

Valdez Innovation School Proposal

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Attachment A: WAIVERS & REPLACEMENT POLICIES

This application is to reapprove innovation status for Escuela Valdez.

Application Planning and Development Committee Members:

Administrators: Peter Sherman, Deb Brennan

Teachers: Jennifer Anderson-Ehrlich, Karyna Johnson, Rachael Pinick, Katie Shively, Maureen Traylor,
Grant Van Pelt

Parents: Jill Darlington, Ivon Gutierrez

Community Member: Marco Nunez

Renewal Committee Members:

Administrators: Jessica Buckley, Gwendolyn Frank

Teachers: Erin Bleichfeld, Emily Johns-O’Leary, Katie Shively, Grant Van Pelt, Anna Jankowski, Matthew
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Parents: Vicky Thrasher, Roberta Fiz, Selena Silva

1. VALDEZ MISSION, VISION, GOALS, AND BELIEF STATEMENTS

Vision Statement: *The Power of Together*

Mission Statement: Valdez Elementary School commits to equity through Dual Language Immersion and culturally relevant, individualized education for all learners.

Dual Language Immersion: closing the achievement gap and increasing equity by creating authentic, research-based education for all students, in order that they experience both sociolinguistic and academic success in two languages together.

Commitment to Community and Culture: creating a community together that works towards an equitable society by valuing the culture and identities of all community members.

High Expectations for Academic Success: providing authentic, personalized learning through intentional, collaborative, data-driven planning to create meaningful and lasting academic success.

- A. GOALS** We aim to prepare each and every Valdez student to graduate having achieved the grade level academic performance standards necessary to be competitive and successful students in any secondary school and to attend college. Valdez students in our dual-language program will become bilingual and bi-literate in English and Spanish, enhancing their communication and cultural understanding in order to be successful and contributing members of a diverse society. We will increase academic achievement across all academic areas as measured by a variety of assessment tools for all students. Our students' academic growth will be documented through Colorado state reports, the District School Performance Framework, and other school-generated data reports. Our collective, unwavering commitment is that all

staff members are highly qualified, caring, compassionate, and dedicated to excellence. We understand that in order to provide a quality education, we must align the efforts of the people who work at our school with those of our families.

As an innovation school, Valdez exercises additional and appropriate freedom to control our educational program, budget, staff, time and incentives to ensure that we remain one of the premier schools in Northwest Denver, while serving as a model of successful educational reform for schools across the country.

- B. **BELIEF STATEMENTS** – The following are belief statements that guide our work at Valdez. Not all staff will share each belief, but they will serve to drive and provoke our thinking, learning, and practice. Collective beliefs may change over time; however it is important that we deepen our habits of critical thinking and reflection about our practice and what is effective for our students. We commit to developing and sustaining a school culture where we review our beliefs and practices on a regular basis.

Academic Model

- We believe that high expectations and standards of performance by staff and family members will push students to work harder, learn more, and demonstrate understanding.
- We believe that a dual-language model offers all students a more-rigorous and challenging academic environment and that it will lead to increased academic success for all students.
- We believe that all students should become bilingual and bi-literate in order to enhance their understanding of the world and to be able to express themselves in multiple cultural contexts.
- We believe that students should be immersed in language-rich environments in order to acquire oral and text-based literacy skills.
- We believe that all students should learn to speak, read, and write in English and Spanish, first in their native or dominant language with second language literacy following quickly.
- We believe that a dual-language model is the best way for native Spanish speakers to achieve academic proficiency, thereby closing the achievement gap. In addition, we believe that a dual-language model honors and promotes the language, culture, and self-worth of our Spanish-speaking students and families.
- We believe that a dual-language model is the best way for native English speakers to acquire Spanish. We believe that being bilingual and bi-literate is an invaluable asset to our students and will open them to a multitude of enhanced academic, cultural, and economic opportunities.
- We believe that through our dual-language model, we will increase our families' engagement in our school and their children's education.
- We believe that the Montessori philosophy provides a developmentally appropriate, individually differentiated educational experience for 3-6 year olds and gives them the best start possible for success in school.

- We believe that skills and knowledge learned in one language transfer to the other language.
- We believe in balanced literacy instruction. The focus is on communicating or gaining meaning in tasks that are authentic, real reading and writing. Skills that are needed to do that better, such as phonics or grammar, are taught explicitly and applied to the authentic work.
- We believe in an emphasis on conceptual understanding in mathematics, while building on mastery of basic skills. We believe in giving students rich, hands-on opportunities to practice mathematical problem solving.
- We believe in ongoing assessment *FOR* learning (Stiggins, 2005): assessment that will inform our instruction. Therefore, whenever possible, we use assessments that have students complete an authentic task, relate their performance to a standard, assess what they can do at their current level, and give results that inform our next teaching.
- We believe in teaching to each student's Zone of Proximal Development through Gradual Release of Responsibility and scaffolding.

Staff

- We believe that all staff must be highly qualified, skilled, caring, and compassionate.
- We believe that all staff must be dedicated and committed to excellence for all students.
- We believe that creating a culture of trust is essential.
- We believe that common learning agreements nurture a professional learning community.
- We believe that collaboration among staff is imperative.
- We believe that relevant and robust professional development is necessary for on-going improvement and for the professional engagement of our staff.
- We believe in shared and distributed leadership so as to challenge and engage all staff.
- We believe that bilingual staff, whenever possible, helps us to meet our students' and families' needs in both languages.

Student Goals

- We believe that setting challenging academic and language goals for ALL students is important.
- We believe that multiple, diverse learning opportunities (exhibitions, demonstrations, and integrated-projects) provide students with mechanisms to attain and demonstrate their growth and proficiency of academic and language goals.
- We believe that academic and language goals must be collaboratively developed and monitored by students, family members, and teachers.
- We believe that on-going, relevant, specific, and timely feedback is critical.

Positive School Culture

- We believe that an intentional, positive school culture is crucial to our success.
- We believe that relationships must be built and cultivated among and between all community members.
- We believe that all members of the school community must be invested in the school-wide culture.

- We believe student code of conduct must reflect life-long, enduring character attributes and be consistently upheld.
- We believe in setting rituals, routines, traditions, and celebrations that represent and enforce our values.
- We believe explicit school-wide behavior expectations must be equitable, consistent, and fair.
- We believe that reinforcing positive behaviors helps to discourage inappropriate behavior.
- We believe that every student must accept responsibility for their learning, actions, and their consequences.
- We believe that to discipline students is to empower students to take ownership of their choices and consequences.
- We believe the culture and diversity of each and all individuals must be honored.

Family and Community Partnerships

- We believe that family and community members must be active partners in supporting student academic and behavioral success.
- We believe that parents are students' first and life-long teachers.
- We believe that strategic and varied family and community involvement in student learning and school-life is significant.
- We believe we must actively promote connections between the two language groups and cultures of our parents.
- We believe utilizing the strengths of our families to promote the school's goals is essential through volunteering in the classroom, on committees, and more.
- We believe that community service, outreach, and connections are powerful tools for extending student learning.
- We believe that networking with community agencies to provide support to the whole child is important.

Learning Environment

- We believe in a safe, secure, structured learning environment.
- We believe that our learning environment and facility must inspire creativity, inquiry, independence, imagination, language acquisition, and critical thinking.
- We believe that our learning environment and facility must foster healthy habits through daily access to natural light, fresh air, appropriate outdoor space, and ample opportunities to engage with other people.
- We believe that our facility must be welcoming, aesthetically beautiful, and representational of our academic program.
- We believe that the school must be clean and sanitary.

2. INNOVATIONS

A. Programming:

i. **Montessori Model:**

Innovation status allows us to continue our **Montessori program** and to continue the necessary adjustments to curricula, instruction, and assessment that are already in place to ensure a smooth transition from a Montessori to a non-Montessori environment.

The Montessori model serves our ECE/Kindergarten students. These classrooms are multi-age, serving students ages three through six in ECE and kindergarten. Our program for three year olds is half-day in the morning for three hours. Four year olds and Kindergarten students stay all day. The Montessori philosophy on education is based on three key elements: the child, the prepared environment and the adult.

The Montessori philosophy promotes student independence and values each child as the center of his/her learning. We maintain a balance of allowing students independence and choice in their learning while encouraging them towards meeting standards.

The prepared environment consists of five main areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, Language and Sciences. The environment is designed to urge the children to be independent and incorporate movement into their learning. The materials in each area are neatly organized on shelves moving from left to right, top to bottom from easiest to most difficult. The children are free to choose developmentally appropriate hands-on works which match their abilities and interests during the Montessori work block.

The role of a Montessori teacher is to connect the children to the materials and to gradually remove his/her self from the children's learning. The teacher and paraprofessionals facilitate each child's learning by individually delivering instruction, making it highly differentiated, and continually recording careful observations of the students' progress. Accurate observation of students and their progress is what directs the teacher to give specific lessons that are interesting and challenging. Each ECE/K teacher must be or become certified from an accredited Montessori training center.

We support students in the transition from the ECE/K Montessori program into the non-Montessori first through fifth grade program, in the following ways:

- Consistency through the dual-language model
- Thematic curricular units
- Particular instructional strategies across grade levels
- Balancing student choice and direction from teachers
- Continuation of assessment tools and practices
- A more traditional afternoon program which includes reader's workshop with guided reading, writer's workshop and math whole group, small group, and station time

ii. Dual Language Immersion Programming

Innovation status allows us to continue our **dual-language model**, which ensures all students become bi-literate and bilingual, while becoming proficient in academic content. Our dual-language model requires us to have flexibility in curricula, instructional strategies, assessments, and operational variables.

a. Philosophy and Structure of Dual Language Immersion: It is the philosophy of Escuela Valdez that teaching students in two languages, of which half the demographic is a native speaker of each, will allow **all** students to become bilingual, bi-literate, and proficient in academic content. Inherent in our philosophy is the belief that allowing students of each language background to take turns being the language model will shift the paradigms of power and privilege in our society. This offers access to cultural capital to all students who may not have had that access before entering our program.

Our model uses a partial 50/50 model, with first-language literacy in the primary grades. This means that students enter Escuela Valdez learning to read and write in their home language, to provide access to linguistic transfer in accordance with current thinking on second language acquisition. At the same time, students are engaged in learning their second language through oral language support, targeted “L2” blocks of meaningful language instruction, and academic content transfer. This means that each student spends a pre-determined amount of their day immersed in an English environment and immersed in a Spanish environment. We achieve this through staffing each grade level with one English-speaking teacher and one Spanish-speaking teacher in the early grades. Students move between the two language environments each day both in linguistically homogeneous and heterogeneous peer groups. In ECE/K, 1st, and most of 2nd grade, students spend about 60% of each day in their native language environment, and about 40% of each day in their second language environment. By third grade and through fifth grade, students will receive 50% of their day in each language. We differentiate for each student by fine-tuning this language allocation schedule to meet each student’s academic and linguistic needs. We manage our enrollment for a balance of close to 50% native Spanish speakers and about 50% native English speakers, so that all students can experience being a language model during specific language blocks, and so that all students have experience using their L2 with native target-language speakers.

b. Oral Language Development:

Innovation status allows teachers the flexibility to pace, condense, or extend lessons to allow for the time needed and depth achieved with this rigorous level of academic talk.

Oral language is integrated into all content areas every day. Research clearly shows that receptivity to and expression of oral language occurs in the first stages of language acquisition. Oral language support and expression is therefore an essential component in a dual-language model. We scaffold and expect students to learn oral language skills in all domains and across all linguistic standards: speaking and listening, reading and writing; social language and academic content areas. Speaking about academic content allows processing of the learning

and deepens students' understanding and ownership of the content. Teachers strategically create a learning community so that all students feel supported in speaking, through morning meeting and other strategies. Teachers provide multiple opportunities for students to talk about content. They ask questions and frame responses that provide differentiated opportunities to respond, based on the students' current language and content abilities. Students enjoy the opportunity to learn through talking and take responsibility to talk about the objective using the articulated communication skills.

c. WiDA and language assessment

In order to assess the success of our goal to create bilingual and bi-literate students, we use a variety of assessments. To assess the English development of our students, we use the WiDA ACCESS for ELLs model (in accordance with DPS and CDE requirements). We also document progress of literacy skills through the DRA/EDL and assess the parallel language acquisition of our students (to assure students are reading and writing at a similar level, across their languages), and will shift our reading and writing assessments to match CDE READ Plan requirements in the next few years. Innovation status allows us to use the assessments that meet requirements while best serving our needs for data driven instruction. Currently Spanish levels are assessed using the IPT tool at the end of the year, and we will continue to pursue the WiDA ACCESS for Spanish Assessment as it is rolled out.

iii. **Specials Classes—arts, technology, and music:**

Innovation status allows us to supplement our program with enriching activities in: fine arts, technology, music, and other disciplines. We are able to better leverage resources and partnerships to provide enriching experiences for our students.

All K-5 Valdez students participate in Physical Education and Music or Art on a rotating daily basis. All of the specials are standards-based and offer hands-on opportunities for students to extend their core content knowledge. We continue to connect with community partners across our specials classes. Valdez maintains a staffed library and computer lab, as well as laptop or Chromebook carts for each grade level 2nd -5th.

Our goal for technology use is to build authentic 21st century skills for students and staff that are beneficial for life skills beyond school. Technology is not taught in isolation; rather focuses on the integration of technology into the core curriculum standards. Technology is accessible both in the classroom and lab settings. The use of technology for authentic tasks enables students to be engaged in learning, use higher-order thinking skills, problem-solve, and retrieve current information. Teachers infuse lessons with effective use of technology, while continuing to pursue professional development that will enrich their practice.

B. Standards-Based Curriculum

i. Backwards Design:

Escuela Valdez uses rigorous content and language-based curricula to prepare students for academic and civic success. We believe that all students can succeed with data-driven and standards-based instruction. To this end, we use a backwards-design model and the Common Core State Standards to plan our instruction.

a. Literacy

Valdez teachers need the flexibility to compact, extend, adjust, and deviate from the District defined curriculum to meet student needs through backwards design. To be truly data driven, we must be able to respond to the student needs and honor that data driven decisions (time and intensity variables) may supersede fidelity to the District pacing and planning.

In line with our dual-language program, there is a strong focus on oral language development, as a precursor to text-based literacy and continued throughout the grades. All students receive initial literacy instruction in their first language, since it builds from their first oral language. For most students, formal second language literacy begins in 1st grade during Second Language time and "50/50" literacy (literacy in 50% English and 50% Spanish) begins at the end of 1st grade or beginning of 2nd grade.

The daily K-2 literacy block consists of a reading workshop, writing workshop, and a skills block. Each block utilizes a workshop format composed of whole-group instruction through mini-lessons; small-group guided reading practice; independent work including student choice; and peer collaboration (such as buddy reading and literature circles). As of 2015, in 3-5, there is about an hour using the Expeditionary Learning curriculum, which integrates both reading and writing around a theme. There is about an hour for independent reading, Guided Reading and other small group instruction, and other writing instruction and practice.

The five components of literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency) are integrated throughout instruction with individual instruction as needed. The focus is on communicating or gaining meaning in tasks that are authentic, and steeped in real reading and writing. Skills that are needed, such as phonics or grammar, are taught explicitly and applied to the authentic work. Each portion of the literacy block contains rituals and routines, artifacts, and best practice strategies. At the end of each unit there occur opportunities to celebrate and share students' products.

For reading, consistent understandings and practices were developed in 1st-5th grade in 2009-10 through "Core Matters" District PD - including stations and independent reading, Guided Reading, developmental stages of reading, differences between one level and the next in leveled books, and charts with visuals created with students in whole group instruction that later support independent work. These practices continue in K-5, with some variations based on grade level.

b. Mathematics

Valdez teachers need the flexibility to compact, pace, extend, adjust, and deviate from District-mandated curricula based on student needs. To be truly data driven, we must be able to respond to the student needs and honor that data driven decisions may supersede fidelity to the District core curriculum. This requires using curricula that matches our values around student-centered learning.

Our standards-based mathematics instruction is rigorous and balanced. Our curriculum emphasizes conceptual understanding, while building on mastery of basic skills. A rich hands-on, problem-solving approach is implemented with all mathematics standards. In ECE/Kindergarten, students use Montessori methods along with a balanced, standards-based workshop approach including cognitively guided resources for small-group work, independent work, and whole-group mini-lessons. These resources are also used to design interview-style assessments which give teachers a clear picture of student academic assets and next steps. In grades 1st-5th, teachers use resources with a strong cognitively-guided approach including the Investigations curriculum. Teachers use the balanced workshop-model, backwards planned from the Common Core State Standards in all grades.

c. Science and Social Studies

Innovation status allows us to adapt and supplement our Social Studies and Science curricula in order to plan and implement engaging, project-based and thematic curricular units whenever possible. If at some point in the future Valdez determines that a different Social Studies or Science curricula are needed to best meet the needs of our students, we will pursue this with the district pursuant to the established processes and procedures for requesting approval of non-district adopted curricula.

Science is taught and incorporated into literacy instruction through our thematic units, including Expeditionary Learning units as appropriate. An inquiry-based search for knowledge, understanding, and application of the standards remains at the heart of our Science curriculum. Authentic tasks include scientific thinking, scientific tools and technologies, and communication. The three standards of earth, life, and physical science are explored from ECE to 5th grade with a constructivist, hands-on approach. Students pose questions derived from everyday experiences and discover the answers to their questions. Each year the first through fifth grade students explore three Tracks units in physical, earth, life, and/or an application unit.

Social studies is taught and incorporated into literacy instruction through our thematic units, including the Expeditionary Learning units where applicable. Social studies activities are comprised of problem-solving and authentic tasks that are relevant to learners, such that the content make strong connections to the student’s world, be representative of multiple and multi-cultural perspectives, and contain cultural competency elements. Social studies exploration enables students to talk openly about culture, celebrate diversity, and establish their own cultural competency, essential elements of our dual language model.

ii. Ongoing Assessment and Data Cycles

With innovation status the school leadership team has the liberty to create assessment tools and use the resulting data to positively impact student learning. Innovation allows for flexibility using our time to create a year-long assessment plan. An essential assessment unique to our dual language program is ongoing second language assessment that checks for mastery of concepts as well as the students' progression of oral language. If at any point in the future, Valdez determines that there is a need to create or select a formal assessment tool, we will work collaboratively with the Research and Assessment Department in that process as appropriate.

We have taken great strides with collecting and using progress monitoring data in reading, writing, and math in the last two years. Still, our assessment plan is a key next step to raise student achievement. Assessments and performance criteria are defined through backwards lesson design in reading, writing, math, language, science and social studies. We use data cycles and data driven instruction to plan and adjust instruction as such: scoring work together; identifying teacher and student work exemplars, identifying student strengths and next-steps as a data team, planning for ongoing re-teaching and planning subsequent assessments (exit tickets, unit/theme assessments, portfolio assessments, bodies of evidence, etc.).

Other data is also used including results of CMAS, ongoing progress monitoring (AIMS web, conferences, notes from small-group instruction, checklists, etc.), and other formal and informal teacher observations. Data is a common link for our school plan, instructional content areas, interventions, and focused classroom instruction.

We will continue to follow the following assessment matrix:

<i>Subject Area</i>	<i>Assessment Tool</i>	<i>Grade Levels</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Oral Language	IPT (Spanish) ACCESS (English)	ECE-3 rd K-5 th	Spring
Reading Skills	DRA2 word analysis AIMS	K-5 th	As needed
Reading Comprehension	DRA2 (English) EDL2 (Spanish)	K-5 th	Fall and spring for all Winter as needed
Reading Interventions	AIMS	K-5 th	As needed

	DIBELS		
Writing	School-developed writing rubric ANET interim assessments	K-5 th	At least once per year
Mathematics	Student-centered math interviews Teacher created pre/post and unit assessments ANET interim assessments	K 1 st -5 th	Per unit Per unit 3 times a year
Mathematics interventions	Navigator and ORIGO screening tools Student-centered interviews	1 st -5 th	As needed
Science and Social Studies	Teacher-generated assessments per thematic unit	K-5 th	Per unit
Reading, Writing, Math, Science	CMAS/PARCC	3 rd -5 th	Per DPS schedule

We utilize student assessment data in order to establish student academic goals, determine differentiated instruction, groupings, and early interventions. Academic goals are based on grade level expectations as identified in the standards and progress indicators. Teachers use formal and informal assessment to track student achievement and attainment of the goals.

a. DPS Opt-In

As a member of DPS, we appreciate the district’s creation of flexible, opt-in policies around testing. We will opt-in to those options that fit our values and philosophy best. As an innovation school, we will pursue other options for curriculum and assessment as we see a need or missing option from the District’s guidelines.

b. ANET and READ ACT

Currently we have selected to use ANET for our interims, as they are a more rigorous assessment battery than the previous interims. Should we decide that ANET is no longer serving our teachers’ needs for accurate assessments to best plan instruction, we will pursue other options.

Similarly, we are aware that DRA and EDL will not be CDE approved assessments for the state READ Plans in the near future. We will consider opting-in to district and CDE approved READ Plan assessments but will maintain the option to pursue other assessments that better meet our teachers’ and students’ needs in the future.

C. Differentiation

Differentiating for students' needs and learning styles is important in any school. It is essential in our dual-language program since students enter with highly varied background knowledge and are learning content in two languages. Our teachers are focused on differentiation through backwards design and rigorous instruction. Teachers differentiate for students above, at, and below grade level through varying content, pacing and expected outcomes. We further differentiate through varying instructional grouping; planning activities, projects, and field trips; fine-tuning our assessment tools; and requiring students to demonstrate their learning in multiple modalities.

i. Intervention and Multi-Tiered Student Support (MTSS)

Students who are not meeting grade level standards in math and/or literacy based on CMAS/PARCC, interim, DRA and/or EDL and other assessments receive multi-tiered support. The first tier is a "double dose" in the classroom: more small group and/or individual targeted instruction with the teacher. The second tier is math and/or literacy intervention with a specialist. Students who are the furthest from grade level receive the most support in terms of increased time and/or smaller group size. We aim to best utilize the resource of these specialists, and typically not all students that are below but close to grade level receive services. Specialists may pull-out of the classroom or push-in to the classroom. If the specialist pulls out, they will ensure that the student is not missing whole group or small group instruction in literacy or math. With additional scheduling flexibility using our Innovation status, before and/or after school interventions can also be provided. Weekly progress monitoring data will be collected on all students in intervention groups. The groupings and time allocations are usually reviewed every 6 weeks, at a minimum of two times per year.

Students who are not showing enough progress after targeted classroom and specialist intervention will be discussed in a MTSS meeting. The team solidifies specific measurable goals in focus areas and discuss strategies and how progress will be monitored— including weekly, pre-, and post- 6 week assessments. The team includes a special education teacher or the school psychologist to utilize their expertise. The team convenes every 6 weeks until the student is making adequate progress. After three 6-week cycles a student may be referred for special education testing.

a. Literacy interventions in English and Spanish:

- *Descubriendo la Lectura* (DLL) and Reading Recovery (RR) – one-on-one with the lowest 1st grade readers

- Leveled Literacy Interventions (LLI) or ILe (Spanish) – small-group reading
- Guided Reading Plus- small group reading
- Comprehension Focus Groups- small group reading
- Reading Partners- 1 on 1 with a trained community volunteer, typically for students just below grade level
- Six-minute solutions- often as assigned during MTSS meeting before special ed consideration

b. Mathematics interventions:

- VanDeWalle and Kathy Richardson based small group instruction
- Origo Math
- ALEKS math – (computer based)
- Mathematics Navigator
- Increased time, ratio, or intensity with a specialized mathematics interventionist

ii. Gifted and Talented Education

At Valdez, we comply with the Gifted and Talented (GT) Identification policies set by the Colorado Department of Education as modified in the summer of 2015. This policy identifies students as GT or Highly Gifted and Talented based on scores from ability tests and standardized tests, as well as through “multiple pathways”. We believe that using the “talent pool” model of including students, even those who are not officially identified, in gifted services allows underrepresented students to develop their strengths and talents over time with extra resources and attention. This focus on equity also means that the GT teacher provides resources to these students’ parents to help them advocate for their child’s needs throughout the complex systems of testing, identification and enrichment opportunities outside of the school day. We encourage the leadership of both Spanish-speaking and English-speaking students to provide a voice for themselves now and their communities in the future. The Valdez community will foster student growth with in-class differentiation, pull-out enrichment or other programming deemed important based on the student’s Advanced Learning Plan or body-of-evidence based strengths.

D. SCHEDULE AND CALENDAR

Innovation status allows us to design and implement a master schedule, a teacher work schedule, and an annual calendar that will best serve our students, families and teachers. We believe that teachers need individual and collaborative planning and reflection time in order to be most effective. We work collaboratively with our families to determine the best schedule and calendar to meet the needs of our students.

Each year, we develop a master schedule that includes: the dual-language model; Montessori work block time in ECE/K; a morning meeting time; an intervention support block; a specials block; a literacy block; a math/science block; and a teacher planning time to incorporate sufficient time for grade level, vertical team planning, and data team planning. Adjustments are made as necessary throughout the school year to ensure that all students receive support and challenge in their daily curricula. Teachers may also be required to cover times during the day to ensure sufficient supervision of students throughout the day.

In developing a teacher work schedule, we recognize that teachers need more planning time, decision-making abilities, and time for reflection. The Leadership Team is charged with collaboratively developing and approving a weekly schedule for teachers and staff that includes time for: instruction and assessment; individual planning; collaborative planning; professional development activities – both structured and unstructured; data analysis; business meetings; and other activities. All efforts are made to differentiate professional development to meet the unique and individual needs of each teacher. All efforts are made to maximize efficiency, input, and efficacy of meetings. Regular communication (verbal, paper and electronic) is expected to decrease the need for meetings. All efforts are made to create a work environment that is: sustainable, effective, collaborative, focused on student learning and professional development, compatible to other personal demands and obligations, and sociable. We also recognize that teaching is very challenging and demanding work and that it often requires extra time, energy, and dedication. The guiding principles in developing a teacher work schedule include:

- Promoting a 40 hour work week as the standard, while recognizing that there may be occasions where teachers may be asked to work additional hours or voluntarily assume additional duties
- Promoting professional development and opportunities for collaboration
- Promoting opportunities for teachers to analyze data and adequate planning time for teachers to adjust instructional strategies as needed

We believe that our staff and parents are best suited to develop and determine our annual calendar. As such, we require the freedom to plan our own professional development days and use the district assigned days in a way that most benefits our students. We work with our families to set an annual calendar that is manageable, cohesive and that serves our students. We adjust the non-ECE and early-release days so as to consolidate them to create more cohesive blocks of time for teacher planning and to create more-manageable non-attendance days for parents. The annual calendar is approved each spring by the CSC.

E. LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

vii. Participatory Leadership

All faculty members at Valdez work as instructional leaders to share decision-making responsibilities in order to provide professional leadership, expertise, and the hands-on-experience needed to ensure high student growth and achievement. All decisions are based on the needs of the students. We share a commitment to involve and consider appropriate stakeholders in our decision-making processes and

agree to be transparent about how different types of decisions will be made. Depending on the type of decision to be made, we use a continuum of methods, ranging from: full staff/stakeholder consensus, to faculty vote, to committee decision, to individual decision-making with input, to individual decision-making. Making decisions in schools can be challenging, time-consuming, and stressful. We commit to seeking a balance of garnering input while making decisions in an efficient and time-conscious manner. Teachers are involved in decisions that directly affect them and we gather input in a variety of ways. Whereas we share a commitment to participatory leadership, especially in regards to curricula, instruction, assessment, professional development, and teacher planning time, final decisions are made by the principal with input from stakeholders. Finally, we commit to including parent and community leaders in decision-making relevant to their interests.

viii. Principal Leadership

The principal of Valdez reports to the superintendent or to the instructional superintendent, as appointed. The principal's responsibilities are to the Valdez students, faculty, and families. The principal serves as the primary instructional leader. In order to be a true instructional leader, the principal, with the advice of the Leadership Team (LT), must be able to make full use of time, money and resources to meet the requirements of this Plan. The principal works in close collaboration with the CSC and the leadership team in order to implement the mission, vision, and goals of the school. The evaluation of the principal is conducted annually by the district instructional superintendent. CSC also conducts an annual survey to give input to the principal. In the event of principal turnover, the Valdez staff will work with DPS staff and shall have equitable and representative decision-making power in selecting a replacement principal and will make every effort to secure a principal who understands the nature of the innovation status and who will honor the provisions within this application. The school may also create and implement an induction plan for hiring and training a new principal to ensure a successful transition.

ix. Collaborative School Committee (CSC)

Valdez forms and maintains a CSC each year consisting of: principal, at least 3 teachers (elected by peers), one support staff member (elected by peers), up to 4 parent representatives, and up to 3 other representatives assigned by the principal. The members of the CSC shall serve two year terms. The responsibilities of the CSC will include:

- Set, approve and maintain oversight of the school's budget on an annual basis
- Create and approve a Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) including academic goals and priorities, based on qualitative and quantitative data and input
- Analyze progress towards UIP goals
- Consider community concerns and direct staff to address concerns accordingly
- Determine the addition, reduction or change in positions as needed and allowable by the budget
- Approve annual calendar

iv. Teacher Leadership and Collaboration (TLC)

We are currently in the process of developing a 3 year plan to implement Teacher Team Lead and Senior Team Lead roles. Over the course of the next 3 years, our plan is to implement three Teacher

Leader Senior Team roles throughout the school. We believe these roles will give teachers an opportunity to grow their leadership within our school, provide all teachers the opportunity to receive peer feedback, and overall support the growth and development of the staff which will in turn lead to stronger student outcomes. These roles will include:

- 50% of time instructing students in a classroom or an intervention role
- 50% of time coaching and evaluating a team of teachers
- Receive feedback and coaching from principal and school leadership
- Are part of the Leadership Team and support in instructional decision making

v. Leadership Team (LT)

The principal has a core group of leaders, including teacher leaders, to make decisions on a daily and weekly basis. This team meets weekly or as necessary. The responsibilities of the LT include:

- Prioritize initiatives, opportunities, and logistics, so as to buffer the demands on the teachers
- Monitor student progress systems and data
- Monitor and adjust interventions and schedules
- Oversee and design professional development activities, including: assess PD needs of staff, schedule PD through year, and gather feedback about PD
- Oversee, design, and plan for differentiated instructional support for all teachers
- Build and approve daily and weekly schedule
- Build and propose annual master calendar (to be approved by CSC)
- Gather input and communicate decisions to entire staff in a timely manner
- Make informed decisions based on student needs

vi. Personnel Committee

Each year, the school forms a personnel committee consisting of, but not limited to: principal (or principal's designee); at least three (3) teachers (elected by peers); other staff representatives (as needed); and at least one (1) parent representative. The personnel committee may also include the assistant principal, administrative assistant, and/or co-teachers of the position for which candidates are being considered. The personnel committee acts as the selection group for hiring of all staff, as time and schedule allow. If hiring decisions need to be made outside of the school calendar or during times when personnel committee members are not available, the principal shall retain the right to offer employment independently. Whereas the personnel committee shall strive to make hiring decisions by consensus, the principal shall retain the right to make final hiring decisions.

F. STAFFING, EVALUATION, AND COMPENSATION

To meet the needs of our students, improve student achievement, and fully implement our educational program, Valdez requires the flexibility to select and hire individuals that further our mission, vision, and academic goals. Furthermore, we need the flexibility to evaluate, support and compensate staff in alignment with our educational program. Toward that end, we are requesting waivers to the appropriate district, state and DCTA policies as to allow us to:

- Hire staff in real time – as and when needed
- Hire staff outside of the DPS hiring cycle

- Waive direct placements of teachers, unless we put teachers into the unassigned pool
- Create non-traditional job descriptions, including the ability to add roles to any job description
- Revise the district’s teacher evaluation system
- Create our own remediation system for teacher performance
- Create our own staff dismissal processes
- Contract staff to teach specialized courses without the requirement of licensing (but within the requirements of “highly-qualified” criteria)
- Establish our own compensation rates and systems and/or to use district pay scales and rates
- Reserve the right to adjust extra-duty pay rates
- Reserve right to create extra bonuses and/or incentives

We are committed to seeking and hiring candidates: who understand the nuances of working within a culturally-diverse community; who understand the challenges and best practices in supporting students in acquiring two languages; and who are bilingual. We do not currently have the flexibility to hire part-time individuals who have appropriate background and experience in a given area on a part-time or temporary basis. In specialty areas, we could hire an expert through a third-party contract, or hire someone who is highly qualified but who may not be licensed. Any staff would be required to pass appropriate background checks through the district.

Due to innovation status, we are no longer subject to a district direct placement process that does not allow us to ensure that every staff member is reflective of our mission and can best meet the needs of our students. With innovation status, we can access the open market, recruit, and make early offers as soon as we know a vacancy is available. We can control the type and amount of student service providers that are allocated to our school. We can also consider having non-certified staff assist with duty and substitute coverage.

New teachers hired to Valdez from outside the District are not to be subject to the Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act of 1990, § 22-63-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S. and will not have any employment rights within the School District. These teachers are considered “at-will” employees.

New teachers hired to Valdez from within the District with probationary or non-probationary status will operate under the guidelines of the Valdez Innovation Plan while employed at Valdez by signing the Teacher Offer Letter. These teachers will not be subject to the Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act of 1990, § 22-63-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S. and will not have any employment rights within the School District, while at Valdez. These teachers will be considered “at-will” employees, while at Valdez. If these teachers return to a position at a different DPS school, and they are in good standing, their employment status will be determined pursuant to District guidelines.

Current teachers employed at Valdez who are of probationary status at the time of approval will continue to advance towards non-probationary status using current district criteria, if in good standing. **Current teachers employed at Valdez who are of non-probationary status** at the time of approval will remain as a non-probationary teacher within the district, provided they are in good standing.

Valdez retains the flexibility to administer a teacher evaluation system that is in alignment with our mission, vision, values and educational program. Valdez intends to use the district's evaluation process as a foundation and may adapt or adopt an alternative evaluation system. Such changes would need to be developed by the LT and approved by the CSC and a vote of 75% of the teaching staff.

If a complaint is received against a teacher, the Principal will follow the procedures outlined in the district's Basic Fairness and Due Process procedures. If it is determined that a teacher has committed an offense that warrants corrective action, the Principal will follow the procedures outlined in the district's Basic Fairness and Due Process procedures.

i. PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

The evaluation, remediation, and non-renewal process would be different for different teachers as follows:

For teachers hired to Valdez **before** Innovation teacher vote:

Probationary: Teachers will be formally evaluated every year. If the principal has concerns of the teacher's performance, the principal shall provide detailed feedback to the teacher. The teacher will be provided a reasonable amount of time, no less than four (4) weeks, to show improvement. Teacher may be non-renewed if sufficient improvement is not demonstrated.

Non-Probationary: Teachers will be formally evaluated every three years. The principal will have full discretion to initiate a formal evaluation for any Valdez teacher at any point in the school year. The principal will have the option of initiating a remediation plan for improvement as outlined in Article 10 and in state statute (TECDA).

For teachers hired to Valdez **after** Innovation teacher vote:

Probationary: Teachers will be formally evaluated every year. Teachers will sign an employment offer letter indicating acceptance of conditions of this Innovation plan. These teachers will be considered "at-will" employees while employed at Valdez. If the principal has concerns of the teacher's performance, the principal shall provide detailed feedback to the teacher. The teacher will be provided a reasonable amount of time, no less than four (4) weeks, to show improvement. Teacher may be non-renewed if sufficient improvement is not demonstrated.

Non-Probationary: Teachers will be formally evaluated every year. Teachers will sign an employment offer letter indicating acceptance of conditions of this Innovation plan. These teachers will be considered "at-will" employees while employed at Valdez. If the principal has concerns of the teacher's performance, the principal shall provide detailed feedback to the teacher. The teacher will be provided a reasonable amount of time, no less than four (4) weeks, to show improvement. Teacher may be non-renewed if sufficient improvement is not demonstrated.

If a teacher is dismissed mid-year, the teacher will be entitled to the procedures outlined in Policy GDQD and Regulation GDQD.

ii. COMPENSATION FOR TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND OTHER SCHOOL BUILDING PERSONNEL, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

Performance pay plans and compensation for teachers, principals, and other school building personnel will continue to match those offered through the district to all other similar employees. If in the future, Valdez staff determined to change any performance pay or compensation for any employee groups, we would work collaboratively district staff to create systems and guidelines. The Valdez principal will have the discretion to offer incentives, stipends, or signing bonuses for existing or potential staff. Any criteria for additional pay would need to be approved by the CSC prior to an offer for such payment.

G. ENROLLMENT

By being an Innovative school, the school leadership team works with the District School of Choice office to establish and maintain an enrollment target, a registration system, and an enrollment process appropriate to the Valdez program. Valdez seeks to enroll a balance of native English-speakers, native Spanish-speakers, and bilingual students, in order to foster linguistic diversity and to maintain peer language models. Valdez enrolls students through the Choice process for all dual-language grades.

Enrollment priorities are determined through the district's choice system – through one lottery for English-speaking students and a separate lottery for Spanish-speaking students - according to the following priorities:

1. Current Valdez student
2. Sibling of current Valdez student
3. Children of Valdez staff members
4. Residents of immediate neighborhood to Valdez (defined by neighborhood attendance area for Valdez)
5. Residents of northwest Denver
6. Residents of Denver Public Schools boundary
7. Non-residents of Denver Public Schools boundary

In order to implement a rich and effective dual-language program, it is critical to carefully manage the language environment for all students. The language environment includes the language input - the language used in speaking to students formally (instruction) and informally (business and social interactions). The language environment also includes the expectations for language output - (in what language do students speak or write?). Linguistic intentionality is critical for both adult-to-student and student-to-student interactions. As necessary for this model, Valdez recruits and enrolls students so as to meet and maintain an overall balance of native English and native Spanish-speaking students. We currently manage our annual choice lottery so as to meet this goal. The linguistic balance may vary by grade level and with the reality that many students come from bilingual backgrounds.

Valdez has a plan to manage attrition. Since students are immersed in academic activities in their second language at an increasing rate each year, it becomes very difficult for students to enter a dual-language program after second or third grade. This is especially true for monolingual English-speaking students. Spanish-speaking students tend to have an easier time transitioning into a dual-language program after third grade as they tend to have some foundational skills in English. As a result, enrollment attrition is a challenge. Ongoing education events for current families help inform the importance of staying enrolled at Valdez and decrease mobility rates. We recognize the need to adjust our enrollment strategy as the demographics of our neighborhood and students change.

Recruitment strategies include:

- A series of open houses in the fall and winter will inform parents of our program and application procedures.
- Parent information events to educate current and prospective parents about our program.
- Marketing materials to be distributed to targeted groups.
- Messaging to be communicated to targeted groups.
- Advertisement of parenting events offered through the school (detailed in Parent Engagement section).
- Admission at later grades- because language acquisition takes time, we may be unable to admit students at later grades unless they are determined to have the necessary academic skills in both languages.

H. SCHOOL CULTURE AND PBIS

Innovation status allows us to tailor our professional development to the unique needs of our population. We implement a much greater level of breadth and depth to our PBIS systems and training than typical schools. In addition, Innovation status is necessary to implement some of the systems that require flexible scheduling.

We consider a cohesive, positive and intentional school culture to be a vital part of our comprehensive plan to create a thriving and enriching dual-language program. Indeed, being a dual-language school requires unique sensitivities to not only language differences, but to cultural differences as well. As a way to unite Valdez families, staff and community members, our intentional culture comprises several components.

Positive Behavior Supports- Current research has demonstrated that the most effective strategy for positively fostering pro-social behaviors and character development in students is to explicitly teach, model, and recognize these characteristics. Positive Behavior Supports (PBIS) provides a framework for providing precisely such instruction. Unique to our school is the need to have this system align well with all of our families, both linguistically and culturally. Our acronym for positive behavior expectations meets this requirement, as it is easily translated into both languages, is equally culturally relevant, and is equally accessible by all.

Our behavior/ pro-social expectations begin with the acronym that summarizes them:

POWER

PODER

Perseverance	Perseverancia
Optimism	Optimismo
Wise decisions	Decisiones inteligentes
Excellence	Excelencia
Respect	Respeto

While each of the traits symbolized by this acronym is critical to success in and of themselves, it is the broader interpretation and meaning of “POWER” and “PODER” and how they relate to success in society that truly sets our approach apart from others’. Our purpose is to prepare students to have success in all areas of their lives. Although we firmly believe that “knowledge is POWER,” we also recognize that functional adults are not educated academically alone.

We also use character instruction to build a culture that embraces the diversity in our student body, and to provide opportunities for leadership and recognition to all students. As part of supporting the ‘Whole Child’ in Denver Public Schools (DPS), a top priority in Denver Plan 2020, Valdez is incorporating ‘Personal Success Factors’ (PSF) into our PBIS character work. PSF is an effort focused on developing a student’s resiliency for challenges they face both in school, and in life. Personal Success Factors are indicators of academic and career success, and are tightly linked to a student’s personal skills and strengths. We are focused on how to name, teach, honor, recognize, celebrate and give feedback on personal success factors with students, while building a deep understanding of the personal success factors for students, our teachers and our community.

Our PBIS and PSF system has been designed to foster not only academic success, but also social and adaptive skills in the following ways.

Systems

Teaching - Specific behaviors in each of the five areas (P.O.W.E.R./ P.O.D.E.R.) are taught at the beginning of each academic year, and again after the winter break. This is done through the use of POWER matrices that list what each of the traits of POWER looks like across several environments, including individual classrooms. Monthly assemblies are also used to teach and model POWER traits on a school-wide level.

Re-teaching - Problem behavior areas, or individual students with recurring behavior problems, will be targeted for re-teaching and rehearsal. We will focus on skill acquisition over punishment and retribution.

Recognition - A host of recognition systems are in place on both the individual and classroom levels:

- Individual students are given “POWER paws” (Valdez’ mascot is the panther) for demonstrating one or more of the POWER traits. Individual students are selected monthly from each classroom to serve as the “POWER Ambassador” for showing consistently exemplary behaviors.
- Individual classrooms have many opportunities to participate in and be recognized by the broader school community. One such opportunity is for them to volunteer to host one of our monthly assemblies, which focus on one of the POWER traits.
- Students are recognized in classroom morning meetings, on the weekly news, and at monthly student-led community meetings for demonstrating POWER and PSFs.

- We have a school uniform policy, which we believe increases consistency and camaraderie, and also have school t-shirts. Permissible as uniform attire on Fridays, the school t-shirt has our POWER acronym and mascot proudly displayed in school colors.

Discipline - Professional development in discipline practices include universal, targeted and intensive interventions. School-wide supports, rituals, and routines serve as the primary behavior curriculum, while classroom and individually-based interventions serve as more-intensive level supports. Environments that prove to be particularly problematic (as evidenced by data, see “data” below), are targeted for skill rehearsal and modeling as appropriate. Individual students who have difficulty demonstrating POWER expectations in specific environments are given the opportunity to learn and display model behaviors. “POWER Outages”, modeled after the “refocus” concepts, are designed to give students the opportunity to reflect on their behaviors and consequences, including brainstorming alternative behaviors. These “minor” infractions are tracked using an online database (see “data” and “SWIS” below). Students fill out four sections of the POWER Outage: 1) What was the behavior problem? 2) What part of POWER was lost/ forgotten? 3) How did it impact others? 4) What is your plan?

Office referrals are given for major behavior infractions (contraband, stealing, blatant disrespect, AWOL, etc.), and result in immediate administrative attention. They may also be given for repeated minor infractions that are not remedied through POWER Outages or parent contact. Office referrals are counted as “major” infractions in the school-wide database. Students who have repeated referrals and/or habitually disruptive behaviors have specific behavior plans created to support them. These could include, but are not limited to: behavior contracts, communication logs (home-school), enhanced monitoring systems, and parent contact. Because we believe in restoring the respectful and collaborative nature of all relationships in our school, major behavior infractions will invariably include a restorative justice component to them. This basic approach includes: 1) defining the infraction, 2) exploring who was hurt (emotionally, physically, financially, etc.) by this infraction, and 3) implementing a means of repairing the damage done. By departing from pejorative models that include punishment and penance and instead focusing on restoration of mutually respectful relationships, our students will gain better empathy and life skills.

Practices

Faculty hiring and training - Because PBS requires a high degree of alignment between staff, it is critical that new personnel are both well-trained this plan and in fundamental philosophical agreement with its premises. This not only makes our hiring needs unique, but also requires a wider array of professional development activities tailored to meet these needs. We also work to have a diverse staff of people who share our school’s values, including educating the whole child and promoting equity.

Classroom supports - Basic classroom structures are consistent across the building in order to strengthen PBS systems, including a comprehensive discipline intervention ladder. Staff is also trained in various methodologies for increasing classroom participation and motivating students to monitor their own behavior, including: morning meetings, visual behavioral monitoring system (stoplight), and reward contingencies.

Visuals - Our school uses multiple opportunities for visual cueing and reinforcement of POWER/PODER. Our expectations are reinforced through various visuals such as: rugs, wall murals, t-shirts, pencils, banners, and displays.

Data

Database - Valdez will continue to develop its disciplinary referral tracking practices. Based off-site, the School Wide Information System (SWIS) allows all teachers to access school-wide data, as well as information specific to their students. Data yields such information as time, location, motivation, and problem behavior. This data guides PD and staff-wide problem-solving discussions.

Data-driven decisions - The PBS approach requires us to systematically look at data across settings in order to make adjustments to our systems and practices accordingly. Data analysis takes place at school-wide professional development meetings, as well as during grade-level teams, data teams (where applicable) and Multi-Tiered Student Support (MTSS) meetings. Data collected not only guides decision-making, but also serves as an indicator of success/ failure of a particular intervention.

I. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Innovation status allows us to continue to develop our parent and community support as well as to leverage our efforts in order to garner additional resources for our school.

We believe that family and community engagement is essential to the overall wellbeing of our educational environment. We strive to empower our families and community members to become active supporters of our school vision. We value our school partners and our families and are adding new ways for both to have buy-in at Valdez School at every opportunity. We pledge that language will not be a barrier for us, but rather a bridge for us to carry our strengths from side to side.

Valdez is creating a relational culture and bringing parents and community members in by offering both English and Spanish classes. We are empowering our native Spanish-speakers to learn the business language in the United States, but more than that, we are empowering our native English-speaking parents to delve into the beautiful sounds and culture of their Spanish-speaking counterparts. In this way, we can break down barriers by building communication POWER. We've scheduled "intercambio" or "exchange" classes to promote cross-cultural and community enrichment. We are also working to coordinate cultural enrichment at the school site. Cultural plays and regular workshops will make learning about other cultures fun and beneficial for parents as well as students. Valdez is intent on creating a relational culture where community members, teachers, students, and parents work together toward the best interests of *all* of our students.

Our Parent Contract states the obligations of the parent to: become involved in their student's academic and behavioral progress, know and understand what academic level their student is on, and take advantage of opportunities at Valdez to improve their student's school experience. The contract can be useful during intervention meetings with parents, to better serve the needs of every student in the school. The individual work plan for support could be tracked and monitored throughout the year and in between years during parent/teacher conferences. We believe that family members do want to

support their students and their school, and we endeavor to give them all the tools necessary to do so. We work to get parents involved in ECE parent groups, parenting classes, ESL classes, Spanish classes, Volunteer opportunities, Leadership team, School events, PTO, CSC, Parent teacher conferences, and classrooms.

In addition, we organize and implement various family/community engagement and outreach events. Together with the support of our PTO, who work to support the vision and mission of the school through targeted fundraising and service-based initiatives, we hold various forums to communicate between school and home. These include our regularly scheduled Coffee with the Principal, Academic Nights, Music and Holiday programming, Spanish Night, and State of the School (to name a few). We work to build leaders among our parent volunteers, offering them opportunities to plan and organize, create fundraising opportunities out of, and otherwise support these events.

We will continue to develop strong communication through our Valdez monthly classroom newsletters, conferences, POWER notes home, family nights, website, and social media. We currently survey our families to help our progress assessment and to create needed adjustments in the school, and we will continue to do so in order to foster an environment supportive of our students and their families. We need the parents to support us as we support their children. We have created a family/community liaison position to provide structural and institutional support and to maintain the above relational culture. The family/community liaison serves on committees in the school and participates in parent organizations (PTO) to keep the lines of communication open and flowing easily.

The family/community liaison continues to serve as a leader in equitable opportunities for our community. She helps identify key cultural celebrations that bring our community together. This work complements our cultural arts program and serves as a spring board for our marketing, public relations and communication.

The family/community liaison has coordinated parent sessions focused on health and wellness. The liaison will continue to coordinate parent sessions that will enrich parents' understanding of school preparedness and acquisition of student goals, as well as increase parents' academic skills. The family/community liaison has been a bridge between the community members/organizations and school. The liaison will ensure ongoing communication, develop a mentor and volunteer program, market the school, and be a public relations representative.

We have grown our community relationships to support us in diversity of volunteers via help counter. We continue to diversify our philanthropic support via in-kind donations, and grant development. Some of our immediate community business partners include Speaks Orthodontics, Nostalgic Homes, HUNI (Highlands United Neighborhood Inc.), Fat Jack's Subs and many other locally owned businesses and non-profits. We want our community partners to feel welcome and become a part of our Valdez extended learning community. We will continue to build our partnerships with local organizations and neighborhood associations. We feel strongly that these community relationships have helped us serve the needs of the students at Valdez and have cultivated a symbiotic bond between the community and the students at Valdez school. Students can also derive benefit by reciprocating the gifts through volunteer services.

For Valdez School, it is essential to build these quality parent and community relationships, not only for volunteer hours and donations they may bring into the school, but also to present our students with options for the future. Our students see the non-teacher adults in the building as role models. These outside role models have an ability to build self-esteem, ignite imagination, and reward student achievements and efforts, in a way that teachers do not. We depend on these community assets to bring in skills and expertise to further enrich the Valdez experience. We support our community assets and family members in working together to develop and monitor student academic, language, and behavioral goals. We have created a marketing committee, which will include community assets and parents as well as students, teachers, and administrators to shine a positive light on Valdez to our neighbors through media coverage for the school. We will continue to reach out to bring our community back to full circle. The community will help us raise thriving students to grow and eventually enter back into the community as successful and educated adults.

J. FACILITY

Valdez School has been located on its present site since the 1970's when the current facility replaced the historic Ashland School building. Valdez School is sandwiched between the historically-preserved North High School campus to the west and the Emerson St. School to the east (now the Academy of Urban Learning). The site represents many opportunities for Valdez School and for northwest Denver. Campus location and facility condition are vitally important in order to: provide effective learning environments for students; attract and retain families; ensure healthy and hospitable work environments for faculty; and celebrate the positive roles that schools can and should play in surrounding communities. As a result of the direct hard work of our school community, Valdez was awarded bond money to support a renovation of the facility. The renovation was completed in late summer of 2015.

3. IMPROVEMENTS IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE VALDEZ EXPECTS TO ACHIEVE IN IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIONS

Our goals include steady growth in academic achievement and growth in all content areas. Specific goals are as follows:

- Valdez will increase CMAS/PARCC growth and status so as to achieve an overall “meets” rating and eventually “exceeds” as measured by the District School Performance Framework (SPF) by fall 2017. The SPF rating will increase each year so as to steadily show growth.
- At least 80% of English-speaking students in grades K-2nd will score at or above grade level in reading comprehension as measured by the DRA2 in the spring of each year.
- At least 80% of Spanish-speaking students in grades K-2nd will score at or above grade level in reading comprehension as measured by the EDL2 in the spring of each year.
- At least 50% of English and Spanish-speaking students in grades 3, 4, and 5 will be meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA as measured by the CMAS/PARCC in spring of 2016. We will

continue to increase by at least 5% each year until we are consistently maintaining a score of 80% or above in the categories meets or exceeds expectations.

- At least 50% of English and Spanish-speaking students in grades 3, 4, and 5 will be meeting or exceeding expectations in math as measured by the CMAS/PARCC in spring of 2016. We will continue to increase by at least 5% each year until we are consistently maintaining a score of 80% or above in the categories meets or exceeds expectations.

4. BUDGET AUTONOMIES, COST SAVINGS AND INCREASED EFFICIENCIES

Valdez has budgetary autonomy and flexibility over its resources in order to fully implement the proposed educational program and meet the needs of our students. Our flexibilities include: the flexibility to budget on actual salaries vs. average salaries (when to our benefit); and the flexibility to purchase administrative services, such as transportation, food services, facility management, maintenance, student services and substitute teachers, from Denver Public Schools or other providers, based on a pricelist that will be provided by DPS to the Principal or designee.