

U.S. Department of Education
2022 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. Nieves Carrales
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 7840 6th Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Somerset State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 78069-0279

County Bexar County

Telephone (210) 750-8961 Fax (210) 750-8973

Web site/URL https://www.sisd12.net/o/ses E-mail saul.hinojosa@sisd12.net

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* Dr. Saul Hinojosa E-mail saul.hinojosa@sisd12.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Somerset Independent School District Tel. (210) 750-8955

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. Don Green
(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 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

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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **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	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	80	75	155
2	71	102	173
3	95	86	181
4	89	82	171
5	0	0	0
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	335	345	680

*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
 - 0.2 % Asian
 - 0.4 % Black or African American
 - 93.8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 5 % White
 - 0.6 % 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: 11%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	57
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	21
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	78
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	687
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 28 %
193 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 83 %

Total number students who qualify: 564

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 16 %
108 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>11</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>13</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>38</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>37</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>9</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: 1
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.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
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 21:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	95%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2021.

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.

The mission of Somerset Elementary School is to provide exemplary preparation for higher education and life, so students are college, career, and citizenship ready.

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

[https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/178?filename=FB\(LEGAL\).pdf](https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/178?filename=FB(LEGAL).pdf)

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Somerset Elementary School (SES) is a rural, public school that borders the southwest region of San Antonio, Texas and is one of seven schools that comprise Somerset Independent School District. This year, 2022, marks the centennial anniversary of the school where threads of vision, tradition, and excellence have been intricately woven to achieve success. The majority of families have been in the community for decades reflecting a long history, while others have higher mobility rates. In addition to unique family backgrounds and histories, students' home environments are varied to include farmhouses, local historic dwellings, trailer park communities, acreage, and multi-generational living arrangements. The campus boundaries span approximately 40 square miles, which attribute to predominately rural housing with limited access to resources, such as internet and city utility services. Given the geographic nature of the school, approximately 43% of students are transported to school. The school serves as the community's hub and provides identity, coherence, and stability where students and families are able to connect and belong. This connection is consistently evident as staff honors the diversity of each child and strives to build upon individual strengths, while embracing cultural and community differences.

SES educators uphold an unwavering belief in each student's ability to learn, grow, and achieve. The mission of "providing exemplary preparation for higher education and life" consistently drives decision-making and purposeful actions. The campus operates from a "one team, one voice" mantra, as this precisely communicates a unified team approach regarding the mission and focus: students. This mantra begins with campus leadership and cascades to all levels of the system to include staff, students, families, and the community. In addition to upholding a culture of success, leaders strategically design instructional experiences that promote academic, social, emotional, and cultural development. Because all faculty and staff operate from this perspective, SES educators reach, connect, and inspire learners.

Given that teacher quality is the primary in-school factor for student achievement, SES is committed to building teacher excellence. Strategic and innovative changes with the master schedule allow for weekly job-embedded professional development during the school day with all teachers, paired teaching models, and intentional cross-curricular instruction. Professional development is facilitated with clusters of teachers to target identified teacher and student needs and includes presentations from internal expert teachers. The cluster to classroom and classroom to cluster model ensures that learning is timely and relevant. This teacher capacity-building model makes SES different, and has led to numerous state-designated master teachers with linked performance compensation. Paired teaching models allow students to work with two teachers who are experts in their respective content areas. Schedules allow teachers to collaboratively plan and connect skills and concepts. This cross-curricular teaching allows for real-world connections linked to transferrable problem solving skills, engagement, and students owning their learning.

The pandemic changed the physical environment, not expectations. SES messaging from the onset emphasized commensurate services, meaning commensurate to pre-pandemic outcomes. The focus was on remaining solution-focused and prioritizing rigorous, relevant, and standards-based instruction, regardless of the instructional model, along with the preservation of positive connections with students and families. SES was not bound by brick and mortar but by innovation and transformation. Multimodal pathways and learning spaces - physical and virtual - were organized to support students while balancing academic needs with social, emotional, and wellness priorities. The school provided wrap-around services through a new mental-health center that was created as a proactive response to reduce and prevent risk factors that affected mental health and academic success for families and students. Counseling and other social-emotional services were available to students, staff, and families, including basic necessities and financial assistance.

The story rests on the victories of the school's learners. Despite the challenges associated with the pandemic, students performed, growth measures were met, and achievement gaps were closed. SES became a trendsetter at the early stages of the pandemic by partnering to provide weekly COVID screening for all staff and students. As a result, 88% of students received face-to-face instruction during the pandemic's peak, thus allowing students to meet and exceed performance indicators. State level data indicates that the third and fourth grade students outperformed over 90% of their peers across Texas in mathematics, reading, and writing. The school is data-driven. All decisions are determined through multiple measures of data to inform

learning needs for staff and students. The focus on growth and achievement provides the lens when viewing data and structured protocols are used with specific types of data to ensure that deep analyses and rich, collaborative discourse results in well-defined actions that support individual students at the name and need level. Practices have been refined over time to address opportunity gaps. Identified needs, collaboration, and purposeful actions were key factors to SES's overall successes. Because every student matters, changes happened by design, not by default.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The primary mission of SES is to provide every student quality educational experiences that prepare them for post-secondary education and career pathways. Learning at SES has been enhanced by adhering to the written curriculum that reflects the academic, social, and emotional needs of learners, promotes continuity through cumulative acquisition and mastery of skills and behaviors, and ultimately defines the portrait of a graduate. Thus, the school's comprehensive curriculum system is standards-based and tied to state and national standards for each core content area, i.e., reading/English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies. At SES, these learning expectations reflect the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), national content standards, and local cultural and community beliefs. These standards are incorporated into daily instruction based on a well-articulated scope and sequence for all subjects. The curricula is housed and managed through an online system and consists of unit summaries, enduring understandings, essential questions, critical vocabulary, performance tasks, unit assessments, instructional guidance documents, and resources. It serves to actively engage students in the learning process so that they are more self-directed, intrinsically motivated, and willing to persist as they develop their intellectual potential.

SES continuously refines curricula with input from teachers and instructional leaders to meet changing needs and to ensure the highest quality instructional programming for all students. This curricular approach ensures that teachers are clear about what students are required to know and be able to do in each grade level and respective courses, and that students are exposed to and master expected grade level and course standards. Teachers departmentalize in reading/ELA and social studies or mathematics and science, allowing for focused professional development, deepening teacher content knowledge, and instructional planning. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment components are tightly aligned in a systemic approach; therefore, powerful instructional and student outcomes are realized.

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

Because literacy is an essential component of all content areas, literacy and numeracy are the school's two driving tenants. When literacy takes center stage with curriculum, students are able to interpret and compose texts across disciplines and make cross-disciplinary connections. SES believes that strong literacy skills are foundational to provide students with access to all other subjects and gain deeper understandings of enduring skills and concepts. The cross-curricular instructional approach at SES is rigorous and dynamic based on defined learning standards, expected curricular outcomes, and students' needs. In order to make learning meaningful, literacy and content objectives are deeply intertwined. Reading/ELA instruction is tied to the Five Components of Reading: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. These components work in tandem to create a strong, rich, and reliable foundation for reading. The majority of teachers have completed state-developed reading academies where teachers have closely studied the science of reading and built their content knowledge and expertise with evidence-based practices. Robust instructional resources include core reading materials, digital curriculum, school leveled libraries, classroom leveled libraries, resources for intervention and enrichment supports, digital diagnostic components, and authentic and diverse texts. With a focus on supporting all learners, the curriculum is differentiated by design and aims to establish a culture of learning and instilling a growth mindset with students, so they become independent readers and learners. Whole-group and small-group instruction, as well as individual and collaborative print and digital learning activities are utilized as part of SES's model. Integrated assessments and reports allow teachers to constantly know each student's data and progress in order to respond. Teachers are given support materials designed to aid in teaching English language learners and students with disabilities. In the early grades, students benefit from this comprehensive foundational reading program as it is designed to strengthen key literacy skills and ensure that all students are achieving reading proficiency by third grade. For upper elementary students, the reading program ensures that learners have

access to core and supplemental programs that offer personalized, engaging instruction and places every child on the path to reading and writing success. SES has focused on students' literacy successes as a means of determining where targeted interventions are needed. Therefore, a well-defined multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) process has been established and linked primarily to reading/ELA. Teachers meet weekly to review student-specific data and identify necessary interventions. MTSS includes a continuum of integrated academic and behavioral supports that address the needs of individual students and ensure they have seamless access to instruction with targeted supports. Support staff are leveraged to enhance Tier I instruction and to provide Tier 2 and 3 students with additional support. Technology-based systems are strategically selected and used to supplement tiered instruction. Various diagnostic assessments are administered at given points during the year to track performance and growth, i.e., Lexile levels, literacy domains, social-emotional gaps, and content-specific gaps. Instructional interventionists and other professional personnel directly support students and continuously monitor and improve the effectiveness of the team's impact.

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

The second tenant, numeracy, requires SES students to use mathematical thinking and processes across disciplines and in multiple contexts to think like mathematicians. When stepping into mathematics classrooms at SES, the energy and enthusiasm for learning are high, because students are fully engaged in real-world connections beyond basic computation. The SES approach to teaching mathematics standards includes hands-on, problem-based instruction where various types of thinking and problem solving strategies are used to make conjectures, explain their reasoning, and justify answers and solutions. This approach keeps students engaged and ensures that learning is authentic and tied to the world around them. The emphasis of mathematics instruction at SES is on the five content strands (number and operations, algebra, geometry, measurement, and data analysis and probability) and five process standards (problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connections, and representation). SES is purposeful about creating the environment where students take risks, share and defend their mathematical ideas, and engage in investigations and problem solving strategies. The environment is shaped through expectations for engagement, persistence, and communication of mathematical concepts and skills, where productive struggles are viewed as progress. Students use varied tools, e.g., concrete models, manipulatives, rulers, graphs, charts, and calculators when solving mathematical problems. Mistakes are opportunities for learning where students are encouraged to reflect on the outcome of specific algorithms or processes and adjust errors. Students consistently work in flexible groups to apply mathematical concepts and procedures in other curricular areas, including fine arts and electives, as a way to solve problems and relate everyday language to mathematical language and symbols. Assessments take on many facets, including performance tasks where students are expected to integrate and apply concepts and skills across multiple mathematical strands and standards. Students view these performance tasks as exciting challenges that tap into their thinking and problem solving skills. Teachers use this information to determine where differentiation is needed. A unique aggressive monitoring process has been incorporated schoolwide. This model has been showcased at state-level trainings to exemplify how teaching and learning should be monitored during classroom instruction. In addition, extensive training has been provided to ensure that all depth of knowledge levels are primarily at the expected rigor. These are two of the several systems that are continuously assessed for fidelity of implementation. In addition, a mathematics digital curriculum is incorporated with the core curriculum to provide in-depth content for students to master concepts and skills. The online modules are customized for each student based on their intervention or acceleration needs. SES students, therefore, engage in personalized learning experiences that allow them to acquire mastery at their own pace. Teachers have on-demand data available to tailor instruction and spiral the standards, as needed, for individual students and student groups. Student support systems are determined based on multiple data views and profiles. Frequent Family Math Nights are incorporated to share resources and tools that support their children in furthering their mathematics successes. Concrete games and activities are presented to make explicit connections between home and school.

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

Science instruction at SES goes beyond books and encourages students to explore learning standards through inquiry and investigations. Teachers at SES nurture student curiosity and promote scientific

thinking through every day experiences. Student inquiry and ownership of learning is evident at SES by how students generate and ask their own questions, how they collect their own evidence, and how they construct their own hypothesis and explanations with varied investigations. The hands-on, trial and error, interactive approach to instruction elevates learning at both the cognitive and affective levels, keeping students excited about science. A cross-curricular approach is reflected in unit assessments, leading to rich and rigorous learning experiences and performance tasks that are purposefully connected to other content areas. This process has allowed SES students to bolster their ability to read critically, identify text evidence, and engage in the scientific process in meaningful ways. The level of planning and intentionality is always evident when students create models, explore science, work through experiments, and make predictions about what might happen. science technology engineering and mathematics (STEM) and robotics are incorporated into science instruction through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Through this initiative, students assemble and code their robots in order to accomplish a specified task, e.g., lift a lever, go through a track to get from one point to another, etc. Coding formulas are tested and adjusted based on intended outcomes, requiring students to engage in various forms of high-level thinking and problem solving. Teamwork and collaboration are consistently evident as students work together to create and compete. Students must respect each other, embrace differences, explore new ideas, and continuously improve. Because of their passion in this area, students who are more subdued step out of their comfort zone to lead and present for their groups. Core values and core content collide in science to bring out the best in SES students.

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

Social Studies curriculum at SES is designed to help students bridge the past and present through lessons that connect current events. Teachers move beyond the textbooks to make learning standards meaningful and encourage students to identify their place and contributions in the community. With a predominantly low socio-economic status, the school seeks opportunities to consistently build background knowledge through field-based experiences outside district boundaries. SES is relentless in providing interactions that level the playing field, and diversity and cultural awareness are integrated into classrooms through multi-cultural literature and other engaging projects. Cultural celebrations at SES create spaces that surround students and families with an environment that honors and respects cultural diversity and their important place in the school community. Background knowledge allows students to connect and contribute to instructional discourse. The integration of local culture provides an opportunity for students to feel a sense of pride, belonging, and validation by highlighting their own cultural traditions. Lessons are integrated with reading/ELA to deepen students' understanding of geography, economics, government, citizenship, culture, science, technology, and society. Students use critical thinking skills to identify cause-and-effect relationships, compare and contrast situations, and make generalizations and predictions about social studies concepts and skills. Cross-curricular projects and products are differentiated to allow for choice and to tailor instruction. Standards-based warm-ups, exit tickets, and other formative assessments are also differentiated to consistently gauge mastery of daily objectives. These assessments support teachers in determining what students understand in order to build on students' strengths and to identify needs. School leaders assist teachers in the skillful implementation of social studies pedagogy by participating in the planning process, viewing lessons, and promoting professional dialogue regarding teaching and learning. These professional learning experiences are aligned to enhance the delivery of instruction and target the learning needs of all students.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

SES strives to incorporate a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning beyond the core curriculum to address the needs of the whole child through other enrichment areas. By doing so, SES improves and encourages student creativity, confidence, and connections to school that are essential to each student's overall growth and development. As a rural school, SES has a clear pipeline to secondary level programs and services in fine arts, athletics, technology, career and technical education, and character education through academics, clubs, and extracurricular activities. The overall goal is to develop learners and leaders as they transition through SES and beyond. SES has embraced the ABC model that delineates expectations for attendance, behavior, and course performance. Students continue to rise to the level of expectations since the standard of excellence is defined and articulated. The master schedule has been specifically designed for all students to participate in art, music, technology, library, counseling, character building, and physical education at least daily. Art and music provide students with opportunities to express themselves through in-school and after-school performances during the year. SES has adopted a one-to-one technology initiative for all students in grades 2-4. Students are astute with the school's learning management system and use their technology block to further acquire the technology proficiencies necessary to efficiently navigate their devices and to safely and responsibly access digital platforms. Students create digital portfolios that carry over from one year to another. These portfolios allow students to monitor and assess their growth over time. Families receive real-time notifications about postings regarding their child's work and are able to view milestones and progress. In order to balance the past and present, the SES library seeks to find balance with digital and print resources and highly promotes students to experience the joy of selecting their books from the library shelves with excitement and eagerness, while flipping through the pages from front to back. All teachers at SES teach and model character building through classroom and school expectations. The pandemic increased the need for character development, particularly related to caring and connections. The school counselor and physical education teachers provide direct classroom lessons that further stamp the character education traits of citizenship, caring, trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, and fairness. Classroom instruction is designed to solidify these traits. The culture of the school and overarching community have benefited from these targeted learning opportunities, and the actions of our students serve as validation that they have internalized these values. The highly structured after school program is an extension of the regular school day where teachers provide targeted accelerated instruction, space for quiet study time with necessary supports, health and wellness time, and opportunities for extracurricular activities to include chess, robotics, safety patrols, clubs, and academic skill building. SES collaborates with a local agency to provide balanced meals during after school programs. Various non-profit organizations work closely with SES to provide additional development options for students through organized sports and clubs. Together, SES is committed to growing learners who will be the community's next leaders.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Teachers at SES administer a beginning-of-year reading diagnostic to identify each student's independent reading level. Teachers use this data to draw on skill strengths and expand on these skills to determine precise levels of acceleration where performance on specific standards lags. Teachers also use diagnostic data to establish student groups for guided reading and to create individualized plans that target each student's instructional needs. Plans are executed and monitored weekly as instruction progresses to middle-of-year and end-of-year diagnostic administrations and results. If students' growth progress is on track, the plan is executed as written. If students' growth progress is lacking, additional support structures are incorporated to include reading interventionists, after school accelerated instruction, parental support systems, and/or technology-based, individualized programs that complement the individualized plans and target specific skills that need to be addressed. Qualitative and quantitative data measures are reviewed to include state assessment data, unit assessments, benchmarks, universal screeners, portfolios, and anecdotal data. When data indicates that student subgroups have a ten percent or more achievement gap in comparison with other student groups, the district's scaffolding document is used to determine prerequisite standards that will be addressed as starting points for natural instructional progression towards student mastery. Highest leverage student expectations are identified to strategically identify where standards will be emphasized to impact subsequent standards. Data profiles include prior year summative data and cumulative formative data. Flexible groups are also established based on specific standards, and students remain in the flexible groups until they demonstrate mastery. Although teachers track growth data daily, formalized

weekly meetings are held by grade level and core subject to communicate which students are not progressing and identify patterns of performance across subjects. Data management systems with current data are accessible to respective staff so that ongoing tracking and communication are explicit and collaborative.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

At SES, student growth and achievement are central priorities. When accelerating high performing students, the process begins by clearly identifying learning targets, assess instructional effectiveness, and develop parameters for precise instruction that leads to improved outcomes. When students are performing at or above grade level, the goal is for students to demonstrate at least one year's growth, regardless their starting point. The baseline is established by analyzing multiple measures of data. The instructional approach is laser-like when students have demonstrated proficiency or mastery with specific standards; therefore, data analysis is used to pinpoint where growth will happen, so that it is strategic. In instances where high performing students are not reaching high levels of mastery on specific standards, SES takes a proactive stance in ensuring that teachers fully understand what students are expected to know and be able to do for those standards. Master teachers lead other teachers through the unpacking of the standards at granular levels to co-construct learning. Teachers are expected to identify what students must know in order to understand and master the standard and actions are detailed to articulate what students must show to demonstrate mastery. Assessment items are subsequently reviewed to validate that the construct of assessment items aligns with the intended outcomes for each standard. SES uses a data tracker to determine each student's growth, and each teacher's students are linked to teacher profiles to determine the number and percentage of students meeting and exceeding growth measures. These percentages inform leadership about where teacher support systems are channeled. All students own their own data, establish goals, and are clear about what is needed to reach the goals. Student data management systems are grade-appropriate to allow students to internalize and act on data. Leadership regularly monitors all formative and summative assessment data at the macro level to ensure that high performers reach their potential.

3c. Special education:

Special education performance is a primary focal point for SES. As with general education students, all students with disabilities are held to high expectations for performance. This messaging permeates throughout the campus. Students' primary programming is determined by the admission, review, and dismissal committee (ARD) and intentional development of each child's individual education program (IEP). Rich data systems and protocols identify instructional strengths and needs. General and special education teachers work closely during instructional planning to execute specialized instruction that is rigorous and requires students to meet instructional demands and make connections with necessary modifications and accommodations. Case managers track performance and progress weekly. Each case manager is responsible for a small and select group of students and serves as the main point of contact for facilitating and managing the caseload. These teachers are required to meet weekly with each student's teachers to communicate progress and needs as documented in case management folders. Weekly data meetings allow respective teachers and the leadership team to stay engaged and informed with each student's progress, whether attendance, behavior, or course expectations and determine additional supports needed for students to continue to progress in the general education curriculum and meet their IEP goals and objectives. SES develops and implements an assessment plan for all students, including students with disabilities, which incorporates multiple types of assessments. The schoolwide data management system allows teachers to create monitoring groups. Current and longitudinal data for students with disabilities is captured by individual student, student groups, and monitoring groups. An itinerant support model provides necessary student instruction and supplemental services that are data-driven and student-specific. Communication with families is ongoing through formal and informal teacher conferences, grade progress reports, IEP progress reports, and capacity building training that engages families in meaningful ways to bridge and strengthen the home and school connections.

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

English language learner (ELL) data trends at SES consistently exceed regional and state performance levels. SES believes that teacher quality, including strong understandings about research-based practices that have proven successful with ELL students over time, is a primary factor that has led to stellar performance. Collaborative learning spaces defined through the master schedule have been incorporated for ELL teachers to share effective practices. Teachers can clearly articulate expectations for excellence and the necessary actions to reach these outcomes. SES celebrates and nurtures students' primary language. Students' language proficiencies in listening, speaking, reading, and writing are monitored and tracked to ensure that performance levels are increasing, explicit instruction supports language acquisition, and strong cognitive academic language strategies are reflected in daily instruction. Written and oral discourse is evident throughout daily instruction, providing students opportunities to master both interpersonal and academic skills. Students are consistently exposed to high quality instruction that builds on their primary language. An online platform is used to complement daily instruction. Its purpose is to individualize instruction that is standards-aligned and evidence-based. This online resource strengthens student proficiency in the four domains and deepens English language development skills through intentional practice that accelerates literacy and language acquisition. Teachers regularly use comprehensive reports to adjust instruction, determine interventions, and close performance gaps. Teachers are intentional about establishing strong relationships with students and their families and consistently draw upon background knowledge and experiences to incorporate strengths and make content accessible. Curricula at SES are provided in both languages to support foundational literacy, build language skills across content areas, and create seamless transitions to the English language. Print-rich environments are evident in all classrooms and include anchor charts, classroom libraries, bulletin boards, and other accessible academic resources. SES has seen significant gains in language development and acquisition that is further evident in students' state assessment results.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Creating an engaging, positive, and safe learning environment is at the heart of every staff member at SES and is visible through collective values and actions. The dedication to students is evident through a myriad of purposefully designed activities that support academic, social, and emotional successes. Students regularly engage in hands-on, minds-on group learning that allows students to share their ideas, engage in academic discourse, and take ownership of their learning. Pride is evident when students share their growth through formal and informal learning outcomes, including presenting learning to their teachers, peers, or articulating their new learning through writing. SES promotes student leadership and social-emotional growth through various clubs and extracurricular activities and ensures students are college, career, and citizenship ready. Teachers promote student ownership by having students create individualized goals, assuming responsibility for tracking their own progress, and identifying actions to reach their goals. They are self-motivated throughout the year to not only examine their opportunities for growth and improve upon them, but to discover their strengths and continue to build upon them. Teachers are purposeful about showcasing students' strengths, building their self-efficacy, and strengthening gaps to elevate all learners. Students and parents communicate how they recognize and value staff commitment to learning at SES as a higher investment that goes beyond paper and pencil.

The positive and engaging rapport that exists throughout every level of the campus was evident when teachers organized a parade welcoming students as they picked up their remote learning packets. The genuine smiles, tears of joy, carefully crafted parade signs, and gratitude from parents underscored the level of staff, student, and family engagement. Because students are accustomed to innovative instructional strategies and own their learning, the transition to remote instruction was seamless. Within two days after pivoting to remote instruction, all classrooms were fully engaged and connected to learning. Teachers worked collaboratively during the pandemic to deliver asynchronous instruction, and students engaged in rich academic discourse with peers in virtual rooms. Feedback regarding student work and engagement was provided through projects and assignments, grades, and specific teacher comments validated learning, addressed misconceptions, and provided extensions and connections. The relentless mindset about achievement, social-emotional growth, and academic growth resulted in 100% performance on all Closing the Gaps indicators. Teachers and campus leaders continue to approach every day with an “everything matters, will do” attitude that ignites and engages every learner, as they transition from one grade level to the next.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Families and the community are an extension of the school and critical partners to overall success. Intentional messaging about customer service is a point of emphasis, and staff strive to deliver seamless experiences that provide value to all stakeholders with a “small town, big heart” attitude. All staff members are responsive, available, and service-oriented as evidenced by high levels of family engagement throughout the academic year. Authentic and timely family learning opportunities include meet the teacher nights, literacy and numeracy nights, open house events, and additional monthly parenting sessions held in both English and Spanish. Involvement of families changed slightly at the height of the pandemic, to align with virtual sessions offered to students. Family use of virtual platforms allowed opportunities to navigate and participate in ways that mirrored virtual instruction for students and subsequently familiarized families with the tools and resources to assist at home. This flexibility allowed for high levels of engagement from hard-to-reach families.

SES is closely linked with Somerset ISD Education Foundation that was established as a partnership between the community, businesses, civic organizations, and parents to provide funds to schools. Funds are available to SES educators through innovative education grants that are designed to recognize and reward innovative instructional approaches as detailed in the school's improvement plan. SES has been the recipient of numerous grants that continue to impact staff and student successes, including academic and social-emotional priorities with real-life engineering investigations with STEM, “SEL”ebrating Social

Emotional Learning staff library, and core area instructional extensions. One specific example is the Kindness Rock Garden where students designed rocks with inspirational messages for the school community.

SES partners with a local college and extended businesses to eradicate poverty through the transformational power of education that begins at birth. This higher education partnership was established to begin educational awareness at the earliest years and enhance a college-going culture. All SES students are slated to receive 60 hours of free tuition after graduation. SES remains committed to providing a quality education for all students through three phases: exposure, exploration and experiences that impact students through high school.

SES families, businesses, and community partners continue to be “all in” when it comes to the success of the school. Local churches and businesses ensure that all students have the necessary supplies to start the school year. A nearby corporation donated funds to provide students with technology and internet access devices that are currently being used to accelerate instruction.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Teachers at SES consistently hold themselves to high standards for developing and performing, and they align their professional growth goals with their students’ academic and social-emotional needs. School culture at SES is driven by these compelling and explicit standards of excellence where practices reflect excellence of teaching and excellence of work as operational norms. School leaders meet weekly with a cross-represented instructional leadership team to review data, identify instructional patterns, target curriculum, and assess teacher, student, and classroom needs. This recursive process is used to determine teacher support systems and professional development which is delivered through weekly cluster sessions. Teachers engage in relevant and targeted professional learning designed to refine instructional practices and impact student learning. The culture is collaborative and allows teachers to showcase pedagogical strengths, deepen their craft, and create consistency and common understandings among teacher teams through high quality, continuous professional learning. Challenges faced in distance learning included keeping students engaged, monitoring student understanding and growth, and creating individualized instruction for students at home and school. Teachers immediately shifted the challenges and identified opportunities to be creative in their digital delivery, but still staying true to their original purpose: reaching and teaching all students.

A Continuity of Services Plan was developed to communicate instructional priorities and detail school, grade level, teacher, and student support systems. Classrooms took on a new look as teachers accessed multiple screens, and with the demands of working within multiple spaces, digital facilitators emerged. The campus leadership team diligently monitored, while teachers watched videos of fellow teachers and constructively critiqued their teaching practices with a focus on student engagement. To support teachers in their instructional practice while navigating through distance learning, staff were provided professional development that encompassed respective content areas and the use of digital platforms while keeping students at the center of every decision. Weekly sessions were customized and scaffolded based on teachers’ competencies and needs, surveys were completed to determine where additional teacher support was necessary, an online teacher portal was developed to stamp and extend learning, and one-to-one modeling was provided through lead teacher support structures. The clear focus was on upholding achievement expectations and maximizing learning regardless of the delivery model. Teachers received continuous feedback and coaching through virtual walkthroughs and observations that focused on student engagement and lesson outcomes. Despite the challenges associated with the pandemic, students performed, growth measures were met, and achievement gaps were closed. Teachers were cared for; therefore, they cared.

4. School Leadership:

From a philosophical stance, the SES leadership team draws upon the tenants of a distributive leadership model where the administrative team seeks to bolster the content and pedagogical knowledge of all professional staff, create a common culture of accountability centered on skills and knowledge, build positive relationships within and among stakeholders, and hold campus educators accountable for how they contribute to collective goals. This philosophy is undergirded in leadership that focuses on the growth and

development of all campus educators and tied to defined competencies and standards of performance. The executive team which is comprised of the principal, assistant principal, counselor, and master teachers, position themselves as facilitators of instruction who work side-by-side with teachers to carry out school initiatives. Individuals are not defined by their titles. Leaders are driven by the goals, rather than roles and do whatever it takes to realize student achievement results.

Campus leaders rely on established policies, programs, relationships, and resources to inform decisions regarding student achievement. The data collected daily from these areas, e.g., formal systems, evaluation data, classroom walk-through data, one-to-one conversations with teachers and teams, cluster surveys, and formative and summative student data provide clear direction on how to monitor and adjust teacher and student growth. Empowered with this knowledge, long- and short-term goals were established at the beginning of year and revised based on formative results. Leadership articulates the goals, embeds structures of support, and communicates expectations and timelines. Because the distributive leadership style remains rooted in data and follows predictable systems and processes, teachers feel valued and students achieve as demonstrated on state assessments.

SES instructional leaders model, facilitate, and communicate schoolwide essential actions and serve as lead learners who willingly take risks, try new approaches, and are willing and able to work in classrooms alongside teachers. On any given day, campus leaders assume the role of teacher or co-teacher. This entrenched model sets the standard for all leading and learning. The school has established systems for decision-making that are routinely implemented with established protocols and areas of focus. The executive team addresses high level priorities and school functions, while the instructional leadership team ensures that effective classroom routines and instructional strategies are in place, and department teams focus on grade- and content-specific actions. Student success, therefore, is directly related to unique structures and processes where high quality human capital drives student outcomes. SES is a rural school with a student-centered heart, because this is “heart work.”

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

SES staff promotes an environment that is respectful of all cultures to make learning relevant and deepen the connections for students through multi-cultural and multi-lingual activities. As a rural and predominately low socio-economic campus, students’ experiences with cultural and social happenings are regularly infused in curricula to keep students well informed about current events and their overall impact. A priority for culturally responsive teaching is to connect families’ cultures, languages, and life experiences in ways that fully acknowledge students’ realities, while ensuring that students are provided with rich experiences beyond the community’s boundaries. Students are proud of their backgrounds and see limitless possibilities. The school embraces asset-based practices that capitalize on students’ strengths, instills pride in their backgrounds, while also assessing barriers that may prevent students from reaching their potential. Though there are patterns of diversity within the school, each student is unique. SES creates an inclusive learning environment that promotes equitable learning for all through culturally rich curricula, multi-cultural projects and assignments, family engagement, and field-based experiences. There is an explicit commitment to sustaining the school’s cultural diversity knowing this demographic is representative of the community served.

SES ensures that the community’s culture and heritage are not lost in this age or the next. Diversity and cultural awareness are integrated into classrooms with multicultural literature. This allows students to share experiences and knowledge acquired through their families to enrich the discussions and to make connections to the real world. Through cultural celebrations, families are treated as key partners. SES creates spaces that surround families with vibrant attire, engaging music, and authentic cuisine. Authenticity of diverse cultures is represented through events such as Fiesta De Las Americas, Feria Mundial, Cinco De Mayo, and Día de Los Muertos. Parental support at SES is facilitated through monthly parenting meetings that enhance parents’ skills. These sessions offer parents a safe forum, delivered in English and Spanish, and include topics such as, homework support, encouraging and motivating children, and navigating the pandemic. SES continually strives to promote sound school-to-home relationships that develop resiliency and self-advocacy with parents and students. SES partners with programs such as Blue Santa and Operation School Bell, and generates the information needed for Angel Tree. Students feel valued and empowered at

SES, because they see themselves represented through teaching and learning experiences. This sense of belonging builds confidence and makes students feel like SES is home.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At SES, the singular belief is that teacher quality is the greatest in-school factor for overall student success. The collective vision is that every student is taught by an excellent teacher who is highly skilled, strongly motivated, and supported by effective leaders. Campus leaders believe that intentional and sustained investments in teachers directly results in success for all students and is essential in mitigating equity gaps. SES leaders implement clear processes and structures to ensure that professional learning teams are cohesive and continually improve their effectiveness. The master schedule at SES has been restructured to provide time during the regular school day for teachers to engage in weekly, targeted professional development. Strategies for addressing student and teacher growth are presented by internal expert teachers and include follow up implementation walks to assess classroom impact. Professional development continues in the classroom as internal expert teachers model lessons, observe classroom instruction, and support teachers' pedagogical growth. Instructional leadership identifies instructional and academic needs using a variety of data, facilitates weekly professional development aligned to those needs, and evaluates the success of professional learning. The leadership team uses normed tools and processes to conduct observations, capture trends, and track progress over time through our data management system. This information, along with other data sources, is used to determine weekly professional development topics or units of study. Utilizing these protocols for a cycle of continuous improvement ensures that teachers and grade level teams are growing in their own effectiveness and increasing their impact on teaching quality and student achievement in every classroom. Together, grade level teachers examine the content standards, review available rigorous resources and materials, and plan student-centered activities.

SES builds teacher capacity through observation and feedback cycles. One key companion leverage point for support is on-going coaching and real-time feedback. Targeted observations and walkthroughs are conducted based on the analysis of formative student data and teacher follow up includes bite-sized, actionable feedback that leads to rapid improvement in teacher practices and student growth. This process encourages teachers to reflect on best practices and to continuously strive to become more effective practitioners. These continuous growth opportunities allow teacher leaders to develop a cohesive and individualized professional learning plan to drive student outcomes. This non-negotiable, highly effective capacity-building model makes SES different, and data supports the notion that SES teachers are achieving greater successes, as teachers navigate through refinements of their craft.