

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name IDEA Carver Academy  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 217 Robinson Place  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City San Antonio      State TX      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 78202-2751

County Hidalgo County

Telephone (210) 223-8885      Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL <https://ideapublicschools.org/our-schools/idea-carver/>      E-mail [laura.flack@ideapublicschools.org](mailto:laura.flack@ideapublicschools.org)

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

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

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Jeffrey Cottrill      E-mail [jeffrey.cottrill@ideapublicschools.org](mailto:jeffrey.cottrill@ideapublicschools.org)  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name IDEA Public Schools      Tel. (956) 377-8000

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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)      Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mr. Collin Sewell  
(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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)      Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 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

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**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):
- 66 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 28 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 41 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 135 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	0
K	59
1	92
2	97
3	110
4	123
5	93
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	574

\*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
  - 0.4 % Asian
  - 8 % Black or African American
  - 84.5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.4 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 6.6 % White
  - 0.1 % 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: 12%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	28
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	50
(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, 2021	633
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.12
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 9 %  
51 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 90 %

Total number students who qualify: 515

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 7 %  
Total number of students served 43

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>3</u> Autism	<u>11</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>6</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>31</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>3</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 4 %  
Total number of students served: 23

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 2

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.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 24:1

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	94%	99%	98%	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.

No student's potential should be limited by the color of their skin, where they live or household income. Through our unique curriculum and our college support model comprising people, programs, and culture, we are closing the opportunity gap and increasing levels of achievement by preparing students from underserved communities for success in college and citizenship. IDEA Public Schools believes that each and every child can go to college.

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

<https://ideapublicschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Non-discrimination-Policy.pdf>

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

Carver Academy is part of the IDEA Public Schools national charter school network. Students at Carver Academy apply for the current year or the next year through an online application. If there is availability, any student that applies and is eligible to attend Texas public schools may attend. Should there be no availability for the current school year, in the grade level needed by the student, they are placed on a waitlist until an opening becomes available. If there are more applications for the next school year than are available, Carver Academy utilizes a computer system to perform a lottery. Students that have siblings that already attend the school have priority and then the lottery system automatically alerts parents of their acceptance for the next school year.

## PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

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Carver Academy is the pride and joy of the San Antonio community and is a highly sought-after school for many residents. It is nestled in the heart of downtown San Antonio within walking distance to attractions such as the Tower of the Americas, the Riverwalk, and the world-famous Alamo. Carver was founded in 2001 as a small private school by National Basketball Association Hall of Fame recipient David Robinson and his wife, Valerie, to educate the children in the neighborhoods around the San Antonio Spurs basketball arena, called the Alamodome. David Robinson named the school after George Washington Carver, the famous African American inventor, to inspire the children in the surrounding area. David Robinson's love of San Antonio and serving children with educational disadvantages caught the attention of the IDEA Public Schools and in 2012, Carver Academy joined the IDEA Public Schools network as the first IDEA Public Schools campus in San Antonio.

Carver Academy serves approximately 600 students, in kindergarten through fifth grade, with over 90% of students classified as racial minorities and 90% eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Carver Academy now serves students from not only the local neighborhoods but also from around the San Antonio metropolitan area, specifically providing opportunities to families with educational disadvantages. Empowered with the IDEA public school's mission and vision of "college for all," over 350 students have graduated and matriculated to college from Carver Academy. Carver Academy prides itself on being inclusive of all students' backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities. As a very diverse campus, students feel comfortable being themselves and expressing their individuality through monthly culture projects, daily social skills lessons and joining the variety of family engagement events offered throughout the school year. Families seek out Carver Academy for its mission of "college for all." Parents and students enjoy researching colleges and, participating in college spirit days as well as the annual college float parade.

Carver Academy attributes its success to the dedication of its teachers, staff, families, and community. At IDEA, there is a shared belief that a college education is the pathway to overall achievement in life. Many different aspects of the educational program at Carver Academy help each student to and through college. Carver Academy's first commitment is to the students' social and emotional well-being and the families served. Students participate in daily social and emotional lessons that focus on building a classroom community, empathy, and celebrating the differences in others. There is a strong commitment, by all adults on campus, that the culture in the building sets the tone for every student to thrive. Students are always and staff always interact in a positive manner, and discipline is handled with restorative practices. Culture is observed and feedback is provided by school leaders to all staff members, daily and practiced frequently. Students are invited to a summer program to learn Carver Academy culture before the start of the school year to ensure they are well-versed in expectations and behavior practices. When observing classrooms, a visitor would be impressed with the uniformity of expectations of tracking the teacher during instruction, all students speaking in complete sentences, and respectful, collaborative group work. This is all to provide an exceptional experience to ensure that each student is ready for the rigorous college classroom environment.

Carver Academy academics are designed to ensure that each student is on track to meet advanced placement course requirements in middle and high school and ready for the transition to college. Monitoring academic excellence and celebrating growth for every student is how Carver Academy ensures that each of the students will not only be accepted to college but also matriculate through college to earn their degree.

None of the success at Carver would be possible without the partnership of the students and their families. Carver Academy is intentional with all celebrations, family involvement events, and communication throughout the school year. A very important goal at IDEA is 90% student persistence, meaning students re-enroll year after year. At Carver Academy, it is important that each family that joins the school continues through their high school graduation as well as to college and on to their college graduation. Student persistence, which measures students who re-enroll year-over-year, is seen as not only academic success but also a success in the social and emotional well-being of the students and families. Teachers are expected to contact families at least once each week to discuss current academic progress and behavior. Students as well as families submit multiple surveys each school year that are reviewed and evaluated by school staff to determine any gaps in communication or family expectations of the school environment. Every year,



parents report their satisfaction and commitment to Carver Academy for their students and are grateful for the support and high-quality instruction for them.

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

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

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

Carver Academy understands that a student's reading ability is directly related to their overall success leading up to and through college. The school's reading curriculum is designed for each student to not only meet the state of Texas standards, known as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), but to also apply those skills by thinking critically about the content being taught. From lesson planning to execution, teachers design instruction with "the end in mind." Examples of state assessment questions that align with each of the TEKS are embedded into submitted lesson plans and required from all grade level teachers. Teachers are tasked with designing daily lessons to explicitly teach content and practice skills aligned to those example questions provided by the Texas Education Agency. Leaders monitor the alignment of instruction through weekly lesson plan feedback for each teacher.

Reading instruction in kindergarten through second grade is a blend of explicitly taught phonemic and phonics skills through repeated review, drill, and monitoring written responses of comprehension for grade level reading passages. Learning to decode words is taught through direct instruction from highly trained teachers. Teachers in kindergarten through second grade have daily lesson rehearsals with leaders to ensure that they are correcting student reading errors immediately and having students practice adequate times to read words fluently. With a mix of lead grade level teachers and co-teachers, students are taught in smaller groups and at their different reading levels. Students are tested weekly on decoding skills, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling. Data is collected and tracked for each student and submitted to campus leaders. Students' data is then evaluated by school leaders and teachers to provide daily interventions to students based on their individual needs. Daily lessons include a variety of Science of Reading strategies such as recognizing and creating word patterns, explicitly taught and practiced vocabulary, and phonemic awareness practice. It is the expectation at Carver Academy that 90% of students are above grade level in reading at the end of each school year and this goal has been met year after year. Reading levels in kindergarten through second grade are monitored by campus-created assessments, curriculum-embedded assessments, and nationally normed assessments such as DIBELS.

In third through fifth grade the emphasis from learning to read shifts to reading to learn and this is seen in the daily lessons provided by teachers. Each day, before school begins, teachers participate in lesson rehearsals with their school leaders. In reading, teachers provide feedback to one another to ensure vertical alignment and leaders provide feedback to push for higher rigor and alignment to the TEKS. Reading comprehension is taught through strategies such as teachers modeling the strategies of successful readers through a read-aloud and monitoring comprehension through student written summaries and constructed responses to TEKS-aligned prompts. Data for monitoring student learning is collected daily with exit tickets. These daily exit tickets are sorted at the end of each learning period by the teacher and school administrators to determine any gaps in student learning and to address them with interventions as soon as possible.

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

In mathematics classes at Carver Academy, the mission of "college for all" is embedded in all instructional practices. In order to achieve 100% college acceptance for all graduates at Carver and IDEA Public Schools, all staff, teachers, and students believe in "sweating the small stuff." This means that every detail of a student's experience at school is a step towards academic success leading up to and through college. From collecting data daily through exit tickets and student seating arrangements to preselected questions and learning activities for each student, teachers are ensuring that students are meeting and exceeding grade level mathematics standards and expectations.

From lesson planning to execution, teachers at Carver Academy design instruction with "the end in mind." Embedded into submitted lesson plans, from all grade level teachers, are examples of state assessments that

align with each of the TEKS. Teachers and leaders are tasked with designing each daily lesson to explicitly teach content and practice skills aligned to those example questions provided by the state of Texas. Leaders monitor the alignment of instruction through weekly lesson plan feedback for each teacher.

During math instruction, teachers utilize both explicit instructional strategies and strategies that include the development of numeracy skills and higher order thinking skills. One of the most successful strategies used is a teaching practice referred to as “academic monitoring.” This practice includes the teacher pre-planning an academic monitoring pathway around their classroom to see students working and provide feedback to 100% of students. This ensures that they are correcting mathematical errors in real-time. This practice is used in kindergarten through fifth grade to ensure that students are meeting daily learning objectives and not falling behind by gaps that are not identified until later on. Campus administration observes and provides feedback on teachers’ monitoring pathways as well as the quality of feedback given to each student.

Math teachers, like all teachers at Carver Academy, collect daily exit tickets from each student to evaluate mastery of the day’s learning objective. After each mathematics learning block, teachers and leaders conduct a short, student work analysis meeting. The teacher reviews each student’s exit ticket to identify gaps in learning, trends, and common misconceptions. Teachers are then able to provide interventions at various times throughout the school day for each student based on exit tickets and assessment data. Before each lesson, Carver Academy math teachers participate in lesson rehearsals where they are given feedback directly from their peers and campus instructional leaders. These lesson rehearsals target common misconceptions found from exit ticket data, or from senior math teachers. Through the years, Carver Academy determined that many misconceptions can be traced back to ones created in earlier grade levels, therefore, these lesson rehearsals are imperative for vertical alignment.

Mathematics instruction at Carver Academy can be seen as a robust, engaging learning block, at all grade levels. The attention to the details of the lesson and then reviewing evidence of student learning can all be attributed to “sweating the small stuff!”

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

Like all subjects taught at Carver Academy, teachers work diligently to ensure that they are bringing joy and real-life learning experiences to each day’s lessons. Equipped with the mission of “college for all,” Carver Academy strives to ignite the curiosity and problem-solving skills all students need for a variety of future science and technology careers.

Teachers begin creating high-quality lessons with the TEKS and utilizing released test questions from the state’s science standardized assessment, given to 5th graders each year. Teachers are tasked with creating lessons that are hands-on and focused on the students thinking critically about problems that can be solved with background knowledge, critical thinking, and data analysis. Campus leaders review submitted lesson plans weekly to provide feedback to teachers regarding alignment, level of rigor as well as student engagement practices.

One of the many challenges faced at Carver Academy is that many of the students are lacking in the essential vocabulary and background knowledge needed to be successful in their science classes. To address this, science teachers use models and activities to teach vocabulary as well as the skills necessary for all students to find themselves successful in science. Science curriculum is used to support teachers’ efforts in creating science investigations that provide students with authentic experiences for students to discuss findings and draw conclusions.

Science teachers are also tasked with creating daily exit tickets aligned to the grade level TEKS. These exit tickets are analyzed during daily student work analysis meetings with the teacher and school leader to find common misconceptions or gaps in the evidence of student learning. After these meetings, teachers provide instruction to address these areas as soon as possible. As with any core content class at Carver Academy, teachers utilize academic monitoring, specific corrections, and feedback to 100% of students during their guided practice.

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

Social studies at Carver Academy aims to serve the variety of cultures and ethnic backgrounds of the students and their families. Students excel in social studies coursework due to robust literature that is integrated into the curriculum. Daily lessons provide experiences through projects to close the “opportunity gap,” in terms of some students entering Carver Academy with the need to develop content-specific vocabulary and experiences. Lessons are designed to celebrate differences and address varying social justice themes throughout the school year. Each unit of instruction includes multicultural texts and authentic project-based learning activities that deepen their understanding of themselves and their communities.

Students begin in kindergarten learning about themselves, identifying what makes them unique, and how they can help make their community stronger by being part of it. Subsequent grade levels build on these concepts and dive deeper into embracing differences by studying other cultures and their unique histories. In kindergarten through 5th grade, social studies lessons embed the principles of history, economics, geography, government, and psychology.

Students are assessed in several ways including daily exit tickets, unit assessments, and projects. Writing to learn is the most beneficial strategy utilized during social studies instruction in all grade levels. Students use their daily lessons and background knowledge and experiences to answer essential questions related to the themes being taught. Hands-on activities have been well received by students and families as they are seen as fun and joyful experiences. For example, students make models of ancient Mayan civilizations and identify the traditional clothes of historic peoples based on their geographic locations.

Social studies is seen as a beneficial curriculum to support Carver Academy’s overall mission and vision of “college for all.” Students can demonstrate a deep understanding of the content through critical thinking and reflections regarding world cultures, including their own.

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

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

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

### **2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)**

In response to parent requests for a curriculum that brings joy and additional experiences for their children, Carver Academy began offering art coursework this past school year, in 2022, to students in kindergarten through 5th grade during the elective rotation for all students. Students attend art classes every four school days for one hour.

Carver Academy art classes emphasize technique and exploring various cultures and their forms of art. To create the successful art program, the Carver Academy art teacher utilizes the kindergarten through fifth grade art TEKS and meets with secondary art teachers from across IDEA Public Schools for alignment.

Student artwork is proudly displayed throughout the campus and parents visit frequently to connect with the cultural lessons taught and take a look at their children’s products. Art is used as a therapeutic release for students, and it is seen as a class where each student can explore their creativity without the pressure of having to identify the correct answer. Students often exclaim that art is their favorite class. Furthermore, there are plans in place to infuse support into arts programming at Carver Academy for many years to come.

### **2b. Physical education/health/nutrition**

Physical education (PE) at Carver Academy is designed to support students as they become lifelong advocates for healthy bodies and minds. It is a highly rewarding and motivational part of each student's day. Like all aspects of Carver Academy, students work towards goals and benchmarks to monitor their accomplishments. Specifically in physical education, students use heartrate monitors throughout PE class to monitor their exercise and track progress towards their goals. Students strive to keep their heart rate high and maintain it for a large portion of the activities that take place in PE class. Students enjoy working together to meet class and grade level goals by obtaining exercise minutes on their heartrate monitors.

The TEKS relating to physical education are used to design lessons and activities. Students participate in engaging, collaborative games, daily warm-up exercises, stretching, and lessons regarding healthy food choices. Students enjoy the collaboration and celebrating meeting their goals with their peers and the PE coach. Teachers and students both look forward to weekly celebrations at Cougar Holler assemblies. The Cougar is the mascot of Carver Academy and emulates the agility and strength that Carver Academy students build through physical education.

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

## **2d. Technology/library/media**

During the elective time at Carver Academy, students participate in both a math-based technology course, known as "Hotspot," as well as a library class that utilizes the Accelerated Reader program.

The Accelerated Reader program is used to motivate students to read by measuring the large quantity of words they have read during the entirety of the school year. The goal of library time is to build a love of reading and create lifelong readers. At Carver Academy, it is the belief that reading to learn as well as reading for pleasure is the key to lifelong success as well as aligning with the mission of "college for all."

Hotspot time at Carver Academy focuses on typing skills and technology skills, as well as the utilization of a math program aligned with the TEKS. The Hotspot facilitator works closely with the math teachers from each grade level to assign lessons supportive of the TEKS taught in the classroom and provide students additional practice that they may need or challenging material to support advanced learners.

Both programs are designed to celebrate students' success on their individual levels as well as provide differentiated learning opportunities for each student at Carver Academy.

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

## **3. Academic Supports**

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

Many families seek to have their children attend Carver Academy because of the school's track record of success with bringing children from below-grade-level performance to meet and exceed expectations. This is through a strategic approach. Teachers receive leadership mentoring and coaching so they can identify effective strategies for students who are performing below grade level, no matter if teachers are new to the profession or have multiple years of experience. Similarly, students receive progress monitoring and daily interventions so that they can build their academic skills as they learn and grow at Carver Academy.

Carver Academy employs a reading interventionist and a math interventionist to provide specialized instruction to students that are performing below grade level. Identification of students performing below grade level begins with giving all students an assessment in reading and math before they begin attending or on their first day of instruction. This data is then collected by administrators to ensure that teachers are

aware of students that need extra support during lessons, as well as group them with Carver Academy's two interventionists, as necessary.

Careful consideration is given to students performing below grade level. Lower academic achievement in students can significantly impact their self-esteem and feelings towards school. To provide the best educational experience for every student, teachers treat all students with individual attention during classroom instruction and provide intervention strategies for all students, even above grade level performers. Carver Academy's school-wide schedule includes dedicated time to provide intervention for all students, in each grade level. To accomplish this, teachers pre-plan questions and learning activities for students identified below grade level. These questions are reflected in their lesson plans and include student names and any special programming the student participates in, such as bilingual or special education.

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

The same careful consideration given to students performing below grade level is applied to students performing above grade level. Teachers at Carver Academy are dedicated to the academic growth of all students, and they use planning, academic monitoring, data analysis, and lesson rehearsals in order to accomplish goals for each student. Students performing above grade level require special attention to maintain their interest in grade level courses and promote their unique strengths.

Several students that have mastered their grade level TEKS have benefited from being placed in courses that are in other grade levels. The current reading program allows all students in kindergarten through second grade to receive instruction at their respective reading levels. Through testing and monitoring their performance in class, students can benefit from being placed in reading groups that meet these individual needs. By creating a master schedule that provides times that are aligned across grade levels, students that have mastered grade level TEKS in mathematics are awarded the same benefit and can attend math class a grade or two above their peers.

Teachers are also challenged with creating lesson plans that include differentiation for students that are advanced and have unique needs during class. Administrators review lesson plans weekly and provide feedback directly to teachers regarding their plans for differentiation. Some strategies include specific questions or writing prompts for students of advanced abilities, project-based learning, and modeling their thinking for their peers.

Students are also challenged during their electives period through the individualized Accelerated Reader and "Hotspot" programs. These programs allow for each student to set goals and track their progress towards their goals. Teachers in these classes act as mentors and support them in their efforts. Students enjoy the challenges and celebrations of their growth toward meeting goals.

### **3c. Students with disabilities:**

Carver Academy employs two special education teachers to support classroom teachers in creating a safe, supportive learning environment for all students, inclusive of those with disabilities.

To support teachers serving students with disabilities, classroom teachers meet with administrators, special education teachers, and interventionists bi-weekly to discuss students that are not performing adequately on their IEP goals. During these meetings, plans are made to support students with disabilities through research-based strategies and determine any additional support applicable to them. In Texas, students with disabilities are required to have an annual meeting with parents to create individual educational plans, however, at Carver Academy, meetings between staff and families happen more frequently and are driven by the abundance of data that classroom and special education teachers collect. Accommodations and modifications are assigned to students based on their individual needs and they are monitored for efficacy through daily progress monitoring.

It is the expectation at Carver Academy that students with disabilities grow academically and socially at the same rate as their non-disabled peers. Teachers are tasked with including specific strategies for students with

disabilities in their lesson plans to meet their various needs. Administrators review lesson plans to ensure that accommodations and modifications are being planned for and observe classes to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are met. Student success is monitored through daily progress monitoring in the form of exit tickets. Teachers are expected to address misconceptions the next day for all students not yet reaching mastery.

The majority of students with disabilities at Carver Academy are served in the general education classroom with support from special education teachers. If students need additional instruction, such as pre-requisite skills or specialized instruction, this is conducted during intervention times when all students are being provided individualized instruction to meet their unique needs.

### **3d. English Language Learners:**

At Carver Academy, 9% of the students are in English language learner programs. The primary language spoken by students other than English is Spanish. Students are served in English as a second language programs (ESL) or through an early exit, bilingual program.

Upon entrance into Texas public schools, a home language survey is administered to determine if any language other than English is spoken in the home or with the student. Carver Academy staff meet with incoming families of Emergent Bilingual students to go over support available. Identified students are tested to measure their comprehension of the English language. The information from these tests and the information collected on the home language survey is used by campus administrators to determine if students would qualify and benefit from programs available for Emergent Bilingual students. Campus administrators, teachers and parents review Emergent Bilingual students' progress towards goals three times each year to determine what classroom accommodations would support the student. These meetings are beneficial for parents to see how their child is progressing in their English language acquisition as well as their progress on the grade level standards.

For students with a strong foundation in Spanish and little English experience, the campus utilizes a program called Espanol to English. This program is designed to provide students with explicit instruction to begin their English language acquisition. Teachers are trained on supporting English language learners through specific strategies that have been found effective through research. As one walks through classrooms, visual supports can be seen via anchor charts and, vocabulary posters as well as student-created visual aids. To support Emergent Bilingual students, Carver Academy builds students' skills to use complete sentences throughout class time. These and additional English language support strategies are monitored through instructional rounds completed by campus administrators. When additional strategies or adjustments are needed, teachers receive feedback to implement these.

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

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

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

With the mission and vision of “college for all,” it is of the utmost importance to provide a safe, joyful, and positive learning environment for all students to grow academically, socially and emotionally at Carver Academy. There are multiple strategies, monitored frequently by campus administration, to determine if a positive school culture is being achieved for each student, each day.

Carver Academy utilizes a campus-created culture rubric to measure and provide feedback to teachers regarding their practices and their impact on students’ social and emotional needs. The culture rubric expectations include expectations for teachers to connect their lessons to college and career readiness. Teachers build strategies towards fostering positive classroom environments and students participate in two daily lessons dedicated to social and emotional development. Students begin their day with a curriculum that focuses on building self-regulation skills through breathing techniques, meditation, talking it out and other kinesthetic strategies. Students also participate in daily social skills lessons that focus on being a becoming a good citizen in school as well as later on in their careers. At the end of each week students have a classroom meeting to address conflicts, practice safe routines and procedures or address any social issues that arise for the classroom of students.

Creating intrinsic motivation in students is a primary goal in promoting a safe, joyful, and positive learning environment. There is an enormous effort by all teachers and staff at Carver Academy to celebrate every student throughout the school year. A school-wide positive behavior support program is utilized to provide students recognition for their good behavior. Students receive points that can tally toward being able to participate in experiences like visits from a local petting zoo, sidewalk chalk time, and collaborative games. In addition, Carver Academy staff, students, and their parents engage in college and career readiness with events such as, a “Fiesta College Float Parade” and a day to “dress like your future career.”

Restorative practices are utilized to ensure that mistakes are handled with positivity and grace as students are learning and growing. Families are involved every step of the way when students need additional support. Carver Academy uses behavior management techniques like peer mentors, reverse suspensions, restorative conversations with teachers and peers, and community service. Through multiple techniques, students have opportunities to engage in the Carver Academy community and learn and grow.

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

Carver Academy is advantageously located in the heart of historical San Antonio and shares its property with the famous Carver Arts and Cultural Community Center. Given these surroundings, providing family and community engagement is of the utmost importance to the stakeholders of the school. Carver Academy provides at least one family and community event each month to include parents, caregivers and community members. Many of these events are done through a partnership with the Carver Arts and Cultural Community Center. The two entities host performing arts performances, family carnivals, and art shows to display the works of students and local artists.

In response to the interest of the local community, there is a strong emphasis on celebrating the various cultures of the students and families served by Carver Academy. For example, each year Hispanic Heritage and Black History months are celebrated by having students create family projects to research and present on famous leaders from a variety of backgrounds. These projects are showcased at public events, such as the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Walk in San Antonio and displayed at events at the Carver Community Center. Events such as these are well attended by families and the community. Students are always proud to show off their projects as they learn about their own cultures and those of their fellow students.

Family satisfaction regarding safety, education and campus culture is measured and monitored through annual surveys distributed in the spring semester to each family and student at Carver Academy. Teachers and staff strive for excellence in all areas measured by the survey and particularly in terms of parent



satisfaction with communication from the school. Each year, campus administrators review these survey results and utilize suggestions from stakeholders to create a calendar of events for the entire school year to increase family and community involvement year after year.

In addition to school-wide events and parent engagement, Carver Academy hosts a monthly school improvement committee meeting. This committee of dedicated teachers, staff members, parents, guardians, and community members reviews school data and supports the creation of the campus improvement plan. Each month, the committee covers updates regarding areas such as safety, academics, parental involvement events and school satisfaction surveys. Committee members are empowered to support the school by working alongside campus educators to make plans to improve the education for all students.

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

Carver Academy utilizes a district-created resource to measure the various areas that make teachers effective educators. This resource, arranged in a rubric to promote growth for all teachers is referred to as the “Guideposts for Excellent Teaching” or GET rubric. Administrators use this tool to measure and provide feedback to teachers on culture, curriculum content, levels of student thinking, using student data, and professionalism.

Each teacher has a grade level leader to support them in their efforts for growth as well as someone to provide peer feedback on their professional performance. Grade level leaders meet twice per month with campus administrators to discuss teacher needs as well as to receive feedback regarding professionalism and the influence that teachers have on the overall culture of the school. Consistent communication is key to creating a professional campus culture.

Each week, campus administrators collect data through cultural and instructional observations. This data is then reviewed, and professional development is created to address areas of need across the campus. Teachers participate in campus professional development, weekly, to address identified gaps, quickly and efficiently. To support administrator growth, teachers provide feedback at the end of each professional development session regarding relevance and effectiveness.

Efforts to support creating a professional campus culture can also be seen in the intentional calendaring by all campus staff. Campus administrators ensure that each week 80% of their time is devoted to classroom observations and feedback for teachers. Teachers know and expect this feedback as they are also measured by how quickly they turn feedback around and what percentage of feedback they implement in their classroom. Teachers also participate in daily lesson rehearsals with campus administrators to ensure that their lessons are the most effective from the first lesson they teach of the day to the last lesson they teach for the day.

Each week teachers also check-ins with their administrative manager to review their progress towards their goals and provide feedback from them. These weekly check-ins are beneficial to the commitment of communication and building relationships with campus administrators to promote professionalism in all staff.

To support the need for a campus culture of professionalism it is also important to celebrate teachers and staff for their efforts. Each week teachers and staff are celebrated at a schoolwide assembly for actions that exemplify the core values of IDEA Public Schools and Carver Academy.

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

Carver Academy is led by one campus principal, two assistant principals of instruction, and one assistant principal of operations. The campus leadership team is committed to the success of all students and is very intentional in every action that they take towards the goal of “college for all.” School administrative team practices are led by an IDEA Public Schools-created measurement tool for administrators called SLLs (School Leadership Levers). There are multiple practices that the campus leadership team is dedicated to conducting on a regular basis to ensure the success of everyone at Carver Academy.

Each day at Carver, campus administrators begin with a “huddle” which consists of reviewing each member's goals for the day as well as any calendar commitments that the team needs to be made aware. This huddle sets the tone for the day. Each lead team member is responsible for groups of teachers and students and communication with the team can get overlooked if not intentionally conducted. The campus lead team is dedicated to keeping consistent communication throughout the day to ensure alignment and quick action to any problems that arise. The campus principal observes assistant principals, in action, daily, and provides feedback to promote leadership growth and alignment with the mission and vision set forth by the campus principal.

Carver Academy’s campus administrative team reviews goals each week during a weekly tactical meeting. The agenda for the weekly tactical includes time dedicated to each of the campus wide goals. Data is brought by each lead team member to ensure that areas of need are getting the most time and attention and areas in need of celebration are recognized. This weekly meeting is crucial to the school's overall success and creates a culture of collaboration among school leaders.

One of the most beneficial practices that the school leadership team participates in is weekly observation rounds. These classroom observations are led by the campus principal, and they are intended to collect data and provide feedback to campus leaders as they are leading teachers to attain elevated levels of academic achievement. These rounds begin in classrooms of teachers needing the most support and the “look-fors” are set by the campus administrator that is managing that teacher. Campus leaders utilize the GET rubric to measure and provide specific action steps to teachers. These observation rounds help each campus leader grow in their role and build their capacity for supporting campus teachers.

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

The mission and vision of Carver Academy is “college for all” and indicates that each child, no matter their background, deserves a high-quality education that prepares them for college. The primary responsibility for each educator at Carver Academy is to provide the best educational opportunities to each student, regardless of their race, ethnicity or their family’s income level. Culturally responsive teaching is achieved through training, setting high expectations for all students, and building relationships with students and their families.

Each year, Carver Academy staff participate in a district-created course called Leadership Towards Equity, created by the district’s Vice President of Equity. This course is designed to not only be reflective of current practices regarding students, but also to embrace the various cultures of the teachers and staff that serve those students. Learners in these courses begin with identifying their own cultures, values, and traditions and how those may create biases in the work of serving students. The course intends to help educators reflect on current school practices that may be biased towards certain groups of students or teachers and make changes to create more inclusive and safer learning and working environments. Carver Academy serves such a wide range of cultures and ethnicities, that it is extremely important for staff to learn about the various needs of the students and their families and respect them as they are creating school traditions, procedures and are planning for instruction.

Setting high expectations for all students at Carver Academy is done through lesson planning, lesson execution, and progress monitoring through daily data tracking. Teachers are responsible for closing gaps by providing individualized interventions to students. On a daily basis, teachers and administrators review data collected from each student from exit tickets to determine interventions needed.

The greatest strategy for providing culturally responsive teaching is the relationships between students, families and their teachers. Each school day begins with a daily social skills lesson that promotes inclusivity and celebrates the differences of each member of the school community. Included in the curriculum are lessons for students to complete, at home, with their families. These lessons provide insightful information to school staff such as holidays their students celebrate, religious beliefs as well as family dynamics. These lessons include opportunities for students, teachers and families to work together to accomplish goals and talk about current issues that may be negatively impacting a student’s access to their education.



## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE**

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Carver Academy can attribute its success to its high-quality and dedicated teachers and staff that serve every student in the school. To train and retain high-achieving teachers, time and effort is given by campus administrators to provide high-quality feedback to teachers through weekly observation rounds conducted by the campus principal and two assistant principals of instruction. Campus instructional rounds are seen as the greatest strategy utilized to achieve academic excellence in all students at Carver Academy.

These rounds begin with pre-work completed by campus assistant principals which includes data from daily exit tickets and any available assessment data. Campus administrators use this data to enter classrooms with an eye for improvement. While in the classroom, campus administrators look for the teacher's actions and how they directly affect student learning as it relates to their overall academic success. Campus administrators use a teacher assessment tool to diagnose the highest leverage teacher action that will directly impact student learning. Campus administrators view the lesson in ten-to-fifteen-minute intervals collecting low and high inference data. After the classroom observation, campus leaders reflect on the data collected and engage in conversations to identify the highest leverage action step to be taken by the teacher. These action steps are then documented and followed up through lesson rehearsals or observation feedback meetings held with each teacher's respective manager.

These beneficial rounds are also utilized to ensure that students in special populations are authentically engaged, challenged, and receive needed instructional attention from their teachers. Teachers are tasked with creating specific differentiated learning opportunities for students performing below grade level and those identified in special populations and placing them in their lesson plans. Campus leaders also participate in observation rounds to review lesson plans and then conduct classroom observations to collect data on the implementation of those lesson plans. Data is also collected on teachers' classroom management, culture, and teaching practices so that timely and effective professional development can take place.

Classroom observation rounds are the first thing placed on each administrator's calendar and the expectation of participation goes without being said due to the benefits of these rounds of student achievement. These instructional rounds are used to provide feedback and coaching to campus staff and has proved the greatest influence on the overall success of the students at Carver Academy. As a result, Carver Academy's 600 students are eager to learn, receive instruction in a joyful environment, and have the tools they need to flourish.