



Dear BRYSS Families,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 School year!

We are extremely excited about the start of a new school year and the endless magical opportunities that await our students.

BRYSS Academy is fortunate to have dedicated, knowledgeable, and caring staff who are ready to teach our scholars and serve our families.

Once again, our students rose to the challenge and met numerous goals. We will continue to focus on student achievement, resiliency, and their social-emotional well-being.

This year our theme is **"Let the Magic Begin"**. The magic at BRYSS Academy creates the perfect emotional hook and motivation for learning because it piques children's natural curiosity. At BRYSS we believe that "Teaching children is and accomplishment; getting children excited about learning is an achievement".

The work we do every day is rooted in our BRYSS vision statement "BRYSS Academy will be an innovative school in which students attain critical skills and become lifelong learners using technology integration and empowered student-centered learning."

We know more than ever that our scholars need a learning environment where they cared for and loved. We are here for our students!

The first day of school is Monday, August 14, 2023.

Once again, we want to remind our families that students will be required to wear their uniform daily. Students will not be allowed to wear hoodies. Only zipper and button-down sweaters will be allowed (no design on sweaters). Only clear backpacks are allowed.

Finally, I sincerely believe that the 2023-2024 school year will be productive at improving student outcomes. I look forward to working with all students, parents, teachers, and staff of our BRYSS' community to make this year a success.

Please contact me at if you have any questions.

Maria A Knosel, M. Ed.

Principal

BRYSS Academy

Office: 956-574-7101

BRYSS Academy is a Pre-Kindergarten – 8th grade campus. Our school provides multiple educational programs and opportunities to ALL students essential to succeed. BRYSS programs are infused with the most current, best research-based teaching and learning practices. Fundamental to the school’s academic program is a robust core curriculum, which is supported by the Transitional Bilingual Program, Gifted and Talented, TLI, Special Education, RTI, 504 Dyslexia and STEM. Each of these specialized programs adds a unique dimension to the BRYSS program, which places the school among the leaders in innovative and effective educational opportunities. BRYSS challenges and provides academic and social support to prepare our students for high school and to be college ready to be successful in a global society.

Principal	Maria Knosel
Mailing Address	2255 North Coria Street Brownsville, Texas 78520
Phone	956-574-7100
Email Address	maria.knosel@tejanocenter.org
Enrollment	500
Grades	PreK3-8
Education Model	Transitional Bilingual Program
School Colors	Blue, Black and Yellow
Mascot	Eagle

School Mascot



Mighty Eagle

School Motto

**“We are BRYSS strong.”
“BRYSS, where learning happens.”**

Mission

We the faculty, staff, family and community of BRYSS STEM Academy are committed to facilitating a student-centered education. The pursuit of excellence is aimed at developing independent thinkers in a collaborative atmosphere by promoting self-respect, kindness and a love of learning.

Vision

BRYSS Academy will be an innovative school in which students attain critical skills and become lifelong learners using technology integration and empowered student-centered learning.

Core Values: We are Achievers, Resilient, Emotionally Strong.



2023-2024 THEME

**Let the Magic
BEGIN!**

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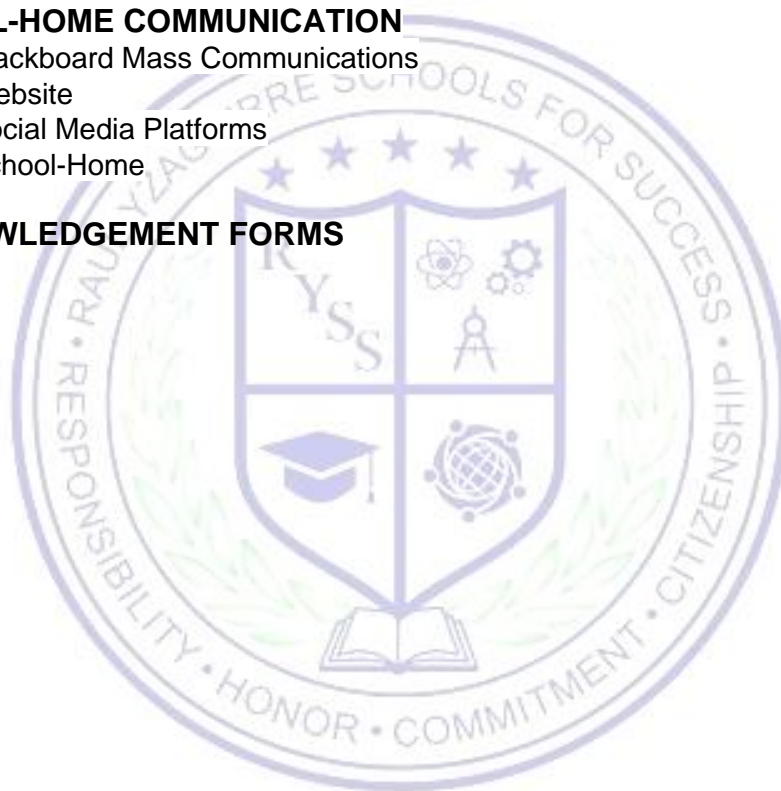
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I. ACADEMICS

Curriculum Overview

All students at BRYSS Academy in grades PK3-8th grade receive instruction in language arts/reading, mathematics, social studies/citizenship, science, and health. Technology instruction is integrated into all subjects, daily. Students visit the library and STEM Lab on a weekly basis. Students in Grade PK-8th also receive instruction in art, music and physical education. Our teachers utilize various techniques including blended learning, differentiated instruction, and cooperative learning that promote student engagement and higher order thinking skills in our classrooms to ensure student success. Various forms of assessment are utilized to drive the instruction and maximize student achievement. BRYSS Academy PK-5th teachers provide a minimum of 120 minutes to target Reading Language Arts to connect the areas of literacy in reading and writing. Our student's math block carefully sequences mathematical progressions and helps develop student's mathematical thinking. Our K-2nd grade students will participate in daily math lessons using Eureka Math and Amplify for reading. STEMscopes science immerses our students in real-world phenomena through engaging lessons and hands on activities. BRYSS Academy seeks to challenge and meet the needs of all our students.

Curricular Programs

Transitional Bilingual Program – (Kindergarten through grade 5)–The Transitional Bilingual Program is a full-time program of transitional instruction. The amount of instruction in each language (primary and secondary) shall be appropriately based on the student's language (primary and secondary) shall be appropriately based on the student's language potential in both languages. Instruction in the first language is phased out and most students are mainstreamed into English by the end of grade 2 and exited from the Bilingual Program by the end of grade 3. BRYSS values our students' bilingualism and will provide native language maintenance classes throughout grades 4-8. Grades 3-5 will participate in a Spanish-language lab three times a week. Grades 7-8 will be offered Pre-AP Spanish as an elective for high school credit.

Gifted and Talented - All students at our campus will learn and be provided with instruction that addresses their specific needs. Our teachers have been trained to provide our G.T. students with a challenging curriculum, expand their knowledge, and develop independent learners who go beyond the regular curriculum. The G.T. Program is designed for students who perform at a higher level and demonstrate creative and productive thinking.

Accelerated Instruction – This instruction is an extended day, academic enrichment program designed to enrich as well as remediate students learning in the classroom and target specific skills to help students master academic standards.

STEM (Science, Technology, Math, Engineering and Mathematics)- BRYSS is committed to support and promote STEM education on our campus. Our students will be provided with educational opportunities in science, technology, and math. Students will engage in critical

thinking and will have the skills and knowledge to solve problems. Our elementary students will visit the STEM Lab on a weekly basis. Our middle school students will participate in PLTW (Project Lead the Way) lessons that open paths that create meaningful futures while connecting to careers in various areas.

Special Populations

Section 504 Services

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on *Response to Intervention (RTI)*. The implementation of RTI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links the student to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's or charter school's Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, and impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals:

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is:

Contact Person: Ms. Maria Knosel
Ms. Susana Hernandez

Phone Number: (956) 574-7103

Special Education and Special Needs Services

BRYSS complies with all federal and state regulations regarding special education and special needs services. If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links the student to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, interventions, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students. Information regarding special education or special needs services may be obtained by contacting the following staff:

Lillian Sacramento, ECC Lead	(956) 574-7103
Susana Hernandez, Counselor	(956) 574-7103
Maria Knosel, Principal	(956) 574-7101
Susan Pansmith, Special Populations Coordinator	(713) 640-3778

Special Education Referrals:

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal laws prior to written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

If the district or charter school decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student.

However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year.

However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

Contact Person for Special Education Referrals:

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is:

Contact Person: Ms. Maria Knosel, Principal (956) 574-7103

Ms. Kristina Guerra, Educational Diagnostician (956) 574-7125

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is:

Contact Person: Ms. Maria Knosel, Principal (956) 574-7103
Ms. Susana Hernandez, Counselor (956) 574-7104

Phone Number: (956) 574-7103

Additional Information:

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families.

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)
- [Partners Resource Network](#)
- [Special Education Information Center](#)
- [Texas Project First](#)

Progress Reports and Report Cards

BRYSS Academy has six six-week periods throughout the year. Progress reports are sent to parents at the mid-point of each grading period. Kinder through 8th grade will receive paper report cards every six-week period. Progress reports and report cards must be signed and returned to the teacher the following day.

PK3 and PK4 receive non-graded progress reports in each of the skill areas taught throughout the year. Parents will be contacted to schedule conferences to discuss student progress 3 times a year.

For students who have failing grades or are at risk of a failing grade, parents will be contacted to schedule a conference with the teacher.

Grading Policy

A minimum of 3 Test Grades and 2 Daily Grades are required per reporting cycle.

READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Test Grades• 2 Daily Grades
ENGLISH/ ESL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 Test Grades (1 Composition, 2 Spelling, 2 G&M)• 3 Daily Grades
MATH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Test Grades (At least half of test must be problem solving)• 2 Daily Grades
SCIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Test Grades• 2 Daily Grades• 2 Labs
SOCIAL STUDIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Test Grades• 2 Daily Grades

- **Re-Teach/ Re-Test:** Failed Test Grade... **NOT** for Daily Grades.
 - Reteach and then re-test ...if student passes re-test cannot receive a grade higher than a **70**.

A	90-100	Highly Proficient
B	80-89	Above Proficient
C	70-79	Proficient
D	60-69	Below Proficient
F	Below 60	Insufficient Evidence of Proficiency
I		Incomplete work

Homework

Homework provides a means of extending students' classroom experiences and reinforcing instruction. Homework may be assigned to students from Monday-Thursday. The amount of time spent on homework will vary but will not exceed 45 minutes. Students will complete homework on their electronic device. Failing to do so may result in a loss of privileges (free time, study hall, extracurricular activities, etc.). Online homework will be planned according to the student's grade level. If no online homework is assigned, students are required to read every night in order to meet the goals established by the teacher.

Field Cultural Experiences

Many field cultural experiences are provided for our students by our ACE 21st Century program. All field experiences are **linked to the courses so that students can connect what they learn from the ACE 21st Century classroom to the school classroom and vice versa**. Activities include one-on-one mentor programs, tutoring, academic enrichment, the arts, physical activity, hands-on learning, and family engagement. These programs provide high-quality academic enrichment and other activities designed to increase students' overall and academic success.

II. ATTENDANCE

Excused Absences

Student is absent as the result of a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes the student's attendance infeasible. Documentation from a health care professional licensed, certified, or registered to practice in Texas must be provided that specifies the student's illness and the anticipated period of the student's absence relating to the illness or related treatment.

Temporary absence resulting from any cause acceptable to the teacher or Principal.

Unexcused Absences

Any absence not listed above or approved in advance by the principal due to extenuating circumstances will be considered an unexcused absence. Vacations are not an acceptable cause for an excused absence from school.

Required Documentation for Absences

A student absent from school, upon his or her return, must provide a written note to the school that explains the absence. The note must be signed by a legal guardian.

Texas Compulsory Attendance Law

Under Texas Education Code § 25.095(a), you are hereby notified that if a student is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in any one school year, the legal guardian is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code § 25.093 and the student is subject to referral to a truancy court for truant conduct under Texas Family Code § 65.003(a).

BRYSS shall notify a student's legal guardian if the student has been absent from school, without excuse, on three days or parts of days within a four-week period. The notice will inform the legal guardian that it is the legal guardian's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school; the student is subject to truancy prevention measures under Texas Education Code § 25.0915; and that a conference between school officials and the legal guardian is needed to discuss the absences.

BRYSS Academy may initiate withdrawal of a student if the student has been absent for more than ten days and repeated efforts were made by designated campus staff to locate the student. Both conditions should be met for enrollment to be revoked, and all efforts to locate the student should be documented in the student's file.

III. SCHOOL OPERATING PROCEDURES

Daily Schedule: **7:15 a.m. – 7:45 a.m. Student Drop-off**
 Breakfast Schedule (All Grades): **7:45a.m. – 8:15 a.m. Announcements and Keyboarding**
 Instructional Day Schedule: **7:45 a.m. – 3:45 p.m. Monday through Friday**

Monday through Friday

7:45 a.m. – First bell
 8:00 a.m. – Start of school day
 8:15 a.m. -- Students will be counted tardy
 3:30 p.m. – First Dismissal Bell
 3:45 p.m.—Afterschool Snack
 4:00 p.m.—Accelerated Instruction

Physical Education Schedule/Parent Conference Times

8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Grade 7
9:15 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Kinder
10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Grade 1
10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Grade 6
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Lunch
12:00 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Grade 4
12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Grade 2
1:30 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.	Grade 3
2:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Grade 5

NOTE: SCHEDULES MAY CHANGE TO ACCOMMODATE NEEDS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

Contacting Faculty and Staff

Teachers and parents may connect via phone call, ideally scheduled in advance. The best time for telephone calls is during the teacher’s planning time (above). Parents are encouraged to discuss any questions regarding their students directly with the teacher. Parents may also call our main line (956)-574-7103 and set up a conference with the teacher. Teachers and staff are also available through e-mail or text for your convenience.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Private Car/ Carpool Drop Off and Pick Up

All families will receive an assigned number tag for their students. It must be visible, as it is used to initially call your students. If you do not have your tag, you will be asked to park and provide identification before your student is released.

Parents and others who drive students to and from school are encouraged to carpool and to stop only at designated points. During the periods before and after school, the streets and driveways around BRYSS are quite congested with both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. To ensure the safety of everyone involved, the cooperation of all drivers is vital. Please drive cautiously, courteously. No cell phone use is allowed while operating a vehicle on school property.

Students will be picked up no later than 4:00 p.m. by parents/guardians/relatives older than 18 years of age. Proper identification is required in order to pick up a student. Any other person that will pick up a student(s) must be able to provide a proper identification and be listed on the release form.

BUS/Transportation

BRYSS provides free transportation services for many students (Kinder-8th grade), which includes picking up and dropping off students at designated stops within Brownsville city limits. Students, as well as parents and relatives receiving the students, must observe good manners and adhere to BRYSS rules in order to continue receiving this transportation service. Bus drivers reserve the right and have the responsibility of denying transportation services to any student not complying with school rules or who fails to supply pending documentation previously requested by teacher, nurse, or school staff.

Drop Off/ Pick Up of Bus Students

Parent/guardians/relatives (older than 18 years of age) must be present when boarding/ exiting the school bus.

The time spent on the bus is considered an extension of the school day. All school rules apply. A student who misbehaves on the bus may lose bus-riding privileges.

Student will be returned to school if an adult is not present at the designated drop-off address. Upon the third occasion of a student not being met at the designated drop-off address by an approved adult, transportation services for the student may be discontinued.

Transportation services will also be discontinued after the third consecutive day student is not at the designated pickup address.

Bus Rules/Procedures:

- Stand away from the road while waiting for the bus.

- Exhibit appropriate behavior at the bus stop. Behavior that is disruptive, destructive, or unsafe for traffic will not be tolerated.
- Be on time. Buses **are not required** to wait for students.
- Board the bus in an orderly manner. No student should be standing up/changing seats while the bus is in motion.
- Do not distract the driver by making unusual noises, shouting, or creating a disturbance.
- Do not speak to the driver unless absolutely necessary.
- Keep belongings and legs out of the aisles.
- Do not throw objects out the windows.
- Do not extend arms, legs, or heads out the window.
- Smoking of any kind is prohibited on the bus.
- Drinking any illegal substance is prohibited on the bus.
- Keep bus litter-free.
- Ride only your assigned bus and get off at your assigned stop. No variations are allowed.
- Obey the driver. He or she is an employee with responsibility for your safety. If a driver experiences any disciplinary problems, he or she will inform the BRYSS administration.
- Know your bus driver's name and your bus route number.
- When crossing the street from the bus stop, use approved crosswalks. All small children must have an adult waiting for them to assist them while crossing the street.
- BRYSS provides free transportation services for the students, which includes pickup and drop-off of students (within Brownsville city limits).
- Parents, relatives, or guardians must be there to receive their children when being picked up and dropped off.
- BRYSS reserves the right to deny bus service for not complying with bus Transportation rules and regulations.

Field Trips

Students must have permission from parent/ guardian to attend field trip. Student(s) must adhere to the code of conduct in the beginning, during, and after the field trip while riding the bus. Any student(s) who does not comply will be sent back to school and/or will no longer attend the next field trip scheduled.

Dress Code

Must be followed at all times, including before and after school (21st Century).

All Students:

- Jeans (not too tight, baggy, or **torn**) may be worn with a school uniform shirt.
- Khaki pants (not too tight, baggy, or **torn**). Must be worn at the waist.
- Khaki shorts are allowed if worn no shorter than two inches above the knee.
- School shirt with school logo or spirit shirt. Blue for ECC/Elementary & Black for Middle School.
- No sweatpants or jeans/khakis with designs allowed.
- Tennis shoes are recommended. No high heels or sandals.
- No expensive or oversized jewelry is allowed. The school is not responsible if worn and lost/misplaced (NO EXCEPTIONS).
- No caps/hats are allowed.
- Sweaters and jackets must be button-down or have a zipper. Uniform shirt must be worn underneath.

For Girls:

- Khaki skirts can be no shorter than knee high (not too tight).
- No oversized earrings. One small earring per ear at the lower part of the earlobe is acceptable.
- No make-up is allowed at any grade level.
- No hair or dye highlights are allowed.
- Fingernails must be short, clean, and polish-free. No acrylic or fake nails.

For Boys:

- No piercings are allowed for boys.
- Clean cut.
- No spike hair (Mohawk) or shaved designs or dyed hair is allowed.

All types of hand gloves and headgear may be worn outside of school buildings during cold weather and stored in their backpacks in class.

Backpacks/ Lunchbox

If students carry backpacks or book bags, they must be **CLEAR** so that the contents may be seen. Lunchboxes must be just large enough to carry a meal, if too large they may be subject for inspection.

IV. HEALTH AND WELLNESS

BRYSS complies with all federal and state law regarding student health and wellness (See: Section 1.9, Student Health and Wellness).

Immunizations

A student cannot be in school if he or she is not fully immunized. A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a notarized certificate or affidavit stating that, for medical or religious reasons, the student will not be immunized. The immunizations required are: diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles (rubella), mumps, rubella, varicella, hepatitis A & B series and MCV4.

Proof of immunization must be personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic, with a signature or rubber-stamp validation. In case of varicella (chicken pox), a signed statement, from the parent indicating the approximate month and year in which the student had the illness should be turned in with the immunization record.

Medications at School

It shall be standard procedure of BRYSS that medications brought from home may be administered by the school nurse or designated person during school hours under the rules and guidelines of the school. The school nurse will observe the following rules:

- Medications will be administered at school only if it cannot be administered at home.
- Medication administered at school must have a written request/authorization from the student's parent/guardian, must be in the original container and properly labeled.
- Written request from a parent or guardian shall contain:
 - The student's name
 - The name of the medication to be given
 - Date of permission
 - Reason for its use
 - Time of day the medication is to be given and
 - Signature of parent or legal guardian

The school reserves the right to limit the duration of parent-prescribed medication to five school days and/or requires a physician statement for continued use of any medication beyond a specified time period.

Medication must be from the United States. No medication from Mexico or foreign countries will be administered by school nurses or school personnel.

Medication must be brought and picked up by responsible adult. **It is against school rules for students to have medication in their possession.** Each case where a physician states a student can carry his own medications (Asthma inhalers) while in school shall be reviewed for safety and decision making with doctor's order, nurse, parent and administration.

The district does not provide medication of any kind to students. The parent/guardian will be contacted if a student is in need of medication during school hours.

Parents and students should be aware that state law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering any anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are physician-prescribed only.

Illness and Injury-Referral to Nurse

In case of illness or injury, a student will be cared for temporarily by the school nurse or a member of the school staff. School personnel will render first-aid treatment only. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the parents will be contacted. If parents are not available, the student will be taken by ambulance to the emergency room at the hospital. Current parent and emergency contact information must be on file at school as well as name and phone number of the student's family doctor. Parents are asked to please complete a nurse's card and return it to school at the beginning of the year.

Chronic Illnesses-Contagious Diseases

To protect students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases or conditions are not allowed to attend school while contagious. In the event or suspicion of a contagious disease, parents should inform the school nurse or principal. These diseases include: *Amebiasis, Hepatitis A Rubella (German Measles) Campylobacteriosis, Impetigo, Chicken Pox, Mononucleosis, Salmonellosis, Influenza, Typhoid Fever, Fifth Disease Measles (Rubeola), Scabies, Meningitis, Bacterial Shigellosis, Gastroenteritis, Viral Mumps, Streptococcal Disease.*

In case of illness or injury, a student will be cared for temporarily by the school nurse or a member of the school staff. School personnel will render first aid treatment only. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the parents will be contacted. If parents are not available, the student will be taken by ambulance to the emergency room at the hospital. Current parent and emergency contact information must be on file at school as well as name and phone number of the student's family doctor.

Medical Emergency

Parents will receive a nurse card for each student at the beginning of the school year or at the moment of registration. Parents are asked to please complete this form with updated information and return it to school.

It is imperative that the school has on file emergency contact information in the event a situation should arise where parents need to be contacted.

Notify the school immediately of any changes in address and phone numbers where parents or guardians can be located.

Social Emotional Support

Our school counselor implements a counseling program to enhance students' academic, career, and personal/social development. Social emotional learning (SEL) programs are implemented at individual, small group, and school-wide levels to help students thrive, socially, emotionally, and

academically. Our counseling program is associated with positive academic success and school behaviors.

Our middle school students will participate in the “Say Something” program to build a safer school culture and learn what warning signs to look for and how to intervene by telling a trusted adult or using an anonymous reporting system.

Our students will also be a part of our school’s “Operation Respect” group. This group is dedicated to changing the culture of our school to become a place where students do not tolerate bullying in any form.

Birthday Celebrations

Traditionally at BRYSS Academy, parents have helped celebrate children’s birthdays by bringing in cupcakes, candy bags, pizza, and other items to share with the class. However, giving the increasing number of children whose access to food is limited by allergies, dietary restrictions, or religious affiliation; Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, birthday celebrations will only be held on **FRIDAYS** and only a **cupcake or a healthy treat** will be allowed. No juices, individual water bottles are suggested.



V. STUDENT LIFE

Extra-Curricular

21CCLC / TX ACE

This program provides academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for students. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.

Clubs

Students participate in various after school clubs of their choice. They can choose from Digital Drawing, STEM, Musketeers, PLTW Flight & Space and Chess. Students also participate in sports like volleyball, soccer, track and basketball. A culinary club, "BRYSS Kitchen", is available for students. Students also participate in performing arts like guitar, music and dance classes.

STEM

Our students participate in various STEM clubs that enrich their STEM content knowledge through projects, activities, and investigations conducted safely and collaboratively in a blended social and academic environment. Clubs available are Coding, Lab Rats, Mathsketeers, Young Einsteins, Block Heads, Chess, and NBA Math Hoops.

BRYSS Academy also offers **PLTW** (Project Lead the Way) Clubs that provide transformative learning experiences for Kinder-8th students. Students participate in engaging, hands-on classroom activities that empower students to develop in-demand knowledge and skills they need to thrive. BRYSS offers PLTW Launch (K-5) and PLTW Gateway (6-8).

Schoolwide Discipline Plan

BRYSS Academy has high expectations for behavior. The plan provides a structure to support a safe school environment while helping children develop self-discipline, strong character, and a sense of responsibility. Our ultimate goal is to provide a safe, nurturing environment where students learn.

Goals

1. Respect every person.
2. Take responsibility for your choices and actions.
3. Build relationships with those around you.

We know and recognize that everyone can make mistakes. We will utilize them as learning opportunities.

Consequences

Phase I

1. Cooling-off time or "time-out."
2. Counseling by teachers, counselors, or administrative personnel.
3. Rewards for positive behavior.
4. Seating changes within the classroom.
5. Verbal correction.
6. Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process.
7. Students not wearing complete uniform may be asked to go to the office, call their parents and have alternative clothing brought from home or wear school provided clothing.

Phase II

1. Behavior contracts or individualized behavior management plans.
2. Removal from the classroom and/or placement in another classroom.
3. Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities.

Some behaviors require immediate referral to school administration.

1. Harassment & Bullying
2. Physical or Verbal Aggression
3. Dangerous Defiance (including computer system violations).
4. Possession of drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes.
5. Possession of weapons (firearm, knife, club, etc)
6. Vandalism

Phase III

1. In-School Suspension
2. Expulsion

VI. CAMPUS AND STUDENT SAFETY

Student safety on campus, at school-related events, and on district vehicles is a high priority of the campus. Although the school has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students and parents is essential to ensuring school safety.

For increased safety, a security officer is assigned to our campus daily. The officer assists administration in keeping our campus safe. Our gates will remain locked between 9:00 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. with the exception of one front gate.

Closed Campus

School security is an important element in our buildings. All outside doors will remain locked during the school hours and all visitors must be buzzed into our main office door to check-in. Some doors will be open before school and after school. All open doors will be monitored by staff.

Parent/Visitor Check-In

ALL visitors must provide an identification when they check-in at the office before walking on campus. Parent support is greatly appreciated as we strive to keep our students safe. Parents must report to the front office when they have a scheduled conference with their teacher. The teacher will report to the front office, or the parent will be escorted to the meeting place. Parents participating in our FACE program will report to the office and then proceed to our Parent Center.

Staff will stop anyone in the building not wearing a school visitor badge. If you are not wearing a visitor badge, you will be asked to return to the office to check-in.

Before leaving the school, visitors will need to report back to the Main Office to check-out.

Visitor Parking

It is permissible to park in the front parking spaces to drop off or pick up your student during school hours in both buildings. Only one front gate will be open for pick-ups and drop-offs during the school day.

Student Safety

Students must wear uniforms daily. Only clear backpacks will be allowed. Students will not use/have cell phones during the school day.

We will implement the "Say Something Program" this year. Students will learn to recognize warning signs of someone at risk of hurting themselves or others and how to say something to a trusted adult.

Desk and Locker Searches

Students should have no expectation of privacy in the contents of their backpacks, lockers, desks, or other school property. Students have full responsibility for the security of their lockers and desks and shall be held responsible for any prohibited items found in them.

VII. STUDENT CULTURE

BRYSS is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which the best teaching and learning may occur. Respect for self, others, and property are essential. Students who fail to demonstrate responsible, respectful, or productive behavior may be subject to consequences as described in the district handbook.

Expectations

Students are expected to avoid conduct that is likely to put them or others at risk. Students will follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Pledge, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers. Students should remain alert and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member. They must know emergency evacuation routes and signals. Students should immediately follow the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

Cell Phone/Electronic Device Guidelines

Cell phones will remain turned off and in backpacks all day. Students are prohibited from using phones during the school day. Devices may not be visible in the pocket of a jacket or pants; items must be completely put away and out of sight.

If a student uses a cellphone, school staff will collect the item and turn it in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return item to students at the end of the day or contact a legal guardian to pick up the item.

The use of mobile cellphones or any other device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in restroom areas or other sensitive areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event.

BRYSS Academy administration may search the device if there is reasonable cause to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation.

BRYSS Academy will not be responsible for damage to or loss or theft of confiscated items or unauthorized access to the device nor the data that resides therein. Students and legal guardians assume all risks associated with bringing a personal electronic device to a campus or school-related event.

In the event that your child needs to call home, the front office telephone will be available to use. In case of a family emergency, our office staff will give your child a message.

Consequences

BRYSS Academy will follow the district's Student Code of Conduct. The Code provides methods and options for managing students in the classroom, school grounds, disciplining students and preventing and intervening in student discipline problems.

Bullying Prevention

Operation Respect has been established at BRYSS to focus on the prevention of bullying. Clear rules on student conduct and strategies to maintain a positive, collaborative school climate are promoted. Students are provided with instruction and trainings that promote effective communication, conflict resolution, and character values education. All students at BRYSS are provided with mechanisms for reporting bullying or threats. BRYSS is committed to being a "Bullying Free Campus".

Student Voice

BRYSS Academy welcomes student's opinions in decisions about academic content, discipline, school culture, free time, and family partnerships. BRYSS is committed to regularly soliciting student feedback, including students in leadership teams and consider them as partners in our school.

Students will participate in surveys and circle discussions designed to connect students to their interests. They will receive feedback from administrators, teacher leads, counselor and teachers. Choice boards will be an integral part of classroom instruction. BRYSS is committed to offering a strong SEL (Social Emotional Learning) program to help students express their thoughts, ideas and opinions.



VIII. PARENT OPPORTUNITIES & EMPOWERMENT

Parent/Teacher Groups

BRYSS Academy's parent groups serve our parents, students, teachers, and faculty in various ways throughout the school year. All parents are encouraged to become a part of these – parent groups. You can contact us at Guadalupe.meneses@tejanocenter.org.

SDMC

Each school year, the SDMC (Site-Based Decision Making Committee) assists the principal in developing, reviewing, and revising the School Improvement Plan for the purpose of improving student performance for all student populations. The SDMC shall be involved in decisions in the area of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. The SDMC must approve the portions of the School Improvement Plan addressing campus staff development needs. A principal shall regularly consult the SDMC in the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the campus.

We welcome parent volunteers to serve in our SDMC. Please contact Maria Knosel, maria.knosel@tejanocenter.org, if you're interested in joining!

FACE Meetings

The need for a strong partnership between the school and families to educate our students is essential. Family engagement has a direct positive impact on a child's learning process.

Our families are invited to participate in various engagement opportunities offered through our Parent Center. Parents can participate in “**Padres Comprometidos**” weekly meetings, monthly “**Coffee with the Principal**” meetings, and **ACE 21st Century**, afterschool training sessions.



IX. SCHOOL-HOME COMMUNICATION

Blackboard Mass Communications

Blackboard system will be used to send emergency, attendance and general notifications from the school. Messages will be sent through phone calls, text messages and emails.

- **Emergency messages:** This category pertains to events that are affecting the safety of your child, an incident that is affecting normal operations of your child’s school day, or school closures due to inclement weather or other emergencies. **At least one phone number and email address are required and must be provided for these communications.**
- **Attendance messages:** These messages are automated and will be sent via phone call, text and email.
- **Other –** These are regular and the most common messages sent by campus administrators and the District. These notifications will pertain to campus events and information, as well as general notifications of campus incidents.

Website

Our school website is a great place to look for information you need the most. Our website compiles all of the most important information about our school and is always accessible. Our school website is at www.ryss.org/page/15 .

Social Media Platforms

BRYSS Academy has a Facebook and Instagram page. They are vital parts of our communication with parents and the community. Our social media platforms have frequent posts and content. Updates and alerts are posted on Facebook and Instagram for parents to access immediately.

Facebook: BRYSS Academy @RYSS Brownsville

Instagram: bryss_academy

School-Home

BRYSS administration and staff believe communication with parents is vital for students to be successful in school. BRYSS utilizes a variety of ways to maintain communication with parents – **Homework Folder, website, marquee, postal service (mail), Monthly Newsletters, emails, phone-out system, agenda/planner,** etc. In order to provide the most effective and timely communication, it is imperative that parents inform the school office immediately of any change of address or phone (cell and home) contact information. BRYSS parents are encouraged to schedule a conference with teachers during their conference period but are asked to please schedule the conference in advance.

X. Acknowledgement Forms

2023-2024 District & Campus Parent-Student Handbook

REQUIRED FORM

The following form must be completed by students and parents and returned to the school by the 2023-2024 first day of school. If this form is not included with this handbook, please request a copy of it from the school office.

- **Acknowledgement of Distribution of the 2023-2024 Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success Campus and District Parent-Student Handbook Form**



Acknowledgment of Distribution of the 2022-2023 RYSS District and Campus Parent-Student Handbook

My child and I have been offered the option to receive a paper copy or to electronically access at the school website www.ryss.org the 2023-2024 District & Campus Parent-Student Handbook.

I have chosen to:

Accept responsibility for accessing the Parent-Student Handbook by visiting the Web address listed above.

or

Receive a paper copy of the Parent-Student Handbook.

I understand that the Student Handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined here. If I have any questions regarding this Handbook, I should direct those questions to my child's campus principal.

Printed name of student

Signature of student

Signature of parent

Date

Teacher Name: _____

Grade: _____

