

U.S. Department of Education
2014 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 Mrs. Sandra McGonagle

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

Official School Name Georgina P. Blach Junior High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1120 Covington Road

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

City Los Altos State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 94024-5005

County Santa Clara County State School Code Number* 43695186047435

Telephone 650-934-3800 Fax 650-968-3918

Web site/URL http://www.blachschool.org E-mail smcgonagle@lasdschools.org

Twitter Handle @BlachFalcons Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL

https://www.youtube.com/user/BlachLASD/

videos Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Jeffrey Baier E-mail: JBaier@lasdschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Los Altos School District Tel. 650-947-1150

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Ms. Tamara Logan
(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 that it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.

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, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2013-2014 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2008 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

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

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. 2 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	125	134	259
8	144	109	253
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total Students	269	243	512

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 26 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 57 % White
 - 11 % 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.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 2%

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the school year	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	512
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.016
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
7 Total number ELL
 Number of non-English languages represented: 4
 Specify non-English languages: Spanish, Dutch, Mandarin, Russian
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3 %
 Total number students who qualify: 17

If this method is not an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

9. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
44 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 categories.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 2 Autism | 0 Orthopedic Impairment |
| 1 Deafness | 14 Other Health Impaired |
| 0 Deaf-Blindness | 20 Specific Learning Disability |
| 0 Emotional Disturbance | 5 Speech or Language Impairment |
| 0 Hearing Impairment | 0 Traumatic Brain Injury |
| 2 Mental Retardation | 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| 0 Multiple Disabilities | 0 Developmentally Delayed |

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	24
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	3
Paraprofessionals	8
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

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

Required Information	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	98%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2013

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 X

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Georgina P. Blach Junior High School is an amazing place to learn. We believe strongly that our great success is a community effort: students who are eager to learn, a passionate and talented staff who has high expectations for all, parents who care deeply about their child's education, and a district that supports innovative learning. In the heart of Silicon Valley, the Blach community is a somewhat small, diverse community. Our school serves a variety of students from all backgrounds, and includes students who are english language learners, gifted students, students with special needs, and from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. While our test scores, as measured by the STAR test, are consistently high, it is our daily work with students that drives what we do. Our school mission is shared with our district: Blach inspires a passion for learning and prepares all students to thrive in our rapidly changing global community. It would be easy to continue doing what we've always done as educators, but we are aware that our learners are changing, as is the world; therefore, we are constantly striving for continuous growth as educators.

We have a very strong core academic program, yet also have elective strength with music, art, languages and a wide variety of classes to meet all student needs and interests. In these electives, students are encouraged to explore their independent ideas and innovate. We are a small school, which enables teachers and staff to know the students and parents well, promoting a strong sense of school community. As one parent put it, "Blach stands out as a magical place for students to learn and grow. It is a nurturing environment where they can grow into teenagers after elementary school and a safe refuge before the high school years." Teachers willingly provide many hours of extra time to help tutor students who have either been absent or who need further instructional support to grasp concepts. We also have a thriving Special Education department with a variety of specialized classes serving a wide set of students with varying needs.

One parent summed up her version of our strengths and accomplishments: "One of the greatest strengths of Blach is the leadership by our principal who is truly an educator with broad vision and the ability to inspire students, staff, parents and the community alike. Another strength of Blach is the fabulous staff who choose to teach this particular age group of students because they love, understand and believe in them. In general, Blach teachers are passionate about their subjects, supportive of students, excel at communicating with parents, and strive to always improve their classes and grow in their capacity as teachers. Two of the greatest accomplishments at Blach in the past two school years have been 1) the offering of new engaging and meaningful electives (such as "My 14%" where students choose what and how to study a subject of their own choice) and 2) the insistence by both principal and staff that Blach campus is an environment of high standards and expectations of our kids. Kids are expected to behave as if school is their professional environment, one where they not only respect others but are taught and expected to behave in ways that respect themselves and the education that they are receiving."

There are many beloved traditions at Blach School. Both the PTA Parent Welcome Coffee in August and the Back to School Picnic in October welcome our new and returning families and encourage parents to be a presence in their child's education and school. Our Leadership elective class plans and coordinates all student events, from dances and noon league activities to homeroom competitions throughout the year. These events help keep our campus active, community focused, and positive. One of the big traditions is the Holiday Faire, coordinated and run through parent volunteers and the PTA, where budding entrepreneurs make or bake all manner of items, from ornaments, jewelry, and candy to dvds teaching magic tricks and on the spot personalized calligraphy items. Students need to figure out the best way to price and market their wares. A culminating tradition is the 8th grade time capsule - full of treasures, inspiration, hopes, and dreams - to be opened right before high school graduation four years after they leave Blach School.

Our rigorous academic program, care of student needs, active and supportive community, and growth attitude are what makes Blach School worthy of National Blue Ribbon status.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

a) The California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program measures student proficiency on the California Content Standards in English/language arts (ELA), mathematics, writing, history, and science. Student performance levels range from Far Below Basic, Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. Looking at our data over the last five years, we consistently have 86.5% or more of all students proficient or above in ELA and our overall Math scores have risen from 71.7% in 2009 to 80.1% or more in 2013 scoring proficient or advanced, including 85% proficient or above in Algebra 1 for our 8th graders. In both history and science, we consistently have 85% of all students score proficient or above.

At Blach School, our expectation is that all students will score in the Proficient or Advanced range on the STAR test. At the start of each school year, through a thoughtful articulation process with our feeder elementary schools, incoming students who will need attention are identified. Our school support team, including principal, counselor, and resource teachers, comes together to analyze student performance indicators from previous years and determine next steps. Classroom teachers from the current and previous years articulate teaching and learning strategies that are successful for individual students with the goal of improved achievement. After parent and student conversations, an initial intervention may be placement in our “Survivor” class, designed to meet the needs of students who have weak study habits or are in need of organizational support.

Once the school year is under way, our staff meets mid-first-quarter in “Round Tables” to identify and discuss any new struggling students. This is an action oriented meeting where outcomes may include setting up Student Study Team meeting with parents, sharing successful instructional strategies, or setting meetings between counselor and individual student for a mental health check in. “Round Tables” continue throughout the year, making sure that students are continuing to make academic progress and remain healthy socially and emotionally as well.

b) At Blach School, we maintain high expectations that all students will achieve at the proficient and advanced levels of STAR, and we have a clear process in place to provide interventions to address students not achieving at those levels. As our data shows, over the past five years, 92% of our students, or more, in 7th grade are scoring proficient and above in ELA. In our 8th grade class, 86.5%, or more, are scoring proficient and above in ELA. Our ELA scores have been very consistent over these last five years. When looking at our Math trends, student performance has increased over the last five years in both grade levels. In 7th grade, students have gone from 80% to 87.7% and 8th graders have moved from 71.7% to 80.1%. The gains in math can certainly be contributed to our increased focus on meeting individual student needs in the classroom.

When looking at our significant sub group populations in the 2013 STAR results, there is a gap of more than 10 points for the subgroup of Students with Disabilities. At Blach School, we run district-wide programs and have created unique programs for students with the most severe needs in Los Altos. One example is our Academic Communications class as a part of our Resource program. This is a class for students with an autism spectrum disorder needing social skills and executive functioning skills support. Many of these students also have unique learning needs and may take classes within our Special Day Class program. All of our special education classes provide specialized support for students, focusing on their individual needs to improve academic achievement. From an amazing school psychologist who heads our special education department, to our specialized teachers, and paraprofessional support, our goal is for each of our students to make significant personal academic gains each and every year. These individual gains are monitored as part of our yearly IEP goal updates.

Other efforts to close the achievement gap in general education at Blach include our intervention class “Survivor.” We have found that many of the students who struggle making those important academic gains are lacking the skills that their peers have honed by the time they hit the middle grades. Survivor is a support class that helps close that gap through units on study skills, test taking skills, communication skills, and

group work skills. In addition to this, we also have a “Blach and Tackle” program that is run by a teacher mentor with frequent check-ins and student follow up. This class is designed for the students who have lost motivation to do well at school, but certainly have the ability to be high achievers.

In addition to the during-school-hours support system, we have also partnered with a community organization that matches seniors with students who need academic support for homework or test preparation. Each week we have tutors come to Blach to work with identified students after school in our Library.

2. Using Assessment Results:

a.) Every academic department across campus uses a variety of assessment data to guide instruction and improve student performance. The year begins with an overview of student STAR scores. Each teacher is able to log onto the SchoolCity STARS (academic achievement) portal and access the STAR performance of all students assigned to that teacher. This allows teachers to start the year with some specific student needs in mind.

While many traditional summative assessments are used, such as projects and tests, there are many more informal, formative assessments that happen all along the way. This may include exit cards, homework, notebooks, writing assignments, class discussions, effective questioning techniques, as well as online tools.

One example of an effective online tool is the use of Google Docs across campus. In English class, students complete several drafts of writing, sometimes individually and sometimes collaboratively, with systematic feedback provided to students by their teacher. Students then take that feedback, revise their content, and improve their personal learning. This tool also allows the teacher to see trends in student instructional needs inspiring mini-lessons or small group instruction based on those needs. In Science classes, Google Docs are used as a parent communication tool at the end of every unit. Students are asked to go through their current unit and share their learning and achievement with their parents. Parents and students then complete a form summarizing their learning, areas of struggle, and what support they were offered and took advantage of.

Similar strategies are used in Math classes as well. Analyzing student work and determining next instructional steps is in constant motion. Through in class student work and online tools, such as Khan Academy or Quia, students can practice problem sets and the teacher can access important student data. That data allows teachers to make instructional decisions, determining what content needs wide review and which students may need additional small group support.

b.) Teachers at Blach School use the PowerSchool Student Information System’s “Parent Portal” which opens their grade books to parents and students from any computer or smart device. With unique log-ins, students and parents can monitor up-to-date progress. This gradebook transparency decreases parent concerns and student confusion. Missing and late assignments are easily visible: Students learn how assignment grades affect overall grades and are encouraged to become accountable for their school work. Families are one step closer to being prepared for our high schools where a similar information system is in place. Quarterly, progress reminders are emailed to families to check the online portal and an official report card is emailed home at the end of each quarter. At both grades, we remain in close contact with parents regarding their children’s progress and evaluate our tools regularly to see that they are as efficient and effective as possible.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Los Altos School District has several teacher professional development days throughout the school year. Each of those days allows for current professional learning and sharing of best practices between teachers and schools.

One example of this is when a Blach math teacher shared her innovative strategy of using homework as a formative tool to improve student learning by providing small group targeted instruction. The audience was

50+ teachers of all content areas at both district junior high schools. Students correct their own homework and take an online survey at home highlighting concepts or specific problems they cannot understand. Instead of taking time traditionally used in class to correct homework, time is spent in small groups working on those specific concepts and students who are able to immediately go deeper into the concept are provided with the necessary resources and instruction.

Another example of sharing successful strategies is through the work our math department has been doing throughout this year. Working with neighboring districts, including our local high school district, and our County Office of Education, Blach math teachers are focusing on the transition to Common Core math. In meetings with up to 20 math teachers, teachers have an opportunity to share best practices with teachers for problem solving, real world application, and innovative instructional practices that support the new Common Core Standards and Common Core Mathematical Practices.

Blach staff also share their learning with larger audiences. At local conferences and across the education twitterverse, we are sharing our best practices and innovative elective offerings. One example is the “My 14%” elective class where students design their own learning. Earlier this year, the class was a chosen topic at a local EdCamp conference for educators in the San Francisco Bay Area.

In addition, many of our teachers are members of professional associations, such as the National Science Teachers Association, National Council on Teaching Mathematics, or the National Council for Teachers of English. We also have teachers who have completed the MERIT (Making Education Relevant and Interactive through the use of Technology) Program at the Krause Center for Education at Foothill College. All of these associations and opportunities provide an outlet for teachers to both share and learn best practices that impact student achievement.

4. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaging our Blach families and local community is an important job that we take seriously. It does take a village to raise a child. Because student success and achievement is a collaborative effort, it is imperative that parents are in touch with what is happening at Blach school. Since we are dealing with growing adolescents, it is especially helpful to have clear home/school communication because it is not unusual for a tween or teen to start establishing some independence and stop sharing about school activities.

According to one parent, “One of the best ways that families are engaged with at Blach is Principal McGonagle's inspiring, relevant, and educational weekly newsletters to parents. They are so helpful and insightful that we often read them out loud to our teenagers. Parents are also encouraged to be a presence on campus, to continue to engage with our children even by simply doing things like dropping off a pizza for our kids and their friends at lunch, volunteering for hot lunch, or supporting a particular student in their efforts on a school project. Blach also engages community by hosting orchestra and band concerts and encouraging volunteerism in the broader community.”

We have a very active and supportive school community. Our PTA is a vital part of our school, providing needed financial assistance and amazing hours of volunteer support in a wide variety of areas, from running our hot lunch program to in-class support whenever requested by teachers. Our Site Council members guide our school on current goals, elicit input from the community, and help us craft our yearly School Site Plan which is directly linked to student success and school improvement.

In the larger local community, we have a wonderful partnership with many different groups. We have consistent senior tutors, through the organization Partners for a New Generation, who work with our struggling students before and after school. CHAC, Community Health Awareness Council, provides free counseling services to students during school hours. The Living Classroom provides docent led science lessons to our students, using our school native gardens.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

English classes include a balanced reading program. Through modeling and frequent feedback, students are able to write in many genres. Our English Essentials class is for students in our Special Education Resource program. These students are below grade level and focus on similar concepts, but it is more individualized in a small class setting. We also offer a Special Day Class (SDC) in English for students with more significant needs. These students may still be learning to read and comprehend beyond simple meaning and write in clear sentences or paragraphs.

As we implement the new Common Core Standards, our math program provides three pathways for students. We use current state adopted textbooks, along with a variety of available resources, to extend and deepen learning. We provide three pathways, grade level, accelerated, and advanced, to best meet the needs of our students in math. We also offer an SDC class that is tailored to each student's needs, as outlined in their IEP, from pre-algebra skills to basic counting and money skills.

Our science classes are a balance of standards based hands-on labs, reading for meaning, demonstration, lecture, writing to explain, and inquiry learning. Some favorite hands-on labs for students include frog dissection, pinhole cameras, balloon car races, and chemistry investigations. Students investigate the ethics of stem cell research, as well as create TED talks on their study of astronomy. All students also have an opportunity to join our Science Olympiad lunch time competition club. Our SDC science classes focus on the same content as our grade level classes, but at a lower level of complexity.

The seventh grade social studies program at Blach focuses on the development of Western societies, including the influences of differing civilizations and their cultures. They begin with the fall of the Roman Empire and move through the development of Feudalism in Europe and Japan, building to the major historical, artistic, and cultural achievements of the Renaissance and Reformation. An 8th grader's course of study in U.S. History takes students on a survey of American history from origins to 1900. Students are asked to think as social scientists: to assume the thought processes of an archeologist, anthropologist, political scientists, and historian, and often assume the roles of historical figures as they think and write about historical events.

Blach has a strong history of visual and performing arts electives. Our chorus class emphasizes vocal technique, sight-singing, musical interpretation, and ensemble work. Our instrumental music courses include band, orchestra, and concert percussion and allow students to continue their study of instrumental learning. We also offer a drama course that introduces students to basic theater techniques. They experiment with costumes, makeup, props, voice, movement, body language, and improvisation prior to performing. Our art program offers a wide range of experiences in the visual arts, from drawing and painting techniques, to pencil, pen and ink, charcoal, pastels, acrylics and ceramics and wire.

All students are enrolled in a daily physical education class. This class follows our state framework and focuses on personal fitness, skill building and game play, individual and group sports, and a strong health component that is detailed below.

Our world languages department is extremely sought after. Students can learn to speak a new language in either French or Spanish. Over a two year course, students begin learning to speak, read, and write in the new language. They also learn about what people do and how they live in different parts of the world. Projects structure most of the units in these courses, and may include cooking, art, poetry, skits and video productions. Students who complete both the 7th and 8th grade class are eligible to enroll in French 2 or Spanish 2 in high school, and will have completed their first year of high school language requirement.

Our other elective offerings are designed to tap into student interests and provide opportunities for students to think about future careers. Engineering, robotics, leadership, yearbook, public speaking, photography, and creative writing are all popular classes. Our "My 14%" class allows students to design their own unit of

study in an area of personal interest. Our video production class keeps the student body informed of current happenings on campus.

2. Reading/English:

b) The English language arts curriculum at Blach provides students with the skills necessary for effective communication through writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking. Some areas of focus include “close reading” of fiction and nonfiction texts, listening and responding thoughtfully to peers, using a text to support claims, and revising written work for power and efficiency. Students progress from summarizing texts to analyzing the literature thoughtfully and critically.

An instructional method that has helped to improve the skills of struggling readers is the incorporation of heterogeneous literature circles in both 7th and 8th grade. Within literature circles, students select books according to interest. While each student has a specific focus to guide the reading (vocabulary, setting, theme, or discussion director), all collaborate to build a complete understanding of the literature.

In addition, the modeling of “close reading” (from Kelly Gallagher’s *Deeper Reading*) is an instructional practice that has helped to improve reading skills. Close reading guides readers through the reading process. Both “think alouds” and demonstration of thoughtful text annotation make the reading process transparent. Students observe that in order to understand what they read, they must make connections, ask questions, and reread. This instructional strategy has helped students construct meaning from the text.

The “Notice and Note Signposts” are another strategy used in both seventh and eighth grade to help all readers find meaning in texts. This strategy helps students to identify the moment in literature when it is time to stop and think. This has helped students to gather meaning from texts they would normally breeze through without thought.

In order to meet the needs of all students in our English language arts program, including both low and high performing students, teachers use a variety of strategies. Small group instruction is the most impactful strategy in our English classes when looking at low performing and very high performing students. Teachers are able to provide differentiated vocabulary instruction, targeted writing instruction and feedback, as well as personalized learning goals in reading for individual students.

While each of these strategies has been helpful in improving the reading of Blach students, all of these efforts are the product of collaboration between seventh and eighth grade English teachers. Blach teachers make it their mission to keep up to date with best practices and educational research to improve instruction every year.

3. Mathematics:

Blach School offers a program that provides a solid foundation in mathematics for our students. Our school math curriculum is currently transitioning from the CA State Standards to the Common Core Standards, including the best Mathematical Practices. Our goal is to provide all students with the opportunity to gain solid mastery of concepts. We want all of our students to be able to apply the knowledge they have learned in a variety of real world contexts. Through a rigorous year of professional development and collaborative study, we have begun to focus more on the why behind math, encouraging students to explain their mathematical thinking. It is not enough for students simply to find the right answer; we want students to understand how they got to an answer, why the thinking process is just as important as the final product, and extend that learning to a variety of real world problems.

Our core curriculum is supplemented in many different ways. Teachers use Khan Academy, MARS (Math Assessment Resource Services) Tasks, problem sets from NCTM (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) materials, hand-on activities such as Algebra Tiles, and many other rich mathematical resources. A typical math lesson could include review, problem solving opportunities, math talks, direct

instruction, modeling, collaboration between students, individual practice, writing, or mind mapping, as determined as best fit for students.

We pride ourselves on providing programs that help all students to be successful in mathematics. All of the teachers have regular times for students to come in for help and review, either before school, at lunch, or after school. In addition to outside of class support, teachers use formative assessment results to provide small group instruction, additional practice opportunities, or additional intervention as needed.

We also have a special education math class for students working far below grade level, meeting the needs of students as outlined in their IEPs. This program is individualized using the V-Math curriculum, which provides differentiated instruction in a modular-based strategic math intervention model.

Always keeping our gifted math students in mind, we provide challenging opportunities for our advanced students. These students spend more time on application and problem solving at a very deep level than students in our grade level pathway. There is also a competition math club, open to all, for those students wanting to spend more time honing their problem solving skills and using those skills to compete with other schools. We also field a team for the MathCounts competition and that team qualified to represent Blach at the State tournament in March.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

According to the California Department of Education's Health Framework, "Individuals must understand the role they must play in protecting, maintaining, and promoting their health and the health of others through healthy behaviors and choices." Health education at Blach School has been designed with this very statement in mind. The Health program was designed to specifically address the needs of adolescent students, so that they understand the implications of their behaviors and choices, as related to their personal health and well-being. Adolescents today are inundated with mixed media messages and peer pressure regarding their behavior and choices, and the need to ensure that Blach students make informed decisions is more important than ever in today's changing world.

The Health program at Blach is a part of the regular core curriculum for all students through Physical Education classes. Blach believes that the physical and social/emotional component of a student's education is as important as any other subject area. Health education has been systematically taught at Blach for the last 17 years, prior to the current CA Health Framework. 100% of all 7th and 8th grade students participate in the Health Education component of their Physical Education class.

Many years ago, the Blach staff determined that students needed a systematic learning experience that focused on personal health and well-being, personal choices, adolescent dangers and pitfalls, as well as the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. The Health curriculum was put in place and has been refined over the years, especially as the new Health Framework and Standards have been adopted.

The goal of the Health program is that all students will attain the skills necessary to make smart choices as they grow and mature in regards to their personal health and well-being. The student outcomes for the program are more critical. Students will feel safe and connected to a caring adult while at school. Students will understand the types and implications of bullying and learn to not be a bully and/or to have successful strategies to deal with bullying. Students will understand the role that nutrition and exercise play throughout life. Students will understand the dangers of drugs and alcohol and choose not to participate when asked. Students will know how their bodies will change and develop. These are just some examples of desired outcomes that support our mission of students thriving in our rapidly changing global community.

5. Instructional Methods:

Blach has a variety of ways in which we differentiate instruction for students. Through our outstanding special education offerings, we are able to meet the needs of our special population in the least restrictive environment. Whether a student needs interpreter services because he is hard of hearing, or a student with an

autism spectrum disorder needs social skills training, we are able to successfully provide that for our students. This is in addition to a wide variety of classes with modified course content in math, english, and science, and social studies.

Within the regular education classrooms, our teachers are skilled in providing what is needed for each student, both on the remedial/intervention side and on the accelerated/extension side. For example, in one math class period, some students may be working collaboratively together solving a complex problem, others might be using iPads to watch a video tutorial selected for remediation, the teacher may be working with a small group re-teaching a topic and clearing up misconceptions, while others still are working independently on a practice problem set.

Technology plays a big role in providing differentiated instruction at Blach. For example, in English classes, teachers are able to work one on one with students over a collaborative document (Google Docs) online, providing specific feedback and individual direction for improved learning achievement. In science, students can answer an online form providing direct information to their teachers about misconceptions, levels of understanding, thus giving the teacher clear next steps for whole or small group instruction. Math teachers may use individualized Khan Academy modules for students. On the creative side, students have access to laptops or iPads in their classes. They often are given a choice in how they can show their teacher their understanding, from an iMovie to a mind map or essay, to a graphic.

6. Professional Development:

Blach teachers have a variety of professional development offerings throughout the school year, as well as during summer, all based on state standards, board and administrative goals, and teacher/staff survey of needs. In-service days meet district goals and school needs specifically. This year's focus of learning as a district has been on assessment - looking at Webb's Depth of Knowledge Chart and using formative assessment to guide our instruction. We continue to work on thinking differently about teaching and learning in order to keep up with meeting the needs of our ever-changing world and students.

At Blach, our staff meetings are all about active learning. We brainstorm ideas, learn new technologies, discuss students, talk about quality instruction and assessment, read timely articles, and watch videos that might highlight a concept, such as building empathy. Last year each teacher was asked to upgrade a unit of instruction, by incorporating a new technology, altering an assessment, looking closely at student engagement and providing choice. This year that work continues with an emphasis on using formative assessment to inform instruction, going along with our district focus. We keep nuts and bolts items to a bare minimum and focus on professional learning.

District instructional coaches and new teacher support providers offer individualized assistance for teachers, from class observations and feedback to team teaching and planning lessons. The district also provides after school professional book clubs and innovative classes on a range of topics, such as project based learning and hacking a math lesson. Many of the staff at Blach are currently reading Building Creative Confidence, the latest book club selection.

This summer, we will be hosting a Blach week of learning for teachers. With support from the Krause Center for Innovation, teachers will be learning how technology, formative assessment, engaging students, and active learning can support the rigorous curriculum and content standards we teach each day. Almost every teacher has committed to this week, which is an amazing testament to their openness to continue to develop as professional educators.

The impact of teacher learning on students is very positive. Classrooms are interactive learning spaces where students collaborate and create products together.

7. School Leadership

Blach's leadership model is inclusive and collaborative on every level. From the site principal and office leadership team to the teacher leaders and our paraprofessional and student leaders, we are committed to the idea that all decisions at Blach are made on the basis of what is best for our students' academic, social, and emotional needs.

The principal is a visible presence around campus, both in classrooms and in the hallways. One parent explained that the principal "is among those people who inspires one to do the best they can. She is actively engaged and involved with every aspect of the school. Students, staff, and parents find her very accessible and open to new ideas. Her team of staff members are key to providing the growth environment that exists at Blach." Our school counselor/psychologist leads our special education department, as well as all student study team meetings with the sole purpose of helping kids be more successful at school. We are also fortunate to have a Teacher in Charge, teaching part time and working closely with the principal to ensure that the school is running smoothly.

Our School Site Council, composed equally of parents and school staff, solicits parent opinion through our annual parent survey. In this way we gather information from parents regarding what we do well, where we can improve, and also gauge student comfort, enjoyment and success at school. Several years ago feedback from parents provided us clear guidance that our electives program needed an overhaul. From that, we designed a new, high interest elective program that is now garnering a lot of praise from students and parents.

Our staff members have many opportunities to be leaders throughout campus. We have staff members who run our noon study program, commit time to facilitate student interest clubs at lunch and after school, mentor students in special projects, and highlight best practices at staff meetings. Within the school and district, teachers can participate on a variety of committees that directly relate to policies, programs, relationships and resources.

We also encourage our students to be leaders. "Children are given the opportunity to organize school events for their fellow students, which gives them a sense of independence and a strong sense of confidence." Through our Student Council and Leadership class, many students have an opportunity to study leadership at Blach and make an impact on policies, resources, and programs.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: STAR

All Students Tested/Grade: 7

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: ETS

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	88	86	85	86	80
% Advanced	60	61	58	57	47
Number of students tested	244	224	253	211	240
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	48	56	50	46	
% Advanced	15	21	15	5	
Number of students tested	27	34	26	22	
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	95	100	94	93	94
% Advanced	83	78	83	74	69
Number of students tested	75	45	52	58	64
7. American Indian or					

Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	89	74	84	83	74
% Advanced	54	40	49	49	40
Number of students tested	127	160	151	110	160
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced			90	90	
% Advanced			76	58	
Number of students tested			29	31	
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math
All Students Tested/Grade: 8
Publisher: ETS

Test: STAR
Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	80	79	73	71	72
% Advanced	53	49	51	44	41
Number of students tested	226	254	218	237	237
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	33	39	17		
% Advanced	3	3	9		
Number of students tested	30	31	23		
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	96	93	88	88	84
% Advanced	64	71	69	68	64
Number of students tested	45	53	58	50	50
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					

Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	78	74	68	66	70
% Advanced	50	40	41	36	35
Number of students tested	139	156	115	148	170
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced			74	84	
% Advanced			52	64	
Number of students tested			31	25	
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA
All Students Tested/Grade: 7
Publisher: ETS

Test: STAR
Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	92	96	96	94
% Advanced	70	73	78	75	72
Number of students tested	245	224	253	211	240
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	59	62	65	59	
% Advanced	15	27	8	18	
Number of students tested	27	34	26	22	
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	96	98	98	95	98
% Advanced	85	78	87	78	91
Number of students tested	75	45	52	58	64
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					

Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	97	92	96	96	92
% Advanced	67	74	74	77	65
Number of students tested	128	136	151	110	160
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced			97	100	
% Advanced			93	74	
Number of students tested			29	31	
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA
All Students Tested/Grade: 8
Publisher: ETS

Test: STAR
Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	89	97	96	90	87
% Advanced	72	84	84	75	66
Number of students tested	226	254	218	237	237
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	43	74	74		
% Advanced	27	29	35		
Number of students tested	30	31	23		
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	96	98	97	100	94
% Advanced	80	91	88	96	80
Number of students tested	45	53	58	50	50
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					

Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	92	97	97	87	86
% Advanced	74	80	84	68	64
Number of students tested	139	156	115	148	170
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced			97	96	
% Advanced			87	88	
Number of students tested			31	25	
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: