U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal <u>Mr Benjamin Klaus</u>
                       (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)
Official School Name <u>Jose Ortega Elementary School</u>
                       (As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address <u>400 Sargent Street</u>
                       (If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City <u>San Francisco</u>   State <u>CA</u>   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) <u>94132-3152</u>

County <u>San Francisco County</u>

Telephone <u>(415) 469-4726</u>   Fax
Web site/URL <u>https://www.sfusd.edu/school/jose-ortega-elementary-school</u>   E-mail <u>antramp@sfusd.edu</u>

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* <u>Dr. Matt Wayne</u>   E-mail <u>waynem@sfusd.edu</u>
                       (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name <u>San Francisco Unified</u>   Tel. <u>(415) 241-6000</u>

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 <u>Mr. Kevine Boggess</u>
                       (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, leave blank.

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 2023 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.

4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.

5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.

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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district   72 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   13 Middle/Junior high schools
                                            14 High schools
                                            0 K-12 schools

                                            99 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district**.)

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")

   [X] Urban (city or town)
   [ ] Suburban
   [ ] Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	0
K	66
1	64
2	66
3	62
4	61
5	65
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	384

*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):

    <u>1</u> % American Indian or Alaska Native
    <u>58</u> % Asian
    <u>5</u> % Black or African American
    <u>11</u> % Hispanic or Latino
    <u>2</u> % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    <u>5</u> % White
    <u>18</u> % 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 2021 - 2022 school year: <u>≤1</u>%

    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 *to* the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	2
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	365
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

    <u>Chinese, Arabic, Japanese, Tagalog, Spanish,</u>

    English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: <u>0</u> %

    <u>0</u> Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: <u>41</u> %

    Total number students who qualify: <u>158</u>

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 8 %
                          Total number of students served   31|

    Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

0 Autism	0 Multiple Disabilities
0 Deafness	0 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deaf-Blindness	20 Other Health Impaired
0 Developmental Delay	0 Specific Learning Disability
0 Emotional Disturbance	11 Speech or Language Impairment
0 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
0 Intellectual Disability	0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504:   2 %
                          Total number of students served: 9

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 7

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	0
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

12. 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   23:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	88%	94%	93%	94%	90%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes _   No <u>X</u>

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

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

At Jose Ortega Elementary School, our mission is to provide a safe, nurturing, and inclusive learning environment where every student can reach their full potential. We believe that each child is unique, and we strive to help them develop their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical capabilities. Our vision is to create a community of lifelong learners who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world. We believe that education should be engaging, inspiring, and challenging, and we are committed to providing a curriculum that is both rigorous and relevant. At Jose Ortega Elementary School, we value diversity, equity, and inclusion. We believe that every student should feel valued and respected, regardless of their background, culture, or ability. We are dedicated to creating a supportive and welcoming environment where all students can learn and grow together. We believe that education is a partnership between the school, the family, and the community. We encourage open communication and collaboration to ensure that each student receives the support they need to succeed. Together, we can empower our students to become responsible, compassionate, and engaged citizens who make a positive difference in the world.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

https://www.sfusd.edu/services/family-supports-services/report-a-concern/uniform-complaint-procedure

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Jose Ortega Elementary School is a dynamic learning community that caters to a diverse group of students from various cultural backgrounds. The school is situated in a vibrant and bustling neighborhood in San Francisco, California. With a mission to challenge all students to reach their fullest potential, the school offers a rich and stimulating curriculum that caters to the needs of every learner.

The school prides itself on its ability to use a variety of instructional strategies that suit the learning styles of each student. Teachers work tirelessly to create an environment that promotes academic excellence, emotional growth, physical wellness, social development, and cultural awareness. The school values honesty, collaboration, and service, and it is evident in the way parents, students, and staff work together to maintain a positive school climate.

Ortega Elementary School offers a range of innovative programs that help students develop critical thinking, language, and social skills. For instance, the Mandarin Immersion program is designed to help students learn Mandarin language skills while also gaining cultural awareness. The Full Inclusion, RSP, and Speech programs are tailored to meet the needs of students in Special Education by providing individual education programs (IEPs) that cater to their unique needs. The school also has a Special Day Pre-K Program that offers a structured curriculum for three, four, and five-year-olds that qualify for the mild/moderate program.

In addition to the programs and initiatives already mentioned, Ortega Elementary School has a dedicated Wellness Center that supports school-wide wellness and restorative practices. The Wellness Center is designed to provide a safe and supportive environment for students, staff, and families to access mental health services, such as counseling, therapy, and social-emotional support. The center's goal is to promote wellness and reduce stress in the school community by offering a range of resources and services, such as mindfulness practices, yoga, and meditation. The Wellness Center is an integral part of the school's commitment to supporting the whole child and creating a positive and inclusive learning environment.

In addition to the academic curriculum, the school offers a range of programs that augment the learning experience of the students. The school offers 100-minutes of physical education each week to promote physical wellness. The community garden and greening projects are integrated with science education, allowing students to connect with nature and gain environmental awareness. The Stonestown YMCA runs an onsite afterschool program that provides a nurturing environment for the students. The school also offers social awareness programs such as penny and can drives, performance opportunities, kickball and cheerleading teams, Ocean's week, and the 5th grade camping trip.

One of the most unique features of Ortega Elementary School is its commitment to cultural awareness and diversity. The school hosts a variety of events that celebrate different cultural traditions, such as Umoja Cultural Day, Lunar New Year Events, and Dia De Los Muertos. These events provide opportunities for the students to learn about different cultures and traditions, and they help to create a sense of community and understanding among the diverse student population.

In conclusion, Jose Ortega Elementary School is a dynamic learning community that caters to the diverse needs of its students. The school's commitment to academic excellence, emotional growth, physical wellness, social development, and cultural awareness is reflected in its rich and stimulating curriculum. With a range of innovative programs and extracurricular activities, the school encourages all students to develop their full potential. The school's commitment to honesty, collaboration, and service creates a positive and supportive learning environment that is truly unique.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**.

1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Jose Ortega's literacy program focuses on developing students' reading, writing, and language skills through a variety of instructional approaches. Our instructional approaches include a combination of teacher-led instruction, small group instruction, and individualized learning activities that are tailored to the needs of each student. These activities may include guided reading, phonics instruction, and independent reading and writing practice.

Our assessments take many forms, such as regular progress monitoring through assessments like running records, teacher observations, and formative assessments. We utilize Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment to support monitoring of literacy skills in our kindergarten, first and second grades. We utilize the Reading Inventory assessment to monitor our third, fourth and fifth grade students literacy levels. Additionally, we use more formal assessments, such as state-mandated reading tests, that are administered periodically to measure student progress and ensure that students are meeting grade-level expectations.

1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Jose Ortega utilizes San Francisco United School District (SFUSD) Math Core Curriculum. The SFUSD Core Curriculum is a Common Core Math Curriculum. Jose Ortega's math program focuses on developing students' math literacy, problem solving, and reasoning skills through a variety of instructional approaches. Our instructional approaches include a combination of teacher-led instruction, small group instruction, and individualized learning activities that are tailored to the needs of each student.

Our assessments take many forms, such as regular progress monitoring through assessments like teacher observations and formative assessments. Additionally, we use more formal assessments, such as state-mandated math tests, that are administered periodically to measure student progress and ensure that students are meeting grade-level expectations.

1c. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Jose Ortega utilizes Amplify Science Curriculum. Jose Ortega's science program focuses on rigorous and engaging science education connected to life-worthy and lifelong learning that fosters 21st century dispositions and skills (identifying problems and designing solutions, observation and questioning, analyzing evidence, creativity, communication, and collaboration). Our instructional approaches include a combination of teacher-led instruction, small group instruction, and individualized learning activities that are tailored to the needs of each student.

Our assessments take many forms, such as regular progress monitoring through assessments like teacher observations and formative assessments. Additionally, we use more formal assessments, such as state-mandated science tests, that are administered periodically to measure student progress and ensure that students are meeting grade-level expectations.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Jose Ortega's Social Studies program is focused on equity-centered social studies with social justice. We embed social studies content across our core content areas. We aim to promote a more equitable and just society by teaching students about the historical and contemporary issues that have contributed to systemic inequalities. By emphasizing the experiences of marginalized and underrepresented groups, this approach challenges traditional narratives that often focus on dominant perspectives and reinforces power imbalances. We seek to empower students to become active and engaged citizens who can work towards creating positive change in their communities. By providing students with the knowledge and skills needed to

critically analyze social issues, this approach encourages them to become agents of change and advocates for justice. Our approach helps students understand the importance of social justice and encourages them to take action to address issues such as discrimination, inequality, and injustice. By incorporating these principles into the curriculum, we can help create a more informed and engaged citizenry that is committed to building a better future for all.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

At Jose Ortega we believe visual art is an essential component of a well-rounded education as it enables students to express their creativity and emotions, communicate ideas, and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Through the creation and appreciation of visual art, students are exposed to diverse cultures and historical periods, are encouraged to think outside the box and challenge the status quo. Visual art education can also foster social and emotional development, as students learn to collaborate, communicate, and build empathy. Furthermore, research has shown that exposure to visual art can enhance cognitive development, academic achievement, and overall well-being. Thus, teaching visual art is crucial for developing individuals who are culturally aware, emotionally intelligent, and equipped with the skills needed to navigate the challenges of the 21st century. At Jose Ortega every student is provided with an hour of visual art every week.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Physical education is essential for the overall development of students. It helps improve their physical fitness, gross and fine motor skills, and promotes a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, physical activity has been linked to improved academic performance and mental well-being. Providing 1.5 hours of physical education every week helps students establish healthy habits that can benefit them throughout their lives. Our teachers embed health and nutrition lessons into their weekly lesson plans.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

2d. Technology/library/media

Our elementary school's library and technology program aims to provide our students with the tools and resources they need to become successful learners in the digital age. Our library is stocked with a variety of age-appropriate books and multimedia materials to support students' literacy development. In addition, we provide access to a range of technology resources, including computers, tablets, and educational software, to help students develop their digital literacy skills. Our program also includes regular instruction on information literacy, digital citizenship, and safe internet use.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

At Jose Ortega, we effectively tailor instruction, interventions, and assessments to meet the diverse and individual needs of students performing below grade level typically employ a range of strategies and techniques to support struggling learners. Here are some examples:

Differentiated instruction: Teachers modify their teaching strategies, materials, and assessments to meet the diverse learning needs of students. For example, a teacher may use visuals, hands-on activities, or group work to help struggling learners understand concepts or skills.

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs): For students with disabilities, we develop IEPs that outline specific goals and accommodations to help them access the curriculum. These plans may include modifications to instructional materials, extended time on assessments, or assistive technology.

Response to Intervention (RTI): We use data to identify students who may need additional support, and then provide interventions that increase in intensity if the student does not show progress. We employ a full time Response to Intervention teacher who focuses on early literacy skills and support

Progress monitoring: To evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, we use progress monitoring tools to track student growth over time. This data is used to make instructional decisions, modify interventions, or adjust the level of support a student receives.

Small group instruction: All of our classrooms engage their students in targeted instruction in a small group setting. This allows teachers to provide individualized support and feedback to students who need it most.

We ultimately aim to tailor instruction, interventions, and assessments to meet the diverse and individual needs of struggling learners by prioritizing data-driven decision-making, collaboration among teachers and support staff, and a commitment to ongoing professional development.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

At Jose Ortega, we tailor instruction, interventions, and assessments to students performing above grade level by using a range of strategies to ensure that these students are challenged and engaged in their learning. One approach is to provide differentiated instruction that is personalized to each student's needs. This can involve giving students more complex and challenging tasks, providing opportunities for them to explore topics in greater depth, and allowing them to work at their own pace. For example, a teacher may assign an advanced reading group for students who are reading above grade level and provide them with more complex texts and discussions.

Another approach is to provide enrichment opportunities such as project-based learning, field trips, and guest speakers. For example, a science teacher may provide an opportunity for students who are excelling in the subject to participate in a robotics competition, or an art teacher may give advanced students the chance to participate in a museum exhibit.

In addition to providing differentiated instruction and enrichment opportunities, we also use assessments to identify students who are performing above grade level and tailor interventions to their needs. For example, a teacher may use pre-tests to identify students who have already mastered a unit and provide them with enrichment activities or a chance to work on a more challenging unit.

Overall, tailoring our instruction, interventions, and assessments to our students performing above grade level ensures that these students are engaged, challenged, and continue to grow in their learning.

3c. Students with disabilities:

At Jose Ortega, we ensure an inclusive learning environment for students with disabilities. We co-develop, with parents and guardians of students with disabilities, IEPs for students with disabilities to address their

specific needs; outlining the student's goals, accommodations, and modifications. IEPs are reviewed and updated regularly. Family members are involved in regular communication, progress reports, and parent-teacher conferences. We provide special education services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, and counseling to students with disabilities. Assistive technology, such as specialized software or devices, help students with disabilities access the curriculum and participate in class, is provided when necessary. Ultimately we promote inclusion by integrating students with disabilities into general education classrooms. This may involve modifying the curriculum, providing additional support, and training teachers and staff to work with students with disabilities.

3d. English Language Learners:

At Jose Ortega, we use several strategies to support English Language Learners (ELLs) in the classroom, including:

Encouraging peer interaction: Teachers encourage ELLs to interact with their peers and participate in group activities to build their social and academic language skills. This helps students feel more comfortable in the classroom and promotes the use of language in context.

Providing visuals: Teachers use visuals, such as pictures, diagrams, and charts, to support ELLs' understanding of academic concepts. This helps students make connections between language and content, improving their comprehension and ability to communicate.

Using real-life examples: Teachers use real-life examples and experiences to contextualize academic concepts and vocabulary for ELLs. This helps students connect new concepts to their prior knowledge and experiences, making the content more accessible.

Modifying language: Teachers modify their language by using simpler sentence structures, repeating key vocabulary, and providing explanations in simpler language to support ELLs' comprehension.

Building background knowledge: Teachers build ELLs' background knowledge by connecting academic content to students' prior knowledge and experiences. This helps ELLs understand the relevance of new information and promotes their engagement in the learning process.

Offering additional support: Teachers offer additional support to ELLs by providing one-on-one instruction, small-group instruction, or tutoring sessions outside of regular classroom hours. This helps ELLs develop their language skills at a pace that suits their individual needs.

Overall, these strategies help create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment that promotes the academic and social development of all students, including ELLs.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. **Engaging Students:**

One of the most critical factors in creating a positive learning environment is building a sense of community and fostering positive relationships between students, teachers, and staff. At Jose Ortega, we achieve this by providing opportunities for students to collaborate on group projects, participate in extracurricular activities, and engage in community service. By doing so, students are encouraged to develop social skills, empathy, and leadership qualities that are essential for both academic success and life beyond the classroom.

In addition to building a sense of community, we aim to create a safe and supportive environment that nurtures students' emotional and mental well-being. This can be achieved through counseling and other mental health services that support students who may be struggling with anxiety, depression, or other issues that impact their academic performance.

To promote academic growth and college and career readiness, we offer a challenging and rigorous curriculum that is aligned with college and career readiness standards. Through purposeful and ongoing professional development, we support our teachers to be highly qualified and trained to provide differentiated instruction that meets the needs of all students, regardless of their learning style or ability level.

We use our educator collaborative structures to engage in cycles of continuous improvement so as to continuously evaluate and improve our practices to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all students. This includes using data to identify areas for improvement and implementing evidence-based interventions to address these areas. We also solicit feedback from students, parents, and community members to ensure that their voices are heard and that the school is responsive to their needs.

It is imperative that we, as a school community, create a positive learning environment that supports student growth and college and career readiness. This requires building a sense of community, providing emotional and mental health support, offering rigorous academic instruction, promoting career and college readiness, and continuously evaluating and improving practices to ensure that all students thrive.

2. **Engaging Families and Community**:

At Jose Ortega, we believe effective communication and collaboration between school, families, and community members are crucial to the success of students and school improvement. We are intentional in establishing a welcoming and inclusive school culture. We do this by working with families and community members by encouraging open communication, treating everyone with respect, and valuing the diversity of our communities. This approach helps us to build trust, promotes engagement, and fosters a sense of belonging among families and community members.

Our educators are invested in creating opportunities for families and community members to get involved in the school community. These opportunities may include volunteering, attending school events, participating in parent-teacher conferences, and joining school committees or councils. Such opportunities help our families and community members to learn more about the school, understand our goals and objectives, and contribute to the school's overall success.

We prioritize building strong relationships with families. We accomplish this by communicating regularly with families about their child's progress, providing resources and support, and being responsive to our families' concerns and questions. These practices help our families feel valued and involved in their child's education and create a sense of partnership between the school and families.

We involve families and community members in decision-making processes that affect their children's education. We solicit input on school policies and practices, inviting families to serve on school committees or councils, or conducting surveys to gather feedback. By involving families in decision-making, we aim to

ensure that their voices are heard, and we are fostering a sense of ownership and investment in the school community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

At Jose Ortega, we strongly believe in supporting our teachers, recognizing that they are essential to achieving our mission of educating students. We provides a supportive environment that fosters professional growth, encourages innovation, and values the contributions of our teachers. Professional development programs and resources are provided to help teachers continuously improve their skills and stay up to date with the latest educational research and practices. These programs can include workshops, seminars, online courses, and mentorship programs.

Our professional development (PD) programs are aligned with the school's mission and goals. The PD provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching practices, collaborate with colleagues, and receive feedback from instructional coaches and administrators. They are also personalized to meet the individual needs of teachers, taking into account their experience level, subject area, and professional goals.

In addition to professional development, we support teachers by providing them with opportunities for leadership roles, recognition for their achievements, and a supportive school culture. We aim to have our teachers feel empowered to make decisions about their classrooms and curriculum, and have access to resources and support to help them implement new ideas and teaching strategies.

The principal is intentional in creating a supportive environment for teachers by providing clear expectations, consistent communication, and regular feedback. The principal also works collaboratively with teachers to identify areas of improvement and develop strategies for addressing them.

It is imperative that our teachers feel valued, supported, and recognized for their importance in achieving our mission in a supportive school culture

4. School Leadership:

For administrative leadership to be effective, it must be grounded in a clear vision, mission, and values that are communicated to all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, parents, and community members. In addition, the leadership structure is designed to support and empower the entire school community to work collaboratively towards achieving the school's goals.

The principal is responsible for setting the tone, culture, and vision of the school. He aims to provide clear direction, establish high expectations for student achievement, and create a positive learning environment that supports the needs of all students. The principal believes in consistent self reflection so that he can grow as a leader in his efforts to inspire and motivate staff to provide high-quality instruction and support for their students.

Our leadership structure includes a principal, instructional coach, and social worker. We meet weekly to ensure that we are best understanding trends across grade levels and classrooms to ensure there is coherence and consistency with rigorous learning opportunities. Our team prioritizes a student-centered approach. This involves assessing the needs of individual teachers and developing strategies to support their growth and development. We also collaboratively ensure that policies, programs, relationships, and resources focus on student achievement through the development of our comprehensive school improvement plan. This plan is developed collaboratively with the school's stakeholders and outlines the school's goals, strategies, and action steps for improving student achievement. This leadership team regularly assess the effectiveness of these initiatives and adjust them as necessary to ensure that they are meeting the needs of their students.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

At Jose Ortega, it is imperative for all our educators to implement a culturally responsive teaching pedagogy. Our approach recognizes and values the diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences, and

perspectives of our students. It aims to create an inclusive learning environment that supports the academic and social-emotional development of all students, especially those who have been historically marginalized.

We implement a culturally responsive teaching pedagogy by doing the following:

Develop a culturally responsive curriculum: We ensure that the curriculum reflects the cultural diversity of our students. This may involve incorporating texts, images, and activities that represent different cultures, histories, and perspectives. Our teachers also collaborate with community members and cultural experts to bring in authentic and relevant resources.

Provide professional development for teachers: We ensure that our teachers get the training and support they need to effectively implement a culturally responsive teaching approach. Professional development includes workshops, coaching, and ongoing discussions about best practices for creating an inclusive classroom environment and addressing cultural biases.

Build relationships with students and families: We prioritize establishing positive relationships with students and their families. Our entire staff works to create a welcoming and respectful classroom and school environment by getting to know our students and understanding their cultural backgrounds and experiences.

Create opportunities for student voice and agency: Students have opportunities to share their perspectives, experiences, and cultural identities in the classroom. Teachers facilitate discussions and activities that promote critical thinking and reflection about cultural differences and similarities.

Address equity and social justice issues: We have a commitment to social justice and equity. Teachers create opportunities for students to learn about and address issues related to racism, prejudice, and discrimination.

Continuously reflect and improve: We have been working to create and maintain a culture of ongoing reflection and improvement by regularly assessing the effectiveness of our teaching practices.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

At Jose Ortega we believe that developing collaborative structures that promote collective teacher efficacy is an essential practice that has been instrumental to the success of our school. This practice involves building a culture of collaboration and collective efficacy, where our teachers work together to improve student outcomes and develop shared beliefs about their capacity to positively impact student learning. This culture of collaboration involves teachers engaging in weekly collaborative efforts to improve instruction, share resources, and support one another in their professional growth, as well as, working together to analyze student data, co-planning and co-teaching lessons, and reflecting on their practice.

Our collaborative structures promote collective teacher efficacy by allowing teachers to tap into a broader range of expertise and resources. They work together to develop common assessments, share instructional strategies, and provide feedback on each other's teaching. This collaboration allows our teachers to develop a shared understanding of what works best for their students and to create a more coherent and consistent approach to instruction. Teachers report that they feel better equipped to personalize their instruction to meet the needs of their students.

We are strategic in creating a culture of continuous improvement, where teachers are encouraged to take risks and try new approaches to instruction. Our collaborative structures promote collective teacher efficacy by providing a safe and supportive environment for teachers to experiment with new teaching strategies and reflect on their practice. This allows our teachers to refine their instructional practices and create a culture of continuous improvement that benefits both themselves and students.

As a result of our collaborative structures, teachers work together and feel a sense of shared responsibility for student learning. They report that they feel supported and valued and appreciate the positive and fulfilling work environment.