

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 [] Magnet [X] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Valerie Hatcher

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

Official School Name University Preparatory School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 13853 Seneca Road

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

City Victorville State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 92392-9339

County San Bernardino

Telephone (760) 243-5940 Fax (760) 261-7023

Web site/URL http://up.vvuhd.org/ E-mail vhatcher@vvuhd.org

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Ron Williams E-mail Rwilliams@vvuhd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Victor Valley Union High School District Tel. (760) 955-3201

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. Penny Edmininton
(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):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 6 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	91	113	204
8	82	118	200
9	81	107	188
10	88	106	194
11	62	109	171
12 or higher	71	96	167
Total Students	475	649	1124

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 8 % Asian
 - 7 % Black or African American
 - 66 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 16 % White
 - 1 % 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: 7%

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	13
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	66
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	79
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	1111
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.071
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 66%
Total number students who qualify: 730

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.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> 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	2
Classroom teachers	38
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	0
Paraprofessionals	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 30:1

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	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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	165
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	68%
Enrolled in a community college	18%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	2%
Joined the military or other public service	4%
Other	6%

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. 2010

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

University Preparatory provides high expectations, academic supports, and fosters student aspirations to further his or her education beyond the baccalaureate level.

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

University Preparatory is a choice school. Students must submit an application to enroll; application requirements consist of students having a minimum 2.5 GPA, no major discipline on his/her cumulative record, and positive attendance of 95% or higher. Upon meeting these requirements, students are placed into an applicant pool and students are randomly drawn via lottery to fill available spots. Students who have siblings currently attending UP are automatically admitted upon meeting the initial requirements and are not part of the lottery pool. Beginning in the 2016-17 academic school year, all incoming 7th through 9th grade applicants will need to additionally submit their California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) results indicating a minimum of Standard Nearly Met in both math and English to be eligible for UP admission.

PART III – SUMMARY

University Preparatory is a comprehensive middle/high school, established in 2005 in response to parental demands for a specifically rigorous secondary learning environment. Our vision is to have students graduate from our school with a level of academic readiness, and emotional maturity that will well position them for post-secondary and career success.

The majority of our students live in the city of Victorville, California, a city with a population approaching 153,000. One-third of the residents are under the age of 18. The Hispanic community represents 46% of the population, African-American 11%, Caucasian 38%, Asian 5% and all other ethnic groups 2%. Our school demographics are similarly proportioned: 60% Hispanic, 10% African-American, 10% Caucasian and 20% other ethnicities. The city of Victorville has a median family income of \$50,034.00, compared to the state median income of \$61,094.00. University Preparatory (UP) accommodates 1,083 students, 70% participate in our Free and Reduced Meal Program, an indicator of poverty. A high percentage of English Language Learners (ELLs) have been re-designated as English Proficient while at University Preparatory.

Although our demographics present challenges, they do not serve as justifications for mediocrity, but rather serve as inspirations to work collaboratively, to challenge socially constructed assumptions and to recalibrate expectations and teaching approaches in order to make our mission, our reality. UP serves as a state model for high minority, high poverty, high performing schools and has been visited by state officials to study some of its success strategies. We hold our teaching and administrative staff to the same rigorous standards to which we hold our students. We practice inquiry driven methodologies and alter our teaching strategies, as needed so that they are responsive to student needs. We conduct regular and routine articulation within and between grades, systems and disciplines, and offer after school tutoring for struggling students. Through these connections with students, and through the inclusion of a myriad of clubs, sports, and events such as the multi-cultural assembly and the Taste of UP, we assist students to grow to their intellectual best and develop as global citizens.

Our academic accomplishments distinguish us as a notable institution with a proven course of success. We are the highest ranked high school in San Bernardino County, and placed in the top 2% within the state of California. Our recognitions and awards include: the US News & World Report 2014 Gold Medal School and 2013 Silver Medal School, a six year WASC accreditation lasting from 2012 to 2018, Title 1 Academic Achievement Awards for the 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2015 school years, 2009 California Distinguished School Award, 2010 National Blue Ribbon School, 2010 San Francisco Heritage Silver Award for Orchestra, 2011 San Francisco Heritage Gold Award for Orchestra, 2012 San Diego Heritage Silver Award for both Orchestra and Wind Ensemble, 2013 San Francisco Heritage Gold Award for Wind Ensemble and the Bronze Award for Madrigals, 2014 Fullerton Forum Festival Gold Award for Orchestra, and the Silver Award for both Wind Ensemble and Madrigals, 2015 Newhall Forum Festival Silver Award for both Orchestra and Wind Ensemble, 2015 Honor Performance Series Choir chose one of our Madrigals to sing at Carnegie Hall, 2012 CIF Southern Section Runner-Up Boys' Soccer, 2013 San Francisco Gold Award for Orchestra, 2014 CIF Southern Section Runner UP Girls' Softball, and The Prowler Yearbook has been featured in the 2015 and 2016 editions of Jostens' national publication, the Look Book.

We are lauded for our academic achievement and many awards, and we are equally valued for the caring culture of tight knit student-teacher-community relationships that cheer and coach our students under the banner of no excuses for neglecting to live up to one's personal best.

After receiving the National Blue Ribbon in 2010, we altered our bell schedule to ensure that all students are encouraged and challenged to develop to their full potential. We have established a 7 period rotating schedule in which 5 period rotate, with the last two period locked out of the rotation. This allows for remediation, Study Skills, Senior Transition courses and for students to garner more than a typical number of credits required for graduation. In this way, students more quickly obtain their required high school credits and move on to Regional Occupational Program (ROP) opportunities, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, or concurrent enrollment in college courses. Most of the courses offered at UP are either Honors

Program (HP) or AP and over 90% of all high school courses offered meet A-G requirements, thereby preventing students from taking ‘the easy way out’.

To aid in the transition to college, we have also instituted a Senior Transitions course which served as the model upon which our Golden Ribbon Award was attained. We have also since partnered with UC Berkeley as part of their Destination College Outreach program.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Our rigorous and comprehensive curriculum prepares our students for entrance into the nation's finest colleges and universities, and solidly prepares them to enter the workforce if they so choose. All of our students are enrolled in honors and, Advanced Placement level courses, foreign language, music, and fine arts. University Prep middle school students take honors level core courses, P.E., and high school level Spanish, and music courses; UP high school students are offered thirteen AP level courses and nine Honors courses from which to choose.

The curriculum is designed to prepare students to develop and maximize critical thinking; analytical and research skills are infused in all coursework across all disciplines. Curriculum pacing plans are designed to ensure that instructional objectives are aligned with and exceed state standards.

Teachers monitor student progress and provide learning strategies necessary to access rigorous instruction. Strategies include: Cornell note-taking, organizational skills, Socratic Seminar, research and expository writing. Underperforming students are advised and encouraged to work with peer tutors and teachers either at lunch or after school.

1. Reading/English Language Arts:

The English Department offers: Honors Prep English 7 and 8, HP English I and II, College Prep (CP) English III, Advanced Placement (AP) English Language and Composition, Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC), AP English Literature and Composition, Shakespeare Tragedy, Journalism, Drama I, and II, Drama III-Stage Craft, and Yearbook. Each course has the focused purpose of preparing students for university and career success. All but middle school level English, Journalism, and Yearbook are University of California A-G approved.

Through these courses, indispensable skills are established and maintained in the areas of critical reading, writing, and grammar and mechanics. Students receive explicit direct instruction and daily skills practice at the 7th and 8th grade levels. Teachers collaborate through monthly vertical articulation meetings to ensure that each grade level builds upon the skills mastered at the previous stage, with frequent, on-going assessments to check for student comprehension. As students progress through the grade levels, subject rigor gradually increases, and students are challenged and prepared academically, emotionally, and socially, to take and pass AP classes in their Junior and Senior years.

2. Mathematics:

The Math Department utilizes an integrated approach at the high school level, while still offering stand-alone studies in Statistics, AP Statistics, and AP Calculus AB and BC. Our transition to an integrated model comes from the incorporation of CCSS guidelines. Teachers balance project based assessments with traditional assessments to gain greater in-depth understanding of student academic achievement. Additionally, students are required to take a full 6 years of math over their tenure at University Prep to meet UC recommendations.

3. Science:

To meet Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) goals and to accommodate rising student interests in the sciences, several diverse UP science courses are offered: middle school students are afforded foundational physical and life sciences and introductory lab experiences. In the 9th and 10th grade more challenging biology and chemistry courses are offered. Thereafter, students are given a surfeit of possible science courses such as: Forensics, Anatomy/Physiology, Microbiology HP, Medical Pathology, AP Biology II, Physics, AP Physics, and Principles of Engineering.

Teachers use interactives such as websites, software, equipment and 3D printers, to provide a more tangible, tactile approach to understanding scientific principles. To provide additional support for struggling students,

accommodations such as extended time, retaking of exams, group projects and differentiated assignments promote mastery and higher levels of student success.

4. Social Science/History:

With the transition to CCSS, social science courses focus more intently on helping students acquire and solidify literacy skills necessary to make meaning of complex texts and historical documents. This effort includes the introduction of Document Based Questions (DBQs) at the middle school level to establish a firm basis upon which research, analytical, and synthesizing skills are balanced. Teachers utilize Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies, peer tutors, and one-on-one conferences to assist and scaffold instruction in order to facilitate English Learners in accessing more complex texts. Middle school students are thereby able to challenge themselves by having immediate access to advanced classes in their high school freshman year. Students continue a course of study that includes: U.S. History CP, AP U.S. History, Government/Economics CP, or AP Government and Macroeconomics.

a. For secondary schools:

CCSS mandates require a tightening of curricular rigor to the results of college admission without the need for remediation. UP cross-curricular writing expectations and use of challenging and complex texts meet students' needs in acquiring essential skills necessary for college and career success. Thirteen Advanced Placement courses are offered as well as courses like the California State University sponsored Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) and Senior Transition to provide students both academic rigor and real world relevance of taxes, insurance, budgeting, and investing in an effort to promote post-secondary school and career success.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

1. Performing Arts: Music and Drama:

Research indicates strong correlations between students learning to read music and higher ordered thinking, and music is treated as a core class at UP. The music program focuses on preparing students to enter music careers and college studies via its offering of: Band I, II, III; Wind Ensemble; Choir I, II, III; Guitar; Beginning, and Intermediate Strings; Advanced Orchestra, and Orchestra. Our music program enriches the learning environment for our students and the community at large. Through music, students discover their talents, build self-confidence and learn invaluable lessons regarding perseverance, accountability, responsibility, and teamwork --all transferable to other pursuits of study. The Music Department presents several major concerts, parades and performances throughout the year.

Drama I, II, and III are available to the high school students. In Drama I, students are taught the basics of staging, improvisation, projection and voice inflection. As students move up to Drama II, more complex acting methods are discussed and developed, and students begin learning choreography. Greater emphasis is placed on student writing in an effort to develop creativity, inner voice, and literary analysis skills necessary to understanding the mood and tone of a play. At the highest level, drama students have the opportunity to acquire stagecraft skills in addition to honing performance skills. The Drama Department presents 2-3 major productions a year and works collaboratively with the Music Department for performances.

2. Physical Education:

Physical education standards are based on the CA State Physical Education Framework and model content standards. All UP students are enrolled in a daily PE class for acquisition of essential norm referenced fitness skills. Student skill levels are assessed at the start of each activity and unit, allowing for students' varying fitness levels and abilities to set personal goals in order to achieve improvement for their own health. This differentiated instruction accommodates those students with physical limitations, or poor balance/coordination to participate equally with others. Student self-assessment videos and formal and informal written assessments also help to support other content areas and increase academic rigor while simultaneously supporting students' physical needs.

3. Foreign Language:

In recognition of our contiguous community and state demographics, UP offers Spanish as a most viable choice for language studies. Following incoming placement tests, appropriate assignments are made for

native and non-native Spanish speakers including at AP levels. Spanish classes offered at University Prep enable our students to communicate effectively with a vast majority of our Spanish speaking population. Students who entered UP not knowing Spanish leave acutely cognizant of the value of bilingualism in a pluralistic society. Fluency enhances their employability where Spanish is needed. It has also enabled students to take and pass AP Spanish exams successfully, last year boasting a 93% and 92% pass rate for AP Spanish IV and AP Spanish V, respectively. This success and expertise has allowed students to serve in the community as translators, volunteers, and liaisons for our Spanish-speaking community members.

4. Technology:

No courses specific to technology are currently offered. However, technology is used to support learning across the curriculum. Teachers integrate technology into their daily instruction through the use of software, multimedia presentations, document cameras, tablets, and online apps. Instruction is provided to students on how to use technology to create their own projects to demonstrate their learning. Additionally, all core departments have two Google Chromebook carts to provide student access to the internet and the district is moving towards 1:1 with every student having his/her own Chromebook in the near future, with our site being used as a pilot.

5. Senior Transition:

Senior Transition is a required course for all 12th grade students. This specially designed course assists students in the college application process, FAFSA application completion, professional resume writing, and provides a basis for financial literacy using the Financial Peace University Curriculum for Students developed by Dave Ramsey. This is a course especially essential for students who will be first time family college goers, who may not have familial experiences upon which to glean how to navigate the logistics of college application, financial, socio-emotional and study habits to support college graduation and inhibit early withdrawal. Here, students receive real world information about transitioning to post-secondary school life, irrespective of whether the transition is to a four-year academic institution or career path development.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

While explicit direct instruction still plays a vital role in our core class instruction, recent changes in state standards, and increasing consciousness of diverse learning styles necessitated a refinement of teaching practices. Teachers in the Math, Science, and English Departments combine their instructional methods to incorporate the flipped classroom model to allow for both an amalgamation of teaching approaches and increased classroom time to accommodate discussion and project based learning. Additional strategies utilized by all teachers include cooperative learning approaches (Kagan strategies), tiered and differentiated instruction, and teacher modeling. Teachers are committed to finding widely diverse approaches to accommodate distinct learning proclivities and to facilitate excitement for learning translatable towards high degrees of academic achievement.

Teachers implement daily warm up/cool down activities, collaborative/interactive structures, daily student writes, content-aligned video clips, Cornell Notes, and the posing of discernment-producing questions. Such methodologies promote consistent student engagement, critical thinking, and content literacy across all disciplines to help make pedagogical approaches habitually effective for students and teachers such alike. These strategies are the foundation upon which students begin to be able to make meaning from complex topics and texts, and from where independent and collaborative achievements are launched.

Teachers differentiate instruction and assessments to meet the needs of struggling and advanced students. In English and social science courses, students receive focused writing instruction through the employment of teacher-student writing conferences. This process enables teachers to individually assist students with varying abilities and thereby improves overall writing proficiencies. The result has been increased performance on AP and SAT exams in those sections. Specific remedial interventions include utilizing peer tutors, group projects, think alouds, and technology tools, such as Turn It In, Learnerator, GoMath, and Khan Academy. These tools provide enrichment for both remedial and advanced students. Teachers also provide one-on-one after school tutoring with students where they are better able to pinpoint specific learning needs.

Counselors provide social, emotional, academic and career guidance utilizing an open door policy. Identified students receive individualized interventions to support success and academic growth. The counselors in conjunction with teachers also provide lunchtime interventions, and they assist students to retake a course where they are not currently meeting a minimum standard. This way, students do not move to more advanced coursework until they have sufficient, supportive knowledge to do so successfully.

Beyond supporting the student via academic interventions, the school has developed relational support systems that mentor and attend to social and emotional factors that might possibly interfere with students learning processes.

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

Assessment data drives instruction to provide quality instruction for all students irrespective of their skill levels. Frequent, multi-leveled data analysis determines instructional needs. University Preparatory utilizes SBAC and other current assessments to identify gaps and gauge appropriate courses of actions toward continuous improvement.

Staff works collaboratively to design lesson plans, and share assessment tools. Students early release time allows for weekly department and grade level meetings where GPA data, class and common assessments, district interims and CAASPP results are disaggregated to identify instruction and learning gaps and design remedying actions.

Data evaluation steered our determination to increase math proficiency within our subgroups. To transition to Integrated Math we acquired professional development, thus affording continuing evaluation of changes to curriculum design and teaching styles. It also assisted the implementation of challenging and relevant material for all students.

Data indicates that we must create rigorous culturally responsive instruction for our English Language Learner population. Our most recent CAASPP indicates a significant achievement gap between our English Language Learner population and our school-wide performance. In ELA 77% of our school-wide population scored At or Above Proficient while only 45.6% of our EL population did so. We strive to close this gap; hence, we have identified under-performing students in the EL subgroup and forwarded data to our site EL coordinator, and students' teachers. The EL coordinator works with students, their families and community resources to sharpen skills in literacy and English fluency, while our English teachers focus efforts on honing writing abilities through one-on-one writing conferencing. UP also employs an expert consultant who meets with identified students twice weekly to provide additional writing instruction. With this multi-faceted intervention, we are confident that we will begin to see early and long lasting achievement equity between subgroups and school-wide results.

Even greater disparity exists between ELs and school-wide performance in math. While 55.3% of students scored At or Above Proficient in Math on the CAASPP, only 26.3% of EL students scored as high. Data indicates our EL students lack the requisite literacy skills to transition to an integrated math curriculum. Recognizing that limited English language comprehension impedes understanding complex subject requirements, we have modified teaching efforts to include in-class and after school peer tutoring. We employ adult mentoring and family involvement through our ELAC and EL coordinator, and have created a specialized intervention program, called Junior Seminar. Identified students with scores below proficiency in math spend an entire semester receiving additional instruction and intensive tutoring via Khan Academy. We continue to monitor student progress and ensure that all subgroups are provided the necessary resources and support to increase academic success.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

As indicated by our name, we are primarily about preparing students for university studies. Over the years we have been able to establish a college-going culture by making whole-student achievement a part of our everyday vernacular and praxis. From the onset, teachers reference tasks and learning objectives towards how to prepare students for university scholarship and workplace careers. College tours are arranged beginning in middle school for early exposure to possibilities and promises. Senior acceptances to colleges are announced and celebrated, and visual tallies of acceptances are publicly displayed. We do this to both applaud our students and to illumine and amplify a climate and culture for all to see the breadth of possibilities that follow hard work. We also celebrate their achievement by throwing a May Day, Decision Day Party every year for the senior class to congratulate all students on choosing the college or career into which they will advance.

While celebrations are the final chapter in our students' tenure at UP, they could not get there without routine school norms that shaped, upheld and bolstered their formation. Students are taught the importance of integrity, interpersonal decency, decorum and appropriate presentation. Our students wear carefully delineated school uniforms. This solidifies school identity and blurs socio-economic lines associated with dress.

UP norms help reinforce a culture and climate of high performance and characterological expectations, school identity and unity. We recognize and applaud the strength garnered through living in a culturally pluralistic society and want students to have both sensitivity to and solidarity with diverse voices within our school, community and society. The school celebrates cultural diversity through assemblies, discussions and presentations. This facilitates a climate of inclusivity and intercommunity understanding.

The school staff furthers unity development through monthly collaboration potluck lunches. These social interactions develop rapport among peers and trust between administration and staff. Our principal has an open-door policy that encourages dialogue regarding concerns and ideas. The principal also meets with new teachers weekly to encourage them in their practice, garner pedagogical feedback, engage conversations about student achievement and seek continuous improvement ideas. All of these practices promote an environment where the learning community is valued and supported.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

UP utilizes a multi-faceted approach to engage parents and community members. We institute a variety of programs that encourage family and staff input and volunteerism.

Our school website, Remind 101, and Edmodo give families and students the tools to stay informed about school and classroom functions. We employ the Aeries grading system, allowing parents to monitor the intricacies of student progress; we make call-outs via NTI Group mass messaging service to disseminate pertinent information, and we have an online Journalism blog that enables students to express themselves.

We have a School Site Council (SSC), consisting of families, teachers, administrators, and students who meet monthly to shape policies and procedures that impact student and campus life. They discuss, review, and determine expenditures of Title I funding.

The Parent Resource Center encourages families to take part in their children's education by providing, lectures, relevant training, literature, and appropriate social service linkages. We have designated family meetings in which course offerings and school wide expectations are delineated. Specific services include the legal advisement on the dangers of sexting, and blueprints for working with community based organizations in service to undernourished and homeless families. The Parent Resource Center instituted a Big Brother/Big Sister program which pairs identified socio-emotionally and/or academically struggling middle school students with appropriate upper classmates.

Hippocrates Circle is a Kaiser Permanente Hospital sponsored mentoring program for socio-economically disadvantaged students interested in ultimately attending medical school.

Our Spanish department oversees an ELAC component to assist the school and monolingual Spanish-speaking families to work collaboratively toward student success. UP offers, an Adult Education English course for its non-English speaking families.

A group of Chinese exchange students and accompanying adults spent a week at UP where they interfaced with students in daily routines of study, play and intimate conversations about the realities of life. The experience was profoundly meaningful as students discovered areas of commonalities and comradery.

The UC Berkeley Destination College Outreach program assists students by holding workshops on a variety of college going related topics including the Dream Act Aid and FAFSA application completion

Senior Transitions began in 2011; all seniors are required to enroll in and pass this course, which focuses on not only ensuring academic readiness for college admission, but also access to the processes and resources to gain said entrance. As part of this course, seniors are required to complete 40 hours of community service. An array of services include: tutoring elementary students, service at homeless shelters, senior centers, and specialized programs such as Toys for Tots, packages for military troops, etc. Successful completion of the program requires the design and presentation of a short multi-media portfolio to a panel of staff and community members.

3. Professional Development:

ELA and math teachers received CCSS training to highlight instructional reform and assessment changes, specifically with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Since then, we have been given multiple opportunities for collaboration in developing: Pacing Guides, lesson plans, supplemental instructional resources, summative and formative assessments and curriculum design.

In 2015, our district adopted a collaboration schedule that allows for teachers, administrators, and counselors to actively participate in setting curriculum goals and tailoring learning plans for students. Teachers meet to analyze data and align curriculum to improve student achievement geared toward a blended learning model. In this setting, the teaching community participates in processes of appreciative and collective inquiries and engages in profound critical examinations of teaching and learning strategies, cross-curricular goals, and flexible assessment tools.

Administrators received training regarding district wide changes to suspension and expulsion protocols. We are familiar with the district data dash board which tracks disciplinary actions by identity-groups to assess fairness and effectiveness, and each site is trained and encouraged to create its own tracking system based on its specificity of needs.

Administrators and staff attended the Equity Institute training, where they learned about racial and socioeconomic issues facing our district and developed strategies to ensure equity among our diverse population of students. Staff also completed the Keenan Associates Safe Schools on-line training, which includes cultural diversity and cyber-bullying.

Additionally, we were trained in Six Traits of Writing and The Art of Lesson Design to support writing across the curriculum, and Kagan strategies to aid in a more inquiry based model of learning. UP science teachers attended NGSS seminars, and several AP teachers attended Summer Institutes to keep apprised of the standardized exam changes and thereby better inform subject matter and instruction.

Our district is moving toward using Google Classroom. Each teacher and student has been provided with a district Google email address. We have been trained in the use of Google Classroom software and the advantages of doing so. This has enabled us to share documents and dialogue with each other regarding

curriculum, best practices, and various documents, as well as how to create a uniform repository for student papers.

Middle school teachers received training in Go Math, a program, which allows teachers to implement state standards in an interactive and engaging way, as well as allowing them to determine the correct depth and rigor of instruction for students. The Rigorous Curriculum Design (RCD) training that we received ensures an incorporation of engaging lessons that utilize a variety of Depth of Knowledge (DOK) skills.

4. School Leadership:

The guiding philosophy of UP leadership supports and upholds the belief that student success is achieved through a partnership; therefore, we strive to create an environment that incorporates a sense of inclusivity for families, community and breadth of stakeholders. In this way, students can be successful at academic, and socio-emotional levels. Honesty, integrity, and trust are the ethical standards at the forefront of our program. We strive to produce citizens who are steadfastly committed to personal success commingled with service to families and communities. Based on the evidence of our successes, it is apparent that our students can and do rise to meet these expectations.

Our Leadership Team consists of the principal, assistant principal, counselors, department chairs, ASB teachers, with additional advisement from Associated Student Body (ASB) student leaders, family volunteers, intervention counselor, intervention teacher, and a School Site Council (SSC) consisting of stakeholders from each of the preceding sectors.

The Leadership Team meets monthly to ensure programmatic integrity aligned to our mission, including the disaggregation of data for the development and integration of strategies needed to meet the diverse needs of our student population and to facilitate student success. Administration and counselors meet weekly to monitor general and distinct student progress. Department Chairs meet the first Monday of every month and then disseminate information to teachers at each department meeting the first Wednesday of every month. School Site Council meets monthly to determine the allocation of Title I funds. Parent/family volunteers hold regular meetings in the Parent Resource Center, and ASB holds weekly student meetings.

In order to best determine the distinct needs of students, administration conducts daily classroom walk-throughs that are designed to support effective instruction and ensure high expectations. Part of this process includes discussing learning objectives with students, engaging in classroom activities, and promoting the vision and mission of our school. Building relationships through transparency, high visible accessibility, and interaction with staff and students promotes a strong sense of student belonging and acceptance that helps to facilitate and enhance the learning environment. Through a collaborative effort, site leadership develops a School Site Plan annually to establish yearly student achievement goals. These goals are distributed to teachers, and departments collaborate and brainstorm best practices as to how best achieve each goal. The site plan guides all expenditures to ensure the increase of student achievement.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our propelling practice is grounded in high expectations, including a culture of no excuses for anything less than excellence. Inherent in this practice is the belief that all students can and will succeed.

Teachers present students with coursework of the highest caliber that is funneled through the practice of no excuses. In 2013-2014 we adopted the California Common Core State Standards. We altered our math practice to incorporate an integrated model, and placed a strong emphasis on literacy across the curriculum. Essential questions have become the basis for English Language Arts (ELA) instruction, and our social science teachers have incorporated document-based questions (DBQs) across all grade levels to further literacy. Similarly, our singularity of focus on no excuses drives our science department to implement the Next Generation Science Standards. Through frequent formal and informal assessments, teachers are able to identify problem areas of instruction and to recalibrate teaching practices appropriately.

The no excuses practice mandates high ethical and behavioral standards for our entire learning community. As such, there is a clear expectation that students and staff alike will adhere to codes of decorous conduct in all areas at all times, and UP has a no excuse/zero tolerance discipline policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, drugs, alcohol, physical altercations, etc.

The correlation between an inculcated identity that accepts no excuses and student performance can clearly be seen in our California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) results, in which 77% of our ELA students and 55% of our math students scored at or above proficiency and only 4% of English and 14% of math fell below the standard. 100% of all 10th grade students taking the CA exit exam in 2014 passed it on the first attempt. Additionally, our graduation rate has been 100% every year since 2010. We have seen a steady increase in college acceptances and enrollment, with 90% or better of our recent graduates attending college after UP graduation. Similarly, the number of UP students taking AP courses has increased by 34% since 2010-2011, and those taking AP exams has increased by 112%, indicating that students feel better prepared for both the coursework and the exams. In addition to the testing data, the California Healthy Kids Survey administered to our 7th, 9th, and 11th grade students this year revealed that 94% of those surveyed felt that there was some degree of high expectation being placed upon their achievement. No excuses is the mortar that binds our success and no excuses is the single most driving force that guides our unblinking self-examination and unswerving determination towards continuous improvement of the institution, our practices and the caliber of students, workers and human beings that we generate.