

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

---

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Stephen Sweeney

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

Official School Name Evergreen Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3010 Fowler Road

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

City San Jose State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 95135-1017

County Santa Clara County

Telephone (408) 270-4966 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL http://ev.schoolloop.com/ E-mail ssweeney@eesd.org

Twitter Handle \_\_\_\_\_ Facebook Page \_\_\_\_\_ Google+ \_\_\_\_\_

YouTube/URL \_\_\_\_\_ Blog \_\_\_\_\_ Other Social Media Link \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Mrs. Kathy Gomez E-mail kgomez@eesd.org

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

District Name Evergreen School District Tel. (408) 270-6800

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Bonnie Gold-Mace

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

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

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## Part I – Eligibility Certification

---

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

---

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 15 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 18 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
  - Suburban
  - Small city or town in a rural area
  - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	8	14	8
<b>K</b>	36	44	80
<b>1</b>	43	43	86
<b>2</b>	45	56	101
<b>3</b>	54	58	112
<b>4</b>	73	58	131
<b>5</b>	61	64	125
<b>6</b>	74	55	129
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	394	392	786

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 78 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 3 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 7 % White
  - 1 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 6%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	26
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	21
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	47
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	800
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.059
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 16%  
124 Total number ELL

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

Bengali, Cantonese, Farsi, Filipino, Gujarati, Hindi, Japanese, Kannada, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Marathi, Punjabi, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8%  
Total number students who qualify: 67
8. Students receiving special education services: 6%  
46 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 11 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 1 Orthopedic Impairment
- 3 Other Health Impaired
- 19 Specific Learning Disability
- 9 Speech or Language Impairment
- 1 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 1 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	31
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	1
Paraprofessionals	2
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 25:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	97%	98%	98%	98%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

The Evergreen community respectfully nurtures and engages each student in realistic, meaningful, and collaborative learning.

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

## PART III – SUMMARY

---

Our vision states, “In collaboration with all vested members of our school community, we consistently work to achieve academic excellence for all students, celebrate and appreciate our students’ diversity, promote a positive school climate, and maintain an emotionally, intellectually, socially, and physically safe school environment.” Evergreen Elementary School is not just a neighborhood school; it is a community. The 2015/2016 school year marks the diamond celebration of Evergreen Elementary School. Over the past sixty years, we grew from being the flagship school of the district to the largest of fifteen elementary schools of Evergreen School District. A school more than 60 years old often shows its age. However, Evergreen underwent a significant renovation in 2010 that added nine new classrooms, a state of the art multi-use room and upgraded landscape, giving the whole campus a more modern look and feel. Evergreen Elementary School will also build a new Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) classroom within a year.

We serve 789 students from transitional kindergarten to sixth grade. Just as the population of California has changed over the past sixty years, Evergreen School’s population has also changed. The ethnicity of our school population includes 38% Asian Indian students, 19% Vietnamese and 17% Chinese. The balance of ethnicities represented on our campus comprise American Indian or Alaskan Native, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Cambodian, Tahitian, Filipino, Hispanic, Black or African American and White.

A range of staff that includes certificated teaching staff, classified staff, School Psychologist, Speech Pathologist, Marriage and Family Therapist, Resource Specialist, English Language Assistant, Occupational Therapist, Instructional Coach, and Adaptive Physical Education Specialist, serve, educate, and support the children of Evergreen School. These staff members support the development of all aspects of student academics. Equally important to an academically successful student is one that is taught and nurtured emotionally, socially and physically. Having these many specialized resources on campus affords us the opportunity to educate the whole child.

Just as the California State Board of Education (SBE) made the decision of adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010, Evergreen School transitioned to a new principal. What an overwhelming challenge, yet an amazing experience, for a new principal. The principal led the charge to bring change to a school where California’s standards were hailed for their rigor, and set high expectations for all students who achieve those goals. Together, with the Instructional Coach, the teachers participated in professional development that increased capacity for helping students achieve proficiency with CCSS and 21st century skills.

Our experienced teaching staff shows a positive growth mindset in their approach to the Common Core State Standards. They examine and implement strategies necessary to teach the new standards and skills using collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and communication (the four C’s). These skills prepare students to act as successful global citizens of the 21st century.

Our teachers especially hold to the belief that students need a strong educational foundation. They strive to make sure each student holds the basic skills needed for success in their academic future. For those students that struggle to achieve grade level standards expectations or who experience difficulty fitting in socially, staff members create a safety net with a variety of interventions.

The natural roles between staff and parents play equally in educating the whole student. The parents and community members highly value teaching the whole child. While they engage at different levels, most families choose to support their child at home and assist them with homework, making sure the student receives proper nutrition and sleep, and gets to school on time. A weekly newsletter, school-wide emails, and reminders on the brand new state-of-the-art marquee in the front of the school inform parents of school events. Teachers communicate with parents through emails, telephone calls, in-person conferences and updates on progress through progress reports, and trimester report cards. Parents volunteer on field trips, in the classroom, and transport baggage to science camp for fifth grade students, and as Parent Teacher

Association (PTA) Executive Board Members. Many parents also spend time on campus as full-time volunteers to support our staff.\

r staff and community work each day to uphold our values. We encourage, promote, and foster the inclusion of differences. Students use the four C's to demonstrate academic excellence. Parents and teachers help foster positivity. Staff and students embrace differences and errors for their ability to help us learn and grow. We model coping skills, and support problem solving with warmth and care.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

---

### 1. Core Curriculum:

The way instruction is delivered to our students has changed since the implementation of the Common Core and has inspired our value statement “Students use the four C’s to demonstrate academic excellence.”

Students thrive on the cusp of innovation, exploration of new ideas, and examination of endless boundaries. An example of innovation comes from a fifth grade class. Students participate in the project, “What Makes Evergreen Special.” In this project students work collaboratively to change lyrics to popular songs to create special Evergreen jingles. Then they use a program thru Apple Computer called Garageband to make musical compositions.

Through an intricate adoption process, teachers selected inquiry based instructional materials that teach critical thinking in math and language arts. Students in all grades develop multiple strategies to solve problems and recognize connections between mathematical concepts. Sixth grade teachers prepare students for college entry with content that encourages students to communicate effectively and work in collaborative teams daily to solve in-depth, realistic word problems. For example, when learning about integers, students worked together to determine distances in a “frog-jumping contest,” using number lines to demonstrate understanding. Fourth and fifth grade classes learned and reviewed concepts in a “number corner.” The number corner encourages classroom discussions and builds on previous material. The curriculum provides hands-on concept development and dives deeper into fewer topics.

The language arts curriculum integrates science, social studies, and math within text passages. In 5th grade, students read *Bridge to Terabithia*. While discussing the literary elements, students were challenged to build a bridge that would allow characters to cross safely into Terabithia. Teachers encourage students to read for understanding from texts and use inferencing skills to comprehend complex material that leads to lively classroom discussions. Teachers differentiate reading instruction with small group instruction. Teachers scaffold student writing instruction with graphic organizers and sentence frames. *Step Up to Writing* provides graphic organizers to students in several grades. Students in many grades follow stop light color coding of sentences, and use common vocabulary such as hook, power outline, and super sentences. First grade students participate in small group or team discussions and evaluate peers on a communication rubric that consists of facial gestures.

Teachers develop students communication skills through the use of a variety of discussion techniques. Sentence frames provide support to English Learners (EL) during small group and class discussions. Students review norms and expectations for discussion regularly. Teachers pose thoughtful questions about all curricular areas. These questions assist students in engaging with the content.

A STEAM teacher provides additional support to students with science, technology, engineering, art and math concepts using New Generation Science Standards to enhance lessons. Many classes participated in a “mystery box” lesson that introduced the scientific method. In sixth grade, students designed hot air balloons to learn about thermal expansion. In second grade, students created bridges in a design challenge. The STEAM teacher demonstrated the water cycle with the Special Day Class (SDC).

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) bridges the path between preschool and kindergarten and gives students a strong foundation for future school success. The TK curriculum framework builds on the California Preschool Learning Foundations and CCSS. Preschool children demonstrate skills with appropriate support in four domains: social-emotional development, language and literacy, English language development, and Mathematics. Students learn through a play-based approach that allows opportunities for social interaction and relationship skills. Transitional kindergarten teachers work collaboratively to develop thematic standard aligned units of study to support our youngest learners prepare for the beginning of their school career. The results of having a TK program are astounding and back the current research on early childhood learning. Our kindergarten teachers have noted the children coming into kindergarten from transitional kindergarten have a stronger foundation, more background knowledge as well as more prior life experiences.

Transitional kindergarten students come to kindergarten with the knowledge of classroom structure and they know the rules and expectations of the classroom. Since our transitional kindergarten students and kindergarten students share the same area of the school, kindergarten teachers are able to get to know more about students' strengths and areas they need support as compared to the meeting the student for the very first time on the first day of school. Additionally, kindergarten teachers have noticed students attending our transitional kindergarten program being more socially mature, emotionally ready and more developmentally ready for the challenges of kindergarten. The transitional kindergarten program at our school has had a tremendous impact on our students success in starting their school career.

Over the past several years of transitioning from California State Standards to the Common Core, the way core curriculum has changed. Teachers teach a strong foundation of basics skills while at the same time ask students to innovate, integrate and collaborate using inquiry based instructional materials. STEAM education is the latest strategy we are preparing our students to learn in the twenty-first century.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Evergreen School provides several opportunities for student growth above and beyond the core curriculum. The additional support provided to our students is done thoughtfully so students have the best chance to thrive academically, socially, emotionally and physically.

We encourage students to take care of their bodies inside and out. All students participate in Physical Education (PE) regularly. Our second and fourth graders participate in our "Too Good for Drugs" curriculum. Red Ribbon Week reminds students that, "drug free is the way to be." Fifth grade students participate in the annual California Fitness Test and consistently exceed fitness targets. In 2015, 89% of fifth grade students were in the healthy fitness zone, 25% more than the statewide average. Girls in third through sixth grade participate in "Girls on the Run," a program empowering young girls to believe in themselves, set and reach goals they might not think possible, and participate in a culminating 5K run. Our staff believes physical fitness is essential for a successful student.

Evergreen School celebrates a partnership with Starting Arts, a drama production company. Our school invites all students to try out for the annual production. Each year students perform in a new production, this year students will bring Aladdin Jr. to our stage.

The second grade teachers produce a play each year. These plays have become a seven-year tradition in which younger students look forward to participating. Older students enjoy watching and reliving favorite memory of second grade. Our PTA hosts an annual talent show where students share a special talent with the community.

Our staff promotes many uses of technology. In the shared computer lab we have 34 Mac desktops, 3 laptop carts with 32 Macbooks each, 1 laptop cart with 25 Macbooks, 2 iPad carts with 34 iPads, and every classroom has 4 desktop computers in every classroom. All grade levels attend the computer lab or use a laptop cart once a week to delve further into the curriculum. In the classrooms students conduct research on iPads and present their findings to classmates.

Teachers use a variety of technology to support student learning. TK classes use Touchtronics to support ELA and Math. First graders use Storybook Weaver and Toontastic for storytelling. Second grade students use Kidspiration to create concept maps and outlines before writing. Students in third through sixth grades have coding lessons with Code.org. Third and sixth graders create video games in Scratch. Our speech therapist uses various applications to enhance social skills lessons, and language and reasoning skills. Students watch video clips to understand facial expressions, body language, tone of voice, and non-literal language for pragmatics.

Several students participate in a community funded district band program that practices weekly. Students in fifth and sixth grade perform two concerts a year, one in winter and one in spring.

Art helps students with critical thinking, fine motor skills, and understanding culture. We offer art prep classes for upper grades. Students spend 50 minutes a week analyzing, interpreting, and creating art. Art prep gives our upper grade teachers time to develop curriculum, and provides our students with a well-rounded education.

A variety of school-wide assemblies addressing topics such as music, hands-on science, and motivational speakers help students learn about our community. The California Dairy Council brought a cow for students to learn about the anatomy of a cow, dairy foods, agricultural contributions, and nutrition.

Grade levels invite community groups to visit. The San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose Water, and Our City Forest visited our campus. Some grade levels attend local community theater performance off campus to expose students to the performing arts.

School doesn't start or stop when bells ring. Evergreen extends student learning to enrich physical, social, and emotional development. Many clubs appeal to a variety of student interests and often involve local community members. The Green Team encourages gardening and composting. Students in the Yearbook Club produce the annual yearbook. The crocheting club helps students develop social and motor skills. Students in the award winning Math Olympiad, compete against students from around the country with support from parent leaders. These clubs encourage our students to tolerate different perspectives and promote positivity throughout campus.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Teachers differentiate instruction to promote student achievement and academic excellence. Instruction at all grade levels incorporates a balance of direct instruction and investigation.

Several teachers adopted Project Based Learning (PBL) strategies early in the CCSS transition. These teachers implemented high quality projects that helped students seek solutions to real world problems. Projects integrate standards from ELA, Science, Social Studies, and Math. In first grade, students learned about the plant lifecycles by creating a Farmer's Market. Students organized a business plan, presented to investors, and sold plants at Open House. Inspired by the work of early adopters, each grade level uses the knowledge of the CCSS they developed over the past three years to develop PBL units. Each grade level will study a topic such as plant lifecycles, water cycle, earthquake safety, state parks, and ways to deepen their understanding of the concept.

Teachers use heterogeneous grouping for small groups. In fifth grade, peer tutors help students struggling with word problems. Teachers plan guided reading with flexible groups based on data gathered from assessments.

The Student Study Team (SST) listens to teacher and parent concerns, and provides instructional and behavioral strategies for student success. These may include chunking information, step-by-step directions or alternative furniture. Students use sensory interventions such as stress balls, and movement breaks. Students with motor skills deficiencies use adaptive grips and scissors. Students participate in activities that support social skills development and communication. Strategies include social stories, zones of regulation, and de-escalation techniques. Our school psychologist opens her classroom, during morning recess and at lunch, for students to play games. Our parent Fun Visors took over this program to continue supporting our students.

In class, teachers intervene by differentiating learning. Students experiencing difficulty in writing dictate thoughts to the teacher. Students with reading difficulty listen to weekly stories with story discs and headphones. Students with visual processing needs use an open dyslexic font or a colored overlay to add support. Applications such as Starfall, Spelling City, and Mathplayground help students master grade level standards at their own pace.

First through sixth grade students identified as "at risk" participate in language arts and math intervention. Struggling primary readers participate in the Ready Readers program for phonics support. We have an

English Language (EL) Development program with an Instructional Aide to assist our ELLs. Last year 40% of EL students were reclassified as proficient ELs.

#### 4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Our students continuously score well on state assessments. Our school is a consistently high performing school that does not show more than a ten percent difference between our overall achievement on spring assessments to that of our significant subgroup. In 2015, 78% (in ELA) and 82% (in math) of our students met or exceeded standards on the Smarter Balanced test. This is compared to our district average of 62% (in ELA) and 57% (in math), and to the state average of 44% (in ELA) and 33% (in math). These scores follow our previous pattern of scoring above our district and state averages. We field tested the Smarter Balanced Test in 2014, and did not receive scores. In 2013, 90% (in ELA) and 94% (in math) of our students were proficient and advanced. In 2012, 89% (in ELA) and 91% (in math) of our students were proficient and advanced. While we notice a slight dip in scores in 2015, we are pleased with the high baseline established on the new state testing system. As our students and teachers improve proficiency with Common Core practices, we expect to see scores equivalent to the success on the previous state testing system.

To maintain high levels of achievement, teachers collect formative and summative data. Formative assessments include checking for understanding through the use of questioning techniques, classwork and homework, and quizzes. Primary classes use exit tickets to determine areas of focus for students. Mid-module assessments provide teachers with an opportunity to see student needs, and address them before the end of the unit.

In order to identify student-writing needs, teachers collaboratively develop a common writing assessment every trimester. After the assessment is delivered, teachers work in their PLCs to determine the strengths and needs of student writing. In sixth grade, teachers studied the results from a trimester writing prompt and discovered students needed to work on differentiating between persuasive and argumentative writing. Together the teachers created a series of lessons that helped students identify key features of argument writing.

Teachers use a variety of assessments to show student growth throughout the year. All assessment information goes home to families through mid-trimester progress reports or end of trimester report cards. Teachers and parents conference in November. Parents are informed weekly through Friday Folders. Teachers also make themselves available throughout the school year for Parent/Teacher conferences when concerns need to be addressed.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

---

### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Students participate in school-sponsored activities that support their social, emotional and physical development. In the spring, students take the “YouthTruth” survey, to report on their school experience. In 2015, 74% of students reported they think their teacher cares about them. When asked, “Does your teacher treat you with respect?” 80% of students indicated, “Yes, very often.”

Each school year, students elect peers to the Student Council. Once elected to the student council as an officer or classroom representative, students accept the responsibility to foster a positive and spirited school climate. Student council engages with local organizations such as Second Harvest Food Bank and the U.S. Marines by having students collect canned food and toys for less fortunate community members.

At the end of each school year, third through fifth grade teachers recommend two students to serve on our Expect Respect Student Leadership Team (ERSLT). One of our sixth grade teachers leads this group to brainstorm ideas to make our school a “bully free” zone and to create an all-inclusive campus. Three years ago, the ERSLT introduced Fitness Fridays. Every Friday, during lunch the ERSLT walk around the track and invite other students to join them. Students also join ERSLT for a Move and Groove Dance party. Last year, they partnered with an artist from the community to paint a mural at the front of our school titled “Bold Spirits, Caring Hearts.”

Project Cornerstone’s research based ABC (Asset Building Champions) Reader program brings parent volunteers into every classroom monthly. The program uses stories to teach students about respect and behavior expectations among all members of the school community. Instructors provide students with skills to handle bullying, and stand up if they see someone else being bullied. The program helps students feel there is at least one adult on campus they can turn to if they have a problem.

One of the upper grade students’ most popular traditions is participating in the Spring Basketball League. Three teachers volunteer to supervise fourth, fifth and sixth grades playing basketball during lunch which culminates in students voting for top players to participate in an All Star Game against staff.

Educating the whole child is an important quality to our success. In addition to academic success, we nurture the growth of students socially, emotionally and physically by offering a wide variety of opportunities.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Without the Evergreen parent and community support, the staff would not be as successful in supporting the students’ academic, social, and emotional needs.

The staff values the importance of families and community in the academic, social, and emotional success of our students. Parents participate in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the School Site Council (SSC) and the English Learners Advisory Committee (ELAC). Parent volunteers frequently visit classrooms, facilitate small groups, help with clerical tasks, assist in the computer lab, or chaperoning field trips. Parents meet on campus to plan and prepare community activities and fundraisers.

While developing Project Based Learning units, teachers connect with experts in the community. In fifth grade, a local university professor will provide feedback on bridge design. In sixth grade, a scientist from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) will provide feedback on student prototypes for earthquake safety. This feedback will help our students deepen their understanding of concepts.

Our parent-led ABC Reader program improves the climate on our campus. Parent leaders train other volunteers monthly on program curriculum. Volunteers plan and deliver lessons in each classroom once a month. Because of this program, students, staff, and community share common vocabulary about bullying

and school climate. One of our core values is embracing differences on our campus. International Day is an annual event that PTA hosts. This event encourages family involvement, and gives students a positive cultural identity. The PTA recruits volunteers to create a booth that displays information about different countries. Many booths include a taste of native food and a craft project. Each student gets a stamp in a passport book. Once filled, they receive a small prize. An entertaining World Showcase Talent Show concludes the event. The show includes cultural dances, music and song. Families leave International Day with a sense of pride and value as an important member of the Evergreen School family.

PTA plays a vital role supporting students and staff. They host a welcome back to school breakfast, and a direct donation drive that supports the staff's work during the school year. The funds support teacher budgets, technology on campus, assemblies, field trips and several other initiatives. The PTA assists with supporting the purchase of library resources. They also encourage community building through activities such as bi-monthly movie nights and end of the year school carnival.

### 3. Professional Development:

Professional learning communities (PLCs) is vital to our professional learning as a staff that influences the success of our students. Seven teachers and the instructional coach attended training on facilitating PLCs. This training equips teacher leaders with skills that improve the functionality and efficiency of our teams.

PLCs can follow several cycle structures. In a lesson study, teachers review a teaching strategy and its impact on student learning. In 3rd grade, teachers wanted to improve class discussions. The team observed a lesson that incorporated "Accountable Talk" sentence frames. Following the observation, teachers discussed strategies. All teachers applied the strategy in their own class to improve the quality of student in-class discussions.

Many teams used a curriculum study structure as they implement new CCSS textbooks. Teachers reviewed new materials and calibrated expectations for student learning incorporating previously used materials and online information. When primary teachers implemented Eureka Math, PLC time was dedicated to review student work and determine areas of focus.

When the leadership team decided to implement PBL at all grade levels, the principal and instructional coach organized release time for every grade level to use for planning. The instructional coach worked with teachers to facilitate the planning of PBL units. Once planned, staff met to share their plans and gather feedback from one another.

Teachers have the opportunity to research best teaching practices through district workshops and conferences. Our teachers attend training events on several different topics. The Buck Institute for Education provides PBL training. The New Teacher Center provides PLC facilitator training. The Twilight Series and 21st Century Learning Conference, brings together teacher leaders and experts to share teaching techniques. Several teachers attend these trainings and share strategies with other staff members.

Many teachers attended a Singapore Math conference to support our transition to Common Core. Our second grade team implemented new strategies they learned. Their excitement with new techniques spread throughout the primary classrooms. As a result, teachers from other grades attended a second conference.

In the fall of 2014 and 2015, teachers attended the Fall CUE conference. Teachers learned strategies for using Google Apps, iPads, and integrating technology into our curriculum. Again, teachers returned from the conference and shared strategies with colleagues.

Student focused Professional Learning Communities comprise the backbone of our Professional Development. PLCs allow teachers the time needed to research and collaborate around implementation of best practices.

#### 4. School Leadership:

The culture of any school stems from the connectedness of its teachers and the decisions and actions of its leaders. In 2012, the principal instituted the Fish! Philosophy that provides context for a fun work environment and creates a culture where people choose to bring their best to work. We have a Sunshine Committee that organizes a monthly lunch.

The leadership team at Evergreen Elementary does not just include the Principal and the Instructional Coach, but rather encompasses the teaching staff as stakeholders for important decisions and input on key elements of the collaborative culture and professional learning community.

When Evergreen was chosen as the site of a STEAM lab by the district, the principal and Instructional Coach determined that it was important for teachers to see STEAM education in action. In September, teachers toured 4 campuses across the Bay Area. At the end of the day, teachers came together and shared their ideas and inspiration. Teachers later spent an afternoon at RAFT (Resource Area for Teachers) experiencing different STEAM activities. The Instructional Coach brought RAFT leaders on-site to lead teachers through a Design Challenge, and help them develop design challenge practices for their own classrooms. The effect of this work is seen in the PBL units teachers are planning in the spring.

The introduction and reinforcement of programs, methods and philosophies start with the principal, who subscribes to a shared leadership philosophy. He uses a variety of techniques to gather teacher input and support. He acts as a lead learner, participating with teachers in professional development opportunities and testing new ideas. To fully engage teachers in key decisions, he invites feedback from the entire staff and asks small groups to participate in discussions and asks them to communicate to the large group. The School Enrichment Activity (SEA) program is one example. The program includes a wide variety of on campus activities taking place during and after school. Teachers willingly take on the leadership of these programs, including yearbook committee, lunchtime sports competitions, Science Night, and Girls on the Run, just to name a few.

Shared leadership is one of the keys to our success. School leadership includes the teaching staff making important instructional decisions as well as identifying components to our instructional program to drive the success of our students.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

---

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) is one practice that contributes to our school's success in providing students 21st Century knowledge and skills.

In 2014 we set school-wide norms, followed by specific grade level norms such as being open to others' viewpoints and respecting confidentiality. We learned about the inquiry cycle and how to write inquiry questions. Teachers asked if their students could demonstrate the ability to clearly and precisely construct viable arguments to support their own reasoning and critique the reasoning of others.

During our first inquiry cycle, we found that grade level teams had difficulty finding inquiry questions deep enough to develop with PLC study. We developed a site-wide inquiry question. "How will students' 21st Century Skills improve with intentional teacher planning as evidenced by the Evergreen Learning Expectations Tool?" Grade level teams created inquiry questions to address our site-wide question. With this focus during PLCs, classrooms began a shift from teacher directed lessons, to collaborative student directed work. Teachers reviewed student work and changed practices to support grade level needs. In first grade, teachers investigated how to improve student collaboration and led students through the process of presenting information to others. Students received a communication score with a communication rubric. Teachers found that students improved their communication skills throughout the inquiry cycle.

Last year the teaching staff and principal evaluated our PLC work using a rubric to evaluate our collaborative culture, action research, continuous improvement, and focus on results. We noticed the need to strengthen shared values. As a result, we developed the following shared values: (1) students use the 4Cs to demonstrate academic excellence (2) encourage, promote, foster, inclusion of differences, (3) parents and teachers help foster positivity, (4) embrace differences and errors for their ability to help us learn and grow, (5) model coping skills and support problem solving with warmth and care.

Grade level PLCs meet regularly to review student work and teaching strategies. Teachers learn from one another and collaborate to improve instructional methods. For example, first grade teachers noticed improvement in their students' ability to evaluate listening and speaking skills and being mindful of rubric requirements. Fifth grade teachers developed rubrics for students to use in writing which increased the quality of student writing, editing and revising skills.

Staff development supports best practices by identifying specific student needs. PLC meetings, cross grade level collaboration, workshops, and training help teachers move students towards academic success.