

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Rhonda Buss

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

Official School Name Gretchen Whitney High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 16800 Shoemaker Avenue

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

City Cerritos State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 90703-1244

County Los Angeles County State School Code Number\* 19642121931880

Telephone 562-926-5566 Fax 562-926-2751

Web site/URL http://www.whitneyhs.org E-mail rhonda.buss@abcusd.us

Twitter Handle \_\_\_\_\_ Facebook Page \_\_\_\_\_ Google+ \_\_\_\_\_

YouTube/URL \_\_\_\_\_ Blog \_\_\_\_\_ Other Social Media Link \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Dr. Mary Sieu E-mail: Mary.sieu@abcusd.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name ABC Unified School District Tel. 562-926-5566

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.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Ms. Sophia Tse  
(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.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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**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

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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):
- 19 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 5 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 29 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. 3 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	68	97	165
8	77	91	168
9	85	94	179
10	95	79	174
11	84	81	165
12	77	94	171
<b>Total Students</b>	486	536	1022

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 67 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 14 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 6 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 1%

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	1020
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.010
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL  
 Number of non-English languages represented: 0  
 Specify non-English languages:
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 19 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 196

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:  $\frac{1}{6}$  %  
 $\frac{1}{6}$  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.

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 3 Autism                | 0 Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| 0 Deafness              | 0 Other Health Impaired                 |
| 0 Deaf-Blindness        | 0 Specific Learning Disability          |
| 0 Emotional Disturbance | 2 Speech or Language Impairment         |
| 0 Hearing Impairment    | 0 Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| 0 Mental Retardation    | 1 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:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers	40
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	0
Paraprofessionals	2
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1  $\frac{31}{1}$

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	98%	99%	98%	97%	98%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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

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

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	164
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	93%
Enrolled in a community college	6%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	1%

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

Yes X          No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.          2008

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Whitney High School (WHS), located in Cerritos, California, is a suburban, public, college-preparatory middle and high school that serves 1025 students in grades seven through twelve within the ABC Unified School District (ABCUSD). Whitney is proud of its diverse student population, with a racial/ethnic composition of 54.6% Asian, 12.8% Filipino/Pacific Islander, 15.5% Asian Indian, 8.5% Hispanic/Latino, 5.6% White, 2.5% African-American, and 0.6% American Indian/Alaskan. Additionally, 19.2% of our students qualify federally as socio-economically disadvantaged.

Whitney provides an academically challenging educational program for college-bound students. The staff is highly committed to a research-based, results-driven, instructional program to ensure all students achieve academic excellence, while they successfully develop socially and emotionally. Students are provided with a rigorous, standards-based curriculum within a personalized learning and working environment. As a result, our school enjoys a rich history of academic excellence and is recognized as one of the top performing schools in the state of California, and the nation. In fact, Whitney students have achieved the highest Academic Performance score (995/1000) since the inception of California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. Whitney has also been recognized as a California Distinguished School on seven occasions and received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award four times. In addition, WHS has consistently been featured in Newsweek and US News and World Report's annual lists of top performing schools. As one can see, excellence is the expectation at Whitney High School.

Whitney's vision is to develop intrinsically motivated, collaborative learners who approach their education purposefully and creatively by taking ownership of their learning to become responsible, innovative global citizens. Our vision supports the belief that a student's education must be meaningful and personal. With this in mind, our desire is for all students to discover their "element," a term coined by Sir Ken Robinson, author and internationally acclaimed speaker, as the place where a person's interests and strengths meet. To support students in this endeavor, Whitney's student advisors have designed grade-level activities that include interest and strength-based inventories, and a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) for each student. Furthermore, core academic departments have developed curriculum and lessons that personalize learning to help students discover their "element." As a result, a number of students utilize their time during the summer months as an opportunity to learn more about the profession to which they aspire, engage in a variety of community service projects, and participate in internships related to their future career choices.

Whitney High School's mission is to prepare students to be accepted, and successful, at their best-match colleges or universities. Once students have determined their "element," our staff works closely with students and their families to identify and pursue the most appropriate college or university for each student's unique interests and needs. Additionally, to ensure graduating students are not deterred financially from attending their best-match schools, we encourage and help our students apply for scholarships. In fact, our staff has helped our 2013 seniors attain over nine million dollars in scholarships for undergraduate study. Moreover, students at WHS have the opportunity to discover their individual strengths and participate in extra-curricular activities that are meaningful to them. With this in mind, Whitney High School offers approximately 35 clubs/service organizations along with opportunities for students to participate in drama, music, and sports programs throughout the year.

Our parent community plays an integral role in Whitney's success. Due to our diverse student population, and to ensure that all cultures are celebrated, our school welcomes a variety of parent groups. These groups include the Chinese Parents' Association, Korean Parents' Association, Filipino Parents' Support Group, Latino Parents' Association, Indian Parents' Association, and the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA). The Whitney Foundation for Educational Excellence (WFEE) is the largest group of active parents on our campus and includes the presidents and representatives from each parent group.

Whitney High School has exceptional students, dedicated staff members, and a supportive network of families and stakeholders. Our school maintains a rigorous and relevant college-preparatory environment while preserving the approachable and intimate atmosphere of a small campus. We provide our students

with a variety of learning experiences both in and out of the traditional classroom setting. With this unique and purposeful approach, our students develop the strong foundational skills necessary for them to achieve tremendous success in college/university, and their future career choice.

## **PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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### **1. Assessment Results:**

a) WHS students are assessed through the California Standards Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. The STAR program includes California Standards Tests (CST) for all core content areas. Students earn scale scores that range from 150 – 600, indicating their depth of knowledge in specific content areas. These scores are categorized by performance levels. Students scoring “advanced,” indicate a superior performance with comprehensive understanding of the content area tested. A student scoring “proficient” shows that he/she is competent and has an adequate understanding of specific content. Students scoring “basic” indicate limited performance with a partial understanding of the content and skills tested. Scores “below basic” and “far below basic” specify a student has little or flawed understanding of that content area. The minimum scale score to designate a student as “proficient” is 350; scores below 350 indicate that a student is performing below grade level expectations. The advanced level minimum scores range from 390–428 and vary according to the subject area. These scores are utilized to calculate an Annual Performance Index (API) to measure overall academic performance and growth.

Additionally, each California school is expected to meet its Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) goals. AYP goals reflect four criteria: (1) student participation rates on statewide tests; (2) percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the CST; (3) API growth; and (4) graduation rate. The AYP goal also includes meeting the participation rate on statewide tests and proficiency requirements for numerically significant student groups. All California high school students must pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) to earn a high school diploma. The purpose of the CAHSEE is to ensure students graduating from public high schools can demonstrate grade level competency. The CAHSEE has two parts, ELA and mathematics, and students earn a pass/no pass mark based on the results achieved.

b) WHS students are achieving high levels of success, with most students scoring advanced or proficient on the CST. As a result of these scores, Whitney’s API score continues to climb. In 2009, our API score was 988/1000 and in 2012 our score rose to 995/1000. In addition, our 2013 CST data revealed that almost all of our students score above 350 in ELA and mathematics, and most are scoring at the advanced levels.

Whitney has consistently met or exceeded the state-wide AYP goals. For the past five years, we have had a 100% participation rate on statewide tests, and student scores exceed the proficient rate criteria set by our state standards in both English and math. Furthermore, 100% of our students passed the CAHSEE during tenth grade, the grade all California students take the test for the first time.

The CST data showed an increase in the number of students who are identified as socio-economically disadvantaged (SED) in the past five years. In 2009, only 11% of students taking the CST were classified as SED, which did not place them in the numerically significant student group according to state criteria. In 2011, mirroring the increase in unemployment, the number of students who were identified as SED grew to 20% of the total student population and has stayed consistent during the 2012 and 2013 school years. In 2010, the SED student group’s calculated API score was 974 and the overall school’s API score was 988. The staff recognized the need to intervene and assist students who were identified as SED. As a direct result of data analysis and collaboration, student scores were raised to 990 by 2011, which was only three points lower than the school’s total API score of 993. Last year, the group of students who were categorized as SED had an API score of 989 and the school’s score was again 993.

Although WHS students are academically accomplished, we are constantly searching for areas of potential growth. With this in mind, our staff analyzed the CST data and focused on students who were identified as Hispanic/Latino. While California has not identified this group of students as numerically significant when calculating our API, there are trends in the data that need to be addressed. Our Hispanic/Latino student CST scores are often lower than the overall school scores. We believe the reason for this decrease in scores is related to their ability to read and write English. To remedy this, the ELA staff members used CST cluster scores to identify three areas in which our Hispanic/Latino population seem to be low performing. These three clusters are: word analysis, written conventions, and writing strategies. Whitney teachers have

attended various ELA workshops to augment their existing instructional methods and meet the needs of our Hispanic/Latino student population. Whitney's goal is for all students to achieve success regardless of ethnicity or economic status.

Our math department has analyzed the CST data and determined a pattern that they are currently addressing. The number of students scoring at the advanced level on the CST has decreased as the students move to higher levels of mathematics. For example, last year, 91% of our students scored advanced in the 8th grade; while only 57% of 10th graders who took Algebra II scored advanced. We believe this trend is due to the fact students have difficulty in the application of mathematical concepts. As a result, we have incorporated more "hands on" collaborative lessons to help students gain a deeper understanding of math content.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

Whitney utilizes multiple measures of assessment when determining school-wide progress in assisting students to meet and exceed content standards. At the beginning of each school year, department chairpersons receive STAR test data through Illuminate, a system that generates reports from a variety of tests. The department chairpersons, along with the administrative team, meet to ascertain school trends based on the STAR data, identify research-based solutions to critical findings, and determine overall school actions. In addition, district benchmarks are given to students three times per year. Teachers scan the assessments directly into the Illuminate system using document cameras. Student scores are generated immediately, which provides timely results and feedback for students, parents, and teachers. Our teachers review the results of the benchmark assessments during monthly collaborative meetings to address gaps in our students' content knowledge and identify strategic methods to close these achievement gaps.

As a college-preparatory high school, analyzing Advanced Placement (AP) assessment data results plays an important role in improving student performance. AP scores are evaluated to gain insight into areas of strength and growth for each curricular area. With this information, our departments use the instructional guides from the College Board to make adjustments in content delivery and instructional practices.

In all courses, student achievement is evaluated through teacher-prepared and project-based assessments aligned to content standards. During department meetings, teachers review and calibrate their assessment tools to ensure they are valid. Furthermore, staff members who teach the same content area meet to compare results of similar exams. Based on the information garnered through these collaborative meetings, instructional practices are adjusted to meet student needs.

Students' ability to reflect on their own data is a key component to school improvement at WHS. For example, in mathematics, students are given formative assessment results and are asked to set goals to ensure they gain a deeper conceptual knowledge of content standards. These goals are written in a portfolio and shared with parents. In ELA, students are given rubrics and are asked to self-reflect on their own writing to make improvements. Additionally, in Physical Education, students keep a "Sportfolio" where students set goals and document fitness scores, which is required to be shared with parents.

Communication is vital to Whitney's success; therefore, student progress is communicated regularly through a variety of means. Each student's STAR test results, a summary of scale scores, and proficiency levels are mailed home each school year. A grade report, which includes five-week progress reports, as well as quarter and semester grades, is mailed home throughout the year. Additionally, each parent has been given a code to gain access to their student's most recent grades through the AERIES Browser Interface (ABI). ABI is a web-portal which allows for real-time access to student data using any modern web browser. Our goal is to be as transparent and communicative as possible with our community.

## **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

We believe that sharing best practices is a key component to creating a school environment that promotes continued student achievement. At the department level, teachers collaborate once per month to share lessons and units of study to positively impact students' academic success. Additionally, staff-wide

meetings are held monthly, providing teachers an opportunity to work collaboratively and share practices that promote connections across subject areas. Our staff worked together on the creation of a learning walk document, which was shared with other schools in our district, to support teachers observing each other. These learning walks provide an opportunity for teachers to learn from each other, share best practices, and develop common areas of strategic focus.

Our teachers regularly attend district-wide workshops throughout the year highlighting topics such as the implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the scoring of district writing assessment anchor papers, and technology. These workshops offer our teachers the chance to work together with other ABC Unified School District colleagues in their specific content areas and grade levels. As a result, WHS teachers feel comfortable observing classrooms and collaborating with teachers in our district to implement effective instructional strategies.

Many Whitney staff members belong to professional organizations, which gives them the opportunity to share lessons and learn from educators outside of our school district. For example, each teacher in our foreign language department is a member of a professional organization, such as the Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), or the American Association for Teachers of French (AATF). Furthermore, our science department is well-known for sharing best practices at both state and national levels. In fact, our science teachers have presented at the American Association of Physics Teachers, National Teachers Science Association, and the California Science Teachers conference. Moreover, all administrators are members of the Association of California Administrators (ACSA), and the principal serves on the ACSA Secondary Education State Council. We have branched out to form partnerships with colleges and universities, including the relationship we have developed with the nanotechnology department at UCLA, in which we share practices to test and modify artificial cell membranes. Finally, we are honored to host United States and international educators who visit our school to observe and discover effective strategies, processes, and procedures that have accelerated excellence on our campus.

#### **4. Engaging Families and Community:**

Whitney's staff actively pursues the involvement of alumni, community members, and parents to strengthen student success. WHS has established parent community groups such as the Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Latino, and Indian Parent Associations, as well as the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA). The relationships parent groups have with the school are essential to the support of our students. Each group meets monthly to celebrate their cultures and discuss any ideas and/or questions our parents may have regarding their students' education. Furthermore, every parent group president is also a member of our Whitney High School Foundation for Educational Excellence. This Foundation meets monthly with our principal to convey information from the parent groups and work collaboratively to support students and our school. Recently, our Foundation was instrumental in helping our school fundraise to build a Multi-Media Arts Center (MAC) which houses up-to-date technology and an auditorium to support student development of 21st Century skills.

We proudly celebrate our alumni and have established a Whitney Wall of Fame to honor them for their exemplary accomplishments. These Wall of Fame inductees participate in various question and answer sessions to help students understand what it takes to be successful. Additionally, we have developed Whitney alumni partnerships that "give back" to their alma mater with the sole purpose of continuing our school's success. Last year, alumni donated iPads and an iPad cart to support the use of technology in our classrooms. Our Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) utilized this technology to give back to our community in a unique way by teaching evening classes about iPad use and various applications to the senior citizens in our community.

We recognize that parents are our greatest resource in helping their learners be successful. To this, we meet frequently with our parents, students, and teachers to discuss students' areas of strength and needs for improvement. Together, we develop individual student support plans which may include after-school tutoring, regular meetings with the advisors and teachers, and coaching on success strategies. To

compliment this, we have partnered with a community counseling agency that provides Wellness Coordinators who help students develop essential skills for coping with stress, organization, and time management. With these resources, we seek to address the personalized needs of our students to ensure not only their academic success, but also their social and emotional growth.

## **PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Curriculum:**

Whitney has embedded the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) into our rigorous curriculum in all departments. Our staff utilizes a wide-range of resources to foster student learning such as textbooks from a variety of publishers, community resources including guest speakers and experts in the field, and cutting edge educational technology. Teachers employ consistent, research-based instructional practices that support the CCSS, including the College and Career Readiness component, to help students develop 21st Century skills.

In ELA, our team focuses on personalizing the curriculum to provide students a “voice and choice” in how they convey information learned. To this end, students are challenged to explore, in-depth, the areas that interest them. Throughout the ELA curriculum emphasis is placed on literary analysis, proper use of language conventions when writing or speaking, and writing for a variety of purposes (analysis, research, and reflection). Students are encouraged to participate, and develop creative ways to “show what they know.”

Whitney’s mathematics team works closely with Loyola Marymount’s Center for Math and Science Teaching (CMAST) to implement the CCSS. The CMAST strategies incorporate the concept of Investigation Before Explanation (IBE). Students work together in small groups to tackle and solve high-level problems; thus, supporting the development of critical thinking and collaboration skills. Parallel to this, students assess their own learning and target “home practice” to develop “procedural fluency” (the ability to work out a problem) and/or “depth of knowledge” (the conceptual application needed to understand and evaluate problems).

In physical education (PE) our guiding principle is “healthy bodies, healthy minds.” Thus, the PE curriculum helps students build effective communication and collaboration skills, develop leadership capacity, and pass the state’s Fitness Gram. Exclusive to our PE program is the Mindfulness curriculum for our middle school students. Our PE teachers and a research team from California State University, Fullerton partner to help students develop beneficial coping skills for stress reduction and physical/mental awareness in an effort to increase knowledge retention and support healthy self-reflection practices.

Our science department works together to design lessons that emphasize collaboration and critical thinking through hands-on learning experiences. Lessons include using a variety of resources such as current scientific journal articles, guest speakers, scientific notebooks, science-related media, and lab experiments. Students actively work together to apply learned concepts, analyze and use data to support scientific outcomes, effectively problem solve, and relate their findings to real-world experiences.

The social science department enhances their CCSS-rich curriculum by engaging learners in meaningful cross-curricular projects, realistic simulations and historical reenactments, classroom debates, and original student-created plays related to historical topics. In our upper grades, students take an active role in their education by teaching a full-day’s lesson on a selected time period and present information about the relevant historical events that took place during the era.

Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) plays a significant role in our students’ course selection based on their personal interests. Our VAPA program includes 2D/3D art, band, digital photography, drama, stage craft, and film and video production. These courses emphasize content and career readiness standards related to advanced technological skills, project management, artistic design and direction, and live performance skills.

The foreign language department offers students the opportunity to study French, Japanese, and Spanish through the Advanced Placement (AP) level. Students actively engage in all modalities of language development including listening, reading, writing, and speaking in pursuit of fluency. Teachers design lessons that are participatory and personal. Students are challenged to apply communication and critical

thinking skills in appropriate cultural contexts to extend their language skills and cultural knowledge to impact their communities and plan their future.

At WHS, we are proud that technology is suffused into all curricular areas. In fact, our school district requires that every student meets mandated “technology graduation requirements” for all grade levels. With this, we have integrated technology into our learning environment and use it as a tool to promote higher levels of creativity, critical thinking, efficiency, and problem solving.

## **2. Reading/English:**

Whitney’s English Language Arts (ELA) department has collaborated to develop an innovative and systematic approach to personalized learning. This approach provides students with guaranteed learning experiences to meet learners where they are, academically, and move them to the next level. Our English team embeds the CCSS, particularly the College and Career Readiness Standards, into this unique curriculum to motivate and engage students and to create purpose in their learning.

To support this dynamic, personalized curriculum, our team wrote and received funding for a Teacher Initiated Inquiry Project grant through UCLA. This funding has made it possible for our team to meet and design lessons that provide students with a voice and choice in their own learning, teaching units that help students explore and delve deeper into their areas of interest.

Our ELA department employs researched best practices to improve the reading, writing, and speaking skills for both struggling and high achieving students to ensure every learner is appropriately challenged. With this in mind, our department utilizes data from many sources such as formative assessments, Advanced Placement (AP) tests, and the Early Assessment Program (EAP). Our AP English Language and Composition scores for the last three years range from 3.8 – 4.2 and our AP English Literature and Composition scores from 4.1 – 4.3. This data is analyzed, discussed, and reviewed as a department to identify individual students’ areas of strength and weakness in order to support their learning needs. To further reinforce student comprehension of concepts being taught, students work together in small groups to discuss and analyze course content. Additionally, students engage in literary analysis, participate in verbal response through the use of Socratic methods, and make deeper connections into their writings by taking part in peer editing. Moreover, embedded in the curriculum are opportunities for students to research and study in-depth the topics that interest them, look for colleges/universities based on these interests, and determine what future careers are available to them.

The needs of students are addressed not only in the classroom setting, but also beyond the classroom. Students are encouraged to meet with teachers, during their “office hours,” in order to seek additional support when needed, discuss areas of interest, and/or receive guidance on assignments. Furthermore, students are urged to participate in our after-school peer-tutoring program for further support.

## **3. Mathematics:**

As we transition into the CCSS curriculum, Whitney’s mathematics department is implementing instruction which emphasizes students’ active Investigation Before teacher’s Explanation (IBE) of concepts. With this in mind, lessons focus on student application and communication of conceptual understanding. Additionally, students learn to self-assess and target areas in need of practice. The goal of these instructional methods is for students to achieve, not only procedural fluency in mathematics, but also to reason and solve a variety of complex problems, and to communicate their outcomes in precise mathematical language. This process creates dynamic classroom learning environments in which learners actively engage each other in discussion, collaboration, and critique related to mathematical concepts and skills. As a result, our students are performing above grade level and the majority reach the advanced levels of calculus, statistics, and computer science before graduating.

A key to the acquisition of mathematical skills is an ongoing, formative assessment system in which both the students and teachers participate. Students are regularly directed to analyze and learn from their errors

on assessments. They are also taught to evaluate their work continually and target their areas in need of improvement in both classwork and homework. Learners know content will be "spiraled" throughout our courses, and they will have future opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge. The focus is on long-term growth and retention of learning. To this, teachers administer frequent brief assessments to gather data and provide students with timely feedback. These assessments may include individual whiteboard work, daily post-its with student questions/work used as a "ticket out the door," or students working reflectively on exam corrections.

To meet the diverse needs of our students, teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies. Daily class time is structured to include teacher attention for individual students, small group collaboration, and teacher modeling of in-depth concepts. Beyond the classroom, our math teachers provide support and intervention through a system of "office hours" similar to those offered at the college level. During most lunch periods and after school, our teachers can be found in their classrooms working with students who either drop-in or who have been specifically invited by the teacher to attain additional help.

#### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Making connections and exposing students to international perspectives is paramount to the study of foreign languages at Whitney. Students begin this global approach by first increasing their knowledge about the culture, demographics, and political systems of the countries that speak the language they have chosen to study. Through course content, the Foreign Language (FL) department strives to convey the importance of students developing an awareness of worldwide issues and cultural viewpoints across all curricular areas, thus supporting students' global citizenry.

FL students are encouraged to purposefully investigate and research in-depth opportunities to involve themselves in the culture and language they study. FL teachers urge students to extend themselves beyond the classroom settings and participate in active language and culture-related clubs offered on campus such as French Club, Japanese Club, Latino Club, and more. As club members, students take part in community activities such as the building of a traditional Japanese garden on campus, field trips to experience and practice their target language, and learning and performing authentic cultural dances.

Correlated with our school's mission to prepare students for college and future careers, teachers support learners in their pursuit of language and culture immersion experiences in locations throughout the world. With this in mind, students are provided the chance to travel to Japan in an exchange program to experience the Japanese culture, language, and day-to-day living first hand. In global programs related to the Spanish language, students are encouraged and supported to travel to third-world countries to engage in service learning projects for the common purpose of helping build sustainable communities through environmental education.

In their commitment to make learning relevant and current, our science department has undergone dynamic and strategic changes to support student learning. The science department developed their current vertical-team model to include department members teaching both middle and high school levels. This change brought content experts that have first-hand knowledge regarding the skills and concepts essential for future success in the high school level science into the middle school classroom, thus bridging a knowledge gap that often affects students upon their transition into the high school setting.

In science, instruction has shifted from textbook-driven classes to concept-rich instruction that emphasizes meaningful exploration of in-depth scientific principles. Learners engage in collaborative, hands-on activities designed for students to discover scientific relationships. As students matriculate through Whitney High School, they are encouraged be active participants in their own learning. Learners explore all science disciplines in order to develop their interest through exposure to challenging course work, having a choice in related academic pathways, and pursuing opportunities to access science related research/internships outside the classroom setting.

Through active involvement in the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) program at WHS, students garner skills to be successful, not only in an arts-related career, but also in careers outside the artistic realm. For example, participation in theatre productions and courses supports students' creativity, innovative problem solving, and healthy risk-taking. This is done through building sets, designing costumes, engaging in improvisations, learning to use state-of-the-art light boards and sound systems, and perform in plays. Our art courses promote critical thinking skills, develop concrete artistic proficiencies, and foster expertise in design. Whitney also offers a comprehensive music program through seven ensembles in which students learn and perform music of different cultures and time periods. In our VAPA program, students hone their personal strengths and pursue their interests through the arts, which helps them take an innovative approach to their futures.

As part of our VAPA program, students may also choose to enroll in our digital media classes and after school programs. Our digital media programs provide students the opportunity to use state-of-the-art computer labs and a specialized digital production studio for photography, film making and editing, graphic design, and music composition and recording. Our graduates can be found in the top film schools in the country, and working in a wide range of film-related businesses. For students who do not pursue a career in this area, the essential learning is developing an artistic judgment that fosters the ability to create and evaluate digital media in their respective fields. Students learn to use digital art as a vehicle for self-expression and self-discovery. The creativity and aesthetic values developed through active creation in the digital arts enriches lives and supports effective decision making in most other non-arts related areas.

## **5. Instructional Methods:**

Whitney's staff makes every effort to strategically differentiate instruction based on the diverse needs of our students by using research-based methods. Our teachers engage in consistent professional development to stay current with effective teaching strategies, and develop the necessary techniques for incorporating the CCSS into the curriculum. Professional development focuses on learning and applying the instructional approaches in the book entitled, *Better Learning Through Structured Teaching*. To this, teachers developed an effective structure in which instruction is differentiated, while at the same time, actively teaching students how to take more responsibility for their own learning. By analyzing data from a variety of sources including – but not limited to – benchmark assessments, formative assessments, standardized testing data, AP data, and EAP data our staff strives to meet students where they are academically and appropriately challenge them to move to the next level.

With the collective purpose to differentiate and modify instruction to meet the needs of all students, our staff utilizes consistent strategies to develop students' 21st Century skills. Accordingly, students actively participate in think-pair-share activities and small group learning clusters to move away from learning in isolation and are encouraged to engage in meaningful discussions. In alignment with CCSS, we focus on supporting students in developing skills needed for future college and career readiness. WHS teachers make a concerted effort to challenge our high-achieving students to think critically and cultivate effective problem solving skills. Our teachers have adopted classroom frameworks to create an atmosphere where students approach learning with an open-mind and engage in problem solving. The purpose of these strategies is to encourage students to persevere and adapt to new learning environments. As a result, students take a more personalized approach in terms of how they convey their understanding of concepts.

By concentrating our efforts on meeting the needs of all students, teachers go beyond textbooks and engage students in real world experiences. For example, teachers frequently have guest speakers share their experiences with students to make connections and provide them with career guidance. Additionally, teachers utilize multi-media resources such as SmartBoards, internet, Skype, and presentation software to appeal to students' learning modalities. In turn, it is expected and required that students utilize these resources when preparing their projects. To support technology use on campus, we have incorporated a Bring Your Own Device policy so students can use their own technological devices to support learning. Learners also have access to our MAC lab and classroom iPads to enable students to further refine their technological skills.

## **6. Professional Development:**

Whitney's staff understands the connection professional development has to both student achievement and school improvement. Last year, the staff read the book entitled, *Better Learning Through Structured Teaching*, by Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey. During staff meetings, the book's chapters were studied in manageable segments of information that incorporated research-based instructional strategies. These strategies were grounded in the "I do," "We do," "You do it together," and "You do it alone" instructional model. Several staff members presented specific strategies during staff meetings, and served as experts to help implement them in classrooms throughout our campus. In addition, this instructional model helped us to develop a common language used in a learning walk document teachers use to observe each other, and attain new instructional strategies that foster student achievement and engagement.

ABC Unified School District (ABCUSD) has implemented a professional development program that serves to support student achievement and prepare our staff for the implementation of the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). All core-curricular teachers attend the CCSS workshops throughout the school year as well as during the summer. During these trainings, our teachers collaborate and develop methods to embed the new standards within the curriculum. Additionally, ABCUSD was awarded a grant to implement the Next Generation of Science Standards (NGSS). Currently, Whitney's science teachers are attending workshops to ensure that we are up-to-date regarding science curriculum and methodologies for our students.

At Whitney, we value on-going learning to support our growth as professional learners. With this in mind, the English department, through funds provided by a grant, utilized the expertise of a consultant in the field of personalized learning. The department, along with the consultant, met regularly in person and through Skype to garner ideas and design lessons to guarantee all students had a voice and choice in their learning; in addition to a rigorous core curriculum. Moreover, Whitney's mathematics team works closely with Loyola Marymount's Center for Math and Science Teaching (CMAST) to implement the CCSS. The CMAST strategies incorporate the concept of "IBE," Investigation Before Explanation, into the curriculum.

The integration of technology is important in fostering innovation and creativity by staff and students. Several staff members have attended workshops to advance their technological skills, and serve as campus experts. They train colleagues to embed technology in the classroom setting and ensure that our students develop 21st Century skills.

## **7. School Leadership**

Whitney's administrative team consists of the principal, assistant principal, and dean of students. The administration's philosophy and school vision are aligned to support our commitment to purposeful collaboration. All stakeholders are valued and their input is vital to the success of our school. Therefore, several committees have been established to assist in the decision-making processes, as well as the development of programs and policies.

The Leadership Team (LT), which includes department chairpersons from each curricular area, the administration, classified office manager, and student advisors, meets twice per month. During these meetings the current year's school plan is developed, outlining measurable goals and objectives along with steps to achieve them. As building leadership capacity is another key component in LT meetings, the agendas include honing facilitation and meeting management skills, in addition to discussions about current educational research and best practices.

The Guidance Team consists of two student advisors, a college/career center specialist, the assistant principal, and our dean of students. They work collaboratively with students and their families to develop Personalized Education Plans (PEP), which help students shape and plan their learning experiences to meet their interests and strengths. The information gathered from the PEP also helps our school implement programs of highest benefit to student achievement.

We believe that when our staff members serve on committees that interest them, they are more effective in supporting students. For example, a staff member who enjoys creating policies could serve on the Policy Committee to update and develop school rules and protocols. Other staff members who enjoy working with students socially and emotionally, could serve on the Student Assistance Team and be specifically trained to work with students in areas of personal, non-academic need. Other committees include: Mentorship, Safety, School Pride, and Technology.

Parent groups are critical to our school's success and commitment to collaboration. The principal meets regularly with the School Site Council, PTSA, and Whitney Foundation for Educational Excellence to gain input on the school plan and budget, to garner feedback on school policies and practices, and to build relationships. Furthermore, our administrative team emphasizes safety and a sense of community on campus. An open-door policy is maintained by all office personnel, which ensures that parents and students feel welcome to voice their ideas and concerns.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) - Mathematics

**All Students Tested/Grade:** 10

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2013

**Publisher:** ETS/California Department of Education

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
% Passing	100	100	100	100	100
N/A					
Number of students tested	169	174	171	175	172
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Passing	100	100	100	100	100
N/A					
Number of students tested	33	24	34	26	21
<b>2. Students receiving Special Education</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. English Language Learner Students</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Passing	100	100	100	100	100
N/A					
Number of students tested	16	10	15	15	19
<b>5. African- American Students</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Asian Students</b>					
% Passing	100	100	100	100	100
N/A					
Number of students tested	116	123	124	132	123

<b>7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students</b>					
% Passing	100	100	100	100	100
N/A					
Number of students tested	20	24	18	15	23
<b>9. White Students</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>10. Two or More Races identified Students</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>11. Other 1: Other 1</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>12. Other 2: Other 2</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>13. Other 3: Other 3</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					

**NOTES:** This table consists of data from the Mathematics section of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) given each spring to all 10th grade students. When the exams are scored, the only performance categories reported are "Pass" and "Not Pass." Whitney High School has maintained both a 100% participation rate and a 100% "Pass" rate for all students, regardless of subgroup, for all years that this exam has been administered.

**STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA

**Test:** California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) - English Language Arts

**All Students Tested/Grade:** 10

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2013

**Publisher:** ETS / California Department of Education

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
% Passing	100	100	100	100	100
N/A					
Number of students tested	169	174	171	175	172
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Passing	100	100	100	100	100
N/A					
Number of students tested	33	24	34	26	21
<b>2. Students receiving Special Education</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. English Language Learner Students</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Passing	100	100	100	100	100
N/A					
Number of students tested	16	10	15	15	19
<b>5. African- American Students</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Asian Students</b>					
% Passing	100	100	100	100	100
N/A					
Number of students tested	116	123	124	132	123
<b>7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students</b>					
% Passing					

N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students</b>					
% Passing	100	100	100	100	100
N/A					
Number of students tested	20	24	18	15	23
<b>9. White Students</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>10. Two or More Races identified Students</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>11. Other 1: Other 1</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>12. Other 2: Other 2</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					
<b>13. Other 3: Other 3</b>					
% Passing					
N/A					
Number of students tested					

**NOTES:** This table consists of data from the English Language Arts (ELA) section of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) given each spring to all 10th grade students. When the exams are scored, the only performance categories reported are "Pass" and "Not Pass." Whitney High School has maintained both a 100% participation rate and a 100% "Pass" rate for all students, regardless of subgroup, for all years that this exam has been administered.