

U.S. Department of Education
2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 6 Federation Way
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Irvine State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 92603-0100

County Orange

Telephone (949) 936-6355 Fax (949) 936-6359

Web site/URL https://vistaverde.iusd.org/ E-mail jerryvlastic@iusd.org

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* Mr. Terry Walker E-mail terrywalker@iusd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Irvine Unified School District Tel. (949) 936-5000

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. Betty Carroll
(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. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	31	51	82
1	52	39	91
2	70	56	126
3	50	44	94
4	36	52	88
5	61	58	119
6	63	55	118
7	48	53	101
8	57	51	108
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	468	459	927

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 26.3 % Asian
 - 0.4 % Black or African American
 - 7.2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 49.3 % White
 - 16.8 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 6%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	26
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	30
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	56
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	912
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

Arabic, Armenian, Farsi, Finnish, German, Gujarati, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 11 %
101 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6 %

Total number students who qualify: 58

8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %

54 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>38</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	32
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	14
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 29:1

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	94%	94%	94%	94%	94%
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 2019.

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

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

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 1997

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

Our mission is to provide our school's diverse student population with the academic and technological skills to effectively meet the challenges of the 21st Century. We are: Open for Learning All Year Long!

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

Approximately 35% of our students are assigned to Vista Verde K-8 School by boundary. The remaining 65% of our students apply to attend via open enrollment/school choice. These students are chosen by randomized lottery.

PART III - SUMMARY

The success of the Vista Verde K-8 School program reflects the combined efforts by staff, students, and parents. Vista Verde sustains the same core values that we opened with over 40 years ago including a student-centered approach with significant parent involvement, and a strong sense of family and community connectedness. In 2006, we relocated from our previous home in University Park to the new community of Turtle Ridge where we now enjoy a state of the art educational facility.

Our school campus serves 930 diverse students who have a variety of talents, backgrounds, and unique abilities. English speaking students make up the majority of our student population. However, a number of students represent a variety of ethnic backgrounds and speak at least 16 different languages, which contribute to our school's richly diverse cultural background. Our school serves many families who represent Chinese, Korean, African American, Hispanic, Indian, Russian, Vietnamese, and Portuguese cultures, in addition to many others. We see our diversity as a strength and value the multiple perspectives a rich cultural and ethnic heritage brings to our school community.

Our mission is to provide our school's diverse population with the academic and technological skills to effectively meet the challenges of the 21st Century. We are committed to providing a rich variety of experiences to promote the acquisition of these skills and encourage the development of values and ideals. Our desire is to focus on the success of the whole child by fostering informed, productive, and capable students who are effective decision makers and problem solvers. Our vision is to empower students to take intellectual risks, to embrace innovation and creativity, all while developing critical thinking and communication skills. We are committed to our powerful professional learning community (PLC) and believe in sustained, quality professional development for our staff. Our evidence-based and assessment informed approach to learning includes a strong multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) team, 1:1 instructional technology device access, flexible learning spaces designed to promote collaboration and communication, and a focus on mindfulness and well-being.

Vista Verde instructional staff are highly trained and passionate about education. We offer differentiated curriculum and instruction by clustering GATE and Challenge students within classrooms beginning in elementary and continuing through 8th grade. To supplement our school program, Vista Verde enjoys strong partnerships with our adjacent Las Lomas Sports and Recreation Park, the Merage Jewish Community Center, the Child Development Center located here on campus and the Teen Center at Mariner's Church. Along with our strong Irvine Public Schools Foundation ACE (After-school Class Enrichment) program, these neighboring facilities provide a wide menu of after-school opportunities for our students.

Our school encourages students to have a voice and to empower their own learning. To support this, we implemented the Speak Up, We Care initiative to provide avenues for students to develop a relationship with adults on our campus when they are in need of social and emotional support. Additionally our entire school is trained in mindfulness-based resilience practices. We stop 2-3 times per day to briefly refocus and reconnect in a mindful way using the Calm Classroom Program to help students manage stress and achieve emotional well-being throughout the day using relaxation techniques. These social and emotional supports, coupled with our Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) Program, ensure our school environment is safe and positive for learning.

Vista Verde K-8 School continues many yearly traditions and customs unique to our school culture that are meaningful to our students and families. Exciting traditions include 100th Day of School in kindergarten, Patriotic Song Performance in 1st grade, Living Museum in 2nd grade, Business Day in 3rd grade, Walk Through California and Walk Through the American Revolution simulations in 4th and 5th grades, Outdoor Science Camp in 6th grade, and Catalina Island Marine Institute in 7th and 8th grades. Additionally, other traditions and activities include our Associated Student Body (ASB), Vista Verde TV, Viking Running Club, Science Fair, Irvine Junior Games, and our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and Vista Verde Foundation. All of these provide opportunities for our students and our parents to become active participants in our school community.

Our school is fortunate to be able to provide access to technology resources and 1:1 devices to all students. As a result, students are able to navigate digital platforms to build connections, develop creativity, promote communication and collaboration, and refine their voice in a global and interconnected world. Our staff benefits from on site technology coaching and support as teachers move through four different degrees of classroom technology integration on the Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition (SAMR) Model spectrum. Our work is made easier with Chromebook access available to all students, allowing for students to experience the independence of using a single device.

Vista Verde K-8 School is historically recognized as a top performing school. Our school honors include being awarded California Distinguished School recognition in 1993 and 2014. We are proud to be recognized as a PBIS Gold School for our positive behavior support STAR Program (Safety School Community, Thoughtful Communication, Act With Integrity and Respect, and Responsible Risk Taking).

Additionally, we received National Blue Ribbon School honors in the 1996-97 school year. As a previous recipient of the National Blue Ribbon School Award, we pride ourselves in our student-centered and family-focused school culture. Our reputation pushes us to embrace innovative instructional and professional practices in our Professional Learning Communities. We recently revamped our entire PBIS Program and completely redesigned our Library Media Center to increase innovation and collaboration in the space. Finally, we value our special relationship with our community members and fully embrace their contributions to our school culture.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

Our overall approach to curriculum and instruction follows The Learning Cycle (TLC). We evaluate our effects on student learning and achievement by focusing on evidence of student learning and use our professional learning Community (PLC) teams to collaboratively engage in a reflective process called The Learning Cycle.

Ultimately, our work is guided by four essential questions:

1. What do we want students to know and be able to do?
2. How will students demonstrate that they have mastered essential learning and developed the essential capacities?
3. How will we intervene for students who struggle and enrich the learning for students who are proficient?
4. How can we use the evidence of student learning to improve our individual and collective practice?

The Learning Cycle is cyclical and our approach follows this mode (clarify, elicit, interpret, act, evaluate):

Clarify Intended Learning: Identify and communicate learning targets or goals and develop success criteria for what mastery looks like.

Elicit Evidence of Learning: Identify evidence to be used to assess each learning target and develop assessment maps for how progress will be measured over time.

Interpret Evidence of Learning: Evaluate performance against success criteria and review error analysis.

Act on Evidence: Deliver targeted instruction (instructional fix) based on interpretation of evidence

Evaluate Effectiveness: Evaluate effectiveness using new evidence (multiple measures) and implement changes to the program based on evidence.

This overall approach allows us to evaluate our effects on student learning and achievement by focusing on evidence of student learning. We know the importance of multiple measures and varying types of assessments as part of our curriculum and instructional approach.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Vista Verde adopted three new programs recently for English Language Arts (ELA) after a lengthy pilot program. Our primary grades (K-2) utilize Houghton Mifflin Journeys to support a balanced language arts approach in phonics, reading, writing, and language use. Upper grades (3-5) use Benchmark Advance to support a comprehensive daily lesson approach that facilitates evidence-based analysis using fiction and nonfiction texts. Teachers use these texts to reinforce close reading, comprehension, writing, text structure, grammar and spelling, and scaffolded reading skills within a balanced literacy program. Our middle grades (6-8) adopted StudySync. Multimedia engagement and integrated writing supports in StudySync assist teachers in providing a well-rounded reading and language arts program that engages middle grades students in building a strong foundation in literacy as they approach high school. Our program is unique in our belief that a single adoption for all grades isn't necessarily the best approach. Our teams recommended programs for adoption, after pilot analysis, that most strongly aligned to our state standards and program goals at each grade level span. All of our grade level teams use assessments provided by the publisher, along with teacher-

developed common assessments (formative and summative). STAR Renaissance Reading is administered each trimester as a benchmark to assist PLC teams in meeting individual student needs in reading when intervention and challenge groups are developed and refined. Our team uses the Response to Instruction (RtI) models to support students in group rotations we call GROW (Go Read or Write). Our PLC teams use instructional assistants to support tiered reading instruction and interventions in group rotations designed with intention to meet students who are below, at, or above grade level standards. Novel study begins in 3rd grade and continues through 8th grade. Novels are selected to support standards-based instruction that aligns with our scope and sequence and our adopted literacy programs. Novels are also selected to enhance text analysis, to provide the opportunity for using text to develop argumentative writing skills, and support literary analysis and comprehension. Upper grade and middle school students also have access to the Junior Great Books series which utilizes shared-inquiry discussions to enhance critical thinking skills.

1c. Mathematics

We consider mathematics engaging and fun, something to be learned by taking intellectual risks. At Vista Verde, our teachers administer ongoing assessments, coupled with the STAR Renaissance assessment each trimester, to provide data to inform our differentiated instruction. For ongoing assessment, teachers use target trackers, exit slips, error analysis, as well as teacher created assessments so students can document their own progress and growth. Common assessments are reviewed using The Learning Cycle (TLC) in our PLCs to plan for instruction for students who need extra support, or for students who need a challenge. Kindergarten uses McGraw-Hill My Math program to support instructional activities that include the use of manipulatives and multiple approaches to solve problems. First through fifth grade teams use Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's GoMath! series. As in primary grades, students interact with manipulatives, but also work on online animated math models, and problem-based modeling videos. Publisher reteach resources help our teachers organize math groups to support students chunking difficult concepts into simpler steps to provide a scaffolded approach when learning mathematical procedures. Additionally, our site leverages our resources and is able to annually renew ST Math, a web-based instructional program that leverages the brain's innate spatial-temporal reasoning ability to solve mathematical problems as students build a deeper conceptual understanding of mathematics. Students can track their own progress, and teachers can monitor and adjust the levels of instruction. Our middle school uses SpringBoard in grades six through eight, which focuses on numerical functions, representing data, and communicating and justifying answers through writing. This program has both conceptual and procedural assessments that help teachers develop mathematical practices. All grade levels work to develop the eight mathematical practices (make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others, model with mathematics, use appropriate tools strategically, attend to precision, look for and make use of structure, and look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning). IUSD offers an Integrated Mathematics Pathway K-12 to best prepare students for success in college, career, and life. Our school and district are committed to the appropriate placement of all students. As a result, we offer two accelerated math courses at the middle school level, Enhanced Math 7/8 and the first course in the high school integrated mathematics pathway, Enhanced Math 1. As a school, to enrich our instruction, we also include the Irvine Math Project, which focuses using foundational skills and concepts to solve real-world problems. Teachers have the freedom to use instructional technology to enhance their classroom instructional practice through the use of online resources like Khan Academy as well.

1d. Science

Over the past couple of years, we transitioned from the California Content Standards to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) while also piloting and adopting new science instructional materials at the middle school level. Science and Engineering practices and standards start in kindergarten where students learn about growing plants, composting, and collaboratively working to plant and harvest their own crops from our garden. Our kindergarten through fifth grade teachers use a web-based program called Mystery Science to give students access to the Science and Engineering Practices (SEP), Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCI), and Cross Curricular Concepts (CCC), the three main components of the NGSS. Mystery Science involves hands-on experiments and projects where students collect and analyze data, collaborate with fellow scientists, problem solve, create hypotheses, test out solutions, and apply their learning to scenarios found in the real-world. Unique to Irvine is our elementary Science Lab program. Upper grade elementary students

participate in a Science Lab taught by a credentialed teacher twice a week and bring hands on experiments to the core science curriculum.

At Vista Verde, our middle school science department adopted STEMScopes for instructional materials for students in grades six through eight. STEMScopes is designed to follow the 5E lesson model found in the NGSS standards—Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate. Lessons are scaffolded to build upon previous learning, allowing both a gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student empowered learning. Additionally, sixth grade students attend Outdoor Education Science Camp where they spend a week in the mountains experiencing the world around them through a scientific lens. Seventh and eighth grade students have the opportunity to attend outdoor science school for a week at the Catalina Island Marine Institute (CIMI) in Toyon Bay.

We use a variety of formative and summative assessments in science, including pre-assessments, to determine student strengths and areas of need to assist us in guiding instruction for each unit. Students are given ongoing feedback in assessments that include graphic organizers, reflective written responses, and visual representations of collaborative work, including labs. Formative assessment is typically used to adjust instructional practice and provide data for our PLC team to design reteach or challenge lessons during tutorial groups. Summative assessments are analyzed by the PLC team to determine how well students perform on each of our agreed upon learning targets for a complete unit. This data informs our lesson design and provides information for us to work with students in a re-teaching setting while giving them multiple opportunities to retake the summative assessments.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Instructional materials for social studies were recently adopted in the past year with the following publisher programs selected in the following grade levels: K-1st grades, Studies Weekly, second through fifth grades, Pearson, and sixth through eighth grades, McGraw-Hill. Again, as with our other content areas, teachers spent time piloting and found different publishers best suited for each grade span. Kindergarten through third grades focus on the concepts of now and long ago, time and space, people who make a difference, and continuity and change. Highlights in our primary grade programs include the first grade patriotic song performance, where students sing songs from throughout our history. Second grade students interview an ancestor or other elder, and then choose between making a paper doll in traditional clothing, or dressing up themselves to represent their culture. Third grade puts on a business day to learn about commerce and local economies. Students set up businesses and sell their wares in a token local economy. In upper grades, the social sciences curriculum integrates past and present with California History in fourth grade and United State History in fifth grade. Fourth grade students learn about the history of California, participate in a lively Walk Through California assembly, and visit the San Juan Capistrano Mission. Fifth grade students develop research skills to learn about and write about one of our 50 states. They enjoy a Walk Through the American Revolution assembly and get to experience colonial American life during an overnight field trip to Riley's Farm. Our middle school program is extensive. Sixth and seventh grade students develop multimedia projects and analyze ancient civilizations and medieval and early modern time historical events using primary source documents. Our eighth grade program integrates U.S. history and geography with a major unit in the spring focusing on the Civil War. A significant decision by our social studies teachers was to seek professional development in Document Based Questions (DBQs). DBQs and Mini-Qs are designed and structured so students at all levels engage and practice answering rich and authentic historical questions. Students learn to use evidence to support arguments and then apply that evidence in argumentative writing. We consider DBQs as one of our authentic writing assessments. Evidence-based argument is a necessary life skill now more than ever. Students are now exposed to DBQs at Vista Verde over a five year period, from fourth through eighth grades. Part of what we do is civic education, and real life requires we be able to answer questions by analyzing evidence and deciding its validity and what it means.

In social studies, we focus on assessing knowledge using formative and summative assessments to gauge historical content knowledge and analysis skills. Our PLC team uses district-supported online platforms (School City and Canvas) to design assessments that include open responses. Summative writing assessments are a large part of our data analysis using the document based question (DBQ) curriculum. Narrative and argumentative DBQ responses are analyzed and used to support instruction and re-teaching.

Data is formally analyzed in PLC normed grading days four times per year in a vertical format grades 6-7-8. Learning targets and success criteria using rubrics (ex. citing evidence on argumentative writing) are reviewed vertically in PLC norming sessions. Instructionally, the social science PLC develops mini-lessons based on formative and summative data analysis and uses this information to support students during intervention groups in tutorial sessions. Students are also provided multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery by rewriting or retaking assessments.

1f. For secondary schools:

Last year, an IUSD Career Technology Education State Grant, along with additional funds from Vista Verde Foundation, allowed us to fund the installation of a Fab Lab in the middle school wing with four 3D printers, a laser cutter, and a fabrication zone with butcher block work tables and power tools to support career pathway courses in engineering. The Vista Verde K-8 School Foundation assisted this project by adding funds to update our science labs in the middle school with new tables and stools that are more flexible for hands-on engineering projects. The Career Technology Education program at Vista Verde provides opportunities for students to explore careers beginning in middle school. Under the umbrella of Career Technical Education (CTE), career education courses provide hands-on learning experiences that build teamwork, leadership, creativity and problem solving skills in a variety of high demand industry sectors. While gaining industry specific skills students also build the professional skills that transfer to successful careers in any industry sector and that help them succeed in college or university programs. Our program is in its first year and consists of an Introduction to Engineering course, a Digital Media/Photography course, and a Culinary Arts and Cooking course. These complement our existing Vista Verde TV course and are designed to feed into CTE pathways at our Irvine Unified School District high schools

1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All students participate in our nationally recognized music and visual arts programs. Our visual and performing arts (VAPA) program is consistently recognized for its high quality. Instructionally, our primary grades participate in 40-minute lessons provided with financial support from the Irvine Public Schools Foundation (IPSF). These lessons focus on rhythm, vocal, and basic music skills and are taught by a fully credentialed music teacher. Upper grade students participate in 40-minute lessons twice weekly in three main strands: vocal, winds, or strings. Students are given a choice and may select one option among the strands. In our middle grades, students have the option for full year elective classes in orchestra, band, vocal music, and musical theatre. Many of our students also audition to participate in the IUSD Honors Orchestra.

Visual arts at Vista Verde are taught by a credentialed art teacher to students in our elementary program. Over the course of six lessons, art instruction is focused on developing foundational art skills. Artwork created by students from these lessons is selected and displayed in our school, at our district office, and is showcased during a yearly district art show. Our middle school art program is offered to students in our exploratory classes. In the past offerings based on student interest included ceramics, craft making, watercolor painting, jewelry design, and fine art drawing. Another opportunity for students in VAPA is through our PTA's Reflections Program. Reflections is a PTA sponsored contest for students to showcase talents in all areas of the arts based on an annual theme. Student artwork is displayed at our school site and contest winners can move forward to regional competitions.

We consider student well-being important and physical and mental health education is a priority at Vista Verde. Our elementary program consists of 200 minutes of instruction every two weeks. Our elementary teachers are credentialed to teach physical education (PE) and are supported by a PE paraprofessional who assists in all lessons for all classes. At the middle school, PE is a core instructional course and every 6-8 grade student is scheduled for a period of PE. At all levels, our program promotes healthy choice and habits, gross motor skill instruction, and individual and team sports instruction. Other fitness opportunities students can choose to participate are Viking Running Club, Irvine Junior Games, Harvest Cup Soccer Tournament, Flag Football Winter Bowl, and Irvine Hoops Basketball Classic. To support healthy habits beyond PE., elementary grade levels use The Great Body Shop program, a comprehensive health, safety, and substance

abuse curriculum. Our 6th grade partners with the Irvine Police Department for Drug and Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) and our 7th grade follow ups with the Student Empowerment at Middle School (SEAMS). SEAMS is an educational program for 7th grade students that builds upon common themes they learned in their elementary school D.A.R.E. program.

Foreign language is offered only in 8th grade in our middle school program currently. We offer two high school level courses. Spanish 1 is a traditional year long elective. New this year, we offered another high school course, Latin 1, in a blended online format.

Vista Verde students have 1:1 Chromebooks access to Google's G Suite for Education and Microsoft Office 365. Teachers and students can access online learning tools like ST Math, Nearpod interactive lessons, Adobe Spark multimedia, Canvas Learning Management System, and many other instructional technology programs. Classrooms are equipped with document cameras and large projection screens. Green screens, STEAM materials, and robotics are also available. Technology skills are integrated across all K-8 content areas to support student learning and are included in our site technology plan. Our redesigned Library Media Center provides an open, flexible, and mobile collaborative workspace where students can spend time reading, using multimedia, and accessing thousands of books and eBooks. Our Library Media Specialist and Media Technicians partner with our teachers to keep our library current with engaging books while teaching lessons that focus on research skills and digital literacy.

Character is ingrained in our PBIS program and in DARE and SEAM. The staff models and teaches expected behavior in all areas of school at the beginning of the year PBIS assemblies and monitors data for reteaching later in the year. Our STAR (safe school community, thoughtful communication, act with integrity, responsible risk taking) acronym is the core of our behavior expectations. Positive student behavior is recognized with STAR cards. Elementary students can use these for treasure boxes and middle school students can visit our STAR store.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Students performing below grade level who need additional academic and behavioral support are discussed by Vista Verde's MTSS Team. PLC teams discuss students and work to intervene in targeted small group instruction if there is an academic or behavioral need during our RtI time blocks. If a student plateaus, or isn't making adequate progress, PLC teams then refer the student to our multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) team. The MTSS Team gathers data to review student progress and current interventions and evaluates this data to drive educational decision making. Intervention Lead Teachers (ILT) are a strong component of the MTSS Team and bring added training and specialized knowledge in evidence-based intervention and instruction. The MTSS Team implements a problem-solving approach to identify and provide targeted supports and intervention including Lexia Core Five, Reading Counts, Read Naturally, Early Intervention to Reading Model (EIRM), Read 180 (middle school), REWARDS (middle school), Reading and Literacy Intervention year-long course (middle school), Tutorial (middle school) in the area of literacy. In math, examples include Do the Math Now, Facts Wise, ST Math, Math Lab intervention trimester long course (middle school), and Tutorial (middle school).

Behavioral supports are also in place for students who are performing below grade level expectations. We have a robust Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) program. Schoolwide PBIS is a framework, or approach, of intervention practices and organizational systems for establishing the social culture, learning and teaching environment, and individual behavior supports needed to achieve academic and social success for all students. At Vista Verde, our STAR Program of behavioral expectations is a PBIS approach. Students who need support become part of a Check-in, Check-out system and may participate in social skills lessons via Tool Box and the Second Step curriculum. We also provide support in small group and individual counseling groups and by using restorative practices in conflict resolution.

We believe our extensive and early interventions with struggling students are a significant reason behind our below average special education caseload.

3b. Students performing above grade level

At Vista Verde School we recognize that giftedness doesn't begin on the first day of fourth grade. To meet the needs of our gifted students, Vista Verde utilizes a GATE Cluster Model. Students who have been formally GATE identified are placed in a GATE cluster within a regular classroom. The GATE cluster model allows teachers to provide differentiated instruction throughout the day and across all subject areas. As part of this process, teachers assess each student's current knowledge and/or skill level then make adjustments to instruction and curriculum to meet individual educational needs. Teachers differentiate the curriculum for our advanced students through a variety of methods. They may change the instructional strategies, alter the format of an assignment, increase the difficulty of an assignment, or provide additional complexity through the use of open ended assignments or projects.

The advantage of the GATE cluster model over pull out programs or self-contained models is that the GATE cluster program obligates the teacher to differentiate instruction for ALL students, regardless of identification. Students can be gifted in the area of math but perhaps still need additional support in the area of language arts. Students who need greater challenge in one curricular area may need additional support in another can be served within a GATE cluster classroom. At Vista Verde, we are fortunate in that the high number of gifted students allows us to have multiple clusters at each grade level.

Regardless of GATE identification, Vista Verde teachers provide differentiation for ALL students in need of additional challenge through the use of pretesting and ongoing progress monitoring. In middle school, GATE students are also cluster grouped within the regular classroom. Throughout the middle school curriculum, our teachers seek to provide opportunities to extend and enrich learning through instructional strategies such as open ended assignments and increasing the depth or complexity of an assignment.

We have a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to share best practices and to provide a focus for professional development that centers on meeting the needs of our brightest students. Our advisory committee is responsible for developing additional opportunities for enrichment and extension beyond the school day.

3c. Special education

Special education services at Vista Verde are provided in our specialized academic instruction (SAI) and speech and language programs. The core purpose of special education at Vista Verde is to provide specialized academic instruction and intervention, as well as to give students with disabilities access to the same educational programs and/or activities that are available to their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent possible. Special education provides a full continuum of program options to meet the educational and service needs of individuals with exceptional needs in the least restrictive environment. These programs are designed to assist children who demonstrate significant deficits in academic and/or language skills. A student can qualify for these programs by having a specific learning disability or other disability as outlined by the state of California. An individualized education plan (IEP) is designed to assist the student to make reasonable academic or social gains utilizing his/her strengths and remediate weaknesses. These programs are designed and implemented by the education specialists in classrooms, or by our speech and language pathologist, and in individual or small group learning situations. Our special education staff uses evidence-based instructional materials to meet students where they are so progress is made on annual goals and objectives. IEP progress monitoring and ongoing assessment are a key part of our program and provide data to assist our professional educators in designing and refining instructional plans for students with exceptional needs. Our middle school program shares a similar design. Our middle school educational specialist works with teachers and students in a collaborative, push-in model in general education core classes with individuals or in small targeted groups, while providing additional support in a study skills class for students whose individual goals require extra organizational and study support.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

Vista Verde K-8 has a significant population of English language learners. Students are recommended for mainstream classes as their instructional setting when initial assessments in language show them to be at the

Expanding and Bridging levels of English proficiency. The results of the initial California mandated language assessment indicate these students have moderately to well-developed oral and written English skills. Grade level subject matter content is delivered in a manner that is accessible to all learners. Students receive moderate to light support through structured, integrated, and designated academic language skills development based on the state English Language Development (ELD) Standards. All teachers at Vista Verde hold English Learner Authorizations and are well qualified to instruct students whose primary language isn't English. A variety of instructional strategies and specialized materials are used to facilitate conceptual understanding, language acquisition, and literacy skill development. Some of our students are at the Emerging and Expanding levels of English proficiency. The results of the initial State mandated language assessment indicate these students have beginning to somewhat developed oral and written English skills. These ELL students receive substantial to moderate support through structured, integrated, and designated academic language skills development based on the state ELD standards. With the integration of the California English Language Development Standards, English fluency and content knowledge development are achieved simultaneously in the core curriculum to ensure English learners do not suffer academically as measured under the federal and state standards. Educators utilize instructional strategies and specialized materials to facilitate conceptual understanding, language acquisition, and literacy skill development. Core curriculum concepts are scaffolded as students improve their level of language proficiency. Our EL students receive extra support through phonics and vocabulary skill building, access to fiction and nonfiction texts, and digital resources available in their home language. Language acquisition progress is reported to teachers through a biannual assessment, the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) where students are tested in four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Based on the assessment results, coupled with data from teacher observations, students can be reclassified from Limited English Proficiency (LEP) to Fluent English Proficiency (FEP). Reclassified students are monitored by our staff for 48 months to ensure continued progress.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Vista Verde K-8 School believes an engaging, positive environment is important for students. We provide many opportunities for students to feel motivated about school. To begin with, we make sure students have confidence and can feel in control of their feelings and emotions. We work hard to equip students with these skills through Second Step lessons which promote social-emotional development and safety and well-being. Our elementary counseling staff works diligently to implement this curriculum in our classrooms, and provide opportunities during lunch and recess time for students to practice socialization skills while building friendships.

Vista Verde teachers and staff focus on growth mindset and mindfulness learner approaches in our classrooms during learning time. Our monthly recognition assemblies don't focus solely on academics. We recognize students for resilience, grit, courage, empathy, integrity, and attitude! Motivation comes not solely from academic achievement, but more often than not from feeling a sense of accomplishment in oneself, or by feeling good about helping someone else.

We motivate students with school spirit, too. School can be fun, and often fun is the rule and not the exception! Our Associated Student Body determines several spirit days each year. In past years these have included Crazy Hair Day, Pajama Day, Dress Alike Day, Clash Day, and Red White Blue Day. One of our major school traditions is dressing up for Halloween on our Fall Spirit Day. As a K-8 school, this brings students of all ages together in a fun day of costumes and trick-or-treating! Students aren't the only ones motivated and engaged; staff dresses up, too.

We work to motivate and engage our middle school students with special programming. One such program is the Youth Action Team in partnership with the City of Irvine. The goal of the Middle School YAT Program is to engage youth in positive social-recreational activities, on-campus prevention and education campaigns, and character development programs. Middle school students are encouraged to participate in the development and implementation of programs that focus on community service (Youth Action Team), personal development, and social recreation. Our middle school counseling staff works to schedule Youth Action Team (YAT) Character Talks to connect students with a trusted adult and our local Youth Action Team members visit campus regularly to make connections at lunch.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Vista Verde, we work very hard to engage and partner with our families and our community. We communicate with and engage our families using multiple platforms like social media (Instagram, Twitter), school and classroom websites, and community forums like PTA Association and Vista Verde Foundation meetings and assemblies. A myriad of opportunities exist for parents to be involved in our school program and student activities including our PTA board and committees, Vista Verde Foundation board and projects, and classroom assistance. Volunteer activities within and outside the classroom exhibit a high degree of parent and community participation and we believe our home-to-school connection is critical to our success. Over 20,000 volunteer hours are typically recorded by our community volunteers each year. Our PTA sends a school newsletter each Friday via email which informs parents about school activities, grade level information, and community activities. Our Principal's Press is sent via SchoolMessenger to keep parents informed of major school events and to provide detailed information about our instructional program. Additionally, parents are active participants in our school site council where elected members represent their peers during the discussion and development of our annual school improvement Plan. Parents receive timely feedback of students' academic achievements and challenges in the form of written progress reports and report cards. To start the year, we hold goal setting parent conferences and follow up in person with spring goal progress conferences for in person communication. There is significant informal communication weekly from teachers to parents via email, class discussion boards, and from class websites. We are also fond of traditions. Each year we hold several big events that are greatly anticipated and enjoyed by our community. In December, we host a holiday dessert open house. Each staff member bakes six dozen cookies

and in place of a traditional open house, we have an open school with festive desserts to celebrate each other and our progress over the first half of the year. This event is our biggest each year and our entire community turns out. Other exciting parent and community engagement events include Science Night, Read Across America Week, and Family Fun Night. We have relationships with local nonprofit community organizations, like Team Kids, too. Each year, Team Kids hosts a Challenge. We kick off the Vista Verde Challenge with an assembly led by Team Kids staff, City of Irvine police officers, and Orange County firefighters. The program delivers lessons about critical community issues, such as homelessness, hunger, literacy, and the environment. Every student is invited to participate in a weekly challenge, such as collecting food or clothing, depending on the Challenge for the year. We value our families and our local community members and strive to connect and engage with all of them.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

We value our teachers and work diligently to make sure they feel supported. Perhaps the most important part of our daily professional culture, and the one which our teachers value most, is our PLC team structure. PLC teams meet weekly (and often much more than that) to clarify, elicit, act, and evaluate by using the Learning Cycle to focus on student learning. Teams set agreed upon norms, discuss and interpret data and common assessments, review evidence of student learning, and examine grading practices and engagement strategies. A big part of our professional culture is this PLC process. Teachers feel valued because they are supported while given the autonomy to drive instructional decisions by using the PLC process. We are fortunate to have four PLC coaches on site who facilitate team meetings, support team health and productivity, and provide another set of eyes when challenges or roadblocks appear. A growth mindset, seeing mistakes as an opportunity to learn, and intellectual risk-taking are areas we also discuss in our PLC team. We see these concepts as important to us and our professional culture as they are beneficial to our students and their mindfulness.

This year, in addition to the 3 full days of district professional development, Vista Verde dedicated six after school (2 hours per session) professional development sessions on training to implement the Calm Classroom Curriculum, School Safety Plan, School Safety Systems, implementing RtI (Response to Instruction and Intervention), implementing effective professional Learning communities focused on common assessments and essential standards across each grade level, aligning our instruction and assessments to the Common Core Standards, and reviewing data and updating our Positive Behavior Intervention System (STAR). The entire K-8 staff receives annual training on the use of Thinking Maps: A Language for Learning. Additionally, instructional staff attended district training and development in core academic areas. Staff and administration meet monthly to review data from both academic assessments and behavioral databases to reflect and revise instruction and positive behavior systems. Additional staff leadership subcommittees focus on increasing opportunities for high achieving students, maximizing support available for at risk students through academic and behavior interventions (MTSS), and improving our Positive Behavior Intervention System (STAR) program. Targeted professional development activities are essential for maintaining and improving a quality educational program, and for keeping our teachers and administrators engaged and excited about learning themselves. Gathering input from teachers on our professional development plan, which is a shared responsibility, helps build capacity and leadership in our teams, as well. Lastly, we have a familial culture among the staff. We genuinely like one another. Positive relationships among the team foster an overall positive professional culture.

4. School Leadership:

Our school leadership is collaborative, collegial, and shared in style and framework. We believe that collective mindwork and a robust synergy of ideas and opinions ensures we commit our resources to focus in areas of student learning where we will get the best student outcomes. We do this in a system of school-based committees and decision-making bodies.

Our MTSS Team is one example of an effective leadership model at Vista Verde. The team consists of the principal and/or assistant principal, Intervention Lead Teachers (ILTs), education specialists, and teacher representatives from kindergarten through 8th grades. Team members review collected data and assessments, discuss student learning needs, analyze social-emotional and behavior needs and then allocate

appropriate resources to implement intervention recommendations in a collaborative setting.

We involve parents in our school leadership as members of our School Site Council. As with the MTSS Team, decisions are made by reviewing data and student outcomes. School improvement goals are developed collectively by ten members of the council composed of the principal or assistant principal, three teachers, one classified employee, and five parents. All of these positions are elected except for the principal or assistant principal member. As a result, our parent community feels as though they are true stakeholders in school improvement decisions with a voice in how resources and revenue are allocated to meet our goals.

Students also have a voice in school leadership. The major voice on campus for students is the Associated Student Body (ASB). Middle school students are our school leaders and apply for ASB as part of a leadership class offered as an exploratory course in grades six through eight. Their role includes making decisions on community service projects, planning events like dances and movie nights, and crafting school spirit activities. They must budget and spend correctly, and then come to an agreement by voting regarding fund allocation for their projects.

Overall, our collective and collaborative leadership model, based on shared decision making, is one we are all proud of as Vista Verde Viking community members. We all feel a sense of ownership for creating a climate and culture that is not only positive for student learning, but welcoming for all stakeholders.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Vista Verde K-8 is successful academically because our teachers are high caliber and exceedingly professional, our support staff is well trained, and all employees consider themselves educators no matter what their actual role is on campus. However, the one practice that we believe is making the most difference in our recent success is our focus on social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, establish and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions. (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, CASEL)

Irvine Unified School District and Vista Verde K-8 School support the social-emotional development of all students. We understand the foundation SEL provides for safe and positive learning, which enhances a students' ability to succeed in school, career, and life.

Our goal at Vista Verde is to support every student. At Vista Verde, we begin with the SRSS-IE assessment. It is a universal screening tool that helps identify students who may be at risk for behavior or social-emotional problems. Some of the things we look for are students who seem emotionally flat, shy or withdrawn, sad or depressed, anxious, or lonely. Teachers assess various risk factors for each student in their class and work with our Elementary Resource Counselor (ERC) and our middle school counseling staff to determine who is at-risk in those areas. Our counseling support staff then personally reaches out to identified students to decide if more intensive SEL interventions are needed. We continue to track and monitor students on an ongoing basis.

Our school encourages students to have a voice and to empower their own learning. To support this, we implemented the Speak Up, We Care initiative to provide avenues for students to develop a relationship with adults on our campus when they are in need of social and emotional support. Additionally our entire school is trained in mindfulness-based resilience practices. This year, our staff embraced our whole school adoption of Calm Classroom techniques. These techniques assist students in developing effective self-regulation skills by working to achieve a state of calm in any moment. We stop 2-3 times per day to briefly refocus and reconnect in a mindful way using the Calm Classroom Program strategies. These help students manage stress and achieve emotional well-being throughout the day using relaxation techniques. Our social and emotional supports, coupled with our Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) Program, ensure our school environment is safe and positive for learning.

Finally, we've started Restorative Practices. In this tiered model, we started with reaffirming relationships through developing social-emotional skills. These skills are universally taught. If a relationship is in need of repair, we work in problem solving circles or mediation. And, for the most intensive situations, we focus on rebuilding the relationship by using restorative circles and restorative plans and agreements. While the Restorative Practices are new to us, we've already seen the benefit of reaffirming relationships, repairing harm, and rebuilding relationships in a caring manner.