

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Sela Public Charter School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 6015 Chillum Place Northeast  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Washington                      State DC                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 20011-1501

County District of Columbia

Telephone (202) 670-7352                      Fax (202) 788-5259

Web site/URL https://www.selapcs.org                      E-mail jbork@selapcs.org

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. Joshua Bork                      E-mail jbork@selapcs.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Sela Public Charter School District                      Tel. (202) 670-7352

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 Ms. Deena Fox  
(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**

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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 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 2016 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: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

**The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.**

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 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	48	57	105
K	20	19	39
1	14	17	31
2	18	13	31
3	11	10	21
4	11	11	22
5	6	8	14
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>	128	135	263

\*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):
- 0.4 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2.6 % Asian
  - 61.6 % Black or African American
  - 5.3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 29.7 % White
  - 0.4 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 5%

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

n/a

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	4
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	256
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, French, Spanish, Arabic, Haitian Creole, Russian, Portuguese, Bemba, Japanese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %  
26 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 22 %

Total number students who qualify: 59

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 13 %  
33 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 with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>4</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>5</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>13</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</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 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.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	8
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 8:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	97%	93%	92%	93%	91%
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 2021.

<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.

Sela Public Charter School offers children of all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, in the District of Columbia, from PreK—5th grade, the opportunity to achieve academic excellence in a safe, nurturing environment that focuses on Hebrew language immersion, promotes the value of diversity and provides the skills for taking action in the world. To accomplish our mission, we focus on: Academic Excellence - We offer our students a challenging academic environment that promotes creative thinking, intellectual curiosity, and the love of learning. Building Community - We build partnerships within our diverse community. Citizenship - We inspire a collaborative spirit and respect for self, others, and the world as a foundation for good citizenship.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UYexBPv0WhvEL9cep2D5OvVq2p6Lfxl/view>

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

Sela PCS is a charter school in Washington, DC. Like all public and public charter schools in DC, Sela PCS is part of the MySchoolDC Common Lottery, where all DC residents are able to apply to any school of their choice that has open seats in the grades they are seeking to enroll their students in. Students apply to Sela through this common lottery, which is managed independently of the school by MySchoolDC. Students’ families apply through the MySchoolDC website between mid-December and early March by choosing up to 12 different schools and listing them in order of preference. Priority for an individual student matching with a school through this process can be increased if the student meets one of the following conditions:

- the student is the child of a school employee (employee preference), or;
- the student is the child of one of the founders of the school at the time it was chartered (founder

preference).

Other than these three conditions, all students entering the lottery and placing a school in the same order of preference have an equal chance of being matched with the school. Once students have been matched with the school, they begin the enrollment process and may accept or decline the seat being offered to them. Once all initially matched students have been offered a seat, the school may begin to pull from a waitlist of students provided by MySchoolDC to complete its roster for the upcoming school year. • the student has a sibling already attending the school (sibling preference);



## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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As a diverse-by-design school, we address diversity at the school level, at the classroom level, and at the staffing level. The value and challenges that come from being a diverse school are at the forefront of each aspect of the school from teacher professional development, hiring practices, student to student interactions, and the broader Sela family community. For example, professional development often focuses on better preparing teachers to serve their diverse classrooms and there is a focus on helping Sela families embrace one another, create experiences together outside of the school, and to develop a deep understanding of each other. We believe, and research shows, that a truly diverse school has academic, social, and emotional benefits for everyone in the school community. Learning from and with others who are different is a core value of the school and we believe that raising students to appreciate and value diversity will have lifelong positive effects on families, communities, and the city of Washington, DC as a whole.

Language immersion is a proven model to develop high levels of proficiency in a foreign language, and to narrow or close achievement gaps for disadvantaged students. Language immersion is also often touted as a way to promote the value of diversity, but too often that diversity is limited to a few groups, often focusing on students who have a family connection to the language being taught. While language immersion can have great value for students who grow up speaking a minority language at home, Sela's model combines the benefits of language immersion with our diverse by design philosophy to benefit a larger range of students. We have few students with a family connection to Hebrew, but many who come from families that value language learning and cross-cultural competence. A recent study of the demographics of language immersion programs in DC found that Sela's racial/ethnic composition mirrors that of the District of Columbia more closely than any other language immersion school in DC. As a public charter school, we do not select our students; the composition of our student body shows simply that Sela's educational model has broad appeal, leading to enrollment from many groups of students--from a variety of racial/ethnic groups, socioeconomic profiles, and wards of the city.

Sela PCS operates on an inclusion model of instruction. Teachers and administrators collaborate to meet the needs of all Sela students within the general education classroom whenever possible. This includes students with IEPs and students who are English Language Learners.

The Student Support Team, led by the Director of Culture and Student Support Services meets monthly to assess student needs based on teacher referrals for either academic or social-emotional/school adjustment reasons. Classroom teachers are provided with higher-level support strategies for students requiring it, and their progress with these supports is monitored by the classroom teachers and reported back to the Student Support Team. If multiple supports prove unsuccessful, students may be referred for further evaluation through the special education department.

Push-in and pull-out services are provided for students with IEPs by special education teachers who work with classroom teachers to meet individual student needs while still providing access to the general classroom curriculum. Related service providers also work with individual student's IEPs to determine the best provision of services, whether inside or outside of the classroom. In each classroom, visitors find a diversity of learning styles among the students, and teachers work within this diversity to find many entry points to learning.

Twice each year, Sela surveys our students' families to ensure that we are meeting their needs. Survey topics include overall satisfaction, school climate, school-family communication, family participation in the life of the school community, and opportunities for respondents to write feedback in their own words. Surveys also ask about student demographic characteristics such as race/ethnicity, FARMS eligibility, special education status, and English language learner (ELL) status, to ensure not only that our family community as a whole is satisfied with Sela, but also that each individual group is being served well. School leadership and the board carefully review all of the data from each survey and note any areas showing a need for improvement. Measures to address these needs may be identified by school leadership and/or the board. In our most recent family survey, at the end of the last school year, 96.5% of respondents expressed satisfaction with Sela and 98.9% would recommend the school to others. These numbers include a cross-section of our school's

demographic and instructional groups.

Sela's student body includes 40% of students who meet federal benchmarks for disadvantaged youth, while 15% of our students are classified as "at risk," meaning living in poverty or homelessness, or under the care of the Child and Family Services Agency. We know that some of our students' families lost jobs or were on reduced hours due to the pandemic and in general, many of our students are cared for by relatives such as grandparents, who help out when parents work shifts that do not allow them to be home after school and older siblings also often have a care-taking role for younger students. To address the effects of poverty on our students and the Sela community we take an integrated approach.

Prior to the pandemic, Sela provided free breakfast to all students in all grades and lunch could be purchased on a sliding scale based on the families' FARMS eligibility. Today, Sela provides free breakfast AND lunch for ALL students at the school. In addition, Sela's extended learning program fees are a "sliding scale" based on the FARMS eligibility. Prior to the pandemic, Sela offered before care as well. Due to our podding cohort structure for COVID protocols and restrained resources, we do not offer before care currently, but hope to return to it as soon as we can.

We also support all our students and families in their technology needs. In March 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic, we provided all students who needed technology, Chromebooks or iPads as well as internet hotspots, to ensure all families had access to virtual learning (1:1 access). Currently all students have 1:1 access to technology in school (during in-person learning) and if a cohort must quarantine due to a positive Covid detection they will be able to take the technology devices home with them to continue virtual learning while quarantining.

Additionally, we have a uniform policy at school to ensure equity and respect among all students. Sela has a "uniform swap/store" where all families can donate uniforms and take uniforms for their children. All families have access to this resource and no donation is required. Sela pools school supplies in classrooms, allowing all students to have access to learning materials.

Finally, Sela has a strong tradition and commitment to individualized and personal connections to our school community. Throughout the pandemic, teachers and school leaders checked in with all families on a one-to-one basis ensuring that not only were the academic needs being met but social, emotional and other basic needs were being met. Sela continues to check in with families on a regular basis to ensure the Sela community can be successful in learning and growing.

In order to create parity for our students, Sela uses as many resources as possible on direct teaching and learning. Sela's administrative team is relatively small and great care is taken in creating a budget that focuses on classroom instruction, high quality teaching, and curricula. As an independent charter school, Sela has the freedom to support teachers' creativity and innovations that show up in excellent instruction and high student engagement. For example, some of the staff are expert at gardening, so they set up a large vegetable garden outside and have created curricula focused on plants, growing, and science and every class at Sela has the opportunity to participate in the garden projects. Sela also participated in the Out Teach program to assist in designing an outdoor related curriculum to build on the Sela community garden. Sela also has worked with Out Teach to apply for grants as well to enhance this opportunity.

The Sela board and PTSA have conducted fundraising campaigns to bring additional funds and resources into the school to offset some costs and bring in special programs such as STEM learning, Kindles, and an art and music teacher. One great example of this cooperation is the creation of our "grassroots" library. Sela's board, school leaders and PTSA all worked together to leverage funds donated, books donated, and volunteers to literally build our school library from the bottom up (donated books, bookshelves, volunteer house to assemble bookshelves, categorize books, etc.). This year we have hired a librarian and have a school library program for the Sela students that is the result of hard work from the entire Sela community.

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

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

#### **1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:**

Sela PCS is founded on the premise that fluency in more than one language develops a greater ability to communicate with and to understand other cultures.

Research indicates that in order to gain fluency in a language, students need to spend significant time in an environment saturated in the language they are learning. At Sela PCS, students receive instruction for all subjects in both English and Hebrew. By immersing students in Hebrew at key times throughout the day, we provide the greatest opportunity for Sela PCS students to graduate bilingual and bi-literate.

As a dual-language school committed to immersion, Sela PCS helps students achieve language proficiency in two languages – including reading and oral proficiency - and will set high learning standards for both English Language Arts and Hebrew Language, choosing curricula that will provide its teachers with the instructional resources to successfully develop these skills and abilities in its students.

Hebrew is a unique target language because it serves as a model of an ancient language that has been revived in modern times; it is an entrée to Semitic languages, and contemporary Israeli culture fosters characteristics and learning about the culture of a country very different from our own teaches children to be global citizens.

Because mastery of the written and spoken language is critical to success in all subject areas, Sela PCS will engage a rigorous and balanced curriculum in both languages.

#### **1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Sela PCS uses The Creative Curriculum for Preschool for PK3 and PK4 Reading/ELA instruction. It is one of the most widely used pre-K curricula in the nation. It's comprehensive, research-based, research-proven, and it features exploration and discovery as a way of learning.

Foundation volumes help teachers create high-quality learning environments and support deep understanding of early childhood best practices, theories, and research. Robust Daily Resources provide the instructional tools and materials to engage children in project-based investigations and make every moment of the day meaningful, intentional, and engaging.

In Kindergarten through 5th grade, Sela PCS builds the foundation for successful readers and writers through the use of Pearson's ReadyGEN English Language Arts Curriculum. ReadyGEN is an integrated and well-balanced approach to reading and writing instruction for Grades K-5 classrooms. Authentic texts with modeling and teacher-directed activities drive learning and motivate readers. Students read authentic literary and informational texts. Instruction focuses on reading, writing, speaking, and listening in response to authentic texts within the framework of the workshop model of instruction.

Students read from 12 authentic texts at every grade level. Interactive Anchor Texts help students engage and blend technology. Texts are carefully selected to reinforce unit themes and are focused on building content knowledge. Backward unit mapping helps students meet Common Core and OSSE ELA and literacy standards. Instruction provides specificity, time, and sequencing for a cumulative progression. Everything in a unit is designed to prepare students to respond to the Performance-based Assessment. Modeling, scaffolding, and close reading strategies support readers with complex text. Integrated intervention is included for skills improvement or intensive remedial instruction.

Sela uses NWEA MAP Growth Assessments, administered three times annually (Fall, Winter, and Spring)

to assess student achievement and growth in Reading and Literacy skills. These assessments allow teachers to inform their instructional planning and groupings for small group instruction in the classroom.

### **1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

For all grades PK3 - 5th, Sela PCS uses the Eureka Math curriculum for mathematics instruction and assessment. Eureka Math (originally called EngageNY Math) is a Common Core aligned math program developed by Great Minds. This curriculum was designed to teach math as a coherent body of knowledge that follows the proper learning progressions required for true math fluency, and not just a set of skills. It works to instill deep, conceptual understanding that students can build on as high as they wanted to while also allowing them to find the joy in the subject.

The goal of Eureka Math is to help all students become fluent in mathematics. Fluency goes beyond just knowing how a particular process can be used to solve a problem. It also requires understanding why that process works. With the Eureka Math curriculum, students learn to think, strategize and solve problems... not just get answers. Its intentional knowledge building increases equity in the classroom and supports student achievement and teacher practice.

Sela uses NWEA MAP Growth Assessments, administered three times annually (Fall, Winter, and Spring) to assess student achievement and growth in Mathematics skills for grades KG-5th. These assessments allow teachers to inform their instructional planning and groupings for small group instruction in the classroom.

### **1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Sela PCS's science program: 1) develops students' science literacy and provides meaningful and engaging learning experiences to enhance students' intellectual curiosity and build students' proficiency in science; 2) teaches students how to manipulate scientific tools as they expand their science vocabulary; and 3) strengthens students' logical reasoning and critical thinking skills, as well as their abilities to apply scientific methodology and inquiry to make connections between books, and between texts and their own experiences.

The aim of Sela PCS's science curriculum is not only to teach science content, principles and practices, but also to train students to use inquiry and scientific methods to learn independently and to solve problems. Teachers guide students to collect and record first-hand data, to represent and analyze it.

Accordingly, Sela PCS's science education programs is inquiry-based and rooted in "real world" situations and experiences.

Formal assessment for science is conducted only in 5th grade, through the DC Science Assessment. This is a standardized assessment in science skills and content that students across DC take in 5th and 8th grade.

### **1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The Sela PCS social studies program is designed around the concepts of democracy and diversity. The social studies curriculum aims to help students to make sense of the world in which they live, make connections between major ideas and their own lives, see themselves as members of the world community, and understand, appreciate, and respect the commonalities and differences that give the United States character and identity.

In addition, within the broad subject of social studies, students have opportunities to explore anthropology, archaeology, geography, history, philosophy, and sociology.

Dual-language programs such as Sela PCS provide a particularly special environment for these topics as students will learn to view the world through multiple languages and cultures. Students will also be able to learn about and celebrate the diversity that exists within the school, as students at Sela PCS will inevitably come from varying backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities. It is also important to recognize that social studies

provide an important avenue for focusing on literacy. Assessments for social studies are generated in-house and based on the units for instruction designed by Sela PCS.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

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

In the pre-kindergarten classrooms, Sela PCS uses a 50/50 immersion model, meaning that instruction takes place half of the time in English and half of the time in Hebrew, our target second language. Each early-childhood classroom will be staffed by either two teachers or one teacher and one instructional assistant, one of whom is either a primarily English-speaker and one the other a primarily Hebrew-speaker, to implement this model.

The classroom is organized as a dual-language environment, with the content and activities in the classroom focused on helping children acquire the vocabulary and proficiency in both Hebrew and English that will prepare them for kindergarten.

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool is one of the most widely used pre-K curricula in the nation. It's comprehensive, research-based, research-proven, and it features exploration and discovery as a way of learning.

Foundation volumes help teachers create high-quality learning environments and support deep understanding of early childhood best practices, theories, and research. Robust Daily Resources provide the instructional tools and materials to engage children in project-based investigations and make every moment of the day meaningful, intentional, and engaging

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Foreign Language - Hebrew -

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Research indicates that in order to gain fluency in a language, students need to spend significant time in an environment saturated in the language they are learning. At Sela PCS, students receive instruction for all subjects in both English and Hebrew. By immersing students in Hebrew at key times throughout the day, we provide the greatest opportunity for Sela PCS students to graduate bilingual and bi-literate.

As a dual-language school committed to immersion, Sela PCS helps students achieve language proficiency in two languages – including reading and oral proficiency - and will set high learning standards for both English Language Arts and Hebrew Language, choosing curricula that will provide its teachers with the instructional resources to successfully develop these skills and abilities in its students.

Hebrew is a unique target language because it serves as a model of an ancient language that has been revived in modern times; it is an entrée to Semitic languages, and contemporary Israeli culture fosters characteristics and learning about the culture of a country very different from our own teaches children to be global citizens.

Because mastery of the written and spoken language is critical to success in all subject areas, Sela PCS will engage a rigorous and balanced curriculum in both languages.

Proficiency is an approach used in teaching a foreign language that aims to assist learners in developing their ability to perform in the learned language in all four skills: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking.

## Physical Education -

Physical Education is an integral part of the total education program of each student in our school. Through the medium of sport and movement all students will participate in a sequential, differentiated program that fosters each student's personal health, fitness and safety. Through exposure to a wide variety of activities, students will gain the necessary knowledge to understand the importance of and make educated decisions around opportunities to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle. The curriculum is based on the standards developed by D.C.P.S. standards in Physical Education. All students in grades KG- 5th have Physical Education for 50 minutes at least twice per week in the gymnasium.

## Visual Arts –

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the arts in relation to history and culture. They will make connections between visual arts and other disciplines. All students in grades KG-5th have Visual Arts for 50 minutes at least once per week in the Art Studio.

## Music -

Maintaining a balance between traditional and contemporary repertoire, students are encouraged to excel at studying multiple instruments to fulfill the needs of a variety of performance pieces. KG-5th grade students receive music instruction for 50 minutes at last once per week in a dedicated music classroom. Music Theory is the study of the structure of music and we begin teaching the basics. Students learn about rhythm using percussion instruments. Students learn about harmony, melody and how to read easy sheet music as they learn to sing various songs.

## Library -

Sela students are able to go as a class to our circulating school library weekly or biweekly, depending on grade level, to learn about library use and borrow books. Students in grades PK3 and PK4 go to the school library every two weeks for a 20 minute class visit, while students in grades KG - 5th attend the library weekly for 35-40 minutes. Once there, they receive a lesson library skills from Sela's librarian, do a short, reading or social studies activity, then have a chance to browse through the collection, select and borrow books, and read independently before returning to their classroom.

### **3. Academic Supports**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level:**

Like all schools, Sela PCS has a variety of learners in each classroom with distinct learning needs. Sela attempts to address the needs of students performing below grade level through three levels of intervention: small group instruction in the classroom for fluid, homogeneous groups; a robust set of student supports delivered through the RTI process; and a strong referral process to move the highest-needs students from RTI to the additional supports provided by the Special Education Department.

In the instructional areas of Reading, Mathematics, and Hebrew, Sela addresses the needs of diverse learners through the regular and frequent use of small group instruction of homogeneous groups of students within the larger heterogeneous class group. Ongoing assessment in the form of exit tickets, and a robust review of student performance through a data driven instructional cycle with peers and administration allows teachers to create fluid student grouping in the three academic areas mentioned above which change over time as student progress at their unique paces to mastery of standards or meeting of established benchmarks.

The next level of support for diverse learners beyond the generalized small groups used in the classroom is individual interventions through the Student Support Team (SST). Classroom teachers, specialist, administrators, and parents/guardians are able to request additional support for students from the SST, which is managed by the Director of Student Support and School Culture at Sela. At monthly meetings, students' needs are discussed, and a team comprised of the classroom teacher, the Director of Student Support and

Culture devises individualized supports that can be implemented in the classroom. At these meetings, students who have already been referred to the SST and have begun to receive interventions have their responses to those interventions discussed through existing monitoring protocols. In this way, individualized supports are provided and their effectiveness is tracked.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

Like all schools, Sela PCS has a variety of learners in each classroom with distinct learning needs. Sela attempts to address the needs of students performing above grade level through small group instruction in the classroom for fluid, homogeneous groups.

In the instructional areas of Reading, Mathematics, and Hebrew, Sela addresses the needs of diverse learners through the regular and frequent use of small group instruction of homogeneous groups of students within the larger heterogeneous class group. Ongoing assessment in the form of exit tickets, and a robust review of student performance through a data driven instructional cycle with peers and administration allows teachers to create fluid student grouping in the three academic areas mentioned above which change over time as student progress at their unique paces to mastery of standards or meeting of established benchmarks. Students who are performing above grade level in the three areas above are able to be grouped with peers at a similar academic level to receive instruction that will continue to push them academically. This can be accomplished by teachers either by modifying curricular material to add additional challenges, or by introducing more complex material.

### **3c. Special education:**

Sela's goal is to provide an inclusive environment for all students, including those with IEPs, which means maximizing time for all students in the classroom while providing appropriate supports. For students who have not demonstrated growth following the implementation of SST supports can then be referred to the Special Education department for an evaluation that determines their eligibility for services under IDEA. Once an evaluation has been completed and reviewed by an IEP Team, the student may begin to receive special education services based on individualized goals encapsulated in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that can include instructional time with a special education teacher in or out of the classroom, related service such as speech therapy or occupational therapy, or a full- or part-time dedicated aide to work with the students inside and outside of the classroom.

### **3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:**

Sela PCS has a growing number of students who are classified as English Language Learners, and works to ensure that those students' unique needs are met. For this purpose, Sela has on staff an English Language Learner Support teacher. This teacher is able to perform assessments, support classroom instruction through co-teaching lessons, and doing both push-in and pull-out support for individual students. The ELL Support Teacher creates individual learning plans for students with input from school administration and classroom teachers to ensure that the diverse needs of the learners under their supervision are met, and their progress is tracked. The ELL Support teacher works under the supervision of the Director of Student Support and School Culture so that there is an existing avenue to request additional support for students designated as English Language Learners.

### **3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:**

Sela PCS has assigned the Director of Student Support and School Culture as the McKinney Vento Liaison to provide support to students who are experiencing homelessness. The role of McKinney Vento Liaison creates a space for the school to provide support for families in the form of connecting them with community resources, attendance assistance, counseling support, food assistance, or lodging assistance. General assistance is provided on a family basis, as different families have unique needs.

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Sela tries and largely succeeds in bringing together its whole school community to cooperate in the education of its students. Within the school building, a robust, dual-language curriculum, strong classroom management through a positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS), explicit social and emotional instruction, and special activities to engage students and their families in celebrating our community's diversity make Sela an engaging place for students to learn and grow.

Like many schools across the country, Sela PCS went into a fully remote posture rapidly in mid-March of 2020 because of the COVID pandemic. Even with this rapid pivot, Sela was able to provide all students with immediate access to remote instruction, which improved over the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Although all Sela students began remotely for the 2020-2021 school year, Sela began hosting weekly outdoor STEM lessons within the first few weeks of the school year for each class at the school. These served as a complement to the existing robust remote learning via live lessons through Zoom and kept students and their families engaged and staff. The senses of belonging and continuity built on the sense of trust in the school community, and allowed Sela to begin to welcome students back into the building for in-person instruction in early November 2020. At first only a few PK classes returned for full-time in-person instruction, but this was followed in late January 2021 with nearly half of all students returning. During this time, Sela continued to host outdoor, weekly STEM lessons for remote students to complement their robust remote learning experience. By March of 2021, the majority of Sela students had returned for in-person instruction, and this led to all students returning for in-person instruction at the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

In a typical school year, Sela would host monthly evening family events with academic themes: Literacy Night, Math Night, Hebrew Night, etc. These were chances to invite the whole school community to come together to learn. With the restrictions on gathering required by the conditions of the COVID pandemic, Sela transitioned these events online. At first, many school families a bit hesitant to engage in these remote sessions, but these came to be recognized an important way to maintain our sense of community. The loss of face to face interactions led the school to host frequent virtual town halls to provide updates to the school community, solicit feedback on the school response to frequency changing health guidance. These were also well received by school families and reestablished some of the links that had been lost through remote learning.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

At Sela PCS, we empower parents to have a voice in their child's education. We believe that when families become actively involved, students, schools, and communities all benefit because strong home-school partnerships help all stakeholders focus on student achievement. Below is a summary of ways in which Sela Public Charter School welcomes family engagement.

Tuesday Folder - Each week the school administrative team, with input from teachers, sends home a newsletter with opportunities for classroom involvement and ideas for extending learning at home. In addition to the Tuesday Folder, supplemental announcements are sent home as reminders for upcoming events or deadlines.

School Open Houses and School Tours - Open houses and school tours occur frequently. School open houses and school tours provide potential parents and families with opportunities to learn more about our schools' academic and socio-emotional learning environments.

Parent-Teacher School Association (PTSA) - Parents and guardians have a voice in operational, learning, community, and fundraising issues through the Parent-Teacher School Association (PTSA), which meets monthly and is in communication with the Head of School and Director of Student Support and School Culture.



School and Teacher Websites – Sela provides links to essential information and forms for current and prospective parents via the school website and through regularly updated teacher websites.

Family and Alumni Hebrew Enrichment – Sela offers all enrolled families a 12-week, 40 minute evening Zoom course in beginner Hebrew taught by Sela staff. This course is usually offered between late September and early December. All Sela families are welcome to attend these classes with their students to be able to develop a basic proficiency in conversational Hebrew. For students who have graduated from Sela in the past three years, and are currently in grades 6, 7, or 8, Sela offers a biweekly Hebrew Enrichment Alumni class taught by Sela staff. This is chance for our alumni to stay connected to the school, each other, and the Hebrew language, which is not taught at other DC public or public charter schools. These classes are paid for by Sela through dedicated fundraising.

Sela also works with many local, national and international organizations to further its mission. Locally, Sela partners with the DC Charter Alliance, EmpowerEd, EmpowerK12, and DC Special Education Cooperative to provide both support and dedicated advocacy around issues facing charter schools in Washington, DC. Over the last few years, Sela has been proud to partner with a number of DC-area charitable organizations: the Philip L. Graham Foundation, Kaboom!, and the Robert I. Shattner Foundation. Each of these organizations has provided substantial assistance toward specific school-improvement projects. Beyond Washington, DC, Sela is affiliated with Hebrew Public, a New York-based organization sponsoring Hebrew-language charter schools across the country. Through this affiliation, Sela participates in the Arbel Fellowship, which provides visa assistance for Israeli teachers looking for Hebrew-teaching positions outside of Israel, and provides teachers with an opportunity to enter a Master's program at Middlebury College in Vermont for Hebrew Language Instruction. Even farther afield, Sela partners with Talma, an organization which sends American teachers to disadvantaged schools in Israel to teach ESL classes during three weeks in the summer. Nearly a dozen Sela teachers have participated in this program over the last five years, and come back with a new take on the Hebrew language and Israel. These partnerships are invaluable to Sela and its ability to achieve its mission.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Adult culture in a school is an essential component of the overall school culture. Sela takes a positive adult culture seriously, and engages in many practices to actively promote a positive school culture among the faculty and staff.

For the last two years, Sela has engaged with an organization called EmpowerEd to create a series of monthly PDs designed to examine and improve adult culture in the school. During the 2020-2021 school year, the monthly workshops provided by EmpowerEd examined the topic of institutional trust and its value, and created a cohort of teachers who would go on to facilitate group workshops around adult culture during the 2021-2022 school year. In the second year of partnership, the teacher facilitators have led groups which have examined different facets of the adult culture in the building, and suggested ways to improve it. This activity is ongoing through this school year.

Beyond this specific professional development series, Sela attempts to provide ample professional development opportunities for staff, and by staff throughout the school year. Every Wednesday, an hour at the end of the day is reserved for professional development, and four full-day professional development days for staff are interspersed throughout the school year. Teachers and staff also attend a two-week Summer Institute in late August before the start of the school year. This is an opportunity for large amounts of professional development, team building and general preparation for the upcoming school year.

Sela seeks teacher and staff feedback on its performance and the direction of the school twice per year through surveys, once in the winter and again in June. These surveys are examined by the school leadership team, and many suggestions made through them are implemented. The recommendations made by staff heavily inform the professional development offerings during the next academic year. Surveys were also an important tool in ascertaining teacher thoughts around the transition back to in-person learning before and during the 2020-2021 school year.

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

Sela has a leadership team comprised of six members: the Head of School, the Director of Operations, the Director of Student Support and School Culture, the Director of the Elementary School, the Director of Early Childhood, and the Director of Hebrew. Despite each team member having clearly delineated responsibilities and direct reports, this team functions collaboratively. Each week, the six members of the leadership team meet to report on their section of oversight for the school, plan for upcoming events, discuss pressing matters of school policy, and reach consensus decisions. The ideas of collaboration and consensus are key to the proper functioning of this team. Because of the structure of this team, all members have a vested interest in the success of the school as whole, and understand their role in securing it.

The Head of School functions as the principal and CEO, ensures the overall functioning of the school, and liaises between the leadership team, the school board, and educational agencies in Washington, DC. The Director of Operations supervises all non-academic matters in the school including facilities, and directly supervises all non-instructional staff and oversees the Extended Learning program, which covers activities before and after the regular school day. The Director of Student Support and Culture supervises the RTI process, chairs the student support team, oversees the Special Education and English Language Learner departments, plans school-wide events, and liaises with the PTSA. The Director of the Elementary School supervises, coaches and evaluates teachers and staff instructing grades KG-5th and coordinates school assessments. They also manage the English portions of the school curriculum for those grades. The Director of Early Childhood supervises, coaches and evaluates teachers and staff instructing preschool students in grades PK3 and PK4. They also manage the school garden. The Director of Hebrew manages the Hebrew curriculum and facilitates Hebrew-language activities outside of the school.

#### **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

As a diverse by design school, Sela addresses diversity at the school level, at the classroom level, and at the staffing level. The value and challenges that come from being a diverse school are at the forefront of each aspect of the school from teacher professional development, hiring practices, student to student interactions, and the broader Sela family community. For example, professional development often focuses on better preparing teachers to serve their diverse classrooms and there is a focus on helping Sela families embrace one another, create experiences together outside of the school, and developing a deep understanding of each other. We believe, and research shows, that a truly diverse school has academic, social, and emotional benefits for everyone. Learning from and with others who are different is a core value of the school and we believe that raising students to appreciate and value diversity will have life long positive effects on families, communities, and the city of Washington DC as a whole. The school has 263 students from across every Ward in Washington, DC, and is designated a Title I school.

Students are offered early exposure to a diverse array of cultural experiences in order to foster their mastery of global citizenship. Many of these relate to Hebrew, which not only exemplifies the capacity of language to unite people across space and time, but is a modern-day language of business and technology. Through the Hebrew language, students are exposed to the culture and people of contemporary Israel. Annually in the spring, Sela holds its "Israel Day," an opportunity for students to experience more about Israel, for example "visiting" different Israeli cities, listening to Israeli radio, and learning Israeli dances. Additionally, Sela draws on the cultural diversity within our school. In January 2020 we held our inaugural International Diversity Day, providing students a venue to highlight their own cultural history and reflect on the similarities and differences between cultures. Each year since, this program has grown to showcase more family traditions from the school community.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Language immersion is a proven model to narrow or close achievement gaps for special education students, students from low socioeconomic status families, and minority students. Sela Public Charter School's mission is to offer children of all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds in the District of Columbia, from pre-kindergarten (PK3) to 5th grade, the opportunity to achieve academic excellence in a safe, nurturing environment that focuses on Hebrew language immersion, promotes the value of diversity and provides the skills for active engagement in the world.

Since its inception, Sela has worked to create a unique model of language instruction for its immersion program. This model has led to increased levels of academic achievement in both English and Hebrew content and skills. In order to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills sets in Hebrew, Sela follows the research based, highly regarded Proficiency-based approach to teaching students Hebrew. In PreK through second grade, students spend half of their instructional time in Hebrew and half in English (50/50 language immersion model), with parallel literacy blocks, and math instruction conducted in both languages. Each class in these grades is co-taught by one English teacher and one Hebrew teacher. For now, in third through fifth grade, Hebrew is presented in a foreign language model, with students receiving one hour per day of Hebrew in a separate Hebrew classroom. We have a structured plan to increase the amount of Hebrew through 5th grade over the next three years as we learn from the strategies implemented in our 50/50 immersion model. Nearly all Hebrew language instruction is given by native speakers of Hebrew to provide the most authentic immersion experience for the students, the vast majority of whom have no access to the language outside of the school.

The model currently used in the early childhood and lower elementary grades at Sela creates an immersive Hebrew-language learning environment while still providing ample time for English language instruction. The parallel English and Hebrew literacy blocks used in grades KG-2nd grade (and next year 3rd as well) are a major component in Sela students' academic success. Each grade is composed of two co-taught classrooms, each with one English and one Hebrew teacher. During the parallel literacy blocks the four teachers per grade pair off by language to provide a 70 minute instructional block in their instructional language. This means that, for example, each first grade class receives a 70 minute block of Hebrew literacy taught by two Hebrew teachers and a 70 minute block of English literacy taught by two English teachers. The benefits of this model are that there are two teachers in the classroom to facilitate small group instruction, to model proper language use, and to provide other supports to students during instruction. Despite the disruptions cause by the pandemic, Sela students have demonstrated consistent gains in both English and Hebrew literacy skills which are directly attributable to this instructional model of co-teaching.