

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 [X] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Denise Michele Patton

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

Official School Name San Jose Charter Academy

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2021 West Alwood Street

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

City West Covina State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 91790-3259

County Los Angeles

Telephone (626) 856-1693 Fax (626) 480-1275

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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*Dr. Denise Patton E-mail denise.patton@sjcharter.com

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

District Name San Jose Charter Academy Tel. (626) 856-1693

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 Mr. Bradley Manning

(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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
PreK	14	8	14
K	60	72	132
1	70	62	132
2	69	63	132
3	66	66	132
4	66	70	136
5	65	71	136
6	63	73	136
7	65	70	135
8	62	74	136
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	600	629	1229

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 16 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 76 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 5 % White
 - 0 % 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: 2%

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	15
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	22
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	1228
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.018
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
62 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 47 %
Total number students who qualify: 572

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
109 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.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>26</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>13</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>61</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 18
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	5
Classroom teachers	56
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	3
Paraprofessionals	9
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 27:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	97%	98%	97%	98%	97%
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.

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

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. 2009

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

In partnership with parents and community, prepare our students with the skills necessary to thrive and positively impact the global community through the 21st century.

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

Students are selected through a lottery process.

PART III – SUMMARY

San Jose Charter Academy (SJCA) is located in West Covina, California; a town considered to be a suburban city within the grasp of Los Angeles, but having an extensive business presence in the Valley. SJCA has a Transition Kindergarten (TK) through 8th grade enrollment of 1230 students with approximately 2400 students on the waiting list. Our student population is predominantly Hispanic, but includes a variety of other ethnicities. Established as a charter school in 1998, SJCA has worked intentionally and purposefully in providing students with an education that prepares them for high school and beyond. Our vision speaks to our efforts in recognizing that our students need an education that includes not only superior academic curriculum and instruction, but access to technology and its integration. In addition, our school provides programs and resources addressing our students' socioemotional needs...crucial for educating the whole child.

As you enter our school, you are greeted by students who smile readily, with enthusiastic and energetic teachers vigorously engaged in current best practices designed to reach all learners. As you walk through our campus, you are delighted to find brightly lit classrooms filled with student work. Student engagement in their learning is a non-negotiable. Our staff receives a variety of professional development opportunities geared towards strategies on how to keep students effectively engaged.

Unique in school design and organizational structure, our school offers students and parents a unique educational opportunity. To better meet the needs of our students, our school is divided into smaller academies – Primary (K-2), Elementary (3-5), and Junior Academy (6-8). Within this structure “Houses” of teachers and students are grouped, which creates the feeling of smaller school communities. These Houses of teachers are supported by a number of teacher leaders throughout the school. (Lead teachers, grade level coordinators, and curriculum coordinators.)

Students attending SJCA attend 7.5 hours of school daily, 7:45a.m. - 3:15p.m., 185 school days per year. TK and kindergarten students attend 6.5 hours of school daily. Students have access to a rigorous standards-based curriculum that is far more than just traditional academics. In the two major core areas of reading and math, instruction is delivered using standards-based, aligned curriculum selected after careful research and evaluation. Students also participate in a comprehensive and articulated hands-on science program, as well as a literature and project-based social science program. Writing is not a stand alone subject. It is woven throughout every subject area in the school. In addition to the above core curricular areas, students receive extensive instruction in music, art, and physical fitness. A “0 period” Spanish class incorporating the Rosetta Stone on-line program is available to 7th and 8th grade students. Our Character and Ethics program is built on the foundation of our eight core values: Wisdom, Justice, Courage, Compassion, Hope, Respect, Responsibility, and Integrity. We also support our 6th – 8th grade students with Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens program.

Interwoven throughout curriculum and instruction is our school's technology component. Every teacher and paraprofessional are provided with his/her own laptop, as well as all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. In addition, all 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classroom have 1:1 iPad access. Our school houses an 80 seat iPad computer lab, and a 34 station PC lab. One unique aspect involving technology is our Customized Learning block, which is a 50-minute daily period built into the schedule for the purpose of providing students with the opportunity to improve and/or extend their learning.

SJCA has been selected as a 2009 National Blue Ribbon School and a California Distinguished School for 2004, 2008, and 2012. In addition, we have been awarded the Title 1 Achieving school award numerous times. While we are truly honored by these recognitions, SJCA continues to have a growth mindset of a school in continuous improvement.

San Jose Charter Academy takes pride in the fact that we have been recognized as a 2009 National Blue Ribbon School. After almost a decade of continuous forward momentum, the school community received a very tangible recognition. This sense of pride has continued to radiate over the past decade.

SJCA has made strong connections and partnerships within our community. Parents are very supportive of our efforts and continue to show their appreciation through their volunteerism and participation in a variety of school activities. We have formed strong partnerships with the city of West Covina and local service clubs. Our dedicated and knowledgeable staff, supportive parents, and involved community members all work collaboratively for the sole purpose of providing a world-class education to all San Jose Charter Academy students.

There have been two major developments since our last National Blue Ribbon award, 1) Access to and implementation of technology, and 2) our shift to the new CA State Standards (Common Core).

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The curriculum of San Jose Charter Academy is research-based. The Charter School uses curriculum programs that have had proven results with students of diverse backgrounds. We believe our program has positively impacted the significant improvements in the areas of reading/language arts, mathematics, science, social science. Key features of the core curricula include utilization of formative assessments, differentiation opportunities to build upon, technology access that allows students to access a variety of resources to support the learning, and staff-driven professional development on related topics.

Reading/Language Arts

Success For All (SFA), a Johns Hopkins University program, is used throughout our Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through fifth grade. SFA is an articulated program that provides a foundation upon which rigorous instruction and consistent routines build upon from early literacy. KinderCorner specifically targets language and literacy development through the discussion of thematic concepts to promote the children's phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and oral language development. ReadingRoots builds upon the foundations of KinderCorner, focuses on storytelling and retelling, developing an understanding of the conventions of print, building vocabulary, developing oral language, listening skills, and comprehension strategies. In addition, students develop as independent, confident, strategic readers. ReadingWings is the upper-elementary reading program and is designed to ensure the academic success of all students. Reading Wings builds on the solid base of decoding and comprehension skills established in the first grade Reading Roots program. Students are consistently monitored in the ReadingRoots and ReadingWings programs, grouped heterogeneously for a 90-minute block, ensuring targeted instruction for each student. Students are grouped based upon their mastery performance each academic term.

Read180, a California state-adopted curriculum is used for our students, grades three through five who are not meeting grade-level reading standards. Read180 offers individualized, adjusted reading instruction to move students to grade level.

Holt Elements of Literature, a California state adopted series, is a middle school reading program built on a passion for literature, powerful learning strategies and comprehensive assessment, using research-based instructional and pedagogical approaches. This particular core reading program, coupled with the core writing program, incorporates a wide variety of genres, classic and contemporary selections, threads reading skills and strategies throughout the text and builds on fluency, the foundation necessary for critical reading comprehension.

Writing is threaded throughout the curriculum at SJCA, using core curricula (Step Up to Writing) to drive content used in narrative, expository, argumentative writing. The writing workshop structure is incorporated throughout the instructional process, focusing students' attention on writing effectively; encouraging students to learn and apply the rules and conventions of spelling, grammar, and syntax; provides students with a supportive process for improving their own writing.

Math

The Everyday Mathematics, 4th Edition includes a variety of rigorous research-based materials to enhance mathematical understanding, prepares children to solve problems flexibly, enables them to carry out tasks encountered in everyday life, fosters number and spatial sense, develops positive attitudes toward mathematics, and stimulates mathematical thinking. The curriculum stresses not only computation but also the full range of mathematics including data collection and analysis, probability and statistics, geometry, and algebra.

Carnegie Learning materials are built on an over-arching questioning strategy that promotes analysis and higher order thinking, building the processes and reasoning behind the mathematics. Questions, instruction, and worked examples interweaved in student lessons help students develop their own mathematical

reasoning. Lessons are also structured to provide students with various opportunities to reason, model, and expand on explanations about mathematical ideas.

Science

The science curriculum is a standards-based approach to learning science. In the curriculum, students actively develop concepts, inquiry skills, and problem-solving skills by "doing science" and "doing technology" through a sequence of developmentally appropriate activities. Science is taught on a daily or block schedule basis.

Social Science

The goal of the social science curriculum in the Primary and Elementary Academies is to awaken the minds and imaginations of children to history and its related disciplines and to develop their understanding of and appreciation for the subject. Instruction is project-based and features meaningful activities that apply key process skills to investigations of important content. A multicultural perspective and respect for diversity pervade the curriculum, which is standards-based and uses authentic assessment to evaluate student performance and guide instruction. Social Science is taught on a daily or block schedule basis.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The specials program at SJCA provides our students with an opportunity to enhance their learning through music, art, and physical fitness. The students participate in PE according to state guidelines. Art and music are provided yearly, each on a semester basis.

Physical Fitness: The emphasis is on developing motor skills and aerobic capacity, targeted to individual levels and according to personal fitness plans. We aim to develop students' skills in sports and games, but we take great care not to overemphasize competition. Rather, we believe that learning basic motor skills provides the components that lead to confidence and enjoyment of physical activities for a lifetime. Our program is designed to accommodate all ability levels. Additionally, all fourth through eighth grade students participate in the Presidential Fitness Awards program.

During the critical Junior Academy years, we guide students through making wise choices as they negotiate the physical, social, and emotional changes associated with early adolescence. We encourage students to participate in intramural sports programs for two of their three years in this academy, and we introduce peer-coaching activities that promote mutual skill development. In the health program, we carefully link the health, science, and character and ethics curriculums when dealing with human reproduction.

Art and Music: Art at SJCA consists of varied two and three-dimensional projects linked to state and national standards. These undertakings, often tied to core curriculum, incorporate technique, history, criticism, individual and group work, and just plain fun. They increase their knowledge of artistic principles, elements, and terminology and translate their observations into original artwork, often using multimedia and other audiovisual materials. SJCA's curriculum offers an ambitious program of instruction in the visual arts, taught by specialists who devote equal attention to history, appreciation, and practice.

In the Junior Academy, the arts program is integrated closely with the other subject areas and continues the balanced discipline-based and performance approaches that students practiced in the early academies, including history, criticism, aesthetics, and production. Students study the arts of diverse cultures and civilizations, making connections to their own lives and analyzing the contributions that societies made to the way people live today.

Primary age students begin formal studies in music through singing, playing simple instruments, and listening to a wide range of musical styles from many different cultures. They gain a wide understanding of various musical forms and styles, such as classical, jazz, blues, and rap. They increase their knowledge of artistic principles, elements, and terminology and translate their observations into original artwork, often using multimedia and other audiovisual materials. All students at each grade level (K-5) perform a musical each year.

The Junior Academy music program provides students with a continuation of the musical skills learned in the primary grades. SJCA offers an advanced band class as an elective during the day. Beginning and advanced band opportunities are available after school as well along with an elementary and junior academy choir.

Computer Science: Technology is widely integrated throughout the instructional day. Advancements in instructional supports have been exponential, and one-to-one device access has been implemented over the past three years. Students have begun formal instruction in using devices and technology to enhance their learning. The computer science technology standards insist students understand how technology enhances and strengthens understanding in their learning.

Yearbook: Seventh and eighth grade students have the opportunity to participate in a yearbook course where they design and build the content for the annual publication. Students learn about the visual and print media communication requirements for this type of media. Students compose, construct, and edit all elements of computerized text layout, graphic art, and digital photography. Students work on clerical, financial, advertising, and business skills in maximizing this experience.

Spanish: Seventh and eighth grade students are offered Spanish class, conversational Spanish, and examining language structures, and cultural awareness. Vocabulary and pronunciation, listening and speaking, reading and typing in the language, cultural activities are taught using Rosetta Stone. Rosetta Stone is used in class and at home in order to get regular practice at their individualized language level in Spanish. Weekly homework practicing the language on Rosetta Stone is required and essential in order to learn the language.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

SJCA believes learning best occurs in a collaborative environment, where there are measurable goals, accountability, taught by highly specialized teachers and staff. Learning best occurs in programs that have strong literacy components, incorporates technology, built upon the core understanding that children are known and understood as individuals.

A variety of instructional practices and strategies are incorporated into lessons on a daily basis. Cooperative learning, explicit direct instruction, and hands-on learning are just a few of the examples used to provide all students with equal access and opportunity. Teachers spend collaborative time identifying the specific needs of their students and plan the lessons accordingly.

Students not showing mastery are identified through annual standardized assessment data, on-going teacher assessment, and are targeted for additional academic support. The instructional day has a dedicated 50-minute Customized Learning (CL) period. Teachers direct student instructional activities that build upon identified skills that require remediation or intervention. In addition, intervention and remedial workshops are offered before school, and after school, to students in grades kindergarten (K) through eight (8) for selected time periods determined by SJCA. Sessions are focused in either math or English Language Arts.

Despite the significant amount of individualization built into the San Jose Charter Academy curriculum, some students may need additional attention and/or services. Our pre-referral process will specify interventions the classroom teacher has previously attempted, along with the outcomes. Referrals may lead to a Comprehensive Support Meeting (CSM) where documented behavioral, and/or attendance concerns are addressed and strategies developed for early interventions. Through a collaborative effort, our administrators, teachers, as well as specialists in resource education, speech/language, occupational therapy and adaptive P.E., meet to identify students who require individualized assistance in academic and/or non-academic areas.

Student progress and effectiveness of modifications are monitored utilizing performance data software, teacher observations, and collaboration between all involved staff. House Teams exist to develop strategies for student achievement and discuss ways to meet the needs of all students. Prior to students being referred

to the CSM, teachers will meet at grade level to confer about student concerns and potential classroom accommodations and modifications.

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

San Jose Charter is a data-driven school. Teachers and parents use assessment data to monitor each student's progress in meeting the California Standards. SJCA's assessment methods are based on the following beliefs:

Authentic: SJCA ensures assessments measure the actual learning that has taken place in the classroom. Pretests are given, learning outcomes established, and assessments designed before any learning activities are introduced. Teachers need to know what specific skills and information they want their students to attain before they can design the learning steps necessary for achievement.

Multiple Measures: A variety of assessments are used to determine student achievement. Standardized, universal screeners include Scholastic Reading Inventory, Scholastic Math Inventory, AIMSweb reading and math, monthly benchmarks, periodic SBAC practice assessments. Teachers also use formative, summative, and portfolio assessments. This compilation of student data are used to drive instruction, confer with parents, and set learning goals within and across grade levels.

On-going: Students need on-going assessments to determine whether skills and knowledge have been truly internalized. The analyses are tied to professional development on standards-based instruction, so that teachers can enhance their understanding of student performance in light of normative data and modify their instructional designs accordingly. In this way, staff is continuously be challenged to rethink current pedagogical practices to meet the changing needs of new and existing student populations. The goal is continuous improvement to achieve the highest possible quality educational program.

Informative: Assessments should promote and support reflection and self-evaluation on the part of students, staff, and parents. Teachers are trained to identify the best ways to assess the learning, interpret data and critically analyze the data in order to reflect on what contributed to the successful gains and positive data trends and determine how the school can address any performance deficiencies or negative data trends.

Student progress towards skill mastery is documented three (3) times annually in the Student Learning Contracts (SLCs), the standards-based report card. Parent-teacher conferences are held for Terms 1 and 2 to review student proficiency. For each student not making progress, an Academic Success Plan is created by the teacher, student, and parent and reviewed at Term 3.

Working in this manner allows us to address the areas of identified need more effectively so that an ever-increasing number of students will meet or exceed the State Standards. It accelerates success, closing the achievement gap found with economically disadvantaged children and English Learners at SJCA.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At SJCA, we create an environment in which each student is expected to achieve at their optimal potential. Our high academic standards are balanced by strong character building, goal setting, and healthy lifestyles, as we try to prepare our students to thrive in the global community. We strive to foster a well-rounded student who knows how to access, analyze and use information to the best of their ability. In order to achieve this, we have to ensure our program provides a positive, hands-on approach to learning.

We understand that learning best occurs when children are known and understood as individuals. We believe that each child's learning journey needs to start from the individual's starting point, including the learner's existing knowledge, socio-economic background, and cultural heritage. At SJCA, each student has a mentor teacher that guides them through their journey. The mentor teacher assists in working through conflict, building grit and perseverance, and developing a sense of self (autonomy). We reinforce our eight Core Values school-wide. There is a monthly focus for each core value, which is addressed through character education lessons, discussions, activities, and individual reflections. The Core Values, along with 7 Habits & Grit Awards, are celebrated through our monthly Core Values Assemblies.

Learning best occurs with highly-specialized teachers and staff. Specialized staff development programs provide proactive instructional leadership. When teachers are given the tools they need to be at their best, their efficacy rises, as well as their perceptions of themselves as educators. SJCA leadership, on a continual basis, strives to highlight progress and successes made by teachers in any given area of their daily work. Two examples include our "Standing Ovarions" section of the bi-monthly bulletin and our "Open Mic" section of our staff meeting, where any staff member can take the microphone and give a special acknowledgment to another staff member for a "job well done." The school's connection with its teachers has resulted in a very low teacher turnover rate.

SJCA is very much a collaborative environment. We strongly feel that collaboration among teachers, between students and teachers, between parents and teachers and administration and community, is a necessary ingredient for building and sustaining a positive culture.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

SJCA recognizes that parents and family engagement are crucial for student success. We are committed to ensuring that families are engaged in their child's education to provide optimal learning opportunities for their child. We believe that the education of our students is a responsibility shared with parents. We invite parents to work closely with our staff in providing key learning opportunities and establishing vital home-school collaboration to ensure student success and school improvement.

Parent involvement and decision making are key elements at SJCA. Parents participate in the decision-making process by serving on the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), School Site Council, etc. Parents bring the perspective of community and culture, they bridge the gap between the school and the community and are a strong representation in the governance and management of our school. To further provide parents with the opportunity to partake in school decisions, we provide surveys that allow us to gauge parent satisfaction on a variety of school topics.

Our school has established a process to regularly and effectively communicate with parents, families, and the community in a variety of ways. We recognize that all parents, not just those who are able to volunteer on campus, need to be actively engaged and kept aware. Our school website and Facebook page provide our school community with information about school events regularly. We also use a phone auto-dialer to communicate attendance and school events. Teachers communicate with parents via Remind101 text messages and Email, as a means of communication between the school and families.

We take pride in the fact that we have made strong connections and partnerships within our community. Parents are very supportive of our efforts and continue to show their appreciation through their volunteerism and participation in a variety of school activities. Our PTO is the heart of our volunteer initiatives at SJCA. This year we have logged thousands of volunteer hours with families working with teachers and staff throughout the school. As a way of giving back to the community, SJCA families participate in the following: the collection of canned food items for our local food pantry, toy drives for both Padres Contra Cancer and California Highway Patrol, raising funds for L.A. Children's Hospital, etc. Our dedicated and knowledgeable staff, supportive parents, and involved community members all work collaboratively to ensure student success.

3. Professional Development:

Professional Development (PD), a cornerstone at San Jose Charter Academy (SJCA), enables us to maintain a student-focused vision. Our school has made a serious investment in PD for teachers, administrators, and school staff. We believe it is an on-going activity, one that must be site-based and intensive. Student achievement results, student performance, teacher reflection, and various types of student assessments are used to generate our PD goals. Our Leadership Team, including our Grade Level Coordinators begin this process during our Leadership Retreat; reflecting and identifying needs of our staff and students. It allows for a systematic way, based on student performance and teacher need, to implement meaningful PD for the following school year. This process is one that we hold as integral to the SJCA system of success. Prior to the beginning of school, our staff meets for 3 days to receive PD training on various strategies that will help improve their teaching. During this time, we also analyze the student state testing results.

Professional Development is not just limited to student free days at the beginning of the year. Teachers participate in ongoing, daily PD in their House Teams and monthly at curriculum rotations and staff meetings. Each meeting is dedicated to a specific topic related to school-wide or house issues, literacy, technology, grade-level planning and student study meetings to identify interventions best suited for individual or groups of students. Team of teachers are also given grade level planning days that occur three times throughout the year. A full day is provided for each grade level team for collaboration and to plan out next steps to optimize student achievement.

SJCA is committed to providing professional development in an on-going manner. The cyclical nature of this process continues to foster a culture that supports and promotes achievement. On-time, needs-based, and strategic, long-term PD goals can be achieved and are meaningful to the teaching and learning process. Consequently, students benefit from the micro-adjustments teachers implement as they make meaning, calibrate, and share best practices within and across teams. Over time, the impact both continues to be, and has been profound, as reflected in overall achievement data and community-based surveys and reflections. Operating with this mindset allows us to work to realize our vision, "to inspire children to create, innovate, and imagine limitless possibilities....to dream, to do, to change!"

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at SJCA is team oriented driven by high expectations and a student-focused approach. Parents, students, teachers, support staff, and other community members are invited to discuss action items, ideas, issues or concerns with individuals directly. We have an open-door policy which allows for issues to be handled at the lowest level. SJCA maintains a shared decision-making approach through the use of various groups of staff, parents, and community members, which address identified needs.

Our leadership tier system allows for there to be many leaders in our community. We house not only an Executive Director/Principal and administrators but also Lead Teachers who assist the administration in overall school planning, decision-making and serve as the staff's leadership team. In addition, Grade Level Chairpersons serve as the instructional and curriculum coordinators for the grade levels they represent, as well as serving as role models for the implementation of instructional "best practices". Curriculum support is also provided by Curriculum Coordinators, assigned to each curricular area in each "academy" (TK-2nd,

3rd-5th, 6th-8th). The variety of leadership roles is the cornerstone to building site-based capacity. This is evident through the work done at our end-of-the-year Leadership Retreat. This event captures the “thinking” of all school leaders as we set and update instructional policy, plan out the upcoming year, and engage ourselves in leadership professional development.

At SJCA, students are provided with leadership opportunities. The school has an Associated Student Body (ASB) advisor who assists in coordinating activities during school to build our student culture. Our school counselor not only to provide mentoring to students but serves as an advisor to our Kiwanis’ “Builders Club,” a leadership group who brings our school and community together through service. Both of these student-led organizations have students officers, who in turn, lead decisions within the context of their focus.

Parents also play an important role in the leadership of the school by serving in various roles. SJCA’s Board of Directors is comprised of five members, three of which are parents. Parent serve on our School Site Council, as well as our Parent and Teacher Organization (PTO) Board.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

SJCA has created a model that allows for daily teacher collaboration in a very purposeful and intentional way. Every day grade and subject level groups of teachers are given a 53-minute block of time to use for collaboration on specific items throughout the week. Having all students at each grade level work with P.E., art or music teachers for a specific block of time frees up the general education teachers to meet and collaborate with their grade level colleagues.

The model was adopted to provide teachers the opportunity to collaborate on a daily basis about instruction and student learning and progress. Time was also needed to thoroughly review student data to determine necessary step for adjusting instruction.

The main goal of this model was to give teachers daily collaborative time for professional dialogue and professional development opportunities, as well as the opportunity to participate in the governance of the school through shared decision-making, which is provided during their Friday block of time. Outcomes for this program involve effective lesson design, in-depth data analysis linked to student progress, implementation of professional development concepts, and feedback provided to administration relating to school operations and academic topics. Grade- and subject-level collaboration creates a system in which there is greater calibration across all classrooms.

This model benefits all students and affects school-wide achievement due to the simple fact that teachers are collaborating on a daily basis about lessons, instructional strategies, student data, etc. We have also found that this model has been especially successful in providing support to a new teacher. Instead of the new teacher being isolated or left to work things through and continually make those “rookie” mistakes, they are immediately taken under the guidance of the grade/subject level teachers and coached to success.

Monday’s collaborative time offers teachers the opportunity to discuss individual students as well as grade level issues affecting various student populations. Grade-level planning collaborative blocks allow teachers to address instructional needs of various student populations and allows for more in-depth discussions relating to differentiation.

This model encourages intentional and purposeful dialogue relating to the implementation of academic content and performance standards. Teachers are given collaborative time to discuss instructional practices and strategies, critical for effective implementation.