

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Natalie Raymundo

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

Official School Name Richardson PREP HI Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 455 South K Street

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

City San Bernardino State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 92410-2607

County San Bernardino

Telephone (909) 388-6438 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL http://richardsonprephi.com E-mail Natalie.Raymundo@sbcusd.k12.ca.us

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. Dale Marsden E-mail dale.marsden@sbcusd.com

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

District Name San Bernardino City Unified School District Tel. (909) 381-1240

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 Dr. Margaret Hill

(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

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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

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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):
- 50 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 11 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 10 High schools
  - 3 K-12 schools
- 74 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	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	106	101	207
7	108	103	211
8	96	103	199
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	310	307	617

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 9 % Black or African American
  - 75 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 10 % 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: 19%

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	59
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	59
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	118
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	609
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.194
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	19

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %  
9 Total number ELL

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

Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 89 %  
Total number students who qualify: 549

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %  
17 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	25
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	1
Paraprofessionals	4
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 24:1

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

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

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

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

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.  
Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2009

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

Our vision is that Richardson PREP HI students will be well-rounded, creative, college and career-focused, critical thinkers who are productive citizens in the global community. The primary mission of Richardson PREP HI, grades 6-8, is to provide a positive, supportive, and secure environment in which to develop responsibility and self-discipline for academic and social excellence within a framework of a contractual agreement between staff, parents, and students.

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

Richardson PREP HI Middle School is a magnet program and is enrolled by lottery. To qualify to enter the lottery, students must reside in the school district attendance boundaries. Additionally, in the year prior to attendance students must have fewer than 20 unexcused absences, no suspensions, and earn a score of “Nearly Met Standards” on the language arts and mathematics sections of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (Common Core Standards assessment or modified assessment).

## PART III – SUMMARY

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The vision for the students of Richardson PREP HI Middle School has evolved over a period of time through a process that involves business partners, community members, district personnel, board members, parents, staff, and students. The original concept was the school community's response to a court order to integrate and desegregate. The acronym, "Personalized Readiness Education Program- Highly Individualized," reflected the programmed packet learning that was once popular in the 1970's. Many other educational strategies have come and gone, but the core concept, meeting the unique learning needs of our students has remained. Since our first National Blue Ribbon Award in 2009, we have further evolved to believe that not only can all students achieve excellence; it is our imperative to make sure that they do, and many programs, supports, and practices have been developed to take away excuses and push all students to excel. Richardson serves 617 sixth through eighth grade students in the city of San Bernardino in Southern California. Although the city of San Bernardino was named All-American City in 1977, the city has struggled over the past 30 years starting with the closure of Norton Air Force Base. With the loss of a major employer, the city has had a high unemployment, poverty, and crime. The belief of the San Bernardino City Unified School District is that through excellent educational programs and a true collaboration between the community and the schools, we can together make our city great again—hence the district motto is Making Hope Happen.

We make hope happen by expecting continuous improvement for staff as well as students. We were recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School in 2009, and since then we have strived to challenge ourselves and our students to keep getting better. All core teachers at Richardson have worked to vertically articulate our curriculum and instruction to align to the goal that all students will be ready for honors and Advanced Placement courses when they go on to high school. Teachers receive specific feedback on instructional practices in alignment with school focus areas and goals. Professional learning and collaboration occurs for 90 minutes every Monday morning using a professional learning community approach. Additionally, each grade level team has a common conference period during the school day to collaborate, discuss individual student needs and intervention plans, and meet with parents.

We make hope happen by providing a rigorous academic program for all students. Students learn in heterogeneous groups, ensuring that all students are given equal access to first-rate curriculum, programs, experienced teachers, and high expectations for achievement—all core classes are run using gifted and talented strategies alongside scaffolds and supports for those that need them. The classrooms at Richardson are rife with academic conversations and dialogues. Gone is the classroom of yesterday with the "sage on the stage." Richardson students are expected to think, respond, and justify throughout their day. They are expected to learn together and from one another. We really work to make all voices in the classroom valuable—not just that of the teacher.

We make hope happen by connecting students to the school beyond core curriculum by offering many enrichment and extra-curricular courses, clubs, and activities. Connecting a student to school is just as important as tutoring and extra help. In addition to our art, instrumental music, Spanish, and technology courses during the day, we have an after school program that provides enrichment and academic support. On average, 250-300 students attend the after school program that runs until 6:00pm. The program includes music programs such as Jazz Band, chorus, guitar, and piano, as well as a fully operational, student run recording studio. We also support academic competitions such as the spelling bee, science fair, Black History Bee, and Latino History Bee. Other after school clubs include chess, dance, community service and volunteering, cheer, coding, art, and ping pong. We also have many sports offerings, including volleyball, soccer, track and field, cross country, basketball, and softball. It is our goal that all students are connected to the school beyond academics.

We make hope happen by not accepting failure. At the middle school level, we often struggle with motivating and inspiring those students that for some reason just have not connected at school. We realized that we had many supports for students, including intervention classes and tutoring; however, we were still not able to get each and every student meeting their potential. After studying the work of experts, including research about growth mindset, grit, and resilience, we realized that tutoring and support are necessary but

not sufficient to meet the needs of all students. We have widened our response to intervention practices to consider social, emotional, and non-cognitive factors. We have developed a mentoring and monitoring system to intervene when students miss as few as 1 or 2 assignments. We help foster a growth mindset by having students retake assessments that they have not done well on, which helps students to understand that learning continues and does not end with the test. We make hope happen by continuing to make a good school better.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

Nearly all core teachers (95%) have received professional development in Pre-Advanced Placement (AP) Vertical Teaming through College Board. Our goal is that all eighth graders leave our school with the skills necessary to be successful in honors and AP courses of any subject area. To this end, core classes are highly articulated to ensure that students build on their skills each year and are on track to be college ready by the end of high school. Our school focus is active student participation in learning through discussion, inquiry, and writing in order to increase the likelihood that they will be college ready upon graduation and not need to take remedial English, writing, or mathematics courses. Skills that we emphasize are: understanding and analyzing complex texts, communicating ideas and opinions around content or texts with justification and evidence, using technology to explore and apply learning, building knowledge as a group by listening and responding to others' ideas, and connecting concepts to real-world situations.

In alignment with the Common Core Standards for listening and speaking, we provide students with explicit instruction and ample opportunities to learn these skills and find their voice. In order to increase students' communication and critical thinking skills, they participate in daily discussions around content. And in many language arts classes you will see frequent debates and Socratic Seminars, which increase in sophistication from grade six to eight. The reflections of these activities focus on what students have learned and how their thinking has changed as a result of the discussions. Students take two blocks of language arts in order to provide them with the time they need to write multiple multi-draft essays as well as time to present formally. Further, 53% of our population are reclassified English Learners and still need additional language support that this additional time provides. In support of outside independent reading, we also use Accelerated Reader, with a goal that students read at least one-million words annually.

In mathematics, not only will you see students discussing, explaining, and defending their process or answers, you will feel the true community of learners where students are helping one another understand. The focus in mathematics is on conceptual understanding first followed by procedural accuracy. When students can explain why a problem is solved in a particular manner, they are more likely to understand the concepts and applications of the mathematics. Students practice and apply concepts using both hands-on activities as well as technology. For example, when learning about the different types of angles, students go out on campus and capture images of angles around campus. And when learning about volume, students complete hands-on labs to extend their thinking. For students that have advanced beyond the regular curriculum, we also offer high school Integrated Mathematics I, which increases the likelihood that students will be able to take higher level mathematics courses in high school, saving students time and money in college, as well as, increasing their chances for selecting technical or science majors.

Our social studies courses follow the California State Standards and integrate the Common Core Literacy Standards. Students actively participate in classroom discussions, activities, simulations, and projects designed to help them gain perspective and learn about world cultures in grades six and seven and understand an American citizen's role, rights, and civic responsibilities living in a democratic society in grade eight. We supplement our base curriculum with History Alive! This curriculum provides another look at history beyond facts and transports learners far beyond their textbooks on active-learning voyages into the past, using primary source materials, works of art, music, and other audio-visual and print materials to develop a deep understanding of history.

Science classes at Richardson have transitioned to the Common Core Integrated Science model with a survey of earth science, life science, and physical science each year. Students are given instruction on key science concepts through the use of technology, independent reading, lecture, discussion, and cooperative learning groups. Students use discovery learning to conduct experiments related to these science concepts using the scientific method to make predictions, construct a hypothesis, test their theory, then observe and measure the results. Using these results, students revise their original hypothesis. Laboratory observations, graphic organizers, projects, and other written work bring a thorough understanding of the universe. Every

unit students participate in a variety of hands-on labs to help them extend their understanding of scientific concepts.

The majority of our focus on college and career readiness lie in rigorous academic preparation and the 4-C's—communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. Students have deliberate, daily practice in communication skills, working with teams to accomplish a goal, critical thinking through inquiry, and opportunities to use creativity and choice. Students also learn about college entrance requirements, financing college, and possible careers they might be interested in. Each eighth grader leaves with a 6 year plan, which includes an interest survey that links them to possible careers. Students visit colleges as field trips, and as we continue to grow and get better, we have added additional opportunities each year.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Richardson PREP HI has a long standing reputation in the community for having excellent enrichment programs in addition to high academic performance. Every student takes one elective course. There is a small number of students (7%—mostly at sixth grade) that take an academic support class in place of their elective. For these students, we make every effort to provide them with other opportunities for enrichment including after school clubs and sports.

The visual art program provides students with the tools and opportunity to express their ideas and imagination. As they develop dexterity and technical skills in a variety of media, students are asked to stretch their creative thinking. In addition to working with traditional visual arts media, such as painting, drawing, and ceramics, Richardson art students are fully engaged in current electronic media. Students create original graphic design, photography, and animation projects while learning to use professional arts industry software. Art courses at Richardson are sequential and standards based. Art is offered at all grade levels and classes meet daily. Class projects often ask students to find innovative solutions to real world problems. As they explore working visually, students learn to critically discuss both the historical and contemporary work of renowned artists. Building upon a school-wide common core focus, students learn to read artworks as texts. As they analyze art, including their own, they learn to cite specific examples to support their conclusions. By learning about artworks from around the world and by engaging in the creation of original art, students learn to recognize art as a vital expression of culture and about their power and potential to affect and reflect the world in which they live.

A second elective choice for students is technology and computers. Sixth graders are introduced to computers in a one-semester course which focuses on the fundamentals, such as internet safety, keyboarding, documents, spreadsheets, and presentations. Seventh and eighth graders hone their keyboarding skills, continue to work on internet safety, create original multi-media projects, and dabble in programming. Advanced learners take the skills they have learned to produce a weekly video broadcast, create websites, and continue with various coding programs. Training and planning is currently underway to introduce a design and modeling and automation and robotics course beginning next school year, using Project Lead the Way engineering curriculum.

Students of all grade levels may also elect to take the yearlong instrumental music courses, including both orchestra and band designed for students with various levels of experience. These groups are involved in community concerts and competitions at Knott's Berry Farm, and Disneyland. The Richardson music program has a reputation of excellence, and our students are often invited to play at various community events, including charity events and galas. Approximately a third of the school participates in instrumental music during the day. Additional programs are also available after school, including vocal music, guitar, jazz band, rock band, and piano, which allows students in other electives or support classes to still learn and develop musical skill.

The final elective students can choose from is Spanish. We offer a beginning course over two years, which is equivalent to a single year at high school. Students that complete both years of the course can pick up where they left off in high school. And with 53% of our students being reclassified English Learners, we also have a native speakers Spanish class, where students who already speak the language can extend their skills in reading, writing, and grammar to build the literacy skills to be bi-literate. Students that complete the

native speaker course will be eligible to take Advance Placement courses in Spanish language and Spanish literature.

Richardson's physical education program promotes a healthy lifestyle through a variety of activities in physical education classes as well as extracurricular sports. The P.E. department offers cross country, mile runs, basketball, track and field, softball, volleyball, aerobics, soccer, hockey, lacrosse, team handball, and task activities, all of which encourage team participation and cooperation. We modify these activities as needed to promote lifelong fitness. Students complete running logs that include personal reflection on diet, health, and goal setting. Using incentives and awards, our goal is to create well-rounded students with an emphasis on lifelong fitness and health. Additionally, students are trained in hands-only CPR. All students take P.E. every day.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Our instructional focus at Richardson PREP HI is for students to be active in their learning. Our teachers approach student learning through collaborative model where students construct learning together through structured discussions, inquiry, use of technology, and direct instruction when appropriate. Our philosophy is that the one doing the talking, explaining, and creating is the one doing the learning; therefore, students are working and talking together throughout much of their school day. Teachers help students build understanding through scaffolded questioning and engaging tasks that require students to think and work together.

Teachers involve all students in frequent demonstrations of their learning. In this way, teachers can adjust their instruction in real time to ensure the best learning outcomes. Failure is not a choice at Richardson. Each team communicates student progress often to parents, counselor and administrators. Each student's success is the responsibility of the entire team; therefore grades are checked continuously and proactive efforts are made to immediately intervene when students are not experiencing success.

There are many reasons that students may not be achieving, and tutoring is not always the best response. Middle school students may need support in organizing their time—balancing school, sports/activities, and home. Additionally, due to the development stage, self-esteem and identity may interfere with academic progress. Peer groups and family relations also come into play. Therefore, each child is worked with as an individual. The team (teachers, parents, administration, counselor, and student) work together to determine the best support. Support examples include, counseling, social skills development, peer mediation, referrals to outside family counseling, and sometimes just checking in with that child more often. Each student's profile is analyzed by the team (including the student) to determine the best intervention plan for him/her. Academic supports may include, intervention classes for reading, language, or math during the school day, peer tutoring, academic tutoring after school (certificated or paraprofessional staff), homework help, and weekly academic monitoring and mentoring. Tutoring and homework help is available for all core subjects. Once intervention plans are agreed upon, a follow-up date is set and all stakeholders are informed of progress. If the student is making adequate progress, then a plan for gradually extinguishing support is created once goals are met. If a student is not making progress, then the team will meet again to review data and revise the plan.

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

Multiple types of data are used to determine student success from the State tests down to daily interactions that inform teachers about student learning. All of this data helps us to measure and monitor outcomes. Assessment results are shared with the School Site Council and other parent groups at least monthly. Data shared include reading and math skills data (STAR), grades/G.P.A., PSAT 8/9, and any other common assessments given. The data is shared both aggregated and disaggregated by grade level and student subgroup. Results are compared to the goals set in our school plan; we describe what the tests measure, and what we believe they communicate. Collaboratively with staff, students, and parents, we discuss next steps and needed resources. Teachers frequently review this data together at the classroom level to make adjustments in instruction both for the current school year and planned adjustments for future years. In this way, we can celebrate successes, note areas of growth, and continuously improve. For example, our African

American student subgroup under-performed on the mathematics portion of the state test last year. We have monitored student subgroups throughout the year to make sure that this will not occur again. As we look at mathematics assessment together, we are sure to go beyond the individual student level and monitor our subgroup averages. For our African American students, we are focusing on helping them develop a growth mindset and helping address any skill gaps that exist.

On the individual student level, students and parents have access to real-time grade books through an online system. Students are given time to check their grades and self-monitor progress. Every 4-5 weeks, students do a deeper analysis of their progress and reflect on their progress. Students take home a printed grade update every 4-5 weeks to bring back signed and an additional copy is sent by mail.

With an assessment for learning approach, we see mistakes as inevitable and learning from mistakes as necessary. One of the ways we support this is through re-tests. Students complete test reflections and corrections; they fix the errors and reflect on their misunderstandings. Students demonstrate their new learning by attending tutoring or completing online practice. Students then retake the test. For topics we consider critical, we require that students continue this cycle until successful. Examples include operations with positive and negative integers in mathematics and the U.S. Constitution test in social studies.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Our School Superintendent, Dr. Dale Marsden, is often heard saying, "We involve people in the decisions that affect them." We involve students, staff and parents in the decisions that affect them. Consequently, students are responsible, respectful, and positive; parents are engaged with us in our work; and every teacher on campus is a school leader. Richardson has a palpably positive environment where students and staff feel safe and cared about. Students often are seen helping other students, opening doors for visitors, picking up trash, and saying please and thank you. School is often a place where students are expected to follow rules unquestioningly; however, with a goal to produce involved citizens, we encourage students to ask questions and teach them to give their opinions in productive and respectful ways so that they will be heard. Students know that the school belongs to the community, and as part of the community, we are all responsible for making it what we want it to be—a place where everyone can learn, be respected, and be heard.

In 2010, all students were involved in developing the code of conduct, ROAR—Respect, Ownership, Attitude, and Responsibility. Students continue to help others understand and own ROAR. The TigerTV class creates video skits exemplifying ROAR do's, don'ts, and why's (often in humorous ways). Since ROAR, we have had a steady decline in behavioral referrals and misuse of grounds/equipment in addition to continuously improving student academic outcomes. Additionally, student forum is held monthly during both lunches where any student can come to engage in discussions with student leaders and the principal. Students ask questions; give their opinion about school policies, rules, activities, and purchases; and help solve real problems. Students have helped solve problems that we sometimes did not even know were happening. Students have given feedback on classroom technology, the dress code, the school rules, and even homework and grading policies. We take what students tell us and use it to inform our decisions. The more students see things changing based on their input, the more they become involved in the student forum.

We begin with the assumption of positive intentions. We assume that teachers have the best intentions for the school and students, administrators have the best intentions for the staff, parents want the best for their children, and students have the best intentions to be engaged, successful learners. In this way, we work together to create the conditions for success.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Richardson believes that student success relies on a collaborative between the school, the families, and the students. We have found that the best way to engage and educate our families is to integrate celebrations, entertainment, and information in one. For example, twice a year we hold a Family Movie Night. Held on Friday evenings, the community is invited to come to hear/see students perform, play games, learn about school and community resources, and end the evening with an outdoor movie showing. These events are very well attended with approximately 500 people in attendance. We take this opportunity to inform families and also to be informed. Student ambassadors survey parents about school policies, opportunities for improvement, and spending priorities.

Other ways we involve parents is through parent training, orientations, open house events, and awards assemblies. Additionally, our annual Veteran's Day Assembly is well attended by families, the families of our staff, as well as community groups such as the local Veteran's Affairs and Mason's Lodge. It has become a local tradition. One of our most well-attended parent training is our transition program to help parents with the shift from elementary to secondary. During the 5-hour event, students travel a mock schedule to learn subject specific success tips while their parents participate in sessions on school procedures, homework help tips, and advice on parenting teens.

The nearby community college has adopted Richardson provides us with opportunities to visit for tours and events. The science faculty holds a "Science Day" for our students. Every year students come back excited

about careers in science and the activities they experienced. Many students have said that it was the best field trip they ever took. Additionally, both the community college and local university's performing groups have either performed at our school or performed for our students at their location.

Finally, our after school program is staffed through a partnership with the local YMCA. This means that our after school program is a collaborative between the school staff and the YMCA, which allows us to provide academic and other enrichment programs we may not have been able to provide previously. For example, we have had a Polynesian dance workshop, martial arts workshop, and an ongoing cooking club that the school alone may not have been able to accomplish. The after school program runs each school day until 6 p.m. and is very well attended. Our program is often visited by State and local educators as a model for new after school programs.

### 3. Professional Development:

Teachers, support staff, and administration are all continuously developing professional skills and honing practices. We continuously analyze data and seek evidence based solutions. Teachers participate in instructional rounds, where they visit one another's classrooms to calibrate student expectations, develop our understanding around the nuances of instructional practices, and de-privatize the classroom. Administrative walk-through data is also collected, and feedback to teachers is differentiated but also tied to the school focus areas. This data helps inform us of needed professional development or who might be a good candidate to help others. We approach problems through collaboration and seek experts as we need them. Training and formal professional development is differentiated by educator need and selected in alignment with school goals.

One example of traditional training is our work on language development. Most of our English Learners have been reclassified, but there is still a need for continued language instruction. All teachers needed these skills and therefore have attended district provided training in language development. An example of teachers learning from one another is student technology use. We currently have 1:1 technology available for every student in every class but having the technology does not necessitate effective use. Teachers learn from one another during Monday morning collaboration time, common conference periods, and after school sessions. Many teachers continue to attend educational technology conferences and workshops; however, we have experts on campus, and we have found great success in moving school wide efforts like this by learning from each other.

Another way we select professional development is through action research around a problem of practice. For example, sixth graders struggle with the transition to middle school. We have researched and tried many things with various levels of success. As we continued our research, we began to learn about non-cognitive skills, including growth mindset, character development, grit, and resilience. We started with readings, videos, and discussions but lacked the expertise on how to put these ideas into action. Two teams attended conferences on these topics, which led to the development of a unique intervention for students who we previously called "unmotivated." Through our continued learning, we have not only seen success with helping students develop a growth mindset and resilience, but we have also seen a change in classroom practice with teachers noticing the early indicators of students giving up or demonstrating a fixed mindset and intervening early, which demonstrates a true change in practice and teacher buy-in.

### 4. School Leadership:

Richardson PREP HI belongs to the community. Therefore, the entire school staff (including clerical, custodial, etc.), the parents, the students, and community leaders must have voice in leading the school. The principal works to involve people in the decisions that affect them by soliciting input and reviewing options together. There are many parent groups that advise and support the school such as School Site Council, English Learners Advisory Council, Parent Teacher Organization, and African American Parent Advisory Council. Students participate in leadership through student government and student forum. All teachers are school leaders. Every teacher on campus has a role on a committee. For example, the school's positive behavior intervention team reviews all student referrals to determine consequences, necessary student interventions, as well as, system changes (additional supervision, changes in procedures) to improve

student behavior. The behavior team is made up of six teachers, one clerical staff member, the counselor, and the two administrators. This practice has led to better communication regarding the handling of behavioral referrals and shares responsibility for managing student misbehavior. The school also has traditional leadership roles such as, department chairs and grade-level team leaders that are consulted regularly on school governance, activities, assemblies, and instruction. Additionally, Richardson's Activities Planning Team (several teachers, office staff, paraprofessionals, and the administration team), reviews and schedules upcoming school events and develops supervision and action plans together. This has led to better success with events running smoothly and the ability to keep making good things even better. Our professional development team is made up of several teachers, a union representative, and the administrators. This group develops and approves our collaboration day calendar and professional development for the year. The group makes sure that the professional development calendars align with the school plan and both student and teacher needs. Finally, any member of the school community is invited to participate in the annual revision of the school plan. Several public meetings are held to review data, conduct needs assessments and develop revisions to the plan. As drafts of the plan are developed, staff, parents, and students are given multiple opportunities to review and comment. Because of the constant invitation to give opinions and share ideas to help us on our continuous journey of improvement, it is rare that someone comes to the school to complain; they come with feedback and suggestions for improvement.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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At Richardson, we take ownership for student outcomes. We all have a role to play in helping students be excellent—in academics, in sports, in arts, in character. In order to do this we must all be accountable to one another for every aspect of the school from the cleanliness of the buildings to the quality of the instruction every minute of the day. Teachers care about their lessons. They collaborate and reflect on every aspect of their lessons to make sure that they are developmentally appropriate, engaging, and will drive students to a deeper level of learning. The nurse works with the counselor or teachers if a student health concern might be interfering with his/her ability to engage in school. The clerical staff talks to students to find out why they are coming to school late and works with them to help solve the problem. The counselor will go to a student's home when we have been unable to meet in person. We do whatever it takes to provide excellent service to each student and family. You will never hear someone say, "It's not my job." We are all accountable.

We take ownership because we care. Students care about the school and one another. They help one another learn and help pick up dropped books and papers. And when they do things they should not—after all they are kids—they are treated with dignity and respect. We help them learn from their mistakes, both behavioral and academic. Students are taught to take ownership for their actions and make amends. We apologize when we do things that cause harm--adults and students alike. We are a family and a team. Every year on the last day of school, tears and hugs are abundant. On the last day, every staff member on the entire campus (health aide, custodian, everyone) walks students out to the dismissal area and waves goodbye until every bus has left the school. Students know we care. We take ownership for the results we get, which drives our constant determination to make great things better. We debrief and reflect after events and about our practices because we can always make it better. Because we are all accountable for our results, students do their best, staff do their best, and administrators do their best each and every day.