services through Response to Intervention, dyslexia, Section 504, and/or special education. Dual language instruction is afforded to English language learners with a model of 50/50 in native language and English. Through the gifted and talented program, advanced learners experience instruction in greater depth and complexity and project-based learning.

Weekly guidance education curriculum through whole class counseling sessions, in-class lessons that focus on emotional growth, and a campus-wide structure that focuses on positive behavior, is provided to each student. Through these systems, students are rewarded with monthly luncheons and recognition in assemblies. These celebrations encourage family members to participate in honoring their child through community and fellowship. Celebrating culture is equally important with campus-led events, such as Grandparent's Day, where history and family is celebrated. Students are also provided with a rich literary

program offering bilingual and bicultural reads both in the classroom and in the school library.

Students learn collaborative problem-solving skills, critical thinking, engineering, science, and communication through various extracurricular activities, which promote student and family engagement. Students participate in choir, dance, coding, intermural sports, academic University Interscholastic League (UIL), award-winning robotics, and Destination Imagination (DI), which yield multiple state teams in four consecutive years. Escobar/Rios Elementary was the first elementary campus in MCISD to implement Elementary STEM, Robotics, and National Elementary Honor Society, recognizing students for their outstanding academic performance and personal responsibility.

Escobar/Rios Elementary pioneers prestigious programs for continual success of the whole child. Building from students' backgrounds and beliefs, the campus pursues excellence and provides opportunities to ensure every child is educated and is provided with a foundation for lifelong success.

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

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

The Language Arts/Reading foundation begins with teachers collaborating and reviewing qualitative and quantitative data for student success. Literary skill development for language acquisition and instruction is provided in English or Spanish, depending on each child's linguistic needs. Literacy-based approaches are used to set a foundation and instill a passion for reading; word walls, anchor charts, and motivational prints are evident in literature rich classrooms. Strategic activities and lessons embed research-based instructional strategies focusing on mastery of the five essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. As students' progress through these components, novels are incorporated to produce lifelong learners and readers. Instructional strategies, such as read-alouds, discussions, and rigorous levels of questioning, are used to target fluency and ensure oral and reading comprehension. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) data, and teacher observations are analyzed weekly to identify individual students' strengths and weaknesses to prepare and adjust instructional lessons. Differentiated instructional lessons, enrichment, interventions, accommodations, scaffolding the learning, and small group instruction are prescribed to meet individual student needs. Additional instructional support is provided through technology labs which utilize a district provided e-learning program that measures student growth through diagnostic screenings and provides tiered instruction. Teachers are able to utilize specific data from the program to increase fluency, comprehension, and the reading level of every child.

Escobar/Rios Elementary utilizes a writing process focusing on the five components of writing: prewriting, writing, revision, editing, and publishing. Student writing portfolios, capturing independent thoughts of students while building them to become fluent writers, are produced yearly and passed to each subsequent teacher. As students become more confident, teachers recommend their work to the creative writing campus chair and students are afforded an opportunity to publish their original work in the Anthology of Poetry by Young Americans. The recommendation for publishing allows students to be acknowledged for their creativity and understanding of the structural components of writing.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

Escobar/Rios Elementary implements a district-created mathematics curriculum, following a scope and sequence that utilizes the state required TEKS and ELPS. Mathematics curriculum scaffolds instruction and utilizes a model which moves from concrete learning to representational understanding to abstract thinking. Basic knowledge at the concrete level is imperative to knowing math skills in a more profound way. Manipulatives build the foundation of math skills and operations, while facilitating deeper comprehension and transferability to real-life problem solving. Representations, cognates, movement and songs allow students to visually and physically understand numeracy, spatial sense, measurement, estimation, patterns, and problem solving. Lessons are created to be interactive, so students actively engage and discuss during the learning process. Built in checks throughout the year strengthen numerical fluency and the connection between automaticity and comprehension; the connection enables students to attain deeper mathematical understanding, while learning that problems can be solved in a multitude of ways. Instruction includes ongoing spiraling of lesson objectives, providing differentiation through supplemental resources that correspond to district-created lessons, and incorporating the writing process through interactive journals which encourage student creativity and math engagement. Journals facilitate writing discussions, activate retrieval of prior knowledge, allow for independent writing, and provide opportunities to engage through peer review sessions. Through daily technology usage, students utilize e-learning through a district-provided technology program where individualized plans reinforce skills not yet mastered or allow for advancement of math concepts. Assessment data are used to monitor the mastery of TEKS, while enabling teachers to focus on low-performing skills through interventions. Enrichment provides opportunities for advanced learners to apply knowledge through project-based learning and lessons focusing on deeper

understanding of equations, variables, and expressions. The fluidity of math instruction, as well as the overall comprehension of skills from grade to grade, is emphasized through curriculum articulation.

### **1c. Science:**

Science curriculum is based on transdisciplinary connections through the development and enrichment of scientific processes and concepts; district created lessons are hands-on and technology driven with embedded math skills. By focusing on visuals, videos, and picture vocabulary, students are able to have a concrete understanding of grade level science TEKS. Students are taught to observe, explore and investigate the world around them, as well as create their own conclusions, with the understanding that they can change based on new knowledge. This form of instruction allows for ongoing classroom discussions and opportunities to respond and personally express understanding through independent writing. The teaching of vertically aligned vocabulary through classroom experiences, with a focus on prefixes, suffixes, root words, and cognates, ensure that students recognize and are able to utilize specific terms in context. With the availability of a science lab open to all grade levels, activities and technology programs develop the scientific inquiry process and bring science to life. Discovery type learning, hands-on activities, lessons that concentrate on state standards, and utilization of technology to research and inquire, support and provide opportunities for students to physically connect to open-ended questions. The district led Science Fair project combines understanding from classroom instruction and independent research on specific topics and allows students to represent their knowledge in an open forum with students throughout the district. Through technology, students are able to build connections and participate in virtual field trips. Housed in a mecca for hands-on science, students make yearly visits to the Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and World Birding Center, Rancho El Charco, Santa Anna Wildlife Refuge, the National Butterfly Center, and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley to apply their knowledge in the natural environment. At Escobar/Rios Elementary students explore the world through a different lens and become open-minded, risk-takers ready for new challenges.

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

Social Studies curriculum at Escobar/Rios Elementary enables students to obtain a civic understanding of how to interpret their community, city, state, and world.

Students receive a foundation for becoming knowledgeable and productive citizens in our society while being caring, empathetic, and principled towards themselves and others. Through active classroom participation and learning to honor cultural diversity, students develop a sense of belonging as well as become familiar with our nation's democracy. Furthermore, incorporating literature, research, and technology, students examine geographical, historical, cultural, and economic situations, which enable them to develop decision making skills, incorporate strategies for reading, interpret data, and engage in a variety of experiences and activities. This learner-centered approach teaches knowledge, skills, and values through active participation in the learning process. TEKS-based lesson guides provide for differentiated instruction through leveled readers, historical novels, games, role-playing, and project-based learning to meet the needs of individual students. Resources provide quality instruction through clearly defined student expectations and objectives, addressing possible misconceptions at the beginning of the lesson, and providing opportunities for students to actively engage in the curriculum. Instructional tools, such as visual aids, timelines, maps, and graphic organizers, are integrated to ensure understanding for all learners. Social Studies is taught in a student's native language so students visually learn key vocabulary, keep interactive journals, and discuss daily current events. Teacher instruction in Social Studies is supported with an abundance of instructional programs that serve to engage students in the learning process. The arts are used to recreate historical events and create projects that build on student abilities. The research process is displayed yearly through the district-led History Expo; students choose important historical figures or impactful events in United States history to showcase and discuss. Independently created, students are expected to present and provide explanation of their research. Furthermore, students participate in a TEKS-aligned field trip to Colonial Days Holiday where they experience a first-hand look at life during our nations' inception.

### **1e. For secondary schools:**

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

Early childhood is an essential component for overall student success at Escobar/Rios Elementary. The passion to teach our students' young minds motivates us to seek diverse and creative techniques in delivery and instructional methods. In early childhood education, Escobar/Rios Elementary teachers follow Texas PreK guidelines, which include phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, comprehension, oral language, emergent writing, math, science, social studies, social, emotional and physical development. Teachers correlate with one another through vertical meetings to discuss areas of strengths and weaknesses. Data is gathered and compared in order to target specific areas that may need further assistance in order to enhance learning and comprehension. By correlating and planning necessary interventions, we can avoid academic gaps. Data has demonstrated that students who have enrolled in an early childhood program, have a stronger foundation that is necessary for their academic achievement.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Escobar/Rios Elementary incorporates a well-rounded curriculum which includes visual and performing arts, physical education and health, second language acquisition, library media and technology, and character-building skills.

All students participate weekly in fine arts where they learn skills to appreciate music, movement, and art, as required by the TEKS. The fine arts program incorporates hands-on engagement through singing, speaking and creative opportunities. In music, students explore rhythm, melodies, harmonies, and expressive opportunities for learning various styles of music and movements that can define the style of music. In addition, students express themselves by creating original works of art, which are showcased throughout the campus. Students are continuously encouraged to display their unique skills and talents through voice, instrument knowledge, movement and art.

The physical education program focuses on creating a systemic approach to health by increasing physical activity and identifying healthy food options as required by the TEKS. Once a week, students receive health lessons where the coach teaches skills necessary to become healthy adults. In addition, students participate in 210 to 300 minutes of physical activity a week with at least half of the time being moderate-to-vigorous activities in the physical education classroom. Students learn to develop basic body control practices, fundamental movement skills and health-related fitness components such as strength, endurance and flexibility. Furthermore, students learn foundational skills for physical fitness as well as how to translate those skills into an active lifestyle. As grade levels progress, students begin to learn locomotor and manipulative skills in dynamic situations, such as dribbling, catching and throwing. Students are tested yearly with an assessment that measures physical and aerobic fitness with national standards; results help drive the direction of physical fitness that the student must accomplish. Students also participate in a district program titled Mission Ballers. The objective of this program is to encourage and develop an early interest in ball handling skills, improve agility and general fitness, build self-confidence, become self-disciplined, develop character, and to be part of a team. Students are provided with multiple opportunities to showcase their learned skills during halftime basketball performances, field day, track, and PE showcases.

Technology serves as the vehicle in furthering literacy and learning through incorporating TEKS, which address creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration, research and information fluency, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making skills, digital citizenship, and technology operations and concepts. Although technology is instrumental in the campus's literacy program, it is used in all content areas through learning games, reading, creating through coding, researching, writing, being innovative, and problem-solving. With the implementation of interactive displays, digital tablets, and laptops with features utilized primarily through internet connection, student needs are met during daily instruction, guided practice, and integration of technology. Using transdisciplinary connections enables a unique learning environment that maximizes every student's potential through rigorous and relevant learning experiences while preparing students to be 21st century global leaders. The campus has also incorporated a third language, coding, in the technology curriculum for all K-5th grade students. Students learn drag and drop

coding, which they use for projects and as a foundation for programming in robotics. The state of Texas recognizes computer programming and computer science as foreign language in high school, so students begin this pathway as early as kindergarten.

The librarian strongly integrates informational literacy with technology through direct instructional lessons that focuses on the development of lifetime, recreational reading skills. Students are able to checkout library books daily and assess for comprehension, earning points for different book levels as well as for number of words read. Teachers and students monitor individual goals with recognition for meeting reading goals showcased throughout the campus. In addition, students are provided access to a digital library collection. Each student has a personalized literacy account accessible 24/7. Titles are matched to individual student's interest, grade, and Lexile level. While targeting reluctant readers, the collections' unique features allow narration of book content for comprehension and guided reading. Students also receive daily news articles which are embedded with engaging multimedia which include videos and photo galleries. Students can read or have news narrated in multiple languages, enabling a cross-cultural language experience while preparing our students for a global society.

### **3. Special Populations:**

Keeping true to the campus philosophy, academic gaps at Escobar/Rios have been closing through instruction, interventions, and assessments, which target the diverse, individualized needs of students served in bilingual, migrant, and special education programs.

Through the dual language immersion/one-way model, students entering school stronger in a language other than English are eligible to receive instruction in their native language and English. Language learning is integrated with content instruction provided in Spanish, which enforces the development of fluency and literacy in both languages, while promoting bilingualism, cross-cultural awareness, and high academic achievement.

In utilizing data from end of year state assessments that monitor linguistic growth, plans are created to ensure individual gains for students. Campus educators monitor academic performance systematically throughout the year. The goals within each of the plans focus on the current proficiency level of the individual student. Strategies are built in four language components and at different linguistic levels. Differentiated strategies include using gestures and movement to communicate language, providing students with short sentence stems for practice during conversations, and allowing grade level analysis tasks with peer collaboration.

Students in the dual language program are assessed in English and Spanish, allowing teachers to monitor progress throughout the year. Teachers provide academic support during a specialized time block within their instructional day, working one-to-one or in small groups allowing for support to target areas of difficulty or provide opportunities for enrichment for students at or above level, through differentiated instruction, implementation of linguistic strategies and scaffolding. Specialized support includes direct re-teach of a skill or using knowledge of a learned skill. Through this systematic approach, gaps have been closed significantly between English proficient and English Learners (ELs). In 2018, ELs scored three percent lower than English proficient students in language arts and scored one percent higher in mathematics.

Migrant students are provided support to reduce the educational disruption that occurs from repeated school movement. At Escobar/Rios Elementary, migratory students are provided with in-class support as well as one-to-one assistance in areas of need with a specialized instructor. The instructor provides services that address individualized needs in a coordinated and efficient manner working with the classroom teacher. Similar to migrant students, students participating in the special education program receive high-quality education in an environment of high expectations and quality services. Specialized instruction tailored to individualized education plans are implemented to meet their academic needs through a combination of inclusion services, which secures opportunities for students with disabilities to learn alongside their non-disabled peers in general education classrooms, and specialized supplementary instruction in an individual or small group setting daily. Through inclusion, a special education teacher continuously checks for student

comprehension and understanding, scaffolds lessons, and differentiates instruction in the classroom. Students receive instruction through their general education teacher as well as their special education teacher during the inclusion time. Both teachers collaborate to pre-plan instruction by discussing lessons of the week, reviewing student progress, and collaborating on appropriate strategies. Data and progress monitoring adjusts instruction.

Some special needs students are also served through a self-contained classroom with a targeted program designed for student success, spending time in general education with the assistance of special education personnel. Instruction is provided through a program model, specifically designed to give students with learning needs meaningful access to the general education curriculum. The instruction is tailored to each child, always keeping learning levels specialized to ensure progress. Students are provided with safety, security, sensory, and transitional skills with continuous monitoring to promote student comprehension and gains.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Genuine care is evident as each student is greeted with a sincere smile and a “Good morning!” daily. Positive experiences are reflected through interpersonal relationships that staff, students, and parents share. Teachers are instrumental not only academically, but socially and emotionally as they engage students and build relationships with students’ families on a personal level. Many children are related to former students, providing educators an opportunity to know families well. Celebrations like quinceañeras (15th birthday) and graduations are events that former teachers attend. When tragedies have occurred in a family, teachers have united in providing support and comfort, engaging and impacting lives beyond academics. Knowing students and their families is an integral component of the campus culture.

Weekly character development classes focus on core values, such as honesty, integrity, citizenship, and tolerance, which are campus expectations of all students. Monthly, students are recognized and rewarded for exemplifying these values consistently and leading by example. The mentor program at Escobar/Rios Elementary enables students to work with staff on social skills and emotional growth, receiving support, encouragement and a safe place for open dialogue. Students learn to make good choices, reflect on citizenship and build relationships with peers.

Annual activities emphasize educating the “whole” child through real-world application reflected in activities such as community service. Students participate in a variety of self-directed activities, giving back to the community, while learning intrinsic motivation. They organize an annual food drive during Thanksgiving, taking responsibility for generating written reminders, posting notices throughout the building, collecting donated food items, and dispersing donations to their most needy peers. Students also participate in a community-based collection of blankets and coats during the coldest season of the year. The social and emotional growth of Escobar/Rios Elementary students is evident as they learn to understand the world around them.

The school climate at Escobar/Rios Elementary creates an environment where teachers feel supported by administration. Because teachers provide the most important resources to a student - their time, dedication, and knowledge - it is important that they feel valued and encouraged. Each teacher is provided with opportunities to question and discuss campus goals, incentives, and culture. These opportunities support the monthly agenda for Campus Improvement Leadership Team (CILT) meetings where key issues are reviewed and vote with discussions held in an open-forum. CILT members participate in “shout outs” during their meeting where they acknowledge the great things occurring in classrooms and around the campus. Throughout the year, staff is also provided with small tokens of appreciation through monthly luncheons, gifts of gratitude, extended lunches and notes of recognition.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Escobar/Rios Elementary's main goal is to provide all students a high-quality education in a safe and supportive learning environment to equip them to excel in the college and career of their choice; student success takes a village. Parents and the community are vital to student success and school improvement, so supportive, trusting partnerships have been developed. The staff takes seriously their role “in loco parentis” (in place of the parent) and treats each child as one of their own. Parents entrust their children to the staff, confident each child is cared for and supported, while being supportive of the campus’ high expectations.

Communication in English and Spanish ensure parents are informed of their child’s academic progress and opportunities for participation within the school. Parents and the community are informed of students’ academic achievements or challenges through the use of electronic communication. Parents are eligible to access a campus wide app that offers communication through texts and emails. A school notification system notifies parents of campus events through phone calls and text messages. In addition, social media, mail-outs, emails, and monthly bulletins keep parents and the community informed. Community partners

are notified of campus happenings with the digital marquee where updates, celebrations, and notifications are immediately displayed.

Monthly, parent meetings conducted in English and Spanish focus on educational, social, and emotional needs. Parents participate in school leadership and support systems through actively serving on language committees, attending conferences, participating in management teams, and parental involvement planning. Parental participation provides a different lens in campus decision-making, while offering opportunities for the parents' voice to be heard; parents support the campus by providing feedback to other parental stakeholders on campus/district initiatives and the decision-making processes, while serving as the greatest advocates.

Business partners and the community contribute to the success of the campus. Escobar/Rios Elementary's annual community Health Fair partners with businesses to provide health and wellness resources for families. Free health screenings, health education, and nutritional guidance are provided. In the fall, a "Read Across America" celebration is held to promote literacy; community businesses participate in read-alongs and literacy games, while supplying free literature to children. Since reading is directly related to academics, engaging literary activities are held throughout the campus, emphasizing reading at an early age, and reading for enjoyment with the family. Prior to summer vacation, a Summer Program Fair is held to provide information regarding summer program opportunities, such as literary programs at Speer Memorial Library, physical programs through Mission Parks and Recreation, and summer information on nutritious free meals through MCISD Child Nutrition. Family and community engagement have contributed to school improvement through true partnerships.

### **3. Professional Development:**

The goal of professional development is to attain higher student achievement. The district provides professional development aligned to the TEKS-based curriculum, delivery of instruction, differentiation for special populations such as special education, dual language, and gifted/talented, and areas in need of improvement. Since Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are a key component for student success, all professional staff have received professional development to ensure high levels of learning for all students, data-driven instruction/progress monitoring, and effective instructional strategies. Professional development specific to the curriculum is provided through consultants and content coordinators targeting writing skills, literacy, math, science, and social studies as well as levels of rigor/questioning, scaffolding instruction, and monitoring for success. Campus administrators have been provided professional development on effective leadership, leading for instructional improvement, instructional coaching, conducting effective walk-throughs, data analysis, increasing student achievement, teacher evaluations, administrator evaluations, legal issues, discipline based upon restorative justice, and mental health.

Professional development is also specific to the goals of the campus. Writing across the grade levels, as well as content areas, has been a priority at Escobar/Rios Elementary because it was a campus struggle for many years. Beginning with needed skills in Prekindergarten through 2nd grade, a specific approach to writing has been created, and trainings have been conducted to ensure continued progress. Professional development in writing includes integrated campus checks, support and guidance by the developer. As specific needs for campus staff grow, trainings are adjusted to meet specific teachers' needs. Feedback from administration and the developer have solidified the process and the preciseness of the program amongst the grade levels.

At the campus level, individual teacher professional development is encouraged. Teachers reflect upon performance in previous years and develop independent measurable goals. Administration works with teachers to provide opportunities for professional development to meet their goals. Teachers choose two specific learning objectives they want to target to improve knowledge and skills that will improve delivery of instruction and ensure students become more knowledgeable. If the requested professional development is academically based, disaggregating data and identifying specific skills to be targeted is required. If the need is social-emotional training, a review of classroom strengths and weaknesses, including the connection to teacher-student relationships, is conducted. Professional development at the teacher level is targeted to the needs of each individual person.

The approach of professional development at Escobar/Rios Elementary has had an impact on all educators at the campus. Because goals are tailored to their needs, teachers acknowledge and implement what they learn. As a campus, ongoing support and discussions for improvement and adjustments are continual, allowing for faith in the process and persistence in the practice.

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

The leadership philosophy and structure in the school at Escobar/Rios Elementary, along with the roles of the principal, other school leaders, and stakeholders is to pursue greatness for the success of the students. Through this pursuit, all educators have grown as individuals and recognition of the impact in the lives of the students has occurred. It is clear that there is no shortcut to greatness and quite possibly, may not be reached, but this does not stop the perseverance to achieve it. Hard work, dedication, and a drive to do what others believe cannot be done is the driving force that has made leaders out of all campus staff.

Everyone is included in leadership; all are vital team members. Although the roles of the principal, other school leaders, and stakeholders are normally hierarchical, the principal emphasizes that no one person is more important than the other. The roles and responsibilities may be definitive, but individual initiative ensures campus structure is maintained. In traditional roles, the principal, assistant principal, and counselor participate in Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD), Response to Intervention (RTI), and 504 meetings to ensure that program decisions are in the best interest of the student as well as monitored for compliance. The instruction and assessment strategist serves as the liaison between administration and teachers; this leader is responsible for meeting curricular needs, while modeling best instructional practices. Teachers are leaders in their classroom and build classroom supports that meet the needs of students. Teachers create compacts and rules with students so they too become leaders. Teachers volunteer for campus leadership roles such as UIL Sponsors, DI Team Managers, and Robotics Coaches as well as serving on the District Educational Improvement Committee (DEIC). Each grade level and department has a representative serving in Site Based Decision Management (SBDM). Campus Instructional Leadership Team (CILT) representatives conduct weekly PLC meetings and relate concerns and information to campus administration.

School leadership ensures policies and procedures are implemented through continuous support from personnel. Campus expectations are supported by campus staff, including dress code, campus based identification cards, and procedures throughout the building. The precedence set in the classroom by teachers creates classroom communities and responsible students. Teachers serve as leaders in pursuit of daily attendance and reading across the curriculum. Through dialogue with parents, incentives have been created to ensure students are in attendance daily and are achieving reading goals. As leaders, staff ensures goals and high expectations are met.

Escobar/Rios Elementary provides a solid foundation for staff and students to excel in future endeavors. Every employee is expected to teach each child as if that child is their own, which has led to relationship building and children being treated with care.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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The one practice that has been the most instrumental to Escobar/Rios Elementary's success is teamwork. When entering the school, the culture embodies a positive feeling that exudes within the environment. Everyone is greeted at the beginning of the day, setting daily expectations. As individuals walk to their destinations at the school, daily reminders are provided to students from dress code to walking on the right side of the hall. Teamwork is key as everyone plays an integral role in the development of students.

From the beginning of a student's academic career, educators at Escobar/Rios Elementary take active ownership in the development of the social, emotional, and academic progress of the student. Teachers acknowledge each student as an individual, knowing that as the student moves from one grade level to the next, they are part of the solid academic foundation for that child. Whether a child is successful or struggling, everyone takes part in that celebration or remediation; there is a candid acknowledgement of determination to make each child successful.

A culture of teamwork, honesty and ongoing dialogue are fundamental. Individuals will only become great at their craft if they learn how to become great. Discussing weaknesses, and what is needed to turn weakness into success, is vital to a solid team. Teams become successful by trusting each other and growing through weaknesses. Putting in maximum effort, day in and day out, creates a willingness and drive from everyone to go the next mile.

Escobar/Rios Elementary staff feel accountable for each child. As educators, the staff believes in building a solid academic foundation for each child, so he or she can pursue the college and career of their choice. The staff never limits a child's success and keeps that ideology at the forefront. To account for each child's future, educators know that discussions are ongoing and that being data-driven and emotionally attached to a child's future is the only way that success will be earned.

No one person is more important than the other. Administrators open car doors in the morning and wait with students when parents leave work late. Teachers eat lunch with their students to celebrate classroom successes and ride on buses to ensure that students make it home safely. Support staff drive to other Texas cities to encourage students in extracurricular activities. Custodians sit with students during lunchtime and provide emotional support during difficult days. Every teacher, Prekindergarten through 5th grade, offers academic guidance through extended day tutorials. This level of teamwork and comradery is the norm at Escobar/Rios Elementary, not the exception.