

Black, Maria

<b>Page: Basic Information</b>
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<b>Page: Support</b>
<b>Letter of Introduction</b> <p>Maria Black serves as the Practical Nursing Administrative Assistant at Canadian Valley Technology Center and has been a dedicated member of the CVTech family for more than 20 years. A proud graduate of the district herself, Maria's journey reflects resilience, growth, and service. She moved to the United States from Mexico at age 12 as an ESL student and attended high school within the CVTech district. As a junior, she enrolled in the Medical Office program, later serving as a student assistant before being hired as an Instructional Assistant upon graduation. Over time, she advanced into technical and administrative roles while earning an Associate of Applied Science degree from Redlands Community College and a Bachelor's degree from the University of Central Oklahoma.</p> <p>In her current role, Maria manages attendance, student files, immunization records, board certification applications, purchasing, and day-to-day operational needs for the Practical Nursing program. However, her impact extends far beyond administrative excellence. She is an unofficial translator and cultural liaison for Spanish-speaking students and families, helping remove language barriers that might otherwise limit access to CTE programs. As a fluent Spanish speaker and notary public, she has assisted families with enrollment documentation, translated critical materials, and supported communication during meetings to ensure all voices are heard.</p> <p>Maria embodies the spirit of the Kaleidoscope Award through her commitment to access, equity, service-learning, and student-centered advocacy. She enthusiastically attended the Kaleidoscope Symposium for the past 2 years as part of her professional development and presented what she learned from that conference to the district's Practical Nursing group to support colleagues in learning more about diversity and inclusion. She facilitates meaningful community service partnerships through HOSA, supports students with disabilities by proactively seeking accessibility training, and serves as a trusted advocate and safe space for students navigating personal and academic challenges. Her work reflects empathy, cultural awareness, and an unwavering dedication to student success—often well beyond her formal job description.</p>

**Support**

Maria Black exemplifies the heart of the Kaleidoscope Award through her unwavering commitment to student access, inclusion, and service—consistently going beyond her job description to remove barriers and create opportunity.

Maria's impact is most evident in the way she advances access and equity within CTE. As a former ESL student herself, she understands firsthand the challenges that language and cultural differences can present in educational settings. Because of this lived experience, she has become an essential cultural liaison within the district. Spanish-speaking parents and students are routinely referred to her for assistance. She translates documents, supports parent meetings, clarifies enrollment requirements, and ensures that families feel heard and respected.

A few years ago, when a new program enrolled several students born in Mexico with Spanish-language birth certificates, Maria used her fluency and status as a notary public to translate and notarize documents—eliminating what could have been a significant barrier to enrollment. She also collaborates with the district's Communications and Marketing team to proofread Spanish-language materials, ensuring accuracy and clarity before publication.

Maria's advocacy extends beyond language access. When a student with a visual impairment enrolled in the Practical Nursing program this year, she proactively sought training and resources. After attending accessibility sessions at the Kaleidoscope Symposium, she implemented practical strategies to improve digital and document accessibility and helped secure necessary adaptive equipment. She ensures accommodations are not only available but thoughtfully implemented—booking quiet spaces, preparing alternative formats, and serving as a compassionate liaison between student and faculty. Her efforts demonstrate a deep understanding of Facilities, Equipment, Technology, and Materials within the High-Quality CTE Framework.

She also plays a key role in Data and Program Improvement by assisting instructors in collecting required follow-up data, often navigating language barriers to reach families and ensure accurate reporting.

Maria's influence extends beyond operational excellence into student leadership and community engagement. She has led and expanded service-learning initiatives for HOSA students, strengthening both CTSO engagement and Business & Community Partnerships.

As part of her personal professional development plan, she has taken steps to attend the Kaleidoscope Symposium in Oklahoma City for the past two years. She extended that learning by sharing out the information she gleaned with her district professional learning community, providing resources and information as well as facilitating profitable conversations on diversity and inclusion.

After learning about Tim Tebow's "Night to Shine" event—a prom experience for individuals with disabilities—Maria worked with campus leadership to transform it into a professional learning opportunity for Practical Nursing students. She advocated for participation to count toward instructional hours, recognizing the profound value of experiential learning. For four consecutive years, she has served as the campus liaison, coordinating logistics and engaging students from multiple campuses. Approximately a dozen students participated last year alone.

She similarly partnered with the Beautiful Day Foundation, which hosts monthly birthday celebrations for underserved elementary students. What began as her personal volunteer effort became a structured service opportunity for CTE students. She coordinated with campus leadership and event organizers to provide students the chance to serve and develop empathy, cultural awareness, and interpersonal skills directly transferable to healthcare careers.

Maria also serves on the campus student involvement committee and the district Safety Committee, contributing to discussions that enhance student engagement and campus security. She participates in recruitment initiatives such as Reality Check events for 8th graders, strengthening the CTE pipeline.

Colleagues describe Maria as a safe place for students—someone who listens, advocates, and encourages them through personal and academic challenges. Her office is often where students go when they need support. She celebrates their milestones and applauds as they cross the stage at graduation.

Her service philosophy is not driven by job description but by heart. She leads by example, encouraging students to give back to their communities and modeling empathy, cultural awareness, and servant leadership daily.

Maria's career reflects the very essence of the Kaleidoscope Award: diversity, inclusion, compassion, and action. Her contributions span Access & Equity, CTSO engagement, Community Partnerships, Accessibility, and Program Improvement. Through her dedication, countless students—particularly those navigating language, cultural, or personal barriers—have found not only opportunity, but belonging.

**Page: Photo**

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**Photo**

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