

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Zeferino Farias Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1100 W. Acacia Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Alamo State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 78516-0000

County Hidalgo County

Telephone (956) 354-2760 Fax (956) 354-3254

Web site/URL https://www.psjaisd.us/farias E-mail leticia.rodriguez@psjaisd.us

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. Jorge Arredondo E-mail dr.arredondo@psjaisd.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District Tel. (956) 354-2000

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 Mr. Jorge Zambrano
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

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

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

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

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	60	58	118
K	39	38	77
1	42	50	92
2	47	32	79
3	40	37	77
4	38	25	63
5	42	42	84
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	308	282	590

*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
 - 0.1 % Asian
 - 0.1 % Black or African American
 - 99.8 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: 24%

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

Our mobility rate is at 24% related to parents' employment or moving back to Mexico.

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, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	46
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	103
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	149
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	624
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.24
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	24

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 60 %
353 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 94 %

Total number students who qualify: 554

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %

57 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <u>5</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>20</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>11</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: 2

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	30
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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.

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	96%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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.

Farias Elementary teachers and staff will provide rigorous, relevant, and innovative instruction and social and emotional support by prioritizing health and safety for all. As future leaders, every student will be prepared for college, future careers, and to compete and succeed in a global community.

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

Zeferino Farias Elementary started the school year with 100% virtual learning. The district provided hotspots and electronic devices to meet all students’ educational needs. As a district, we are on a Five-Phase Plan. Phase I began with teachers delivering virtual instruction for students. In Phase II, staff had limited access to the building to prepare resources for students, but students and teachers continued to work from home. In the latter part of this phase, our district plan allowed 25% of the students to report to campus for in-person instruction. During this time, paraprofessionals on campus modified delivery methods to enhance student learning to keep teachers teaching from home. We are currently in Phase III, which allows 100% of our teachers and staff to be on campus unless they have a medical exemption, and up to 12 students per classroom can report to campus for in-person instruction while others can opt to continue with virtual learning. Teachers have overcome many challenges during this school year from learning how to use various technology platforms, teaching from home, and adapting to new ways to motivate and engage students. Our teachers have learned to use virtual platforms for continuous teaching and learning to meet their student’s needs. The main concern during this academic year has been and continues to be the well-being of the students, teachers, and staff.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Zeferino Farias Elementary is in Alamo, Texas, nicknamed the "Land of Two Summers" in the southernmost part of Texas. The school is located only about 15 miles from the Texas-Mexico border of Hidalgo County in the Rio Grande Valley. To honor the legacy of a former educator and resident of Alamo, the district named the campus after Mr. Zeferino Farias in 1977 after his passing in 1974. The motto at Zeferino Farias Elementary is, "Learners today and Leaders Tomorrow." We believe that learning is ongoing, fun, and a challenging life-long process that should take place in a warm, suitable environment. A quality instructional program includes committed school personnel, the community, and parents working together to provide a current curriculum and meet every child's needs.

Zeferino Farias Elementary services approximately 590 students that are 99.8% Hispanic and 0.2% reporting other ethnic backgrounds. According to the 2020 United States Census, the city population is 19,910, and the median household income is \$39,858, which is 34% less than Texas and 35% less than the United States. The poverty rate in the City of Alamo is 26.8%, while the poverty rate is 11.8 % in Texas and 14.9% in the United States. Based on census data, the education rate of high school graduates or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+ is 63.5%, and the Bachelor's degree or higher is 12.0%. The number of persons in the city without health insurance under the age of 65 years is 34.8%. According to the World Population Review, the unemployment rate in the city is 11.2% (compared to 6% in the U.S.). Many of our families in Alamo, Texas, still live in poverty, and based on census data, the majority of our student's parents have a high school diploma or less.

We currently are servicing approximately 590 students which 165 students are receiving in-person instruction, while the remaining 425 students are receiving virtual instruction ranging from PK3 to 5th grade. According to our Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) records, of these students, 59.8% have been identified as English Learners, and 93.9% are economically disadvantaged and qualify for a free or reduced lunch. Also, 97.7% of the school population is identified as at-risk of dropping out of school. There are seventy-four staff members, and thirty are teachers, eight are instructional aids, nine professional support staff, two campus administrators, and one counselor.

Zeferino Farias Elementary offers a rigorous curriculum, instruction, and assessments with highly qualified teachers. Students at our campus have the opportunity to participate in an all-English Class or Bilingual One-Way Program. Students needing academic support are offered tutoring before or after school and Saturday Academies. Despite the disadvantages that our students face at Zeferino Farias Elementary, they attained an overall "A" (91 out 100) for exemplary performance in the Texas Education Agency 2018-2019 School Report Card. The campus earned in Student Achievement (82%/B), School Progress (90%/A), and in Closing the Gaps (92%/A).

Students at Zeferino Farias are encouraged to strive for academic success in various ways. They track their own goals throughout the year. Several key strategies are used to obtain educational progress, cultural awareness, and social and emotional development. Teachers and staff strive for all students to grow academically and build intrinsic motivation by working with students to set goals and mastery levels based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Students have an individual data binder where they track their goals, data, and victories. The binders are used to create unique pathways to assist with enrichment activities to continue learning and understanding the concept. Teachers and students work together to achieve personal, classroom and campus goals. As a grade level, the classroom with perfect attendance gets recognized with the ideal attendance crown in its classroom door. Other incentive awards provided to students include additional recess time, dance, or having lunch with the teacher. Despite the pandemic, students continued to be recognized weekly for reaching their reading goals and other achievements through our social media campus page. Students build cultural awareness through family-based projects during the school year, consisting of monthly celebrations selected by the teacher. These projects allow students to collaborate with parents and share their learning with peers. At Zeferino Farias Elementary, we promote social and emotional development daily. Students are greeted by the staff and their peers every morning. Teachers volunteer to provide various after-school extracurricular activities to help promote belonging on campus. Students and staff complement each other as a sign of kindness to fill each

other's kindness bucket. We encourage a kindness challenge every week. By meeting the needs of all our students through social and emotional development, we will continue to achieve our academic goals.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Zeferino Farias Elementary serves approximately 600 students from Pre-K 3 through 5th grade. About 55.3% of our student population are English Learners who benefit from our One-Way bilingual program; teachers provide instruction in reading and science in their native language. Zeferino Farias Elementary teachers use the curriculum developed by the district, which is integrated with the state-adopted materials and addresses the state standards rigor and specificity. Teachers modify and differentiate their instructional approaches and assessments to meet our students' academic needs before and during virtual learning.

Due to the pandemic, school districts were forced to transition into virtual learning. Administrators and educators had to revamp and adjust the learning systems to accommodate the new educational platform. The curriculum focused on reading and math in the spring to provide structure for the teachers and students without overwhelming them as they learned to navigate virtual learning. Curriculum, instruction, and assessments had to be modified to be compatible with virtual lessons to meet the intricacies of 100% virtual learning and the school's current operating schedule for synchronous and asynchronous learning. Teachers have incorporated many more virtual activities into their lessons. Students learned to use various online forms for their weekly assessments and benchmark tests. Virtual learning proved to be a challenge, but our students' and teachers' continued dedication allows them to reach their academic goals.

Learning standards are an essential component of education because they set clear and measurable goals, inform instruction, and help measure achievement. The learning standards are addressed in various ways based on the subject area taught. For example, reading standards are taught based on genres. Every six weeks, students are introduced to a genre and learn and apply the learning standards by incorporating various activities and instructional practices to be engaged. Through differentiated instruction, students receive targeted instruction based on their individual needs. Formative assessments are given at the end of the week to check for understanding and to see if the teaching is being effective or if changes need to be made so that each child can succeed. The math curriculum focuses on using hands-on materials in a problem-solving format to teach content knowledge, algebraic reasoning strategies, data analysis, basic facts, and systematic concept lessons. The curricular approach makes the transition from one grade level to the other a smoother one. At Farias Elementary, our goal is for every child to succeed and take ownership of their learning. As teachers, we begin with the end in mind. Our goal is to ensure that each child is learning and has a clear understanding of learning standards. We employ different instructional approaches to help every student achieve mastery.

Differentiated instruction is also an integral component of the education students received at Farias Elementary. As educators, we understand that not all students learn in the same manner; we adjust our instruction to meet their needs. This ensures that students are continuously progressing and feeling positive about their achievements. Usually, lessons are planned to align with the “average” student in mind. However, it is crucial for all students, even those who do not necessarily have an IEP or a 504 plan, to use accommodations to support their learning. Providing differentiated instruction for our students helps to close the achievement gap one student at a time. Supporting student's engagement in the classroom and knowing each child's learning style is also vital.

Assessment data is a driving force at Farias Elementary. Teachers and administrators collaborated with the assistance of a data-based strategist on how to effectively analyze summative assessment data to improve student and school performances. This was an approach used to zoom in on each student and gain knowledge on what they need. Across grade levels, teachers use formative assessments such as teacher observations, weekly assessments, weekly fluency checks, and work samples to adjust instruction to improve student performance and to give students and families immediate feedback to support students' academic progress. In our school, we use summative assessments such as Benchmarks, STAAR, TELPAS, LAS Links, SLO's, TPRI, Tejas Lee, and TX-KEA to measure student learning and skills throughout the year. At the beginning of the school year, teachers analyze STAAR, TELPAS, and TPRI data by grade level from the previous year to identify areas of strengths and concerns. This data is used to plan instruction, improve student and school performance, and close the achievement gap between subgroups. Teachers

utilize the test data and DMAC Reports to differentiate instruction and adjust their classroom instruction.

In mathematics, we use weekly assessments in various forms. The test is a mixture of multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. The test is created at the district level with the curriculum team. Teachers have the flexibility to change the test based on the needs of the students in their class.

The reading assessments are formatted as if it was a state assessment. The questions students must answer are at various levels of depth of knowledge questions. The teachers follow the district curriculum, and as the math, they also modify as needed. Teachers have received training from strategists, and they implement those strategies within their teaching. We have purchased their resources and use them as reviews.

In social studies, their weekly test is multiple choice questions supporting the reading concepts. Through social studies, students must apply reading strategies. Teachers teach social studies through reading passages. They implement strategies students will need to implement in their reading state exam. This helps to support both contents through reading passages.

The assessments in science are created by the district's curriculum team. Teachers administer the weekly test. The test is multiple choice and very similar to the state exam. Teachers use this data to adjust their weekly entry tickets to assure students' misconceptions are clarified. In science, teachers try not to deviate from their weekly plan due to many concepts being taught.

They typically use small group instruction to determine who might benefit from additional intervention or tutoring. The ultimate goal here is to close the gaps and make sure all students are learning at the most significant potential by utilizing our assessment data and tools.

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

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

The Zeferino Farias Elementary early childhood (EC) program is available to all three and four-year-old children. Teachers use a theme-based integrated curriculum that aligns with the prekindergarten guidelines. This curriculum provides instruction for bilingual and English Learners (EL). Subjects taught include Language Arts, math, science, social studies, and social-emotional development. Through a district partnership with the Hidalgo County Head Start program, a Farias Elementary EC teacher works collaboratively with two Head Start personnel. EC teachers and Head Start staff use strategies that include whole group/small group and individualized instruction, play-based learning, and age-appropriate strategies to develop oral language. All lessons include a plan for developing fine motor skills and social-emotional learning and incorporate technology as enrichment.

Students are administered assessments three times a year that measure math, science, and social studies growth. Students are also assessed for letter-sound recognition, letter naming, vocabulary, phonological awareness, and sight word fluency. Progress monitoring is conducted weekly to provide targeted instruction for students needing remediation and intervention. Students in our EC classes participate in library, music, computer lab, and physical education classes. In the computer lab, students use programs that target math and language skills. These programs provide additional data to measure growth and skill development. Early childhood classrooms are a balance of EL and English Proficient students. Students develop oral skills in two languages through play and interaction with partners.

To meet the needs of our students during the pandemic, Farias Elementary was able to provide students in the early childhood program with a technology device upon parent request. Parents have the option to have their children participate in a synchronous or asynchronous setting. Teachers develop visually engaging, interactive lessons and activities using various online resources to deliver instruction to our face-to-face students and virtual learners. Asynchronous students are provided with a learning packet. Early childhood educators communicate daily with parents to address any concerns or questions they may have.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Zeferino Farias Elementary is committed to developing every child's inner talents and greatness by providing them with opportunities to explore and expand their interests beyond academics. The school encourages this development by promoting the arts, technology, library, physical education, leadership skills, and character-building programs. This will ensure that all students are prepared to participate and excel emotionally and intellectually in a global society.

Music is an essential component of providing students with a well-rounded education in fine arts. Resources used include textbooks, various online accredited resources, and the District Music Curriculum that focuses on a scope and sequence based on all TEKS. Since PSJA has identified oral language acquisition as a district focus, music lessons are created to integrate with other subjects to enhance mastery in all academic areas such as math, reading, science, and social studies. They are also exposed to various genres of music through other composers and their works.

Library lessons are designed to integrate technology skills with the district's TEKS-based scope and sequence for the core curriculum. Texas Library Standards are the basis of digital literacy and citizenship education. The school library offers information and digital literacy instruction that enables our students to locate, evaluate, and communicate information in various formats. Students can access personal reading, inquiry-based learning, and the creation and sharing of knowledge with various online tools.

In physical education, coaches demonstrate and model the skills needed in all sports according to the district's scope and sequence which is aligned to the state TEKS. Students then apply their skills and knowledge when engaging in physical activities and sports. Farias Elementary Physical Education classes provide moderate to vigorous physical activities for 135 minutes a week so students can maintain a healthy lifestyle. Students also learn about nutrition and health education through a program that promotes physical activity and healthy eating choices for students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Physical education TEKS are measured annually for students in third through fifth grade using a yearly fitness test. Zeferino Farias Elementary has partnered with the City of Alamo, where many of our students participate in numerous sports after school.

Through guidance and counseling classes, all students receive character-building and social-emotional development lessons. The students attend biweekly lessons that address students' academic, college, and career readiness, personal, social, and emotional skills essential to achieving excellence in education. These lessons help build and develop individual values and strong character as well as strengthen the individual's social-emotional intelligence. Farias Elementary has traditionally implemented school-wide kindness and leadership programs. Students are recognized and awarded kindness certificates throughout the academic year. Leadership skills are ubiquitously taught within lessons. As a school, all students can utilize their leadership skills and demonstrate kindness by uniting and engaging in community service projects such as providing blankets for the needy and raising funds for various organizations that assist children with leukemia and other life-threatening illnesses.

3. Academic Supports:

Knowing our diverse learners and their individual needs is essential to ensuring they succeed. Farias Elementary meets these needs by adjusting instruction is accomplished by providing education in the language that students best understand, using different resources to enhance students' learning, and utilizing various strategies to collaborate in the classroom. An example of providing instruction to students in their primary language is incorporating our 50/50 model Dual Language biliteracy program. This dual-language instructional model allows students to learn new content by using many visuals and high academic vocabulary in both languages in all content areas depending on the grade level. Teachers are constantly looking for new, adequate research-based resources and instructional strategies that allow students to use their depth of knowledge and enhance the rigor of their lessons. Collaboration amongst students in the classroom provides them with various opportunities to discuss, engage, expand, and present newly learned content.

Special education students are provided with accommodations and modifications, according to their IEP, to assist them with their learning. An ARD committee, consisting of an administrator, the counselor, homeroom and special education teachers, and parents, determine what accommodations best fit the student's needs. Students needing small groups or individual support receive it in the resource room, or those requiring less help receive services within their classroom. In-class support has shown to be positive learning support for the students. Teachers modify their lessons to meet the students, needs never lowering the students, expectations. Students are expected to meet their grade level requirements. If the child is below level the teachers create an intervention plan to assure students meets the on-level requirements. This service allows them to receive direct instruction and materials from the teacher while having assistance readily available.

Our migrant population is 1.7% of the campus population. Migrant students are offered extra help from tutors that come to campus twice a week. They collaborate with the teacher to fill in gaps that might exist due to students' families moving at different school year times. Our school district's Migrant Department provides electronic devices and programs for students to use at home that target grade-level skills.

Our ELL students receive prescriptive intervention plans in the various computer programs we use as a district. Teachers differentiate instruction for our ELL population so they can be able to speak, read and write in English. Students are provided with various opportunities in class to present, read and write in English. The goal of the teacher is for students to be able to obtain Advance High in the TELPAS state exam, so they show mastery in English.

Using different assessments helps teachers make quality decisions on how to adjust instruction. By incorporating pre-assessments, the teacher can decide where to start and scaffold instruction. Using formative assessments within lessons assures that teachers check for understanding to continue to adjust instruction as needed. Summative assessments help identify concepts students have mastered and areas requiring intervention.

Interventions are intentional, prescriptive, and provided in the classroom, within a grade level, after school, or on Saturdays. Intervention sessions target students performing below, at, and above grade level and provide students with quality hands-on instruction and immediate feedback to clarify any misconceptions. Interventions provided within grade levels allow teachers to make crucial decisions on the needs of specific groups of students. All grade-level intervention students are grouped according to mastery of a particular standard. An "expert" teacher will plan for her group utilizing engaging activities, research-based strategies, and practice items. Teachers not only plan for the students that are in-need of interventions to pass the state exam. The intervention plans are also for students that show above grade level or are in the mastery category. We want to maintain students at that level. Students at this level are exposed to higher order thinking questions in class during instruction, they leaders in groups, and are expected to complete special projects. These groups are constantly changing according to student needs and data. After-school and Saturday interventions provide the students with interactive rotations that allow students to get more hands-on instruction. By being intentional in our teaching and interventions with ALL students, we have closed the achievement gap between our students and subgroups.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Farias Elementary has built a positive, motivating, inclusive, and supportive learning environment in which students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. The implementation of kindness and leadership programs with fidelity has resulted in a cohesive bond between all stakeholders, making our school a positive, engaging, and safe place for all. From the moment the students and parents enter our school, they are treated with dignity, respect, and like part of a family.

Student engagement and motivation are recognized and validated daily for their unique skills and values. Farias' paradigms are that all students have the inner greatness and that all students are leaders. Farias students experience daily the sincerity of their teachers' demonstrations of support and encouragement. Teachers award daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly recognition to all students. Students' successes, talents, academic and personal achievements are recognized throughout the school year and shared with all families and our community using several modes of media.

Teachers continuously collaborate and share ideas across grade levels to create opportunities to engage and motivate students. Students frequently participate in surveys and class discussions for ideas and decide on student clubs, activities, and celebrations. Enthusiasm and participation from students and their families increase when they participate in the decision-making process.

Our school has had to adapt to many different challenges to provide our students with the best learning experiences during this year's virtual learning. At Farias, we understand that social and emotional growth is fostered by accepting everyone's uniqueness, background and empathizing with individual situations, issues, and concerns. Throughout the virtual learning lessons, teachers have provided academic and emotional support to all students and their families. An example of a fun way teachers have fostered social-emotional growth is synergizing on Fridays. Students have expressed that their favorite way to practice social skills is through synergizing activities such as virtual breakfast together, during which students can share and talk freely about any topic. Students show enthusiasm, excitement, and joy as they can converse. This also allows teachers to get to know each student individually and has had an amazingly positive impact on most student/ teacher relationships which is evident in increased student participation.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaging families, community members, businesses, and local universities is a strategy that Farias Elementary has used to build positive relationships that improve the school environment and student success. Curriculum nights is a strategy that has helped to increase academic success and close educational gaps for our students. During curriculum nights, teachers share academic and attendance goals with parents and strategies to help their students at home. Other family events include Grandparents Day, Veterans Day, Million Father March, Pack the House, Posadas, Father-Daughter dance, Mother's Day, a Book Character Parade, which connects literacy and family involvement. These events help build unity between families and our school community.

We welcome parents and community members to visit Farias Elementary during Leadership Day. During this event, parents and community members visit classrooms, students present their data binders, and share their achievements with visitors. The use of these data binders has also helped increase parent participation during Texas Public Schools Week. The school continues to have monthly parental meetings via social media. Sessions involve college and career readiness, helping your child build better relationships, bullying, tips and tools for dealing with stress, testing tips for parents, developing your child's self-esteem, etc.

Farias Elementary has established several partnerships with community members and local businesses. Some of our community partners include the City of Alamo, local refuge, state university, local grocery store, and church. The City of Alamo sponsors a creative arts contest, and our students can win prizes. Many of our students come from low socio-economic backgrounds; therefore, they look forward to this event

every year. The refuge cares for the migration of birds and animals of our region. They visit our school annually to explain the importance of wildlife conservation and educate students about local wildlife. Through our partnership with a state university, students receive monthly lessons about nutrition and hygiene. Our students learn about proper nutrition following the USDA's MyPlate guidelines. Students engage in fun and interactive lessons and activities. The grocery store is one of the city's major grocery stores, and they sponsor our Veteran's Day celebration, dance team, and the Red Ribbon Week rally. The church gives our fifth-grade students books and provides blankets and necessities for students and their families during the holiday season.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

As we once knew, our digital learning world changed abruptly one year ago this month. We thought we knew nothing compared to the immense knowledge that awaited. Along with new programs and new tech terms, we have attended diverse professional developments aiding us in this tech-savvy journey. When we cannot participate in a training session, one of our staff members turns it around to us at the campus level. We have been provided with professional development to help us with resources and guidance to better prepare lessons to meet student needs, leading to teacher success. The stronger a person's sense of efficacy, the more effort exerted and the more likely the persistence when facing difficulty. Hence, the more confident we felt within the challenging realm of the virtual classroom, the better the delivery of our instruction.

Also, our school administration anticipated the need for new and updated devices, so every teacher from our school was able to get a brand-new laptop. Our students, from 5th grade to kinder also received new chrome books. Our administration allocated hotspots for staff and students with faulty internet and new devices.

Our support staff, which includes office personnel, educator assistants, school nurse, and our custodians, have played a significant role in the success of our schools' transition to distance learning. While we were teaching virtually, they were the ones who distributed the electronic devices, study packets, hot spots. They were with those students who started receiving instruction at school in December. They also reached out to families with trouble-shooting issues and problems logging into class with class codes.

Yes, we have had bumps along the way. Still, there is nothing that resourceful teachers cannot accomplish, especially when working with a great team like ours here at Zeferino Farias Elementary. We have mastered much, and still, there is more to complete. Who would have known that with a click of a button, we could call attendance from our own home, conduct parent conferences, schedule an open house, or have staff meetings? Even though multiple stakes were at hand with our staff and our student's education at the beginning of the pandemic, we have shown resilience and determination as a team.

Our staff has often gone through distressing times, yet our team has always been there to show support. Some examples are buying flowers, donations, food, or drive-by parades to offer in one form or another that we are here for one another despite the circumstances.

4. School Leadership:

As a campus, we came together to write down our leadership philosophy. We agree that all the stakeholders play an essential role in the structure of our school. We believe that learning is ongoing, fun, and a challenging life-long process that should take place in a warm, suitable environment. Parents should provide a supportive environment that teaches positive attitudes, habits, and values. They should become actively involved with the educational decision-making process that affects their child. Quality instructional programs include committed school personnel, the community, and parents working together to provide an education that creates a well-rounded child and meets every individual's needs. We believe that the community, leaders, and businesses actively participate in the education process by supporting the school in all areas whenever possible. They should serve as positive role models and should make education a priority.

We focus on student achievements by providing professional development in all ELA/SLA, Math, Writing, NBRS 2021

Science, and State designated supports. We use data to drive intervention plans and incorporate intervention time into the day at every grade level for every student. We plan and provide instruction, interventions, and enrichment directly related to every students' needs/strengths as demonstrated by data.

During this current pandemic, our administrators came together and worked extended hours to ensure that everyone affected was safe. Our leaders thought of every possible scenario and implemented procedures, revising schedules, and accommodate daily to continue having rigorous and meaningful instruction. Our school leaders are passionate about their roles on campus. Employees are inspired to engage in all needed functions as a campus to support our community. Compassion and understanding during this time are the human factors that have been expressed most frequently at our campus, which contribute to the success of our school leadership.

Our administrators work hard to determine how to keep our students learning during the pandemic. They are focusing on solutions instead of problems. Our school leaders set the vision of what they want, and together we make it happen. Does everything work out the way we want? No, and that is the flexibility that our administration gracefully embraces. Our school environment has changed during this pandemic, yet we did not lower our expectations. We are learning a new platform, adjusting to technology, and taking the impossible to a new level. Our campus administrators are incredibly supportive of their teachers, students, and families. One thing that does not change is our commitment to our students. Our campus is 100% invested in achieving the success we have now.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

The population of Zeferino Farias Elementary is 99.2% Hispanic or of Latino origin. One would think that addressing the needs of our students would be simple. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Our students come from very diverse backgrounds, each with their own identities and experiences. Teachers embrace their students and ensure that each has the resources they need to succeed. They understand their students and provide targeted support such as giving instructions in another language, eliminating distractions for students who need help focusing, and modifications for those in need. In doing so, barriers are removed, and the whole classroom thrives.

To promote equity, teachers create an environment where students feel safe, respected, and motivated to learn. To accomplish this, students create a mission statement that verbalizes how learning and behaviors should look like in the classroom. By allowing students to have input into setting the tone for learning, they take ownership and establish an inclusive environment where the opinions and perspectives of all are valued and respected. To create an atmosphere of school-wide safety, Farias Elementary follows the district initiative known as Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Safe that defines appropriate behaviors for all students in the common areas.

To build cultural awareness, students participate in family-based projects and celebrations throughout the school year. These projects and festivities allow students to learn about their cultural heritage from family or research and, in turn, share their knowledge with students and staff. In doing so, students learn about different cultures and traditions, which nurtures diversity. Students learn about Dia de Los Muertos, Hanukkah, Christmas Around the World, Lunar New Year, Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, etc. Farias Elementary teachers and staff express interest and sensitivity to students' cultural differences and experiences and maintain high expectations.

In 2012, Farias Elementary adopted a leadership program that changed the school's climate and empowered all students to believe they could be leaders in different areas based on their talents and strengths. Through this program, Farias Elementary students have learned that they all have the potential to become leaders regardless of ethnicity, cultural background, and abilities.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Despite the pandemic causing campus closures back in March 2020, Farias Elementary continued our traditional focus on social-emotional support to increase student academic success. The district allotted a two-week transitional period to evolve into the new virtual platform. Meanwhile, teachers communicated with parents to find and meet the needs of their students and their families. The first calls were for emotional support, and as the weeks progressed, the theme of the calls changed to inquire about academic support needs.

Electronic devices such as tablets, laptops, and hotspots were provided to those in need of one to enhance the social and emotional relationship between teachers and students since they could now connect virtually. Teachers and staff supported students and parents with materials and lessons that were accessible. The flexibility provided to the students, families, and teachers has had a positive impact on the social-emotional well-being of our students, therefore, increasing academic success. Traditional celebrations continued, such as end-of-year recognitions and kinder and 5th-grade graduation parades. Teachers created a slideshow to recognize our students' accomplishments through social media. Our goal at Zeferino Farias was to continue connecting with students and parents and make them aware that we cared for their well-being.

At Zeferino Farias, we understand the importance of meeting the social-emotional needs of each student, so continuous communication is a critical factor between parents and teachers. By meeting the social-emotional needs of our students, we can bridge the students' well-being and academic success.