

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 [X] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Matthew Marshall

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

Official School Name Santa Rosa Accelerated Charter School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4650 Badger Road

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

City Santa Rosa State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 95409-2633

County Sonoma County

Telephone (707) 528-5319 Fax (707) 528-5644

Web site/URL https://sracs-santarosa-ca.schoolloop.com/ E-mail mmarshall@sracs.k12.ca.us

Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/Santa-Rosa-Accelerated-Charter-School-

Twitter Handle 1502793760041006/ 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.

Date

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mrs. Diann Kitamura E-mail dkitamura@sracs.k12.ca.us

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

District Name Santa Rosa City Schools Tel. (707) 528-5617

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

Date

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Donna Jeye

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

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

Date

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. 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):
- 14 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 9 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 28 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	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	30	34	64
6	32	31	63
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	62	65	127

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 23 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75 % 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.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 0%

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	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	0
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.000
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	0

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
3 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Mandarin(Putonghua), and Arabic

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %
Total number students who qualify: 6

8. Students receiving special education services: 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 conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 0 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 2 Other Health Impaired
- 4 Specific Learning Disability
- 0 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: 10
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	4
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	0
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 32:1

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%	98%	98%	98%	98%
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

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 Santa Rosa Accelerated Charter School is formed to serve students grades 5 and 6 who show the interest, ability, and promise of succeeding in an academically challenging and specialized setting. Students will be provided high interest, standards-based, real world experiences for learning at the level in which growth proceeds most effectively. Integration of technology and making connections across the disciplines will be the key element of the educational experience. These experiences will provide students opportunities to become self-motivated, competent, and life-long learners.

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

The Element H Admission Requirements were finalized at the Santa Rosa City Schools Board of Education Meeting on January 28, 2015. In the event that the Charter School receives applications exceeding the maximum cap prior to the close of the admissions deadline, it shall determine which students shall enroll in the following manner:

Sibling Preference

All siblings of students enrolled at and attending the Charter School at the time of the lottery or who were enrolled at the school at any time during the seven (7) school years prior to the school year for which the lottery is being conducted, shall be admitted.

Lottery Procedure

In-District Applicants whose parents/guardians provide written verification that they are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch under that program guidelines shall be designated Free and Reduced Eligible. Applicants residing within the boundaries of the Santa Rosa City Schools Elementary or High School Districts shall be designated District Resident. Families residing within the Santa Rosa Elementary School District, Rincon Valley Union School District, Wright Elementary School District, Piner-Olivet Union School District, Mark West Union School District, Kenwood Elementary School District, Roseland School District, Bellevue Union School District, and Bennett Valley Union School District all fall within the enrollment boundaries of the Santa Rosa City Schools High School District. Applicants not meeting any of these criteria shall be designated as Other.

The Charter School shall employ the following lottery procedure to determine admission to the school in the event that the number of applicants exceeds the number of available slots:

Draw No. 1

1. Free and Reduced Eligible - In District: Draw 4 times
2. District Resident: Draw 1 time
3. Child of current Charter School employee: Draw 1 time

When all of the envelopes from categories 1 and 3 are drawn, then, if there are remaining envelopes, the lottery shall proceed to draw all of category 2. When all of categories 1, 2, and 3 are drawn, the lottery will proceed to category 4 listed below.

Draw No. 2

4. Other - Draw 1 time until no envelopes remain

Wait List

In the event that there are applicants remaining after the conduct of the lottery, those applicants not admitted to the school shall be placed on the waitlist in the order that their names were drawn. To the extent that openings occur at the Charter School during the school year for which the lottery is conducted, applicants shall be offered admission in the order in which they appear on the wait list.

PART III – SUMMARY

Santa Rosa Accelerated Charter School (SRACS) is located in Rincon Valley, an idyllic neighborhood where deer and hawks are often seen frolicking in the lush, green meadows. Rincon Valley is situated in the northeast quadrant of Santa Rosa, the county seat of Sonoma County, California, United States. Santa Rosa is located 55 miles north of San Francisco. Its estimated 2014 population was 174,170 with a total area of 41.50 square miles. Santa Rosa is the largest city in California's Northern San Francisco Bay Area and the 28th most populous city in California.

During the 2002-03 school year SRCS began brainstorming about the possibilities of having a school of the arts and humanities. Two teachers were selected to teach the core subjects, one for math and science, and one for language arts and history. So began the unfolding of this unique program. Its primary goal was to create a program modeled on the California State Standards for gifted and talented youth. This model program that serves children seeking an education that focuses on constructing deeper knowledge across the disciplines.

SRACS' fundamentally believes that all children can learn with depth and complexity, if provided meaningful learning experiences that tap into their passions, interests, or talents. A basic framework for a challenging standards-based core curriculum that infuses technology into its daily work is at the school's center. The core content areas of English-language arts, mathematics, science, and social science will be standards-based, thus students transitioning from the charter to the feeder middle school will receive similar content as their peers in traditional settings.

The uniqueness of the school is not only in its embedded use of technology in students' daily learning, but in the following ways:

The teaching and learning of the overarching core content standards focus on both breadth and depth. The standards-based instruction offered by the teachers does not consist of their briefly covering required material, rather by having students work together to apply their conceptual understanding of those standards in various and meaningful ways.

The lens through which students derive meaning from curriculum will be an area of focus determined by individualized student needs and interests. At SRACS, each child is provided a rigorous, challenging curriculum in a safe and affirming environment. This allows him/her to develop a complex understanding of each subject. This also helps them develop a system to understand new content through the four pillars of the instructional program: acceleration, depth, complexity and novelty.

The school is committed to the joys of exploration and discovery. Collaboration between and among the teachers enhances their intellectual inquiry, expands their understanding, and deepens their empathy. We feel that SRACS's four pillars, acceleration, depth, complexity and novelty, inspire active engagement in environmental stewardship, global citizenship, and service.

SRACS' aforementioned four foundational pillars inspire students' active engagement in environmental stewardship, global citizenship, and service as well.

Since 2003, SRACS has been the most effective charter school within Santa Rosa City Schools (SRCS). Since its founding, SRACS and has been serving fifth and sixth grade students with the potential and motivation to succeed through curriculum that is rigorous in an academically accelerated educational environment.

Family involvement is critical and one of the school's core values. Returning families carry an understanding and continuity of the school's culture and philosophy and often take leadership roles.

At SRACS, students are taught critical thinking and in-depth analysis in differentiated classrooms. The curriculum provides the academic rigor with which allows students to thrive; without this the school's high-level learners tend to disengage and stagnate. The school serves students from all over Santa Rosa. SRACS

students consist of every race, ethnic, and socio-economic group who seek the accelerated, differentiated curriculum provided. It is our job to serve these students at the level s/he needs and ensure that each student is challenged daily.

Since our inception, we have established a number of school traditions. For example, every Halloween, one of our science teachers gathers the students around a very large ladder on which he climbs and places a very large pumpkin at the top; then, through chemical reaction, and with goggles humorously placed over his eyes, causes the pumpkin to explode. It is a great show of science and the students look forward to it every year.

To complement the school's rich curriculum, students enjoy numerous field trips. Traditionally, the new 5th graders experience a team-building field trip and 6th graders annually travel to Nature Bridge, a student-centered science camp. One of the school's most cherished traditions is working with our local preschool where our 6th grade students become "buddies" with preschoolers.

By intentionally, being housed on the Rincon Valley Middle School campus, SRACS' students comfortably and slowly acculturate to the middle school so their eventual transition to 7th grade is seamless.

SRACS has attained so many milestones. The school opened with one portable classroom and then expanded to two and there now exists a total of four (two English/social science rooms and two math/science rooms.) We grew from serving 60 students to now serving over three times that number. Since the completion of our first year, the number of applications has exceeded available space and we have had to maintain a waiting list with sixty plus students on it.. This shows how much our community values our school. SRACS is highly sought out by parents and students from all over Santa Rosa. SRCS has been unable to commit more facilities to our program, limiting our ability to expand.

Our goal is to serve students who show the interest, ability, and promise of succeeding in an academically challenging and specialized setting. Through the integration of technology and making connections across disciplines as the key elements of their educational experience, students are engaged in high interest, standards-based real-world teaching and learning through individualization. Our program is not a panacea for all children. It is a place for students who thrive through challenge, can accept not always finding definite answers, have an intrinsic sense of motivation, and are stimulated by opportunities to explore.

In addition to a different curriculum model, we also run our school using a collaborative approach. The SRAC's Family Parent Organization (SFPO) provides opportunities for communication and support between and among teachers and parents. Unlike traditional schools, the teachers are in control of the design model of our curriculum, though we are mandated to follow the state standards of what we teach. We consider our parents, our administration, our students and our staff a team model. Each year we grow and develop in our ability to create an educational experience that is rigorous and thought-provoking.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The core academic program of SRACS is centered in self-contained classrooms. Students have a language arts/social studies teacher and a math/science teacher. At times, in science and math, 5th grade students are paired with 6th grade students. This allows the 6th grade student to mentor the 5th grade student on curriculum and school culture.

As stated previously, the fundamental belief of this charter is that all students can learn through awareness which offers acceleration, depth, complexity and novelty through meaningful learning experiences that tap into a student's significant interests, passions, or talents. Therefore, this charter provides a basic framework for a challenging standards-based core curriculum that infuses technology into daily work.

The core content areas of English-language arts, mathematics, science, and social science are standards-based, ensuring students transitioning from the charter to the Rincon Valley Middle School (RVMS), the feeder middle school, will have studied similar content as their peers.

The uniqueness of the charter is not only in the imbedded use of technology in students' daily learning, but in the following ways in which the charter believes learning best occurs:

1. The teaching and learning of core content standards will focus on a breadth and depth of understanding. Standards-based instruction will not simply be a "covering" of those standards on the part of the teacher, but through students working together to apply their conceptual understanding of those standards in varied and meaningful ways.
2. The lens through which students make meaning of such a curriculum is determined by student needs and interests. At SRACS each child is provided a rigorous challenging curriculum in a safe and affirming environment, allowing the formation of complex understandings of the subjects. These increased options provide students with enriched educational opportunities far beyond the traditional elementary school setting while simultaneously offering the unique prospect of becoming true stewards of their own learning.

3. We define these four criteria in the following way:

ACCELERATION

Acceleration encompasses more than simply moving gifted or high ability learners through the curriculum at a faster pace or providing a second grade student with fourth grade work. Acceleration focuses on how we can orient a student towards "accelerated levels of thinking and levels of knowing" (California Association for the Gifted, 1994, 2005).

Acceleration of thinking and knowing involves differentiating the core curriculum to provide challenge and opportunities above and beyond grade-level content. Instructional strategies to differentiate the core curriculum through acceleration include: (a) connections to Universal Concepts: POWER, CHANGE, SYSTEMS, STRUCTURE, RELATIONSHIPS, CONFLICT, ORDER vs. CHAOS, and (b) the teaching of the disciplines or "Thinking Like a Disciplinarian" -- viewing the same topic from different disciplinary perspectives: economy, geography, linguistics, sociology, psychology to see the interdisciplinary connections of a single topic, theme, or event.

DEPTH

Differentiation using "depth" refers to approaching something or studying something from the following patterns to pursue the topic in greater detail and to a greater understanding: (a) from the concrete to the abstract and from the abstract to the concrete, (b) from the familiar to the unfamiliar and from the unfamiliar to the familiar, and (c) from the known to the unknown and from the unknown to the known.

Delving deeper into content requires students to examine topics by determining the facts, concepts, generalizations, principles, and theories related to them. Key words such as: language of the discipline, patterns, details, trends, ethics, big ideas, unanswered questions, and rules represent the means by which students elaborate on their thinking and understanding of a topic. According to CAG (2005), depth is moving from patterns to trends; it proceeds from rules to structure to ethics, from simple “pragmatism to speculation.” As students move through the different patterns of thinking, they form large conceptual foundations of subject matter.

COMPLEXITY

Differentiation using “complexity” involves moving students beyond a surface level understanding, from an analysis of what is intended to what is inferential. Complex thinking requires students to view the implications of something now and something over time -- to see its connections and applications across the spectrum in a fluid rather than a static orientation.

Differentiating the complexity of the core curriculum can be accomplished by extending the content to the study of issues, problems, and themes. Complexity involves making relationships between and among ideas, connecting to other concepts, and bridges to other disciplines. Key words of complexity consist of: overtime, multiple perspectives, and interdisciplinary.

The teacher’s challenge in differentiating the complexity of a task or subject matter is to assist the student in seeing the myriad of facets that the topic consists of: to see associations among diverse subjects, to find multiple solutions to the problem, and to analyze or evaluate those solutions from multiple points of view (CAG, 2005).

NOVELTY

Providing advanced learning with differentiation through novelty depends upon the students’ perceptions and responses. Novelty means that teachers can stimulate students in the following ways: (a) the use of critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving skills, (b) encouraging students to seek original interpretations of existing information, and (c) encouraging the development of aptitude or interest-based learning experiences. Independent Study projects are another example of how novelty can be used.

According to CAG (California Association for Gifted- 2005) , novelty complements depth and complexity by providing inquiry and exploration into seemingly disparate and in-congruent topics that lead students to create new, original, and/or reorganized knowledge structures. Key words of novelty include: irony, paradox,

These increased options provide students with enriched educational opportunities far beyond the traditional elementary school setting while simultaneously providing the unique prospect of becoming true stewards of their own learning.

Furthermore, this charter believes that learning in isolation is not a reflection of the society in which our students are contributing members. Therefore, regardless of the focus developed at each location, program development will be based upon collaboration, meta cognition, and connectivity. Collaboration will occur between and among teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community stakeholders. Students will be provided myriad opportunities for self-reflection and assessment, through curriculum that values the learning process equally to that of finished products. As a result, students will develop the critical thinking and meta cognitive skills necessary to guide their own learning. Whenever feasible, curriculum will be interdisciplinary and provide students with real-world application of their learning.

In addition to the rich curriculum, real world application, community involvement, development of technological skills, meta cognitive learning, and greater choice in educational program, students will also benefit from the setting, which will be at or near one of five middle schools. As a result, students may:

A. Participate in greater course offerings, clubs, and activities during their elementary years.

B. Comfortably and slowly acculturate to the middle school throughout their tenure at the charter so that their eventual transition to 7th grade is seamless.

C. Choose to enter, and be prepared for, the accelerated core classes in 7th/8th grades.

Not all students learn in the same way, nor equally well from the same sources so there will be a use of differentiated curriculum in content, process and product.

The school educational program recognizes that children are variously gifted, and subscribes that there are many learning modalities, such as, linguistic, mathematical/ logical, intrapersonal (self), interpersonal (others), bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, and musical.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to the rich core curriculum, real world application, community involvement, development of technological skills, metacognitive learning, and greater choice in educational program, students will also benefit from the setting, which is Rincon Valley Middle School. As a result, students may have credentialed teachers in drama, choir, music, art, and P.E. to augment our daily program. Students have performed a musical rendition (e.g., Cinderella and Aladdin), learned folk dancing in P.E., put on a concert for our school community, and are in the process of designing an arts showcase. For students not wishing to participate in band we have Spanish instruction or a math study hall opportunity. We also have robotics, basketball, and chess lessons offered after school. In addition, in the past, we have had cross age tutors from Maria Carrillo High School students teaching Spanish and now we have added a credentialed Spanish teacher one day a week to introduce students to a new language. One way to describe how our other curriculum areas support student acquisition of essential skills and knowledge is to look at our school pedagogy as a whole. Basically we believe that students think, learn, and create in different ways. Therefore, we know that when our students are performing a John Sousa song in band, and learning about music theory and composition, that this knowledge will transfer to their understanding of the writing process and history. When our students are in their art class, they learn - among other things - about perspective. This in turn helps them to understand perspective in writing, in reading text, in understanding bias. When students become aware of symmetry in their art, they then understand how symmetry is in nature, in equations, in poetry. As teachers we use these conceptual lenses to make our subject areas have meaning. We explicitly teach the transference of big ideas in the disciplines to help foster a richer understanding of each.

Technology is infused across the disciplines and students are given the opportunity to develop their technology skills. For example, in the science and math class, students get opportunities to work with various simulation software to model real life situations. At other times they use Excel spreadsheets to help them graph and see trends in data. They also use science probes to collect data to analyze their own world using their own data.

Each year our electives change slightly. For example, this year we have started a class called "Cities"; this class allows students to research different forms of energy, economic systems, geography and social structure in order to create their own cities and create all the elements of civilization in a nutshell. Students use technology to design using architecture programs and to research information needed for the development of their city.

Another aspect of our program is our study hall time and our once a week after school homework help. The study hall is two days a week (and more if students demonstrate need). Students may choose to be in a study hall instead of choosing four or five days of elective. This gives them an opportunity to get more individual help, use peer collaboration and check in on any assignments that need revision or completion.

Lastly, our Physical Education (PE) program is taught by a credentialed PE teacher. We believe that physical education helps our students develop their full selves. All students receive the full amount of PE minutes mandated and follow a rotation of games and skills that are developmentally appropriate.

Our belief is that by making learning a real-life experience, students are becoming self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

SRACS was created to be the antithesis of The Standardized Testing Model. Developing habits of mind and character, connecting standards based learning to big themes, anchor standards, the CAG standards etc.... is the focus of the school. We are however cognizant of the responsibility to give and support our students as they take standardized tests. As can be seen in our scores, over the last eight years SRACS students have scored over 900 in each year. Last year, was the first year of the SBAC and we performed very well on that standardized assessment too. We have no significant subgroups and so our AYP is also exemplary. As SRACS moves to a more inclusive enrollment process, we anticipate a more diverse student population. When this happens, we will revisit these student outcomes each year via our accountability report to the SRCS to make the outcomes more specific to any significant subgroups.

Our vision is that each child will take the first of many steps in the journey of becoming a competent self-motivated, lifelong learner, which he will become a knowledgeable, well rounded leader who assists in creating positive change for the world of tomorrow. These means are accomplished are not new to teaching. The ideas of Socratic dialogue, experimentation, acceleration and critical thinking are ideas core to knowledge acquisition. What makes this school so crucial however, the child who was ready to go has been left alone. He or she may be intellectually advanced in one area and woefully clumsy in another. She may have been overlooked in a system that focuses on test scores and a curriculum that uses test preparedness as its sole measure for success. That is why we think our school is offering something unique to students in Santa Rosa, and we think this model can be replicated throughout our county and beyond.

From the beginning, we looked for curriculum and teaching that was novel, based on the unique learning preferences and style of students, and a program that offered depth and complexity to the students across all subject areas. We carefully selected materials that correlated with the standards and also incorporated higher level thinking processes such as synthesis and application of knowledge versus knowing just the basics. We developed ideas and lessons by using Wiggins and McTighe's backward design (Understanding by Design, ASCD 2000): we identified the "big idea" of the standards, and then looked at what students needed to do and know in order to bring understanding to the material we were presenting. As a result we have a rich program that offers a multitude of experiences.

What might that look like? For example, we follow the state content and performance standards but go more deeply in to the subjects. Students built individual aquariums with fish and plants so they can learn about the aspects of systems related to physics, chemistry, biology, and ecology. Then students used this project to learn about other systems, such as government systems to discover the correlation between the two. Students then understood that the balance of power in an aquatic system has direct parallels with the social structures inherent in our political system; students make the correlation between the "big fish and the little fish" with the corporate elite and the working class in society. The knowledge gained from science and biology then transfers to a more complete understanding of political systems. In the English Language arts class students then have a deep understanding of systems and structure, which allows them to develop meaningful claims about how cultures developed and how various forces impacted those cultures. For example, when students are asked to explain how the geographic features of a place affect the development of the culture, they can readily articulate the different elements of the system and how they interact.

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

While we are a school that uses summative assessments such as the state standardized tests, we find more value in the data that comes from formative assessment. That being said, the summative assessments used are required state assessments (e.g., STAR or SBAC), end-of-unit and chapter tests, and student report card grades. The data from SBAC helps us see where we are doing well, and focus on our areas of weakness. We use this information to see what we might change and adapt in our practice. For example, our student's scores in writing conventions from the STAR test were an area we wanted to improve, so we spent summer

professional time creating an articulated program between our two grade levels. The next year our students were more engaged in the curriculum and their scores reflected their learning.

Another example is the partnered work time in the math science classrooms. The two math science teachers choose areas to work on based on student work and cognitive understanding of the material. Then students are paired - one sixth grader with one fifth grader - to work to demonstrate understanding. During this partnered work time the teachers are able to move from group to group checking for understanding and probing to see the depth of knowledge.

Our trimester report cards give us yet another opportunity to look at the whole child, as both the math/science and history/language arts teachers fill out the collective report card. When we meet to discuss our students' academic performance, we are able to see how a student might perform very differently in one of the other core curriculum classes in comparison with our own, and share our observations about their individual strengths and weaknesses as learners.

Formative assessments greatly influence our instructional practices. We gather information on student learning by showcasing exemplary student work to illustrate that to which students should aspire on a given assignment or project. In addition, students are provided a rubric in order to self-assess their finished project. Another type of formative assessment employed is peer assessment. This gives students a chance to evaluate and revise their own work after feedback from peers. In addition to these strategies, we use exit slips to give us quick feedback in checking understanding. The data from the formative assessment is used to help us refine our rubrics, choose which instructional practices we will use, and whether to compact a student out of a lesson and accelerate him, or to re-teach a concept.

Parents and students are informed of student achievement in a multitude of ways. Each Monday we have corrected work from the week previous sent home with students. This gives students and parents a snapshot of how regular assignments are being graded and scored. In addition to that, besides our Back-to-School Night where we go over our grading systems, parents also have a fall conference to formally discuss progress. We make ourselves very available to parents through email and informal progress reports upon request. Students can check in with teachers during our elective time in order to monitor their progress. We have our homework posted on our website each day to assist students and parents in being connected with assignments. Our report card is standards-based to show specifically how students are doing in meeting the standards.

Students will be critical, creative, and complex thinkers as demonstrated by the following:

- Showcase knowledge through presentations, exhibitions, gallery walks, student displays of work, Power Points, dramatizations, exhibitions, all of which, connect directly to State and CAG Standards.
- Utilize primary source information to produce a finished project, defend an opinion, develop an original idea, etc ...
- Reason quantitatively, evaluate, solve a problem, synthesize information and ideas, apply knowledge, and make logical deductions and predictions
- Make personal judgments about validity, usefulness, and the ethical nature of information.
- Produce a project that demonstrates analysis and synthesis
- Develop the ability to both of self-assess and peer-assess
- Develop metacognitive skills and the ability of self-reflection

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At SRACS, our goal is to provide each child with a rigorous challenging intellectual curriculum in an environment that is safe and affirming. Students are asked to extend themselves as learners, to take intellectual risks, to struggle sometimes as beginners as they enter an environment of abstract ideas and a system of learning that goes beyond the facts and the basics. Students will use "Universal Themes" or overarching ideas that connect across the disciplines such as Power, Relationships, Change, and Systems.

Understanding and applying these concepts to the study of history, literature, math and science is the cornerstone of our curriculum. This framework allows children to form complex understandings of the subjects and gives a system to understand new content with depth and complexity.

At SRACS we have focused on looking at the core curriculum through universal themes. Our emphasis on music, technology, art, real-life problem solving and community involvement has created a unique educational environment. Each group of students work with the themes provided to create generalizations. These in turn help to determine the direction of our curriculum.

In addition to a different curriculum model, we also run our school with a collaborative approach. We have our parent club, the SRAC's Family Parent Organization (SFPO) that provides opportunity for communication and support between teachers and parents. Unlike traditional schools we, the teachers are in charge of the design model of our curriculum, though we are mandated to follow the state standards of what we teach. We consider our parents, our students and staff a team model where each year we grow and develop in our ability to create an educational experience that is rigorous and thought provoking.

To provide social emotional support, SRACS has recently been authorized two days per week of counseling support for students. The Social Advocates for Youth Counselor works with students one-on-one and in small groups.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

As a two-year school, family involvement is critical. Returning families carry an understanding and continuity of the school's culture and philosophy and typically these parents take leadership roles. Parent involvement is one of SRACS' core values.

In the spirit of supporting student learning, SRACS has a long and successful history of engaging its families and the community through the SRACS Family Parent Organization (SFPO), teacher volunteering, and a structured parent volunteer program. SRACS has an active non-profit SFPO, which raises money to support co-curricular offering such as daily art, music, drama, Spanish, and physical education instruction. Students and families love these classes because of the extensive student collaboration and exposure to meaningful intellectual learning in subjects outside the core curriculum. The SFPO also raises funds to support technology in the classroom, thereby enabling students to research, write, and prepare projects. Families and community are also engaged through extensive teacher volunteer time. Teachers volunteer for afternoon homework help, available to all students. This academic help enables kids to experience and benefit from an "office hour" question and answer format where everyone has the opportunity to learn by asking questions and cement students understanding by explaining new concepts to fellow students. The teachers also volunteer weeks of their time every year to attend professional development during weekends and summer vacation. Because of this volunteer effort, SRACS teachers are renowned in the Santa Rosa parent community for their understanding of how kids learn, for their ability to develop the intellects of their students, and for their ability to make the classroom experience worthwhile and meaningful. Teachers also volunteer their time for an extensive Lego Robotics program, which has won two county championships as well as numerous individual and team awards. Finally, families and community are engaged through an extensive and structured parent volunteer program. Parents are encouraged to volunteer in four different areas: classroom help, fundraising opportunities, school-wide volunteering, and

leadership roles. In the classroom parents help grade papers, set up equipment for projects, and get homework distributed back to students. Fundraising is accomplished through parent volunteers who set up an annual community building family event with kid activities such as live and silent auction. Parents can also volunteer for school wide activities such as new student orientation; marquis sign updates, basketball team coaching, field day, the talent show, and coordination of the yearbook. Parents also serve in leadership positions on the school's Advisory Council where teachers, administrators, and parents work to advise how to best support student learning.

SRACS works collaboratively with SRCS, partner school districts, the district and local SELPA, and other agencies to meet the needs of all the enrolled students and support them in their academic endeavors.

The desire is to have a student population whose demographics mirror those of the student population in the greater Santa Rosa geographical area. SRACS staff feels that the pedagogy and methodology of SRACS should be offered to other elementary and charter schools within SRCS. To that end charter school staff will work proactively to develop outreach programs to ensure all members of the Santa Rosa community have knowledge of the pedagogy and methodology of the SRACS.

This charter recognizes that students and schools are more successful when parents, staff, students, and the community work together to support and foster learning for students.

Therefore, at SRACS, the education of each child is a joint venture among all members of the school community. To support this goal:

1. Parents/guardians, staff, and community partners are elected to serve on the school's Advisory Committee.
2. Parents/guardians who enroll their children in the school accept responsibility for their child's education. Therefore they agree to:
 - Regularly discuss with their child the importance of education and school.
 - Keep in regular contact with their child's teacher(s) regarding student progress.
 - Attend school sponsored parent meetings regarding the school's programs.
 - Consistently support their child in completion of school work and preparation for assessments.
3. Parents/guardians agree to participate in the life of the school. These service opportunities and hours are determined by the school's Advisory Committee. Such service hours are flexible and varied so as not to create barriers for a diverse student population. In addition, for parents who work several jobs to support their family, options of mentoring or community support are available. Varied service opportunities are advertised such as classroom assistance, field trip transportation, fundraising support, and advisory committee work, tutoring, and reading with students.
4. Staff provides outreach to students and their parents to create two way communication and participation. These include the following:
 - Parent Education Nights
 - Family-School Nights
 - Regular phone calls home to share student performance
 - Explaining rubrics and other feedback tools and then sending written feedback home regarding various forms of assessments
 - Holding parent-teacher conferences
5. Parents and guardians agree to participate in the life of the school by regularly attending SFPO meetings and fundraising activities. Parents commit to volunteer a minimum of ten hours per year. Parents are also encouraged to volunteer their expertise in after school activities (coaching, basketball, art, Lego Robotics). Such service hours are flexible and varied so as not to create barriers for a diverse student population. In addition, for parents who work several jobs to support their family, options of mentoring or community support are available.

Varied service opportunities could include such things as classroom assistance, field trip transportation, fund raising support, and advisory committee work, tutoring, and reading with students.

3. Professional Development:

Instruction is provided by highly qualified staff that employs a wide range of instructional strategies that support attainment of high academic standards, and who embrace collaboration and ongoing professional development.

Santa Rosa Accelerated Charter School places a high value on professional development and are supported by their family and parent organization and Santa Rosa City Schools District. It is one of our highest priorities. As research supports, the skill and knowledge of the classroom teacher is the number one indicator of positive student outcomes. Our focus is always on improving student learning and achievement.

Over the years, our teachers and administrators have benefitted from receiving a wide-variety of professional development. Some of our teachers have even been presenters of professional development at the state and national level. Both science teachers have presented at National Science Teachers Association and the California Science Teachers Association. One of our two founding teachers is a past president for California Association for the Gifted and has presented for them. One of our teachers recently participated in International Baccalaureate Program training in Canada and has attended a research study on science education on climate change at Stanford University.

Teachers have received professional development in Common Core State Standards, and Next Generation Science Standards. They have attended conferences at California Association for the Gifted, National Association for the Gifted, and California Science Teachers Association, as well as Association for Supervision and Curriculum, pre-advanced placement, and Springboard.

We feel professional development is one of the keys to the success of our students. All four of our teachers at SRACS are trained in G.A.T.E. standards, curriculum development, pedagogy, and methodology and commit yearly to intensive and ongoing staff development and self-reflection.

We see our school as a place where teachers have been allowed to use their knowledge of best practices. This is the result of professional development.

Our focus is on improving student learning and achievement. The entire faculty meets monthly, and we meet in smaller groups on a weekly basis to work collaboratively. We meet across grade levels to insure that gaps are filled, so our students are able to move from one grade level to the next.

4. School Leadership:

The extensive collaboration, experience, credential and expertise of our teaching staff present at our school plays a critical role in the operation of a highly successful charter school. Our principal is a supportive leader, who gives each teacher the freedom and flexibility to make decisions about teaching and learning in his/her own classrooms. He encourages them to work together collaboratively to plan, problem solve, and positively impact student learning. Our assistant principal provides support to our principal and all members of our staff. Our school counselor is a compassionate man, who meets with students and families to develop IEP's and 504's using the Student Study Team (SST) process. SRACS benefits from having a Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) two days per week to work with students individually and with small groups to assist students who are facing adversity. We have an active Family Parent Organization (SFPO), which provides assistance through fundraising and volunteering. Our SFPO provides scholarship money to students, funds the purchase of technology, playground equipment and teacher professional development.

Staffs at the school work collaboratively with SRCS Board of Education, local SELPA, and other agencies to meet the needs of all the enrolled students and support them in their academic endeavors.

Governance of SRACS remains with the SRCS Board of Education responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institution and for ensuring the institution's mission is carried out. Site-based decisions are determined by the school's Advisory Committee, consisting of elected parents, community members, and school staff.

SRACS meets all State and District policies with regard to staff working calendars and instructional minutes for students.

While the initial SRACS program has operated at Rincon Valley Middle School, the re-authorization of the Charter holds open the possibility of one or more additional sites being brought to the Board of Education for consideration.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In the development of lifelong learners, the charter values the learning process equally to content and product. Therefore, the assessment system at SRACS is a combination of formative and summative assessments to provide regular feedback to staff students, and parents regarding student progress. This varied feedback will include the following formative assessments: daily work, homework, comprehensive classroom assessments, portfolios, presentations, district benchmark assessments, and state assessments.

In addition to informal and regular feedback, parents and students receive standards-based report cards three times each year that provide insight into the academic performance level of the student. SRACS utilizes the standards based report card used by SRCS, and continues to seek out a summative feedback tool that better aligns with our curriculum and philosophy.

The 2011-2012 California Standards Test data indicate the students at SRACS are making above average student achievement. The Academic Performance Index (API) for SRACS is 969 which is well over the state-wide goal of 800. SRACS also met all English-Language Arts and Mathematics Annual Yearly Progress goals as outlined in No Child Left Behind. SRACS is accelerating the learning of their students.

Annual summary analysis of student academic performance will continue to be measured through state assessments and the district benchmark tests. The state required annual assessments include STAR (standards-based exams, norm-referenced tests, SABE) and CELDT. STAR, CELDT, and benchmark assessment results will be mailed home to parents/students annually.

SRACS was created to be the antithesis of the Standardized Testing Model. Developing habits of mind and character, connecting standards based learning to big themes, anchor standards, the CAG standards etc.... is the focus of the school. We are however cognizant of the responsibility to give and support our students as they take standardized tests. As seen in our scores below, over the last 8 years SRACS students have scored over 900 in each year. We have no significant subgroups and so our AYP is also exemplary.

2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013
925 949 952 946 961 952 945 969 Testing transition year

2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012
100% 100% 100% 100% 100% 100% 100% 100%

CAASPP

2015 ELA Math
5th Grade 90% 83%
6th Grade 92% 84%

Percent of students who exceeded standard or met standard. Does not include those who nearly met standard.