

U.S. Department of Education
2023 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. Odette E. Garcia

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

Official School Name Roel A & Celia R Saenz Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 310 South Gate Road

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

City Roma State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 78584-0187

County Starr County

Telephone (956) 849-7230

Fax (956) 849-7503

Web site/URL <https://www.romaisd.com/rcs>

E-mail ogarcia@romaisd.com

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. Carlos M. Gonzalez Jr. E-mail cgonzalez@romaisd.com

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

District Name Roma Independent School District Tel. (956) 849-1377

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. Ricardo A. Perez

(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 2023 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 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
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 (2022-2023) 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):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
2 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 9 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, 2022 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 Students
PreK	52
K	64
1	64
2	94
3	93
4	87
5	94
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	548

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 100 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 0 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 school year: 19%

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

For the 2021-2022 school year, Roel A. & Celia R. Saenz Elementary's mobility rate was higher than usual. This increase was due to a larger than usual number of new to the district students that enrolled after October 1, 2021. The increase of Covid-19 cases in the state during the fall 2021 was a significant factor on why parents/guardians chose to wait on enrolling students at the beginning of the school year.

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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	63
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	40
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	103
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	548
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.19
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	19

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 94 %

517 Total number ELL

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

Total number students who qualify: 517

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 10 %
Total number of students served 55

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 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>9</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>1</u> Deafness	<u>3</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>10</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>37</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>12</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 0 %
Total number of students served: 0

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 9

11. 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.	28
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.	16
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

12. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	95%	97%	99%	98%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

15. 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.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

The entire school community at Roel A. and Celia R. Saenz Elementary is committed to challenging students to reach their academic and social potential. We are committed to providing students with a developmentally appropriate education that emphasizes high academic and social expectations for all students; the opportunities, resources, and environment necessary to be lifelong learners; the skills and encouragement needed to be productive, responsible citizens; and the support required to develop a healthy sound judgment and appropriate decision making.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.romaisd.com/Page/5959>

18. **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

Nestled on the Texas-Mexico border alongside the Rio Grande River is Roma Independent School District's (ISD) Roel A. & Celia R. Saenz Elementary School (R. & C. Saenz Elementary). The campus's South Texas landscape is calm, serene, and surrounded by mesquite and cacti. The City of Roma is located in the heart of Starr County and provides a gateway into Mexico via Ciudad Miguel Aleman, Tamaulipas, through the Port of Entry. In 1971, Roma became a National Historic District.

R. & C. Saenz Elementary proudly opened its doors to the Roma-Los Saenz community on August 26, 2008, named after two former Roma I.S.D. educators and the community's strong pillars. Both individuals continuously strived to better the education of those they served, inspiring many to achieve their highest potential.

R. & C. Saenz Elementary is a predominantly Hispanic school of low socioeconomic status; therefore, a Title I School. Furthermore, according to the 2022 United States Census, Roma has a population of 11,505. The American Community Survey stated, "The average household income in Roma, Texas is \$37,434 with a poverty rate of 53.48%." However, these obstacles do not hinder the students' learning outcomes. R. & C. Saenz Elementary has a population of 549 students and grades ranging from Pre-kindergarten through Fifth Grade. As a team, R. & C. Saenz Elementary is committed to understanding, implementing, engaging, and interacting with each other to sustain progress and minimize the learning gaps. The teachers, parents, and school community work diligently to guarantee student excellence. The school uses the motto "No Excuses" to motivate the achievement of success. For example, by teaching students to create attainable goals, students will achieve success, and this accomplishment breeds even more achievement. Creating these measurable goals allows educators to challenge and encourage students to improve and become accountable for their behavior, work habits, grades, and ethics. Students who meet their personal goals and achievements throughout the year are recognized.

R. & C. Saenz Elementary challenges students to succeed socially, emotionally, physically, culturally, and academically. For instance, during October, while partaking in the annual Red Ribbon Week Activities, students are allowed to master essential concepts, processes, and skills which help develop character-building, creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. The school strives to create a strong collaborative culture with parents and the school community. This culture is crucial in assuring learning is positively impacted and cultivates an optimal educational setting promoting academic excellence for all students. The families served are eminently involved in their child's education and kept informed through the parent portal of weekly events, grades, and any updates on safety precautions that may occur. For example, amidst the pandemic and the fear of socializing and working cooperatively, R. & C. Saenz Elementary and the community prevailed by becoming creative and finding innovative approaches to facilitate interaction with students from home to school safely and efficiently. Engaging in technology programs and software made learning fun and interactive for students enabling teachers to monitor their progress closely. The school counselor created a calming corner for social and emotional growth. The counselor also instilled character-building affirmations during morning announcements to everyone. These initiatives helped create a safe and secure nurturing environment.

R. & C. Saenz Elementary also offers numerous programs and extracurricular activities that promote a gateway into more than just the prescribed academics. These programs entice students with excitement, creativity, and high levels of learning and academic excellence. Some of these programs and extracurricular activities include Makers Spacers, Robotics, Music, Art, Battle of the Books, and the University Interscholastic League (UIL). R. & C. Saenz Elementary also hosts school-wide community engagement events such as Meet the Teacher, Open House, Christmas Programs, Grandparent's Day, Career Day, and Veteran's Day programs. Furthermore, school events such as Accelerated Reader (AR), Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Read Across America, and the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) are traditionally kicked-off with huge celebrations. To foster different viewpoints such as acceptance, diversity, and the importance of empathy, R. & C. Saenz Elementary organizes spirit walks throughout the year for cancer and autism and other campaigns. Students need a balance between academics, extracurricular activities, and festivities.

R. & C. Saenz Elementary has received the following accolades reaffirming its commitment to student excellence. These include; being named a 2015 Honor Roll School, 2019 and 2022 Texas Education Agency (TEA) “A” rating with six distinctions, HEB Excellence in Education Award, the 2022 National Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I Distinguished School Award, and 2019 and 2022 Gold Ribbon School recipient.

The parents and the school community realize that children are the key to Roma's future. Together they are committed to educating well-rounded learners with the necessary tools to become lifelong learners on the road to becoming College, Career, and Military Ready (CCMR).

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

At R. & C. Saenz Elementary, the Reading and Language Arts (RLA) curriculum aligns with The Texas Pre-kindergarten Guidelines for Pre-kindergarten students and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for grades Kindergarten through Fifth. Both educational standards drive the curriculum, ensuring students learn the skills necessary to master the grade level TEKS and be provided high-quality instruction. The district-adopted basal and other supplemental materials meet every student's needs.

Differentiated instruction is essential in developing students' mastery of literacy skills; hence, instructional leaders search for varied teaching strategies to aid in attaining effective results. Since the population at R. & C. Saenz Elementary is predominantly emergent bilingual, teachers aim to increase students' foundational solid reading skills by using their first language to promote vocabulary and background knowledge through a variety of methods such as a read-aloud, videos, online storybooks, journal writing, word walls, and classroom libraries to build a strong foundation in reading. In addition, the RLA curriculum integrates Science and Social Studies. This combination of subject matter evolves a dynamic curriculum, challenging students' potential while triggering curiosity for non-fictional topics. Another way of differentiating instruction in the classroom is using the Interactive Flat Panels Displays (IFPD). The IFPDs provide learners and teachers with great interactive lessons and activities that enhance teaching by integrating various learning styles. The technology available serves to familiarize both instructors and students with online assessments. Teachers take on this multifaceted approach by utilizing these resources for engagement, efficiency, effectiveness, empowerment, and evaluation.

Small group instruction is another method followed by whole group instruction and is vital to targeting areas of strengths and weaknesses. During this time, teachers can provide intervention to students by selecting a specific skill to clarify, focus, and provide feedback on a more personal level. Most teachers and administrators underwent the Texas Reading Academy, which helps empower a learning environment promoting high academic excellence for all students.

Since the lesson extension continues at home, parental involvement is crucial in helping their children strengthen the ongoing development of literacy and excitement for literature. Parents attend workshops to acquire essential strategies that have proven beneficial in educating their children. Parents can also learn about R. & C. Saenz Elementary and how the academic programs work. Positive collaboration between teachers and parents improves student learning, social capabilities, and emotional health.

R. & C. Saenz Elementary is data-driven. Formative and summative assessments are instructional tools used on campus to monitor students' progress and performance. Teacher-created formative assessment data drives instruction and is used to make necessary adjustments, and students use this data to monitor progress toward set goals. District-created summative assessments are administered on a six-week basis. Data derived from these assessments guide instruction, identify student strengths and weaknesses, target skills needing intervention, and create accelerated instructional plans. Both types of assessments are essential in determining and creating an accurate picture of student achievement or learning gaps to ensure all students are learning at high levels daily.

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

At R. & C. Saenz Elementary, the TEKS is used to align the mathematics curriculum, and teachers use the district-adopted basal along with several other supplementary resources. A timeline is provided at the beginning of the year to serve teachers as a guide for the skills needed to ensure mastery of the Math concepts in the grade level. Based on these timelines, teachers know where students should be in the learning process. Teachers strive to teach students using different learning styles during Math instruction to make the lesson more engaging and interactive. The differentiation of instruction helps make it easier to

acquire mental math concepts and ignite logical reasoning when solving story problems.

Math is fundamental in daily life, and it refines problem-solving skills, facilitates making connections to real-world experiences, and prepares students for future careers. The math supports the rigor used in the thinking process of other core subjects and encourages learning of the content. Various opportunities provided to students help them successfully attain Math concepts through small group instruction, interactive word banks, cooperative groups, and after-school tutorials.

At R. & C. Saenz Elementary, teachers have also incorporated digital learning platforms to enable students' content mastery of mathematical concepts through differentiated instruction. Teachers give students ample opportunities to demonstrate solutions, ask questions, and justify answers while refining their math skills. For example, with the resources provided by the school, students can model solutions to story problems by using hands-on or virtual math manipulatives. Incorporating TEKS into tech games makes learning math more appealing to students. The games promote collaboration among teachers and students, friendly competitions, and a better understanding of needed skills. Students who lack academic conversation are encouraged to communicate in English using mathematical vocabulary. These platforms empower instructors to monitor students' progress closely. Technological advancement provides teachers with fundamental tools to facilitate instruction and allow students to learn optimally. Although R. & C. Saenz Elementary promotes technology integration, educators must also consider developing fine motor skills. It is necessary to continue to enhance students' dexterity on paper or dry-erase boards. Teachers have to teach students how to use a keyboard without diminishing the use of paper and pencil.

Professional development is vital to maintain an updated curriculum and research-based strategies. A supplement to the basal requires R. & C. Saenz Elementary teachers to attend Saturday training to understand the Math program better. Teachers are presented with various approaches to teaching concepts and helping prepare students for online testing. Training is provided to parents to help deepen the understanding of Math in the classroom and reinforce the skills at home.

Assessments in math are parallel to RLA, and teachers administer both formative and summative assessments to identify how students are performing. Math formative assessments are administered routinely during regular classroom instruction through teacher observations, in-class activities, and weekly tests. Summative assessments are administered at the end of each six weeks. Data from a Math summative and formative evaluation are analyzed and used to guide instruction.

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

The TEKS guides the core curriculum for Science at R. & C. Saenz Elementary. R. & C. Saenz Elementary uses the district-adopted basal with a supplemental science curriculum to assure student mastery. The administration funded a technology program to enhance science skills and provide students with practice for state assessments. Teachers are continuously researching engaging methods to present lessons. A science lab is readily available to teachers for demonstrating live experiments. Teachers can give students the experience of hands-on learning using scientific tools and following safety guidelines.

Effective instructional practices are applied at school to expand students' knowledge of Science. A method used to spark interest in Science in students is by granting them the ability to collaborate in cooperative groups. Allowing students to work cooperatively performing science experiments encourages communication, responsibility, and socio-emotional growth. Every student is held accountable for contributing to the project's result with the opportunity to plan, theorize, and conclude the outcomes. Working collectively towards a goal, solution, or plan is a technique R. & C. Saenz Elementary teachers nurture to instill an imperative work ethic. Another opportunity provided to students to excel in Science is hosting a Science Camp. Students are inspired to explore Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM), career opportunities, and learn the importance of post-secondary education. They work on intensive hands-on activities aligned with state standards while building on creativity and critical-thinking skills connected to real-world experiences. Students are also motivated to attend Saturday tutorials and improve Science concepts to target TEKS needed for content mastery.

Formative and summative assessments analyze students' strengths and weaknesses. Data is examined during a Professional Learning Community (PLC). Skills needing reteaching are prioritized, while those demonstrating mastery are spiraled into lesson plans. This process helps promote content mastery and keep students on track to becoming CCMR.

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

At R. & C. Saenz Elementary, the TEKS align the Social Studies curriculum standards set by the state. Teachers use the district-adopted basal for instruction in combination with supplemental resources and the integration with RLA. At R. & C. Saenz Elementary, teachers use various methods to make Social Studies interesting, amusing, and unforgettable. In particular, integrating technology creates interactive and engaging lessons for students to discover the wealth and knowledge of history. Teachers access the information faster, recreate life events in history, and connect it to current events. Exposing students to virtual field trips through technology-based lessons allows them to experience new concepts without leaving the campus. Another instructional technique teachers use to motivate their students' social studies learning is project-based activities. For instance, students build dioramas of neighborhoods, different types of residences, community helpers, and many more.

Another approach used to inspire learning in Social Studies is honoring veterans and their families on Veterans Day. R. & C. Saenz Elementary dedicates a special ceremony to all the courageous men and women in their honor. Students learn of the importance of civic participation and patriotism in this event, allowing them to connect the past to the present.

Connecting the school to home is crucial in helping students succeed academically; therefore, R. & C. Saenz Elementary practices cultivating robust parental involvement. R. & C. Saenz Elementary showcases and recognizes students' accomplishments on the school website. Through this, parents actively encourage students to make educated decisions and help create productive citizens.

In Social Studies, R. & C. Saenz Elementary utilizes formative and summative assessments to monitor student learning of the TEKS. Every test created contains new skills and spiraled concepts, and the PLC analyzes the data and identifies the areas of strength and those in need of improvement. By working together as a school community, more is achieved.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

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

The R. & C. Saenz Elementary Pre-kindergarten program aligns the district-created timelines to the Texas Pre-kindergarten Texas Guidelines. Students accepted into the early childhood program are emergent bilingual; therefore, teachers focus on exposing students to the English language while embracing their home language to learn. The full-day program for four-year-old students is housed on campus with Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. Since R. & C. Saenz Elementary is the student's first educational experience in a structured setting, it is essential for the child to feel safe and secure. This sense of security will support the child in developing socially and emotionally, instilling a sense of curiosity and love for learning. The preschool program is consequential to the development of literacy. Learners are taught phonological awareness through songs, rhymes, poems, and listening to stories and written texts which will later help on future state assessments. R. & C. Saenz Elementary students develop their gross and fine motor skills by engaging in movement through music, exercise, games, art, and technology. Through Science and Social Studies, students learn how to interact with others, the community, and the world using games, non-fiction stories, experiments, and discovery. Early implementation of these Texas Pre-kindergarten Guidelines facilitates student learning and development.

R. & C. Saenz Elementary administers both summative and formative assessments to evaluate student progress of the Texas Guidelines. Being a data-driven campus, the PLC meets to assess the results of the

tests to measure student growth and development. During the PLC, the data gathered is reviewed and used to modify instruction to determine what skills need reinforcement, monitored for change, and targeted as areas of struggle. The PLC collaborates and incorporates techniques to refine areas of weakness and cultivate strengths to establish the skills essential for success in their elementary years.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

R. & C. Saenz Elementary teachers implement the TEKS in the Fine Arts Curriculum to guide students in every grade level. All students participate in Music, Theater, and Art lessons.

Teachers incorporate Music into daily lessons. Music makes the lessons more engaging and relevant to students and helps develop their listening, language, and communication skills. Music lessons are offered after-school for Fourth and Fifth Grade students.

Teachers encourage role-playing in the classroom. Role-playing stimulates the students' imagination and develops social skills. Students of all grade levels are encouraged to participate in Veterans Day Presentations, Christmas programs, and Talent shows.

The campus integrates Art into the lessons to reveal the students' creative side and expand their imagination. Art also fine-tunes their motor skills when drawing or painting. The school supplements the lessons by inviting local artists to share their experiences and techniques. Students in Fourth and Fifth Grade participate in Art Smart. In this UIL event, students study the history and elements of famous paintings.

Fine Arts prepare students with instructional skills to boost self-confidence and improve communication. The benefits of the Fine Arts ultimately improve academic achievement and cognitive functions.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The Physical Education program at R. & C. Saenz Elementary follows the TEKS. It incorporates a district-wide program for all Pre-kindergarten through Fifth Grade students by integrating classroom physical activity and physical fitness throughout the school day. R. & C. Saenz Elementary uses the Fitnessgram program to collect health and fitness data for Third through Fifth Grade students. Students participate in cardiovascular activities such as a mile run, jumping jacks, lunges, squats, and single-leg jumps. On "Wellness Wednesdays," students perform these activities and are measured for physical growth.

The coach implements several methods of instruction to target health and wellness. Some of the sports programs the coach leads are flag football, basketball, soccer, track, volleyball, and cross country. All Third through Fifth Grade students are encouraged to participate. Each sports program is offered for two weeks and consists of practicing and learning the sport's rules. Students compete in friendly local district tournaments.

Teachers also educate students on the importance of staying healthy and following a balanced diet to support learning.

Students are encouraged to observe a healthy diet and make wise food choices. For instance, R. & C. Saenz Elementary invites health book authors to reinforce the importance of healthy eating habits and physical activity.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

2d. Technology/library/media

R. & C. Saenz Elementary is on a path to leading students to success by offering an assortment of innovative programs to boost knowledge, creativity, and exploration and also be able to connect to real-world scenarios. Technology is the gateway to the future. Hence, R. & C. Saenz Elementary offers programs to improve learning through STEAM, Robotics, and Library makerspaces for Kindergarten through Fifth Grade Students. These programs motivate the students to become more involved in STEAM. The programs are extracurricular, so students meet after school and on weekends.

In Robotics, students create, design, code, and program EV3 robots. Makerspaces are equally creative and innovative. The library hosts makerspaces and provides opportunities to develop handcrafted projects using a 3D printer. These innovative programs aim to impact STEAM involvement in students and prepare them for future employment.

R. & C. Saenz Elementary follows the technology application TEKS curriculum for Kindergarten-Fifth Grade students. This curriculum provides the students with the foundational skills needed to be successful in the future. Students learn computer fundamentals, multimedia, online safety, digital citizenship, keyboarding, internet usage, and communications. Students exercise their cyber skills daily in the computer lab.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

R. & C. Saenz Elementary teachers analyze the assessments to modify instruction to meet the needs of students performing below grade level. R. & C. Saenz Elementary follows the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and the Response to Intervention (RTI) when determining the differentiation of instruction and decisions for all students. Tier 1 interventions are offered to all students because acceleration is crucial in closing the achievement gap, and Tier 2 interventions target students who need additional support in a subject area. Furthermore, Tier 3 students require an individualized learning plan because students are experiencing substantial problems learning.

As a Tier 1 intervention, R. & C. Saenz Elementary offers after-school tutorials in compliance with HB4545 for every student who may need acceleration. Instructors customize lessons and activities to engage student learning, and students can work together with peers at the same level. “Spartan Time” was created as an intervention for Tier 1 acceleration within the school day. During “Spartan Time,” teachers work in a small group closely with students on foundational skills to identify, reteach, and reinforce instructional objectives and provide personalized feedback. Saturday camps are also offered through Tier 1 interventions to increase student growth in achievement. These activities support research-based practices to become academically successful.

Tier 2 instruction supports students requiring further assistance in a subject area. In this small group, teachers focus on specific foundational skills necessary to improve and implement progress monitoring checks to succeed academically. The classroom and resource teachers intervene to help close the learning gap.

In Tier 3, students in Section 504 are provided intensive individualized support according to their instructional needs. With the help of the resource teacher, the classroom teacher provides the needed intervention to close the learning gap. The outcome ensures that all students reach their full potential.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

At R. & C. Saenz Elementary, teachers address the above-grade-level students using the Texas Performance Standard Project (TPSP). By following the TPSP, teachers differentiate instruction for all students and extend learning for the gifted and talented students from Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. Educators explain and review the projects aligned to the TEKS and let students select which task will be researched and presented to their peers. Teachers realize differentiation is not solely for students who struggle but also for overachievers. Lessons prepared for this student population consist of stimulating exercises that address cognitive development allowing for exploration, creativity, inquiry, and rigor. Teachers at R. & C. Saenz Elementary also provide environments that are physically, emotionally, and socially equipped to meet the needs of the gifted and talented population. The idea is to engage learners with higher-order thinking lessons involving multiple means of presentations while simultaneously allowing for a different pace of learning.

Another method used to address the needs of gifted and talented students is multi-level grouping. Different ability groups are assigned various assignments. R. & C. Saenz Elementary teachers are flexible and gear their lessons to be student-driven. Having student-led discussions gives them the rigor and confidence to communicate academically. Educators allow learners to become responsible for their learning through curriculum acceleration. Being independent learners ensures that above-grade-level learners become confident decision-makers.

The counselor at R. & C. Saenz Elementary oversees the Leaders Organization. Here, students are encouraged to join and learn about leaders in the community, state, and country. Students vote for a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and parliament. Every year teachers devise an initiative to change or update a concern students might have during the year. This committee allows above-grade-level students to have a perspective of real-life government operations.

3c. Students with disabilities:

R. & C. Saenz Elementary has a Life Skills Unit on campus, serving Fourth and Fifth Grade students with cognitive and physical impairments. These students are provided an inclusive education according to the TEKS and as recommended in their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Other students are serviced through the certified special education teacher using the TEKS as a basis for content mastery. The dyslexia students use an evidence-based curriculum to address their individual needs and be academically successful. The pull-out program services Pre-kindergarten through Fifth Grade students in Section 504, Special Education, and Dyslexia.

During their annual Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee, parents, teachers, and administrators discuss student growth, strengths, and areas of improvement. The committee reviews the state assessment accommodations in these meetings and creates IEPs. R. & C. Saenz Elementary's Inclusion Program allows all students to interact and learn alongside each other. Inclusion and acceptance are imperative. R. & C. Saenz Elementary has an adaptive physical education coach who comes to campus daily to service the physically impaired students. The adaptive physical education coach assesses individual students and provides activities to refine their motor and communication skills. School nurses give informative presentations on student-specific issues, such as oral hygiene. Students participate in these demonstrations to ensure clarification of the concepts. The counselor has a sensory room for any student needing a calm, peaceful environment to self-adjust behaviors. The door is open all day for learners having meltdowns or needing a brain break. The classroom has multiple sensory items for students to explore. Lighted tables, sand art, Lego walls, bubbles, a trampoline, and bean bags are available, providing a soothing atmosphere. R. & C. Saenz Elementary ensures all classrooms set high expectations for learning and contribute to overall academic success.

3d. English Language Learners:

At R. & C. Saenz Elementary, the population is predominantly Emergent Bilingual (EB); within that population, some learners are Recent Immigrants. The school provides a Transitional Late Exit program for students to ensure they thoroughly acquire the English language. The school offers programs to aid in English language acquisition. Parents must complete a Home Language Survey (HLS) to qualify for the program. If the parent states a language other than English on the HLS, the student takes an English

Language Acquisition Assessment to determine program eligibility. Suppose a parent consents to their child being part of the bilingual program. In that case, they are taught by a bilingually certified teacher using the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) and the TEKS to ensure language and content mastery.

To continue to enforce English Language Acquisition, students practice these skills at the computer labs. As students progress through a computer-based program, they advance to higher-level modules applying the English language acquired. The program also exposes them to unfamiliar topics and pictures, promoting vocabulary development and comprehension. Furthermore, this program has a science section exposing students to non-fiction literature and enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the language while acquiring English proficiency. EB students continue to sharpen their reading skills while encouraging logical reasoning and mental rigor through math lessons. The questions gradually become more complex; therefore, students slowly reach their ultimate goals. EB students practice their English skills daily during the allocated time in their classrooms to exercise second language acquisition. Some EB students are pulled out and provided small group instruction in their second language to succeed academically.

The Language Proficiency Assessment Committee reviews data gathered from formative and summative assessments for the EB students to ensure the students are excelling in all core subjects.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

R. & C. Saenz Elementary staff recognize the importance of fostering an environment conducive to promoting academic, social, emotional, and physical student engagement for students to be CCMR. R. & C. Saenz Elementary motivates students to learn at high levels using various instructional approaches. For instance, during school closures, the school community kept in contact with teachers and administrators by hosting a virtual meeting every morning in which everyone actively participated. Enthusiastic faculty routinely greeted students through morning announcements followed by pledges, birthday recognitions, character-building videos, writing prompts, and current events. These virtual announcements were adopted and implemented daily, fostering a positive school climate throughout the school community.

The diverse activities throughout the year foster an encouraging and engaging learning environment for all students. For example, an author's visit promotes literacy, Career Day encourages the school community involvement, and academic in-services for students prepare them for state assessments. In addition to preparing students academically, the school promotes compassion and empathy to reduce bullying by spreading kindness throughout the school day. Mini field trips to the central office to meet the Superintendent, to the City Municipal Park to participate in the grand opening of a book trail, the traditional Easter egg hunt at the football field, and visits to the Performing Arts Center to see future Gladiators perform also nurture a positive school climate.

The school continuously promotes the love of reading, motivating students to prevail academically and creating a positive school culture. Students are encouraged to set a reading goal every six weeks. Upon achieving the target, students are eligible to get a book from the book vending machine. Students receive books to add to their libraries throughout the school year. Another sensational reading activity initiated is a Reading Club. Students in the Reading Club participate in a friendly competition with students from around the district by reading books and answering challenging questions. This competition inspires the team and the school community to work hard and consistently improve academically. The goal is to create avid readers and for them to become well-rounded learners.

These approaches spark learning by cultivating higher-level thinking skills and collaboration. They are student-driven and support academic core subject development and emotional growth, promoting a positive school climate and culture. Students who embrace these opportunities are candidates to be presented and recognized at the district's monthly board meetings.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At R. & C. Saenz Elementary, a strong partnership with families is essential in challenging the students to reach their maximum social, physical, emotional, and academic potential. R. & C. Saenz Elementary recognizes parents and community members' vital role in developing a strong collaborative culture. Setting clear expectations gives the capability to create outstanding teamwork. The parent, school, and community partnership establishes a learning environment promoting high academic excellence for all students. R. & C. Saenz Elementary prides itself on demonstrating excellent relationships with parents because it enhances the learning process.

Parents are encouraged to attend monthly parental meetings on topics that interest them. For example, R. & C. Saenz Elementary has invited speakers on nutrition, test preparation, research-based instructional strategies, crafts, and health advice. Guest speakers interact with the parents providing an opportunity to be active participants. The parents attend sessions at the Region Service Center and collaborate with parents from other districts. R. & C. Saenz Elementary publicize meetings on the parent portal, social media, flyers, and email. Parents can attend all holiday fests, award ceremonies, promotional exercises, and graduation. These provide great opportunities to interact with families while boosting student academic performance and creating positive behaviors. Parents, community members, stakeholders, and families gather on Career Day. Community members enlighten the students and teachers about their respective careers. At this time, the

community comes together to inform the students and staff about their job responsibilities and keep them laser-focused on the importance of academic excellence. This collaboration between the campus and community builds awareness of various career paths and helps students connect to the real world.

In addition, R. & C. Saenz Elementary engage families at school by inviting them to Awareness Walks. Families are vigorously involved at school, organizing and participating in the school's Awareness Walks. For example, during the Cancer walk, the group is led by students and their families fighting cancer or are in remission. Classrooms make banners demonstrating acts of kindness and support for peers and community members. This walk helps create awareness for the cause by supporting each other and instilling hope for the cure. During the Autism Walk, the school community meets at the football field and helps students with special needs. Parents lead the walks and create a cheerful ambiance for everyone. With parental and guardian involvement, the school operates to its fullest potential.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

At R. & C. Saenz Elementary, the teachers are a priority. Administrators strive to provide the most innovative and ingenious resources, equipment, technology, and staff development involving specific content area subjects and socio-emotional training. Teachers are welcomed every school year with motivational presenters to ease the start of a new year. R. & C. Saenz Elementary informs employees of academic achievements, state-mandated updates, school recognitions, and policy changes.

Teachers are valued and supported by administrators in several ways. For example, teachers receive updated research-based resources to facilitate teaching and learning for all students. Innovative teaching techniques help teachers plan and execute their lessons, making learning more captivating and intriguing for students.

Educators at R. & C. Saenz Elementary are highly fortunate to have the equipment to captivate the attention of students' learning. Therefore, teachers can simplify the planning of lessons by using advanced equipment, giving them more time to plan special activities. This state-of-the-art technology enables them to create lessons to teach complex concepts and skills. One example is the interactive flat panel. This groundbreaking computer helps students and teachers, and educators can use it in numerous ways to facilitate their lessons.

R. & C. Saenz Elementary encourages staff development sessions throughout the year. Many of these preparations address teachers' emotional needs. One specific training teachers enjoyed was determining the characteristics defining their personalities. It consisted of questions, tallying points, and identifying one's color scheme. Many teachers were surprised to discover their personality characteristics, but it was a stimulating exercise for many.

Throughout the year, teachers are recognized for their accomplishments and celebrated. One main event is Teacher Appreciation Week. Throughout the week, teachers can get together to celebrate their achievements, ideas, and future endeavors. Many students bring tokens of appreciation for their teacher. According to most educators, the most rewarding and cherished gifts are letters of thankfulness, spoken words of gratitude, and small tokens of appreciation.

Another important event for teachers is the annual Teacher of the Year nomination. Teachers select peers who excel in the classroom and participate in many extracurricular activities. Being nominated is a great privilege, but being chosen as R. & C. Saenz Elementary Teacher of the Year is an incredible honor.

Teachers always have the support of the administrators. Confidentiality is a priority at school. Teachers feel comfortable, safe, and treasured at R. & C. Saenz Elementary.

4. School Leadership:

The administrative leadership team at R. & C. Saenz Elementary consists of a principal, assistant principal, counselor, facilitator, and librarian. Each team member empowers the teachers, students, and school community to improve student learning because they are committed to a common goal, creating a positive school climate for the entire school. Together they are a valuable support system for teachers, students,

parents, and other staff members.

The principal's role is to provide a safe, nurturing environment conducive to learning for all staff and students. The administration team goes above and beyond their designated roles for the protection and security of everyone by ensuring safety procedures and school rules are followed, providing a safe and calm learning environment.

In conjunction with the assistant principal, the principal is accountable for overseeing the performance of a particular population of students and implementing student-centered discipline at school. The team nurtures students in learning to be problem solvers and take ownership of their actions. R. & C. Saenz Elementary strives to uphold a family-oriented environment and sustain safety making every classroom effective and conducive to learning.

At R. & C. Saenz Elementary, the principal and counselor encourage parental involvement in school and embody the importance of working with the community to help students flourish. Together, they promote social-emotional learning and character-building for students to overcome life's challenges and still triumph academically.

The R. & C. Saenz Elementary principal also serves as an instructional leader. During PLCs, the administrative team and teachers collaborate, build relationships, refine each other's skills, and analyze data assessments to make educational decisions to achieve the desired outcome. The principal and facilitator diligently work on ensuring every teacher has the resources needed to create classrooms beneficial to learning. The team always listens to the teachers and students and genuinely cares about helping them be successful academically.

The librarian and the principal are innovative and full of ideas. They show teachers how to integrate technology into their lessons and regularly look for resources and equipment to enhance student performance on weekly tests, benchmarks, and state assessments. Mutually they foster reading throughout the campus.

The administrative team at R. & C. Saenz Elementary is reliable and committed to helping Spartans thrive through effective communication and celebrating accomplishments. They are innovative solid leaders committed to educating an insightful college- and career-ready student who will become a deep-rooted learner.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

The student population at R. & C. Saenz Elementary is predominately Hispanic; however, EB students feel supported in culturally diverse classrooms. Teachers provide literature on various backgrounds and customs to connect students' prior experiences with new cultural learning. It helps to expose students to other cultures while learning about their own. Students' cultural backgrounds and personal narratives influence learning and empathizing with others.

Even though the community remains small, the world is increasingly diverse. The technological advancements achieved at R. & C. Saenz Elementary allow one to travel to other regions and experience different cultures. One example is using a platform that maps the world using satellites. It is already programmed to take the user on a winter holiday adventure to the North Pole. Teachers interact with the program to visualize the variety of customs and traditions. Students experience the environment and practices of other countries. Students can compare and contrast the similarities and differences between cultures. It is fascinating seeing students interact with each other creating and discussing their findings.

At R. & C. Saenz Elementary, all students are held to the exact high expectations and treated equally. The campus values every student; although most are Hispanic, multiple household traditions exist. For instance, a custom not all Mexican Americans practice is the "Day of the Dead." Teachers ask students to bring items or photos to honor their deceased relative during this presentation. They are encouraged to talk about their ancestors, and conversing about their loved ones allows everyone to understand their accomplishments.

Awareness of cultural inequalities and educating oneself on other cultures aids students' attention for deep appreciation and acceptance of everyone.

The R. & C. Saenz Elementary staff also models equity for students and accommodates different classroom learning modes. For example, in the classrooms, teachers expose students to current events through online resources to depict what is happening globally, allowing students to understand what is occurring amongst different cultures. Educating students on cultural diversity will enable them to express their points of view on the subject. The lesson extends through class discussions and student interactions, providing learning opportunities for all involved.

The R. & C. Saenz Elementary team provides a nurturing and positive multicultural education. The emergent bilingual students feel comfortable learning at school by using their prior knowledge to learn the English language and feel accepted by their peers.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

At R. & C. Saenz Elementary, the staff ensures students learn at high levels daily. To attest that this occurs, the administrative team is fully present along with teachers during PLC. The committee meets twice weekly and works in partnership to improve the teaching skills and students' academic performance. The committee is held accountable for student learning and committed to all students' academic success. During the PLCs, the staff shares common knowledge of the state standards, establishes a system to monitor learning, tracks student growth, and improves classroom practices when students need to meet their growth. Educators understand that the PLC is a collaborative team effort where all stakeholders empower each other to learn.

The state standards are scrutinized and thoughtfully implemented for all students to learn. The teachers unpack and analyze the different strands of the TEKS to plan the various lessons to embed and implement the different learning styles. Being data-driven, the PLC constantly collaborates to improve student achievement. The PLC records weekly assessment data on weekly trackers to provide evidence of student progress. PLCs evaluate the data per subject and ensure students are improving every week. The PLC looks for trends in the data and shares findings with the committee members.

For example, the stakeholders evaluate the percentage of students missing the same question and discuss how students can better understand and master the skill. Educators create the formative tests based on content mastery and spiral in TEKS previously taught. Teachers ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn. If students are showing academic growth, the committee determines how to challenge those students to excel even more. If the students need to improve, the committee shares strategies to help each child progress and meet their goals. Sharing these innovative teaching strategies makes the teacher more effective in the classroom. Building teacher capacity is a top priority because they are teaching the students. Professional development is determined based on the discussions during the PLCs. Differentiation of classroom instruction helps more students succeed academically by increasing scores on weekly tests, increasing student engagement, and making students more confident in their learning. Teachers focus on small group instruction during after-school tutorials to help ensure content mastery and improve student growth. Learning from each other and working collaboratively to gain ownership of student learning is a priority in the teaching process.