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

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Paloma Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 660 Camino Magnifico
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City San Marcos   State CA   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 92069-7323

County   San Diego

Telephone (760) 290-2199   Fax

Web site/URL   http://www.palomaelementary.org   E-mail dana.spencer@smusd.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*Dr. Kevin Holt   E-mail kevin.holt@smusd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name San Marcos Unified School District   Tel.   (760) 752-1299
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. Janet McClean
(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   12 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   3 Middle/Junior high schools
                                  2 High schools
                                  0 K-12 schools

                                  17 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
   [X] 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	15	14	15
K	65	79	144
1	82	73	155
2	78	77	155
3	80	73	153
4	66	79	145
5	70	81	151
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	456	476	932

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
12 % Asian
2 % Black or African American
42 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
35 % White
4 % 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: 5%

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 *to* the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	22
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	27
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	49
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	926
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.053
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 29 %
   282 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Cantonese, Chaldean, Children, Farsi, Gujarati, Hindi, Ilocana, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Telugu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 33 %
   Total number students who qualify: 305

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
   99 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.

9	Autism	2	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	16	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	22	Specific Learning Disability
0	Emotional Disturbance	38	Speech or Language Impairment
2	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
9	Mental Retardation	0	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
1	Multiple Disabilities	0	Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: <u>3</u>

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	2
Classroom teachers	35
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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   <u>271:1</u>

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	98%	98%	98%	97%	95%
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 <u> </u>   No <u>X</u>

    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.

Our mission is for every student to receive a quality standards-based education in an environment that will help them develop into responsible global citizens.

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

Paloma Elementary, adjacent to Palomar Community College and in close proximity to California State University San Marcos (CSUSM), is one of eleven public elementary schools in the San Marcos Unified School District (SMUSD). 926 students from the Santa Fe Hills community call this school their home. The student population is comprised of the following ethnicities: .2% American Indian, 13% Asian or Pacific Islander, 2% Black, 42% Hispanic, 35% White, and 4% two or more races. Our school has 33% of the student population qualifying for free/reduced meals. Our diverse school culture is represented by fifteen languages. Our students receive rigorous academic instruction in thirty four general education classrooms, two learning center classrooms, and two severely handicapped classrooms. The Learning Center classrooms are utilized by students with Individualized Education Plans as well as students receiving Tier III intervention in our Response to Intervention program. The Severely Handicapped classes serve moderate-severe students who have disabilities which significantly affect their ability to access curriculum.

The tight knit, involved community of Santa Fe Hills assumes an active role in the success of Paloma students. The Paloma Elementary School family creates an environment of mutual trust and respect where all children have an equal opportunity to achieve academic excellence, develop a love for learning, and acquire skills to become responsible members of society. We have a low transiency rate, with most of our students beginning Transitional Kindergarten and continuing through fifth grade.

Since opening in 1990, Paloma has maintained its vision of academic excellence, winning many awards and recognitions such as California Distinguished School in 2010, recognition by the John Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth in 2013 and Title I Academic Achievement Award School in 2014. In 2015, on the 25th Anniversary of Paloma's opening, time capsules were opened to find a variety of historical documents- letters, photographs and newspapers depicting the campus and surrounding community. Since its inception, Paloma has maintained high standards for all stakeholders.

To encourage community involvement Paloma holds many annual events. Our school year begins with a Meet Your Teacher event. Families are afforded the opportunity to meet and interact with their child's teacher before the first day of school, thus lessening student and parent anxiety. In fall we host a Spooktacular, a Halloween themed carnival where the entire community can come together in a safe and fun environment. To celebrate our love of literacy we participate in the nationally recognized Read Across America week engaging in various reading activities. The culminating activity is "Reading on the Green" where families are invited to come and read with their children on our beautiful lawn. To commemorate another successful year, we hold a Spring Festival during which Paloma families enjoy presentations from local high school dance teams, listen to musical performances, play games, and enjoy food from different cultures.

One of the challenges that we face at Paloma is the high number of English Learners. With the increased rigor of the Common Core State Standards, it is decidedly more difficult for English Learners to achieve proficiency. Another challenge that we encounter is a high number of students with a Low Socio-Economic designation. Oftentimes these students do not have the same environmental supports at home that other children are afforded. The Paloma staff meets these challenges by employing a variety of strategies that support student success, like visual graphs or realia to develop schema, auditory sounds or music to help with memorization, and kinesthetic movement utilizing a hands-on approach to learning new materials. At Paloma we guide our students toward becoming active, inquiring lifelong learners who are prepared for college and career and global citizenship. We utilize awards to acknowledge the achievement in or improvement of academic standards and to motivate our students, such as the Principal's Award, Hustle for Excellence, Dreambox Math Awards, Lexia and Accelerated Reader Literacy Awards.

We are fortunate to have on staff a full time social worker and a full time school psychologist. Together they provide social emotional interventions, individual and group counseling, the "Panther Paws" program, and provide instruction in social pragmatics through the Second Step program. Paloma has three core behavioral expectations which are: Respect, Responsibility and Safety, which are the basis for the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS). In our PBIS, students receive Superhero coupons as reinforcement for

positive behavior. They can redeem these at our "Superhero Store". Our students are encouraged to assume leadership roles across campus through the Peer Buddies Program, the Safety Patrol and the Student Council. Paloma employs a full time physical education teacher who focuses on kinesiology, health education and fitness. Our students participate in an annual district track meet where they traditionally do exceptionally well. Students have the opportunity to participate in organized sports activities through the Good Sports program and Fit Kids America. To promote a feeling of cultural inclusion, Paloma hosts a schoolwide multicultural fair where students share traditions from their respective cultures. In order to provide to equal access to technology, a fully staffed computer lab is available before and after school and throughout the day. In our music program, students attend a weekly class where they learn how to play instruments, read music, and become familiar with important historical composers.

At Paloma, all students receive a quality, standards based education in a learning environment that fosters the 21st Century skills of critical thinking, communication, creativity and collaboration. Teachers employ Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD), Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), Nancy Fetzer language arts curriculum, Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) Math strategies to implement district created, Common Core aligned language arts and math units. The severely handicapped classrooms utilize the Unique Curriculum which tailors instruction to meet the exclusive needs of their students. All teachers remediate and extend their lessons to fortify student success. Assessment data is collected and analyzed during Structured Teacher Collaboration Time (STCT). Paloma is a school where all stakeholders feel valued and respected, and where parents are encouraged to participate and be a partner in their child's education.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Paloma Elementary school employs a variety of instructional practices to ensure that students meet or exceed their academic potential. We focus on four core academic areas: Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

In grades TK through 5 there is a designated Language Arts block where teachers use differentiated instruction daily to reach every child. For the first six weeks of school kindergarteners attend "Kindergarten Bootcamp". During "Bootcamp" students are placed in small groups that focus on phonics and phonemic awareness ensuring all students start with a solid foundation. When "Bootcamp" is over, we transition to Kindergarten Team Time, where students are once again placed in small, leveled groups to work on specific literacy skills. Team Time affords the teachers the opportunity to work on specific learning targets to meet the varied needs of all students at. During this block in grades 1-5, teachers focus on close reading strategies, collaborative conversations, academic vocabulary, scaffolded reading, inferencing/context clues, text structures, annotation, and three types of writing (informative, narrative, and opinion). Grade level social studies and science standards are integrated in each thematic English Language Arts unit. Students access content in a variety of ways: non-fiction short reads, novels, and multi media presentations. Teachers utilize technology on a daily basis to enhance the curriculum and meet the needs of a diverse group of learning styles. In partnership with Cal State San Marcos, aspiring teachers from their liberal arts program provide small group science instruction to fifth graders. We have fostered partnerships with local science and technology companies like Thermo Fisher and the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) who work with our school to provide hands-on science opportunities that correlate to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The Helen Woodward Animal Center brings Life Science to the hands of our students through their school-centered curriculum. The San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) Splash Lab extends and enriches our fourth-grade Earth Science curriculum about our changing earth through inquiry-based experiments. The district Child Nutrition Services department works in tandem with local farmers to create a rich experience for our second graders where they learn what it takes for food to get from the farm to their table. The second grade team then expands on that lesson by creating their own grade level market where students create a business plan, design a product, and sell their goods at the market.

In the area of mathematics, teachers use inquiry based lessons and Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) strategies to assist students in developing a greater conceptual understanding of mathematics. The Standards for Mathematical Practice are a focal point and are at the root of daily math lessons. Daily Number Talks afford the students an opportunity to engage in rich conversations where they explain their thinking to their peers, using math-centric vocabulary. Teachers use district created units, incorporating open- ended questioning, while providing students an opportunity to confidently explain their thinking. An emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving affords students the experience of engagement in collaborative discourse. One of the many strategies that teachers incorporate into the math block is explicit instruction. Explicit instruction involves teaching a specific skill or concept in a structured environment using clear, direct language and is focused on producing specific learning outcomes. Teachers clearly identify the learning objectives, highlight the necessary skills, provide precise instructions, and connect new material to previous lessons. Across campus, students also engage in collaborative learning, reading common pieces of literature which link language and math and have proven to increase motivation and time on task. Students are presented with open-ended problems which provide opportunities to practice or review mathematics skills or concepts. With the varied ability levels in each classroom, discussing and solving problems as a group assists the students to move from a concrete level of understanding to a more abstract level of understanding. Cooperative learning has also proven to assist our English Learners in the development of social skills by creating a context for interaction. When working independently, students access a variety of standards- based personalized learning programs, such as Dreambox and Ten Marks. Both of these programs can also be accessed from home, enabling our students to work on relevant skills when they are off campus.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Paloma Elementary School not only excels at helping students reach their potential in academics but in other areas as well. We strive to create well-rounded students who love to be at school learning.The Paloma community values and supports the other curricular areas with outstanding programs. In the arts, we have a paid music instructor, who through the use of the state Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) content standards, teaches all students in grades TK-5 weekly for thirty minutes. The students' musical skills and knowledge are developed through vocal and instrumental instruction, as well as with music history. As our fifth grade students prepare for promotion, they carry on an 11 year tradition of preparing a musical performance for their families. Along with directed art lessons in all classrooms throughout the year, classrooms participate in our Original Works art fundraiser where all students in TK-5 become familiar with artists from the past and use that knowledge to create their own beautiful works of art. In physical education, students are instructed by a full-time credentialed PE teacher who has an extensive background in exercise and health. She runs a rigorous program which includes strength exercises, stamina building, collaboration, health education and sportsmanship that are all backed by the state physical education standards. All students in grades K-5 participate in PE 2.5 days a week. Most recently students participated in the Jump Rope For Heart pledge campaign where they learned how important it is to take care of their hearts and they raised thousands of dollars for those in need. Our fifth grade students participate in the Presidential Youth Fitness Program which is a tool to help develop healthy habits. Nutrition is also a unified part of our commitment to being healthy. Our students in grades 1 -5 eagerly participate in a monthly taste test and survey from the student-run Nutrition Advisory Council (NAC) to determine which new foods should be served in the cafeteria. Additionally, all classrooms follow the Healthy Kids guidelines and promote healthy choices for snacks and lunch. Technology is used extensively throughout the day in every TK-5 classroom for all academic areas. Paloma students have access to either ChromeBooks or iPads. Each of our 39 classrooms have at least six devices, as well as the use of a fully-functioning computer lab with a full-time technician. Every student receives instruction in the lab once a week for thirty minutes. Students are taught how to use Google Apps for Education, Google Docs, Google Slides, Powerpoint, coding, and word processing, along with keyboarding. Academic success is expected and supported at Paloma. Our school is fortunate to have seven iPad carts, shared by 14 classrooms, and seven ChromeBook carts which are used in grades 3-5. With technology so readily available, students have ample opportunities to extend their knowledge in all subject areas with our computer based personalized learning programs: Lexia, DreamBox, Tenmarks, and Accelerated Reader/360. The lab is open every day before school for those students who do not have computer access at home. Each classroom incorporates Genius Hour into their day once a week, where students of all levels are empowered to explore their own passions. Fifth graders take part in the Coding Club, where teachers use Kodable, the Hour of Code, Google CS First Music, and Sound with Scratch to teach students to write computer codes. After-school Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) classes are held once a month for students who have qualified for GATE, but are open to all students, affording everyone extended learning opportunities. This program is facilitated by a GATE certified; credentialed teacher who partners with local companies to provide inquiry- based learning opportunities and enrichment through a variety of projects in the areas of art, science, and technology. In the spirit of entrepreneurialism, our GATE students also create a monthly newspaper called the Panther Press, which they sell for a quarter.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

The staff at Paloma takes pride in creating an instructional environment that reaches the needs of all students. Our campus has a three tiered system of intervention in place that ensures high levels of student learning and achievement. Our first tier encompasses the exemplary instruction and scaffolds that occurs daily in the classroom by each credentialed teacher. Classroom teachers use district provided curriculum, teacher designed lessons, and technology driven programs to expertly guide their students through learning as they collaborate, communicate, create, and critically think. Through the use of concrete data and daily observations, teachers are able to adjust their instruction to best serve students whether they are performing below grade-level, at grade-level or above grade-level. The Essential Elements of Instruction (EEI) are a means by which our teachers gauge the efficacy of their lessons, and monitor and adjust them as necessary. Small group instruction is used in every classroom on campus. This practice affords students the opportunity to receive intensive instruction within their classroom, and lowers the teacher: student ratio throughout the

day. Close reading is also utilized in every classroom K-5, to ensure that students comprehend nonfiction text on a deeper level. Students engage in collaborative conversation rich with academic vocabulary. Because there is a schoolwide focus on speaking in complete sentences, sentence frames are used as a scaffold so that all students can focus on their conceptual understanding of a subject, rather than the wording of an answer.

The second tier of intervention is a systematic, closely monitored approach designed around SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) goals. Our program provides both push-in and pull-out models of instruction for students who have fallen below grade level. The push-in model is a scaffold approach that allows students to engage in the classroom community while still having their needs met. The validity of the curriculum and its alignment with the Common Core state standards are always at the forefront of instruction. Students engage in reading, writing, math, science, and history. Their success with the grade-level curriculum is propelled by the addition of a support teacher or aide in the classroom and subject area content being delivered in a variety of ways such as videos, realia, songs, computer programs, and modeling. The pull-out portion of our Tier 2 interventions is a leveled approach that uses researched based curriculum designed to accelerate student achievement in the areas of language arts and math. The second tier often includes a second dose of English Language Arts or math instruction, taught by either the classroom teacher or one of the 6 highly skilled intervention teachers. The Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) System is used daily in small group to provide powerful instruction in assisting students in their effort to achieve grade level competency. Tier II also incorporates` Before-School Learning programs for students in grades 1-5 who are performing below grade level in reading. The programs are run four days a week by credentialed teachers and focus specifically on phonemic awareness/phonics, developing students' reading skills and the acquisition of academic vocabulary. These prescriptive interventions are based on the individual needs of the students and each group uses systematic research based curriculum.

Our third tier of intervention is designed for students who need intensive support and remediation to bridge their present learning gap. The philosophy of our program is to provide explicit instruction with a student-to-teacher ratio of no more than 3-to-1. Tier 3 intervention includes more intensive interventions such as SRA Corrective Reading (McGraw-Hill). These interventions may also be provided by Academic Specialists in our Learning Center. Throughout the process, student progress is monitored and data is continually analyzed to determine the efficacy of the intervention and next steps.

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

At Paloma Elementary, assessment is an integral part of instruction and lesson design, and is one of the determining factors as to whether or not objectives are being met. We use a variety of assessments, to include: standardized tests, benchmark assessments, unit assessments, and teacher/district created assessments. All test scores are placed in a central student information system, Illuminate, where teachers and administrators can gather the data from assessment results. From a schoolwide perspective, administrators are able to disaggregate data and create reports using a variety of factors, which can then be shared with staff and students. For example, the principal can create a report on current Lexile levels in reading, with a filter of below grade level English Learners. The administrative team can then meet with the Intervention Specialist to determine the obstacles impeding those students and form intervention groups. That same data can be used when monitoring Redesignated English Proficient (RFEP) students or setting goals with English Learners that have yet to be redesignated. By having the data immediately available, teachers can provide immediate feedback to students, creating opportunities for teachable moments when the concepts are fresh in the students' mind.

Assessment plays an essential part in lesson design. Our multiple measures help to identify all levels of learning. Teachers employ a "backward design" model to plan their upcoming lessons. By knowing what the end result will be, they can plan the lesson accordingly while asking themselves: "What is the objective and what will it look like when we have achieved it? What will the evidence be that the students understand? How will we meet the needs of all learners? What scaffolds will we put in place? How will we reteach and re- engage with the lesson if students do not grasp the concepts?" Teachers meet in weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLC), where they disaggregate and analyze assessment data and determine next

steps of instruction. During PLC, teachers are able to discuss commonalities between classroom lessons and delineate "what worked" and "what didn't". It also affords grade level teams a time to interact with our Intervention Specialists and Academic Specialists (Special Education), to ensure that students in need of extra assistance are getting the support needed to access the curriculum. The Administrative team believes it is essential to provide grade level teams an opportunity to meet twice each semester to develop long-range plans, to enhance upcoming lessons, plan for needed scaffolds/interventions, and to analyze assessment data at a deeper level than can be accomplished at a PLC. Therefore, grade level teams are given release days twice a semester.

The students at Paloma have always excelled on standardized state testing and 2014-15 was no different. On the 2014-15 CAASPP, we exceeded the state averages in all areas and all subgroups. Paloma's overall average in math was 60%, while California's overall average was 33%. Paloma's overall average in English Language Arts was 69%, where the state overall average was 44%.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The climate and culture of Paloma Elementary School is full of positivity and excitement. When people set foot on campus they remark on its tidiness and the respectfulness of our students. There are many systems in place to encourage and foster this behavior. Our school engages and motivates students using Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a proactive approach that establishes the supports needed by students to achieve social, emotional and academic success.

Social growth is nurtured by affording students varied ways in which to interact with each other. Some students choose to be school leaders, while others choose to be classroom helpers. Student Council is one way in which students in grades 3 through 5 can utilize their leadership skills. As a member of student council, students plan events on campus and assist the administration at each bi-weekly flag salute assembly. Fifth grade students are eligible to participate in Safety Patrol, which aids our young pedestrians in traffic safety before and after school. We have created a Peer Buddy program in which general education students act as mentors and typical peer examples for our severely handicapped students. We have two important programs that are used to support our students' social and emotional growth on campus which are organized and taught by our school psychologist, social worker and speech and language pathologists. For those students needing support with social interactions and pragmatics, we have the Second Step curriculum. In Second Step, students learn to have empathy, manage emotions and solve problems that may arise in social situations. This program is utilized in small groups, as well as in classes. Zones of Regulation is a second program that fosters self-regulation and emotional control. Students are taught to recognize where they are at on an emotional scale, and are given tools to regulate their behavior and dissipate any negative feelings.

Our school culture is an environment where teachers feel valued and supported. The school year begins with a Welcome Back breakfast provided by the administration in conjunction with the first staff meeting which features a pictorial slideshow of the staff in their summer adventures. This allows the staff to get a glimpse into the personal lives of those with whom they share their day. Once a month throughout the year, teams prepare a breakfast for the staff. These gatherings help to foster personal connections and empathy amongst the staff. All staff members at Paloma know that they are valued and supported, not only as an educator, but as a person. To get to know each other a little better and have some fun, we have a Mystery Panther poster which displays interesting facts about a person. Throughout the week, staff members guess who is being described. Because the most important thing we can "give" the teachers is time, grade level and department teams are given four site-funded professional development days a year, which illustrates to the teachers that their administrators value teacher collaboration time.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our avenue to student success and school improvement at Paloma begins with our families. We take pride in creating a pathway together that begins on day one. Families are welcomed at the beginning of the year with a Meet- Your- Teacher event. Parents are encouraged to volunteer in classrooms and on campus throughout the year, as well as join our parent advisory committees: Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), School Site Council (SSC), Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) Committee. Volunteers are recognized at a flag salute and at a Thank You Breakfast at the end of each year.

Throughout the year there are many opportunities for community members to become part of the Paloma family. Twice a month we hold school flag salute assemblies during which students are recognized for academic achievement, classrooms give presentations, and where we are able to enjoy student performances. The flag salutes are followed by "Coffee with the Principal" during which parents have a chance to interact with school administrators in a more casual setting. Our PTO helps raise funds to support our students' success and extracurricular activities, such as school Dine Outs at local restaurants and school dances. We welcome the entire community to our Halloween Spooktacular Carnival, Spring Festival and

Multicultural Fair. Paloma has a monthly literary theme, such as Read a T-shirt Month or Keep a Poem in Your Pocket month. Families are invited to celebrate literacy by joining the school in the annual Reading on the Green celebration.

To broaden our students' horizons, Paloma reaches out to the San Marcos community. We foster and maintain close partnerships with surrounding businesses, with Palomar Community College, CSUSM, and with our secondary schools. Throughout the year, middle and high school students visit Paloma to mentor our students and volunteer in classrooms and at school events. Not only do our fifth grade students get the opportunity to tour the middle schools before they attend in their sixth grade year, but the middle school science departments join us at flag salute to share exciting hands-on science presentations. Paloma Elementary believes in supporting families in need within our community. During the holidays, our families donate food, clothing, gift cards, and toys to help families that need assistance. Our Student Council and PTO work in tandem to create gift baskets which are shared with those families.

Teachers of Paloma support student success inside and out of the classroom. At Back- to -School- Night all parents are invited into the classrooms where teachers provide information about their instructional programs and explain the available supports that will be implemented to help students achieve their goals. In winter, an annual staff/parent versus fifth grade basketball game takes place. Oftentimes, Paloma staff members support students in their outside interests by attending their performances like the Youth Theater production of The Little Mermaid or a sporting event, like Youth Baseball. As part of the spring festival, silent auctions are held. A favorite item to bid on each year is Time with a Teacher/Administrator, where teachers and administrators volunteer their own time and money to engage with students outside the classroom. By the end of the year, all Paloma staff members have made lasting connections with our students. In spring, Open House is held, where parents are invited to campus to celebrate successes and students are able to showcase the work they have done throughout the year.

3. Professional Development:

Professional Development plays an integral part in the continuing education of the staff at Paloma Elementary, the impact of which is seen each day in the academic success of our student body. This year our staff has been involved in approximately 41 hours of professional development including on-site and district opportunities. The SMUSD Professional Development Model builds capacity in both teachers and administrators. Professional development at the site level directly correlates to the district-wide PD that takes occurs on all campuses. By doing this, the whole of the district is concentrating on a common topic. Over the course of two years, all teachers and administrators new to the district take part in training which covers the Essential Elements of Instruction (EEI). EEI is a model of effective lesson design and instruction in which teachers create lessons with a targeted objective and specifically designed actions for their students to participate in as they demonstrate learning. Due to all certificated staff members in SMUSD having the same professional development in EEI, everyone who directly impacts students is able to speak a common language and share "best practices", not just at the site level but across the district.

At an administrative level, the principal and assistant principal attend monthly symposiums where they receive training which is focused on meeting student needs, as directed by student data and current research on learning. Those concepts are shared with the staff at monthly staff meetings. All professional development directly aligns with the conceptual understanding of Common Core State Standards. For example, the first standard in the Speaking and Listening section for each grade level focuses on students engaging in meaningful discussions, so the importance of collaborative conversations is a focus. All teachers have been trained in the new English Language Development (ELD) Standards so a common thread of verbal language occurs across campus. All students have access to Accountable Talk Tents which provide sentence frames for collaborative conversations. Our staff has created a speaking and listening rubric that aligns with our district report card so data can be constructed on each students' active engagement. As administrators engage within classrooms, they can monitor how well teachers integrate collaborative conversations within the curriculum and continue to support teachers as they continue to refine their teaching practices. Site teacher leaders were trained by Doug Fisher on rigorous reading and text dependent questioning. These teachers in turn provided staff development at our school so our campus once again speaks a common language. Another set of teacher leaders were trained on the district's Student

Information System, Illuminate. These teachers have become our on-site experts and continuously train our staff in the production of online assessments for all areas of the curriculum. This system has allowed teachers to provide immediate feedback to students which results in amplified remediation or extension opportunities.

Professional Development in the area of math is lead by a Principal on Special Assignment (POSA) and four Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA). Grade level teams meet with the POSA and TOSAs to unwrap the Common Core Math Standards, research and discuss the "best practices" in math instruction, and create plans for co-teaching upcoming units. Following those meetings, the TOSAs co-teach lessons with the teachers and analyze student outcomes. Teachers have also been provided ongoing professional development in how to conduct Math Talks. Through Math Talks, teachers provide students an opportunity for deeper understanding through communication. Students are given daily occasions to articulate and defend their ideas and analyze the reasoning of others. These conversations enable teachers to assess student knowledge through asking "good questions," and align instruction to ensure each student understands how to use math skills through thinking, talking, and doing.

4. School Leadership:

At Paloma Elementary, it is the belief of the administration that all students have the capacity to learn, and that it is up to us, as educators, to ensure that they have all of the skills in place to be successful. It is the goal of the Principal to assist in the creation of an environment in which staff members feel valued and supported, and in which our students feel secure and safe to take academic risks in their pursuit of excellence. The administrative team, comprised of the Principal and Assistant Principal, serve as facilitators for the staff to ensure that they have the necessary tools to provide a quality education to every child, every day. Decisions which affect the entire staff are taken to the Leadership Team, which is comprised of grade level representatives, a representative from the Special Education Department, and a representative from the classified staff. The Leadership Team meets monthly to discuss professional development, curriculum, and site concerns. The Leadership Team also supports the administrative team in maintaining an environment that capitalizes on the strengths of all stakeholders and that fosters self-esteem and self efficacy. Teacher leaders, along with the principal and assistant principal, provide ongoing professional development throughout the year. The School Social Worker, School psychologist, and Speech and Language Pathologists provide social-emotional professional development throughout the year. The principal and assistant principal, with assistance from the Special Education department, provide professional development in the area of inclusion.

The principal, and all staff members, work in partnership with students, families and the community to ensure that each student acquires the knowledge, skills and core values necessary to achieve personal success and to enrich the community. Families are invited to twice-monthly flag salutes where we celebrate student success, both academic and behavioral. To encourage parent input, the principal holds a coffee chat after each flag salute where parents are encouraged to share ideas, celebrations, and concerns. The school leadership philosophy ensures that at Paloma: students demonstrate respect and responsibility while putting forth their best effort toward their educational learning experience; that teachers and staff set and implement standards-based learning goals and monitor results in order to differentiate instruction to meet the individual needs of all learners; and that parents partner with the school to enhance their child's academic growth and strength of character.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At Paloma all students are on a trajectory to success. As their preconditions of learning may not always be parallel, they are all equally supported to grow academically, socially and emotionally. The one practice that makes Paloma so successful is Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI is a comprehensive three-tiered approach that identifies students with learning and/or behavioral needs. RTI begins with standards driven instruction and/or behavior management known as Tier I.

Tier I is implemented by our highly qualified teachers as the first line of defense to ensure all students are provided a superior education in the least restrictive environment. Classroom instruction is differentiated when student performance or behavior indicates the need. Tier I support is equally accessed by all students.

When classroom observations coupled with assessment or behavioral data begin to align in a declining mode of student success, our Tier II interventions come into play. For at-risk students, classroom teachers meet with members of our intervention team to create detailed action plans with measurable academic or behavioral goals. Prescriptive intervention is provided to the at-risk students by the team for approximately six weeks. This becomes the forum to implement goals and gather progress data. During the six weeks, at-risk students receive small-group instruction, four to five students per group, in either a push-in or pull-out model of intervention. After six weeks, follow-up meetings between the classroom teacher and members of the intervention team are held to review the data and provide academic or behavioral advisement. We have created a Kindergarten Boot Camp as a Tier II program to accelerate phonemic awareness in our kindergarten students coming in with limited letter or sound recognition. The program is an overwhelming success. We have 85% of our kindergartners reading. We also have several Tier II Before-School Learning programs targeting reading and language development for students in grades 1-5. These programs are designed as intervals of intervention, using systematic, research-based curriculum. Students are successfully exited from the programs when academic growth aligns with the current level of classroom instruction.

At times it becomes apparent that students need further, more intensive, support beyond Tier II interventions. We meet these needs with our Tier III interventions. These interventions are once again provided by our intervention team in customized student-to-teacher ratios of either two-to-one or one-to-one. Instructional needs are determined and procedures implemented in similar fashion as our Tier II interventions.

If Tiers II and III prove to produce little or no improvement for the at-risk students, a Student Study Team meeting is conducted which includes articulation between the general education teacher, school psychologist, speech and language specialist, intervention specialist, and school administration. Once a comprehensive plan has been determined, the Student Study Team meets with parents to review all intervention data and discuss the next steps towards obtaining student success. It is at this time that a determination is made as to whether or not a need for assessment exists to identify if a specific learning disability is inhibiting the student's progress. If the team, to include the parents, decides that is the next step, then an assessment plan is created and signed by the parents and the student will begin assessment. Upon completion of the assessments, the team will once again meet to review the results. If the student does not qualify for special education services, then the intervention team will re-engage Tier III interventions and monitor progress. If the student does qualify for special education services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is developed and areas of need include goals written to match state standards. The articulated Response to Intervention process at Paloma is a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention driven by performance data to ensure quality education to every child, every day.