

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Jeff Rickert

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

Official School Name Environmental Academy of Research Technology and Earth Sciences

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2626 Michael Drive

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

City Newbury Park State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 91320-3252

County Ventura County

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Web site/URL http://www.conejousd.org/earths E-mail jrickert@conejousd.org

Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/groups/58370077675

Twitter Handle / Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Ann Bonitatibus E-mail abonitatibus@conejousd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Conejo Valley Unified School District Tel. (805) 497-9511

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Patricia Phelps

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

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

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

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 17 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 26 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	41	48	89
1	49	37	86
2	36	51	87
3	51	37	88
4	48	47	95
5	50	46	96
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	275	266	541

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 16 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 23 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 54 % White
 - 5 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 3%

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, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	537
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.030
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 18 %
97 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Assyrian, Bengali, Cantonese, English, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Kannada, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Marathi, Pashto, Polish, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 18 %
Total number students who qualify: 97
8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
40 Total number of students served

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

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	23
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	1
Paraprofessionals	1
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 22:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	95%	97%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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.

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

The Environmental Academy of Research Technology and Earth Sciences (EARTHS) helps students embrace the future through an inquiry oriented, integrated earth sciences and technology curriculum.

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

All kindergarten through fifth grade students in the Conejo Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) are eligible to apply for admittance to EARTHS Magnet Elementary School during an open enrollment period each spring. CVUSD families receive information regarding the school's application and lottery process during the open enrollment period. A random drawing selection process is utilized without regard to any type of demographic data, including students' grades or parents' socioeconomic status. Students who are not selected for the upcoming school year through the spring lottery process are put on a waiting list until September 30th.

PART III – SUMMARY

EARTHS is a public elementary school in Thousand Oaks, California in the Conejo Valley Unified School District. The area is located 35 miles northwest of Los Angeles and serves a suburban, largely middle to upper middle class community, in addition to a small number of socioeconomically disadvantaged pocket communities.

EARTHS was created to alleviate an increasingly evident segregation issue at several schools, as well as in response to declining enrollment and the need to ensure that resident families elected to enroll children at schools within district boundaries. Using a market driven approach, EARTHS was birthed from focused public survey results that revealed district parents desired a school that embraced the attributes of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education model with an eye toward earth sciences.

Enduring partnerships were forged as an inspired community joined forces to design a learning environment to encourage and challenge all students to develop their full potential academically, emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally. From EARTHS' 2009 inception, students receive an integrated, personally relevant, student centered curriculum in which learning is framed by the lens of real world scientific inquiry and engineering design. The school's Exploration Center, replete with Physical and Life Science Labs, cutting edge research library, and an acre of distinctive outdoor biolabs (Regions of California Garden, Native Plant Garden, Pollinator Garden, Butterfly Labyrinth Garden, Peace Pole Garden, Oak Grove, and fruits and vegetable plots) are frequently utilized by EARTHS' students. The focus is on earth, life, and physical sciences, as well as technology, providing students with in depth science exposure and an opportunity to learn through inquiry oriented, active, engagement.

Scientific inquiry, through answering questions by active investigation and solving problems through design, nurtures students' abilities to think creatively, analytically, and independently in order to thrive now and in the future as productive, responsible members of a global economy.

EARTHS' diverse 532 current student population is created by random enrollment process design. Eighteen percent of EARTHS' students live below the poverty level. Eighteen percent of the students are English Language Learners (ELL). Spanish is the predominate language of the 21 languages represented by the ELL population at the school. EARTHS has 12 percent identified Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) and nine percent Special Education students. EARTHS' diversity is celebrated for the opportunities it provides for students to respect and embrace cultural differences, as well as for the resolve to provide instruction whereby all students excel.

EARTHS' continually refined curriculum was originally developed around rigorous standards that easily mesh with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The EARTHS' teaching team worked closely with enduring partners, FOSS Science, University of California, Berkeley Lawrence Hall of Science, and WestEd, to create an interdisciplinary curriculum using Full Option Science System (FOSS) program units as focal points for interdisciplinary units of study. These organizations also provided teachers with intensive staff development in data driven collaborative teamwork to create a professional learning community (PLC) focused on student achievement through ongoing analysis of student work and refinement of curriculum and instruction.

EARTHS, a Professional Development School in partnership with Pepperdine University, opened with its professional development center right on campus. Student teachers work in unison with EARTHS' teaching staff, enabling students to reap benefits, such as increased intervention and differentiated instruction. A strong learning community is further enhanced by enthusiastic parents who volunteer well over the requested three hour per month minimum to help students soar.

Academic progress is strikingly visible in EARTHS' consistently high achievement. As the following typical day illustration indicates, children's needs and the curriculum are fully intertwined to encourage and challenge all students to develop full potential in all areas. First grade teams in the vegetable garden observe

their onions and stretch math skills to calculate and record growth in science notebooks. Second grade students in the Physical Science Lab sort rock types, investigate attributes, and make evidence based predictions about impacts of weathering. Applause fills the multipurpose room as kindergarten actors bow at the conclusion of their animal habitat musical production. National Project Budburst third grade Citizen Scientists in the Pollinator Garden sketch flowers, upload data, then read purposefully in leveled expository texts to continue to research their eco-science focus question. Meanwhile, fifth grade SHRUBS (Students Helping Restore Unique Biomes) students have returned from a local Santa Monica Mountains hike with National Park Service (NPS) Ranger partners to remove invasive plant species. Academic language fills the air as they collaboratively type reports. Fourth grade National Wildlife Federation (NWF) partners in the Life Science Lab work in teams testing trout tank water purity levels to help interpret fry population reduction. Eco-Geckos Student Council students fan out around the school encouraging conservation habits that earned EARTHS the NWF Green Flag and 2015 United States Top Ten Eco School awards.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

EARTHS Magnet School’s CCSS and NGSS curriculum is linked with grade level FOSS science unit focus questions as the basis for its inquiry oriented infrastructure. Using these inquiry focal points, teacher teams generate a cross-curricular conceptual flow to create a connected curriculum that is personally relevant to EARTHS’ students.

Reading instruction is differentiated to propel student achievement through flexible guided reading groups and literature circles. Students read widely, especially in leveled expository science and social studies texts linked to current science focus questions. All students are also provided rich shared reading experiences through quality core literature. Targeted supplementary instruction supports less proficient readers’ access to the text and extends high achievers. CCSS College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards undergird instruction. For example, students read closely and cite evidence from text in reading and writing, as well as integrate and evaluate content presented in multiple texts and diverse formats. EARTHS’ high regard for reading culture encourages and propagates students’ increasingly independent reading of complex literary and informational texts.

Writing instruction through the CCSS based, Step Up to Writing program is intentionally woven throughout EARTH’S integrated curriculum. Using the program’s progression of skills and common language, teachers design timely whole and small group lessons to strengthen observed weaknesses and stretch achievement. Through authentic writing assignments, students are taught to produce evidence supported arguments, well organized informative/explanatory texts that convey complex ideas, and imaginative, focused narratives. EARTHS’ writers embrace technology and put forth the sustained effort required to fully develop written communication skills as they record in science notebooks and collaborate with others to research, produce, and publish their writing products.

EARTHS’ teachers design integrated instruction to ensure students master or exceed CCSS and acquire habits of mind required of productive mathematical thinkers. Students flex mathematical reasoning muscles while creating models to frame data derived from investigating their current science inquiry focus question. Using the Everyday Mathematics curriculum and EARTHS’ developed Performance Tasks, mathematics is taught as a discrete subject and curriculum integrated. Teachers pre-assess students to design data driven differentiated instruction. Concepts are introduced using concrete, real life examples and students learn multiple methods and problem solving strategies to acquire deep conceptual understanding. Ongoing formative assessments help teachers deploy student teachers and volunteers at centers to support students’ mastery of facts, basic algorithms, and complex problem solving through hands on reinforcement activities. SuccessMaker, Xtra Math, and Reflex Math are robust individualized online programs employed to help students acquire computational automaticity.

EARTHS’ team enhanced FOSS grade level science units provide the inquiry focus scaffolding for the school’s integrated curriculum. Each trimester, students concentrate on one earth, life, or physical science strand. EARTHS’ student scientists work in the labs, gardens, local mountains, and fifth grade Pali Outdoor Science Camp as they cooperatively use discipline related technological tools to observe, measure, identify, intuit correlations, as well as design and test hypotheses. They achieve fluency in scientific thinking processes and academic language. Similar to adult scientist counterparts, student scientists expand thinking and broaden understanding by recording investigations in personal science notebooks, deliberating during animated peer and teacher led discussions, conducting extensive online, as well as “interviewing an expert” research, and sharing results through multi-media presentations.

EARTHS’ social studies curriculum is organized around science focused inquiry and primary sources, supported by students’ language rich writing, discussion, actual and virtual field trips, quality literature, in addition to textbook and online research. For example, inquiry extends into social studies when students examine how California’s four regions offer different environments for organisms and how those environments affected the lives of indigenous people living in each region. Science research projects, such

as “What’s Your –ology?” foster career awareness and preparedness, as well as students’ research and technology skills when students interview professionals in the field. Third grade history comes alive in local Santa Monica Mountains as student investigators conduct exploratory hikes in the Satwiwa Chumash village and Rancho Sierra Vista former Spanish land grant area. Participation is high in EARTHS’ all school lunch elective, Eco-GECKOS (Growing Environmentally Conscious Kids On Site) environmental action team. The NWF Green Flag was awarded to EARTHS. The City of Thousand Oaks has also recognized the Eco-GECKOS for beneficial wastewater reduction efforts.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The arts are embraced and acquisition of CCSS and NGSS are enhanced through EARTHS’ integrated visual and performing arts program. Throughout every week, students at each grade level learn Musically Aligned program songs to reinforce what they are learning in science. Students sing in the garden, on hikes, and at home, songs about the scientific method, gravity, energy waves, ecosystems, etc. All students perform in annual grade level musical and play productions reflective of science areas of study. For example, first grade performs their production, “The Garden Show,” in the EARTHS’ gardens, and fourth graders delight audiences with “Geology Rocks.” Insect and flower observations become works of art as all students regularly practice technical drawing skills by sketching scientific observations in science notebooks.

All students participate in EARTHS’ “AMUSE: Art Makes U Smart Education,” classroom program, taught monthly by volunteer parent art docents. Students learn about selected artist masters; docents facilitate as student artists create their own instruction inspired art. Almost one half of EARTHS’ students choose to participate in twice weekly, donation supported band, strings, and choral programs and perform publicly throughout the year. In addition, all students attend a variety of on and off campus professional fine arts performances to nurture interest in the arts.

EARTHS has received Platinum and several Gold American Cancer Society Awards for its school wellness program which promotes healthy eating, physical activity, and future tobacco free lifestyles. Students receive a minimum of 100 minutes of physical education per week. All students participate in the research supported SPARKS program. During fast paced center rotations, trained specialists lead students through physical fitness and sport skill development activities. Classroom teachers model healthy lifestyles through physical fitness instruction in science inquiry relays, hikes, and organized games. The entire school embraces good nutrition through Harvest of the Month farm to school collaborations, food free birthday celebrations, and child centered healthy food promotions. Student participation is high during twice weekly before school Running Club. Parent volunteers run, cheer, and reward students with necklace foot charms for each mile they run.

The school’s language diverse student population allows students to teach each other the basics of new languages through “Languages at Lunch.” Early indicators demonstrate that this twice weekly EARTHS’ lunch club pilot program is the ideal vehicle for the expanded dissemination of the model from its fifth grade pilot throughout all grade levels at the school. Peer language tutors sign up and receive training from the school’s ELL facilitator to deliver 10 small group vocabulary and fundamental sentence lessons for students who sign up to participate to learn a new language of their choice. After school Spanish language elective classes are offered to all students at a nominal cost or scholarship.

EARTHS’ commitment to the STEM model is evident as technology is infused throughout all aspects of the curriculum. Technology is integrated across the curriculum through student access to classroom computers, iPads, wireless netbooks, SMART Boards, two computer labs and an Exploration Center research library technology center. Students throughout the school are taught to conduct responsible online research, collaborate through such resources as Edmodo, and Google Docs, as well as to create presentations using Prezi, PowerPoint, and Google Slides.

All EARTHS’ students participate in a multi-grade, CCSS and Education Environment Initiative aligned, outdoor education program. This environmental education program is designed to increase student awareness of the world around them and cultivate understanding and care about environmental issues.

EARTHS and the NPS partnered to develop the fourth/fifth grade SHRUBS (Students Helping Restore Unique BiomeS), second/third grade SPROUTS (Students Practicing Research Outdoors Using Technology and Science), and kindergarten/first grade SEEDS (Students Experiencing the Environment by Doing Science) programs. Service learning is a major component of the programs. Student work includes restoration, signage, habitat awareness, and litter control. For example, students work side-by-side with Park Rangers in the Santa Monica Mountains' plant nursery collecting seeds and caring for the native species within a restoration site. Students also participate in lessons taught collaboratively by the NPS Rangers and teachers on native flora and fauna, geology, fluvial geomorphology, the impact of invasive species on native plants, life and water cycles, scientific methods, and public speaking.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

EARTHS' lottery enrollment process creates a diverse student population resulting in an unusually large achievement level span within many classrooms. Differentiation of instruction with Gradual Release of Responsibility scaffolds are employed to challenge GATE students and catapult achievement of those not yet meeting standards. Students' response to instruction is closely monitored. EARTHS' multi-tier system of supports is focused on continuous growth and sustainable success for all students.

The inquiry based method, a natural differentiator, allows students to extend and stretch learning, while providing hands on background building content knowledge experiences. ELL and GATE students discover and experience science concepts individually and concurrently with grade level peers. Teachers deliberately introduce and embed academic language resulting in increased student engagement. Inquiry allows for peer discussion, interaction and deeper thinking, all skills that are academically valuable to GATE students and language learners. Kaplan's Depth and Complexity icons developed for GATE students are utilized simultaneously for all students. EARTHS' GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) and CLAD (Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development) skilled teachers weave English language support methods and standards throughout the design and implementation of all lessons. Grade level PLCs have also developed language specific science content area mini lessons that address ELL needs and specific language goals. English language paraprofessionals provide push-in support to small groups.

Push-in and pull-out Response to Intervention (RTI) classes supplement regular instruction. A variety of reading, writing, and math benchmark assessments are administered at the beginning of school and each trimester. Teachers triangulate data and rank students by need to form flexible prioritized lists. The focus of intervention is fluid in response to students' performance on state and school test results. For example, to improve phonics and reading at first and second grades, intervention students are assessed using the Basic Phonics Skills Test (BPST) and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) test. RTI goals are set and students are clustered by achievement level for small group instruction using the Systematic Instruction in Phoneme, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS) program. Students are regularly assessed and close progress monitoring occurs at weekly team meetings to review progress and modify individual student's intervention program as indicated by data. Intervention is also technology infused with continuously adaptive programs used within the regular classroom (e.g., Read Naturally, Success Maker, Xtra Math, and Reflex: Math Fact Fluency). Parents are able to access many school programs online.

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

The assessment program at EARTHS is designed to systematically improve student and school performance through a "define, measure, analyze, improve, control" continuous improvement cycle. This process is yielding fruitful results. On the new third through fifth grade CCSS California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress assessments (CAASPP), EARTHS' students performed second out of all 17 CVUSD schools in English Language Arts and third overall in Math. These scores are significant because EARTHS' diverse population represents a true cross section of CVUSD students.

EARTHS' Hispanic/Latino, Low Socioeconomic, ELL, and Special Education subgroup scores are significantly higher than comparable district wide subgroup scores. However, in comparison to the test scores of all EARTHS' students, these subgroups have a greater than ten percentage point gap. To address the achievement gap of these subgroup students and challenge students meeting standards, PLCs work to

ensure each child receives the most appropriate instruction to accelerate achievement. During initial goal setting PLC data meetings, EARTHS' staff evaluates individual student's state test results, previous year CVUSD third trimester benchmark assessment results, as well as a variety of freshly administered schoolwide adopted CCSS based assessments. A weekly minimum day banking time structure allows PLCs time to analyze student data and redesign lessons. Teacher groups generate ESRs (Expected Student Response), indicating standards, vocabulary, and results desired in designated student work.

These and other pre/post assessments are regularly utilized to form differentiated instructional groups: Basic Phonics Skills Test, Johnston Spelling Inventories, Scholastic Reading Inventory, CVUSD Benchmark subject exams, Educators' Assessment Data Management System (EADMS) online assessments, adopted curriculum publishers' assessments, California English Language Development Test (CELDT), A Developmental English Proficiency Test (ADEPT), and EARTHS' created formative assessments and Performance Tasks.

Student assessment results are meaningfully shared with all EARTHS' stakeholders to advance achievement. Students receive immediate feedback throughout the school day. Upper grade teachers, students, and parents utilize Edmodo online communication network for collaborative input. CAASPP and CVUSD Benchmark assessments are fully explained to parents and community through the EARTHS' website, Blackboard all-call system, School Accountability Report Card, Single School Plan for Student Achievement, as well as at Open House, School Site Council, and English Language Advisory Council meetings. Teachers invite parents to join hands to help ensure student success through personal meetings, timely phone call and email feedback loops, through first trimester parent teacher conferences, along with CVUSD trimester progress and summative reports.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

EARTHS' students are engaged and motivated as a result of the growth mindset that pervades EARTHS' classrooms and campus. Effort and perseverance are the watchwords that add substance to the reasons why students are thriving. Learners are motivated because the integrated inquiry oriented instructional goals set before them are personally meaningful and students persist because the school culture is one that celebrates conquering difficult learning tasks through focused effort. Thus, students needing extra support and high achieving students alike exhibit pride as they meet elevated learning goals and eagerly embrace new challenges purposefully selected by their teachers.

The supportive teacher culture at EARTHS is rooted in the fundamental belief that teachers transform students' lives and motivate them to achieve lofty goals. Teacher teams participate in frequent professional development and lead the metamorphosis of EARTHS over time. One fifth of the selectively hired teachers are university adjunct professors. Highly valued for their ability to develop, implement, and refine curriculum with a laser like focus on well-rounded student achievement, EARTHS' teachers transform their students' lives, the lives of their Pepperdine University student teachers, and other CVUSD teachers as frequently requested professional development providers.

EARTHS promotes a caring, collegial school culture. Harmonious, productive student teamwork in the classroom, gardens, labs, and off site fieldwork locations is purposefully taught. EARTHS' teachers inculcate many of the same group dynamics and collaboration strategies they learn through their own extensive professional development. Positive behavior support is fostered through the CHAMPS social skills program. Social emotional growth is also supported through Kelso's Choice conflict resolution program, and fifth grade Department of Justice's Stand Proud social competency skill building program.

The school's shared leadership team designs and orchestrates programs to advance students' productive academic, social, and emotional growth. Assemblies honor students' academic and "Character Keys" citizenship gains every trimester attended by the entire school community. Reminders throughout the week and monthly "principal on the building" rooftop rallies reinforce character building values. For example, the entire school dances choreographed moves along with EARTHS' gecko mascot-costumed principal to Kelso's Choices, "It's Your Choice Baby," originally taught by the school's counselor. The school's Big Buddy/Little Buddy program fosters upper and lower grade interconnected peer relationships as student pairs solve STEM engineering challenges, (e.g., force of magnetism aligned "Design a Slip-Free Bookmark"). Regular community based environmental service learning projects link and develop EARTHS' students' academic, social, and emotional goals.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Strong family and community partnerships center on the notion that all have a responsibility to educate EARTHS' students and play vital roles in that effort.

Parents pledge to volunteer three hours per month during enrollment and this sets the stage early for a productively engaged community. Parents fostering EARTHS' mission are seen engaging students in teacher designed activities at classroom centers, science lab experiments, and at biolab/garden Master Gardener led sessions. Lunchtime "Rethink Your Drink" and "Color Your Plate" parent sponsored healthy eating samplings for students and family events, like the morning pancake breakfast 3K Great Gecko Adventure Race, engage families and promote successful lifestyles. Weekend family drives to Lake Piru to release the students' hand-raised trout help parents appreciate their children's efforts to conscientiously monitor and maintain tank water to match that of the release site. The whole family celebrates as students are lauded by the NWF for EARTHS' Trout Hatchery's comparatively highest survival rate of trout during release in local rivers.

EARTHS' asset building best practices build a strong parent community. Home visits from the staff

bilingual parent liaison help parents of struggling students create ideal homework study areas, increase capacity, and create relational bonds. At EARTHS' After Dark family education nights, parents learn from Discovery Center guest speakers and try students' software programs while their children simultaneously experience science extension activities in the labs. "Pajamarama" Reading, Astronomy, and Family Movie Nights also connect families to EARTHS as a bonded learning community.

The student success focused motto, "It Takes a Community of Partners," is well founded through the school's network of financial support, professional development, resource sharing and intellectual exchange allies. Monies from grants written by a resourceful EARTHS' parent teacher team (e.g., Boeing, Amgen, Baxter, Rainbird, City of Thousand Oaks, United States Forest Service, Toyota, and NEA) provide staff development funds, resources to help construct and maintain EARTHS' indoor labs and garden biolabs, as well as furnish students with investigation related technological tools, such as digital binoculars, GLX graphing logger, anemometers, and water quality sensors. Both elementary students and teacher credential candidates receive academic support through EARTHS' mutually beneficial partnership with Pepperdine University and on site Professional Development School. Students and teachers flourish through staff development partnerships that include FOSS Science, Lawrence Hall of Science - University of California, Berkeley, West Ed, NWF, NPS, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Discovery Center, and EARTHS' Taiwan sister school.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is planned and orchestrated to continuously expand the capacity of EARTHS' principal and teaching staff to cultivate standards based achievement for all learners and school improvement. Outside consulting partners, the Teaching Learning Collaborative strategy, CVUSD provided professional development, and conference opportunities are utilized to passionately and persistently nurture growth of EARTHS' PLC.

To maximize both rigor and relevancy of the school's multidisciplinary integrated curriculum, the EARTHS' team has dedicated this entire school year toward professionally supported examination and refinement of CCSS and NGSS alignment with inquiry focus question cross-curricular conceptual flow. EARTHS' well established West Ed, K-12 Alliance partner is conducting focused professional development sessions with the staff to evaluate renewed extraction of CCSS and NGSS standards for each grade level and provide the means to help teachers identify updated FOSS curriculum areas of alignment. Teachers respond to compelling questions and are empowered to make revisions to ensure that selected cross-curricular learning activities best support the conceptual flow of inquiry related to each science unit's focus question, as well as facilitate students' deep conceptual understanding.

EARTHS' PLC utilizes the Teaching Learning Collaborative professional development strategy of a "plan, teach, debrief, adjust, teach, debrief" cycle to enhance instruction and students' conceptual understanding. Each grade level PLC guided by the principal-facilitator, analyzes student assessment data to determine a content area of weakness. Teachers then collaborate to design a carefully sequenced exemplar lesson. Teachers alternate teaching the lesson segments to one class of students while the rest observe and take notes. Following the lesson, the team debriefs regarding the lesson design, supported by evidence collected during lesson delivery. As the PLC analyzes collected student work and other response data, they uncover indicators of relationships among lesson design, teacher decision making while teaching, and student understanding. Using this evidence, the PLC then redesigns the learning sequence, teaches the lesson to another student group, debriefs the lesson and further refines it. This trust building collegial learning process promotes enhanced lesson design and instructional decision making resulting in student achievement gains.

EARTHS' teachers and principal also attend CVUSD provided professional development and conferences regarding data analysis, instructional technology, English Language Development, GATE, STEM, NGSS, and CCSS to continuously refine, and add depth and breadth to teaching and instruction. PLC members who attend selected professional development sessions teach what they have learned to their colleagues to maximize learning benefits for EARTHS' students.

4. School Leadership:

EARTHS' research and results philosophy interconnects with the school's shared leadership structure. The principal is the leader of leaders and teachers are the transformational leaders of EARTHS' students. Through this shared leadership structure, the team strives to refine curriculum and implementation of it through continuous, collaborative, data driven action research so the diverse learning needs of all students are richly met.

EARTHS' principal promotes and protects the school's mission through leadership, garnering of resources, creating partnerships, and dedicating time to ensure EARTHS' PLC focus on propelling student achievement. Teachers, empowered by EARTHS' principal, hold key leadership positions and all major policy, program, partnership, and resource decisions are made through a collaborative process. The Leadership Team is made up of the principal, a teacher in charge, one primary lead teacher, one upper lead teacher, a GATE advisor, an ELD advisor, and a representative teacher from each grade level. All staff members are invited to attend and share at these agenda publicized monthly meetings where overall school goals are shared and discussed. Three Shared Leadership Committees (Technology, FOSS/NGSS, and Data) conduct collective inquiry, as needed, throughout the year regarding research based best practices and current reality to bring information and recommendations to the Leadership Team and then to the staff as a whole.

Data driven grade level PLCs also meet every week to analyze student data in relation to students' response to team created Performance Task expectations and to design instruction to ensure that students' depth of knowledge in academic areas meet or exceed CCSS and NGSS goals. Vertical teams meet for the same purpose, but from the perspective of preparing students for the next grade level. EARTHS' intervention team (principal, teacher in charge/special education teacher, school psychologist, and intervention specialist) meets every six weeks with grade level PLCs during common planning time periods to analyze intervention students' most recent progress monitoring results and adjust supports, as indicated in support of students' assessed needs.

EARTHS' school leadership philosophy and structure is unchanged from several years ago when the University of California, Berkeley conducted a program evaluation study. This study found that EARTHS represented top achievement of FOSS Leadership Academy program goals. The same study found that teachers felt supported by the principal in that they were allowed the freedom to be reflective practitioners and customize school curricula to be science centered and integrated across subjects within their PLCs.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Integration of curriculum taught through the lens of earth sciences inquiry oriented focus questions is identified by EARTHS' stakeholders as the one practice that makes the school so successful. With student achievement a paramount focus, teachers push beyond boundaries of traditional disciplines and maintain accountability while designing intriguing inquiry oriented learning experiences that engage students' interest and provide a context for learning.

CCSS and NGSS based content is supported with hands on, personally relevant learning experiences linked to science focus questions that guide students' investigations. For example, students exert effort to understand mathematical terms such as, minimum, maximum, mean, median, and mode, and properly employ their use as they observe and measure their bean plants growing in the outdoor biolabs and terrariums to determine which environments best support plant growth. Second grade students studying motion make animal movement and balance observations in the Life Sciences Lab. The students then expand thinking and broaden understanding through authentic writing while recording their investigations in science notebooks.

Students achieve while learning respect for the environment through inquiry integrated subject areas. For example, as students closely read and analyze a social studies text about Spanish explorers' introduction of non-native plants to the area's indigenous Chumash population, they consider the significance and analyze the impact of cultures working together. Written language and technological skills development overlap with service learning projects when, for example, students assemble around computers to create pamphlets that help National Park visitors identify native area plants and invasive species.

Through formative and summative assessments, teachers constantly evaluate students' learning and modify the integrated curriculum to accelerate achievement. Whether in the classroom, indoor and outdoor labs, or hiking and other fieldwork experiences, there is flexibility in the daily schedule to allow for extended inquiry experiences or to adjust the approach. This enables all students to progress at their own pace and develop interdisciplinary critical and analytical thinking skills. GATE students thrive in these learning environments while English language learners have opportunities to improve English language skills throughout the entire day. Utilizing a combination of English language development interwoven with increased comprehensible input and hands on academic language opportunities, students make connections and construct real meaning of the curriculum. Data strongly supports that EARTHS' inquiry oriented integrated curriculum is closing the achievement gap for ELL and low socioeconomic students, as well as enabling already high achieving students to soar to even greater heights.