

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 [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Steven Michael Daubenspeck

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

Official School Name Thornhill Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 5880 Thornhill Drive

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

City Oakland State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 94611-2147

County Alameda

Telephone (510) 339-6800 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.thornhillschool.org/ E-mail steven.daubenspeck@ousd.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*Mr. Antwan Wilson E-mail superintendent@ousd.k12.ca.us

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

District Name Oakland Unified School District Tel. (510) 434-7790

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 Mr. James Harris

(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):
- 54 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 14 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 17 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 86 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	11	10	11
K	36	36	72
1	36	38	74
2	28	37	65
3	27	24	51
4	32	31	63
5	21	29	50
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	191	205	396

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 12 % Asian
 - 13 % Black or African American
 - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 52 % White
 - 13 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	4
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	394
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.028
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
16 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Arabic, Cantonese, Vietnamese, 4 others

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13 %
Total number students who qualify: 54

8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %
26 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
- 1 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 2 Emotional Disturbance
- 2 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 4 Other Health Impaired
- 11 Specific Learning Disability
- 11 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: 3
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	16
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.	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 25:1

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	96%	97%	98%	98%	97%
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.

Thornhill Elementary provides an environment where students are nurtured and empowered to be life-long learners, building upon their creativity, curiosity, sense of self worth and academic excellence.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Thornhill Elementary School is nestled in the picturesque hills of Oakland, California, with tree-lined streets and friendly neighbors. Painted murals cover the playground area, as each graduating class gifts their artistic expression to inspire students for years to come. In the 1950s our low-density neighborhood hosted one of the many cherry orchards that served the local area; Thornhill was built in 1958 to accommodate the growing population in Montclair village. Thornhill students reflect the diversity in our local neighborhood as well as the broader Oakland community. Students thrive in Thornhill's nurturing culture, which is as much a reflection of our approach to education as it is of the care and dedication shown by our administration, staff, teachers and parents. In addition to educating our children, our school serves as a community space/play ground after hours and on weekends.

Thornhill is deeply rooted in a tradition of whole mind/whole body education as well as academic rigor. Our emphasis on academics is underscored by our high academic achievement – our 2013 API score was 946 – and we have kept this achievement up while maintaining a class ratio of 25:1, transitional kindergarten through third grade. Thornhill's English Language Arts (ELA) SBAC scores for the 2014-2015 school year is currently 74% meeting/exceeding. In mathematics 76% are currently meeting/exceeding. This put us in the top four elementary for math and 5th for ELA. Thornhill's 396 students come from all over Oakland, with 31% of our students living outside our neighborhood catchment area. We are identified as a Caring School Community, which incorporates social skills into our curriculum and is extremely effective.

Our mission, an extension of Oakland Unified School District's mission, has been carefully refined to reflect our student population and our community. We are committed to educating all students to help them meet or raise their aspirations, to enable them to choose from the widest range of personal and career choices possible, and to prepare them to be effective, contributing citizens to society. We offer a broad-based curriculum to all students, while also providing enrichment and differentiated instructional techniques such as Spatial Math (ST) and Achieve 3000. We also offer interventions to students that need extra help.

Our guiding vision is to ensure that all students have equal access to our core program within the context of the heterogeneous classroom. Our fundamentals work in conjunction with the core curriculum set forth by Oakland Unified School District to offer students the ideal mix of core curriculum, supplemental learning and customized enhancements. We attempt to balance classes equitably based on gender, ethnicity, and academic achievement. We believe that such classrooms provide a rich learning and social environment for all students. Our rigorous curriculum is aimed at actively engaging students in the learning process, while promoting higher levels of thinking. We believe that the delivery of high-quality curriculum is informed by subject matter knowledge and insight into children's needs while enlivened by spontaneity and fun. Many students also participate in our school enrichment programs before and after school. Students can become engineers through our Lego and Toyology programs; chefs in our cooking classes; and scientists in our Mad Science classes. Our enrichment drama, dance, music, art and sports classes encourage movement, imagination, and a healthy lifestyle.

Thornhill educates the whole child in a caring community that is collectively responsible for all students. Thornhill, like so many schools across California, struggles to execute our vision with the financial resources provided by the state and OUSD, so we have created supplemental parent- and community-based fundraising programs to support our goals. An integral part of the school's financial footing comes from the Thornhill Parent Faculty Club. Parent donations that come through the PFC fund a full-time librarian, computer classes for all students (and computers), art classes and K-2 music instruction through the ORFF program, all of which are scheduled during the instructional day. The PFC and a newly revitalized Dad's Club host and run our annual walk-a-thon, carnival, and auction gala, as well as movie nights and student and education-related meetings for the community.

Our teachers work consistently to reach every student and meet them where they are academically. Teachers are able to achieve this goal through immense parent support that is evident daily on campus. Thornhill teachers rely on parent volunteers to help out in the classroom, which deepens the school's spirit of

community. We have found that, high levels of parent involvement coupled with teacher commitments improves the educational outcomes of all students and enriches our childrens' educational experience by giving them focused and attainable goals.

We also create many opportunities throughout the year to involve our community in our school activities. Thornhill has established a number of traditions, including our Lunar New Year Celebration and parade, winter and spring break music performances, monthly sing-alongs, our Walk-a-thon, Engineering night, and oratorical performances each February for Black history month.

Educators, parents, and student's collectively partake in creating a cohesive and caring environment. Our academic rigor, coupled with our approach to social and emotional well being makes Thornhill not only a vehicle for education, but a platform where all children matter and succeed.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Thornhill utilizes the core curriculum followed by OUSD in English Language Arts, mathematics, science and social studies/history.

Our approach to literacy includes six components: Reading Workshop, Writing Workshop, Interactive Read Aloud, Shared/Close Reading, Word Study, and Interactive/Shared Writing.

Reader's Workshop is emphasized at all grade levels and provides students with the opportunity to learn specific skills and strategies, that will push them further as readers. In each grade students use leveled texts to apply new skills and strategies; further developing foundational reading skills, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers routinely meet with students in guided reading or strategy groups to provide intervention and extension for all readers.

Writing is a significant part of our culture at Thornhill Elementary. We pride ourselves in creating inquiry-based projects that are reflective of the writing process and Common Core Standards. Bulletin boards throughout the school showcase final compositions from students in all grades and create a sense of pride and ownership for all students which follows along with our whole mind and body approach.

Using the Lucy Calkins writing program in conjunction with our monthly professional developments led by a writing professor, we are able to create a collective responsibility that is evident in each and every classroom. Teachers create clear anchor charts for students to follow, and consistently share ideas on making lessons more effective.

Most recently, students have successfully integrated technology into their writing using Chromebooks computers to approach their work. Student's writing drafts can be saved, shared, edited and revised with the capability of instant feedback of teachers and peers.

In mathematics, we value instruction that leads to developing students' conceptual understanding of Math. We use math Expressions Common Core for all grade levels. In our partnership with Math Expressions, teachers use the OUSD's Core Curriculum Guide, which is a collection of math tasks that allow students to apply the learned skills and strategies in real world context to further develop mathematical problem solving skills.

In the first, third, fourth, and fifth grades, classes have begun to use an online math program called Spatial Temporal (ST) Math. This is a game-based program that boosts math comprehension and proficiency. Academic discussions in mathematics is also a key common core aligned strategy that we use. Thornhill students participate in Number Talks protocol, based on the the book by Sherry Parish to support students with mental math and computation strategies. Number Talks supports students with a conceptual understanding of mathematics.

For the past nine years, Thornhill has used the inquiry-based FOSS science curriculum. FOSS emphasizes hands-on investigative skills and critical thinking skills, and successfully integrates language arts, mathematics, and social studies into the science curriculum across all grade levels. Currently, Thornhill is taking on a district leadership role in piloting the new Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Thornhill has always enjoyed a strong science identity, led by teacher and community commitment. All teachers take part in professional development and summer institutes that emphasize cutting edge curriculum and teaching practices. Thornhill families have always played a vital role in supporting our science work. Parents have constructed a dozen raised bed gardens designed to use in reinforcing science concepts and build literacy in outdoor sustainability. Thornhill hosts annual family science fair nights where students display investigative projects. For the past two years, Thornhill has hosted an "Engineering Extravaganza" science night open to the public with engineering activities for all grade levels.

As an innovative school where teaching outside the regular curriculum is expected, teachers actively seek ways to deepen and enhance lessons. In the past nine years, in addition to FOSS, teachers have developed school-wide units using Marine Activities, Resources & Education (MARE) and Great Explorations in Math and Sciences (GEMS), both developed at the Lawrence Hall of Science. Teachers regularly take students on field trips to the Lawrence Hall and Chabot Space and Science Center. Currently, Thornhill is the only OUSD elementary school taking 4th/5th grade students to the NASA Challenger Program which engages all levels of high-order thinking and problem solving as well as communication and teamwork skills. To culminate students' K-5 learning, 5th graders spend 3 days/2 nights at the NatureBridge Institute located at the Marin Headlands. NatureBridge engages students with their natural surroundings, challenging them to apply academic and personal skills in building quality environmental literacy.

Our students' visit many local historical sites, such as the Peralta Hacienda in Oakland and the state capitol, Sacramento, CA. Students' inquiries into social studies and history are uniquely supported by Oakland's rich, diverse and vibrant community. Our students routinely visit sites where key California historical and cultural events took place. For example, our fourth grade students spend three days at the Coloma Outdoor Discovery School, where they experience the lives of miners and gold seekers during the Gold Rush—on the site of Sutter's Mill, where gold was discovered in 1849.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Thornhill recognizes the fact that music and the arts are as essential to a well-rounded education as literacy, math, and science. Music increases student engagement, builds focus and awareness, and opens a creative space for personal expression. Ten years ago, Thornhill, took music to the forefront, designing and implementing curriculum that would integrate music into the curriculum of all grade levels.

Students at Thornhill receive a comprehensive music education. All students come together monthly to sing together in our school-wide community sing-alongs. The lower grades (TK-2) participate in lessons rooted in Orff Schulwerk (movement and play) as well as in group singing, rhythm, and dance. They also participate in the San Francisco Opera Aria Program, where students and teachers design a complete opera. This includes writing libretto and arias; designing and constructing sets; and theatrical direction, and performance.

In third grade, all students are involved in our violin program. This program is lauded nationally by the Music-in-Education National Consortium, which engages them in learning violin through the Suzuki method. Students build musical focus and awareness, a sense of group responsibility, and increased overall engagement and confidence.

In fourth and fifth grades, all students begin an instrument of their choosing and participate in an ensemble. Group instruction is led by a dedicated instrumental music instructor during the school day. Students practice fundamental tone production and rudimentary techniques both at school and at home, and rehearse ensemble at school.

In fifth grade, all students study "Jazzocracy" – a music and social studies curriculum (designed at Thornhill) that engages students in the evolution of jazz. The program helps students make the connection between jazz and American democracy.

Upper grade students also receive workshop lessons in traditional Balinese Gamelan music and dance as part of our school's efforts to increase international awareness and participation in the arts.

Thornhill's musical focus came to fruition through dedicated work by teachers and sustained grants and partnerships with national organizations such as the Music Integration Literacy Enhancement Program (MILE); Music In Schools Today (MUST); Music in Education National Consortium (MiENC); SF Opera; Gamelan Sekar Jaya; the Marcus Foster Fund; and Oaktown Jazz.

Thornhill Elementary arts program provides weekly formal arts instruction to grades TK through fifth grade. In the lower grades, TK – 2, the classroom teacher integrates art in the curriculum; weekly writing assignments are accompanied by drawings illustrating students' thinking. The focus is on exploration of the elements of art and of diverse mediums, expression of ideas, representation of objects, and an introduction to the use of art to more easily access and understand contemporary, historical events, cultural aspects, and social issues. The upper grades receive weekly visual arts instruction. In 3rd, 4th and 5th grades, students learn specific art techniques using a variety of mediums. Teachers emphasize the creative process -- from brainstorming and planning to creation, observation and review. Student art from all grades is displayed in public exhibits in the local library and local shops. This helps to boost student self-esteem and confidence, as they see their work valued in the public eye. The perception of visual arts as a means of self-expression and communication is facilitated. Thornhill's visual arts program utilizes a holistic approach in the education of students.

Physical Education is done twice a week. Students have two 50 minute periods of Motors Skill Development and or standards based physical education. In both classes students learn cooperative games as well as good sportsmanship.

Technology is integrated into classrooms on a daily basis. Students in all grades have access to Chromebooks, which are used in the classroom for research, word processing, and personalized learning. A computer teacher supports each grade level by providing weekly technology instruction using the Educational Technology Standards. This push-in model allows, teachers to effectively integrate technology into the core content areas.

Thornhill Elementary School has multiple ways of supporting student's social emotional learning. All teachers hold daily morning meetings in each classroom with the goal to build the community in each class. Morning meetings set the tone for the day, where students can be seen and heard by having a voice. OUSD has adopted Caring Schools Community curriculum as its socio-emotional curriculum. Students also get many opportunities to practice speaking and sharing ideas, through the regular use of Think Pair Share protocol during various subject discussions. In these peer-to-peer connections, each classroom has a higher-grade buddy class. The buddy classes meet once a week to work on various activities. The goal is to promote cross-age recognition, friendships, and to promote mentoring/mentee opportunities. Additionally, fifth graders have leadership opportunities as lunch monitors to support our younger students thereby building community. Fifth graders also help out as Jr. Coaches at recess.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Thornhill takes a multi-tiered approach to reading intervention beyond the classroom. Students reading at or above grade level participate in book groups guided by Instructional Assistants. This strategy provides students additional opportunities to practice skills and engage with texts at the appropriate reading level. Students reading below grade level on tri-annually administered standardized assessments (Fountas and Pinnell, Scholastic Reading Inventory) are placed into small instructional groups that focus on remediating areas of weakness. Informal assessments identify students needing additional teaching of phonics and sight words. Student groups work with a reading teacher to develop skills needed to decode words, build vocabulary, increase fluency and improve comprehension. Computer programs, such as Achieve 3000, are used to reinforce skills. Frequent teacher conferences help keep small group reading goals aligned with the curriculum.

Thornhill teachers provide differentiated instruction through small group and 1:1 support. In reading, teachers use guided reading groups to instruct students at similar reading levels. In these groups students are taught explicit skills and strategies they need in order to move on to the next reading level. Teachers use assessment tools to monitor student progress towards their reading goals. They can then use this data to set next steps. To focus on individual needs, teachers confer with students on a regular basis to celebrate successes, set goals, and share teaching points. This time is extremely valuable as it provides students with focused and attainable goals.

Thornhill has made a shift towards personalized learning using technology. This allows teachers to set-up their students with tech-based programs linked to their current math or reading needs. Teachers then use the data collected from the programs (ST Math & Achieve 3000) to monitor student progress towards the standard and to formulate small skill groups.

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

Thornhill's staff is well-versed in using data to inform instruction using multiple measures. In Grade Level Professional Learning Communities, all teachers participate in generating data to inform intervention and acceleration in reading and mathematics. We use Fountas and Pinnel as primary indicators of reading achievement for grades TK – 5. Additionally, in grades 2-5, the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) is used to determine whether students are reaching their targeted benchmarks. Using this data in a cycle of inquiry to determine interventions, teachers then develop student intervention plans and conference with the principal. The first two tiers of intervention are supported by the classroom teacher in a Reader's Workshop model. The third tier of intervention is an additional individual and/ or small group instruction taught by a specialist for students that are furthest behind in reading and comprehension. In the third tier of intervention, students receive 40 minutes twice a week of differentiated support with targeted instruction with specific and measurable targets. These interventions build students skills as well as teach students good habits for responsible learners.

Parents, students and the community are informed of students' academic achievement. Parents are informed of their pupil's progress through three report cards and two parent conferences per year. Thornhill schedules minimum days during parent conference weeks to accommodate all parents schedules to review data and achievement goals. Parents learn the benchmark indicators in reading achievement and mathematics. Additionally, teachers communicate with parents about their child's progress regularly on an as needed basis. Parents are also guided to extra resources in specific content areas as well as given guidance on how to develop positive habits for responsible students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Thornhill was a long-standing participant in the Caring School Community initiative. We support our diverse student body through Socio-Emotional Learning curriculum and peer-to-peer opportunities that support teachers, staff, and school administration to foster a positive school community. These peer-to-peer opportunities include: reading buddies, conflict managers, junior coaches, cross-grade tutors, recycling monitors. These relationally based peer-to-peer opportunities allow students to develop leadership skills, while encouraging each student to have a stake in the whole school community. It is these peer-to-peer opportunities that promote emotional safety and a sense of self worth at Thornhill, thereby allowing our students to be in a community and to stay focused on schooling.

Thornhill engages and motivates students by supporting them in all aspects of their academic, physical and emotional growth and providing opportunities to explore their interests. These opportunities enable all children to have activities they look forward to and enjoy. Teachers work to give students a feeling of ownership in the classroom. We hold high expectations for all students in the school, and our differentiated learning model means each child is provided with engaging lessons in each subject area on a regular basis.

Thornhill welcomes the many variances of families and cultural backgrounds in our community. We hold regular meetings which build a trust factor that enables children to speak up when things are not going their way. Thornhill families have many different ethnic backgrounds and our teachers make an effort to reflect this in titles that make up their classroom library and classroom discussions. We also invite families to share their own cultural traditions. Students create heritage dolls which are displayed in the cafeteria to show our diverse community as well as participate in a heritage school luncheon. Throughout the year we host many events that incorporate student and parent involvement such as our yearly oratorical, Lunar New Year parade, African American Read-In, Walk-a-thon, and Spring Carnival.

Thornhill has a community of teachers that support and assist each other. Teachers have a level of academic freedom in their teaching that shows a trust for their knowledge of what is appropriate for and what can support the children's learning.

In addition to our large Parent-Faculty Club, which supports classroom learning, teachers rely on the willingness of Thornhill parents to volunteer time in the classroom, to donate needed supplies, or drive and chaperone on field trips. Students see parents throughout the day, which furthers the idea of a supportive community working together. Our principal is highly supportive of students, teachers, and families – students see him in the school yard nearly every morning, and he follows student progress in a number of ways. He is an active advocate for continuing and expanded opportunities for teachers, and is always available to meet with parents to discuss any issues they may be having.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Thornhill employs a number of successful strategies designed to engage the support of families and the wider community to boost not only the school's academic successes, but also the school facility. The school's Parent Faculty Club, in place for years, is a fundraising arm that supports a wide range of academic-related activities, and provides critical assistance to school staff in engaging parents and families. The PFC's weekly newsletter is one of the main communication vehicles for the school, with event announcements and updates as well as a weekly letter from either the principal or the PFC president. The PFC works with members of the faculty to support community needs. PFC board members develop and run meetings to support the needs of the community, such as a recent event on gender diversity that featured speakers from local organizations and OUSD; the PFC collaborated with staff, community, and OUSD to develop the presentation. The PFC also helps to maintain the school grounds, with an annual clean-up day and site and safety committees that work on specific projects and direct traffic at morning drop-off. The PFC's enrichment committee develops Thornhill's popular after-school enrichment curriculum, and provides scholarships so all children can be included. All parents are invited to the monthly

PFC meetings. Summer playdates for incoming kindergarten students, a meet and greet social for all new families at the start of the school year, and our back-to-school night all foster Thornhill's open and welcoming culture.

Teachers reach out to the families through regular classroom newsletters where they share lesson objectives for the week. Parents are invited to volunteer both in and outside the classrooms, helping to set a welcoming atmosphere. There are two formal conference times scheduled each year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Every family has the opportunity to participate, and if they can't, teachers reach out to arrange an alternate date or a phone conference. During the year teachers reach out for other meetings when needed or parents are welcome to request meetings to discuss concerns or address questions. Both the Back to School Night and Open House occur every year allowing parents meet teachers, learn about content/curriculum, classroom expectations and showcase student growth. Events such as Engineering night also draw in parent participation. School events and other information is announced on our website, through school-wide Yahoo email group, and by room parents for each class.

3. Professional Development:

Thornhill is driven by the needs of the teachers through identified areas of growth. We focus on addressing the supports needed to have teachers master instructional strategies for successful teaching. Thornhill's leadership team meets to outline professional developments plans based on focal areas that are decided upon using student performance data and teacher needs. To build capacity in teachers, we have content area leads that provide professional learning around the school's and district's vision. These teacher leaders support our staff with the implementation of curriculum, data-driven instruction, and core teaching strategies.

Teachers and staff take part in district provided professional development and outside trainings, workshops, or conferences. In addition to mandatory development, Thornhill's Parent-Faculty Club provides funds for teachers to take advantage of development opportunities they choose themselves based on their own interests. All teachers are a part of a professional learning community, where they use student data to inform instructional next steps.

To build capacity around balanced literacy, Thornhill's teachers participate in a variety of trainings, including in-house workshops where they study the components of balanced literacy, modified units of study around reading and writing, and practice and apply conferring and small-group instructional strategies.

All teachers participate in professional learning around science instruction and the new Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Teachers use this time to build knowledge around the standards, especially the emphasis of science and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and the integration of CCSS and the NGSS.

With the emphasis of technology integration and blended learning, our staff routinely participates in professional development centered on classroom instruction, student skills and access, and creating an environment that supports technology. Teachers also participate in building a TK-5 grade outline of necessary technology skills and knowledge. This living document provides teachers with an understanding of the core concepts that students need to master before moving on to the next grade. Teachers are encouraged to participate in a variety of technology workshops around using computer programs to support personalized learning, diving deeper into technology standards, and using a data platform to analyze student assessment data and develop intervention plans.

Another area of professional learning is social-emotional learning. More than ten staff members voluntarily participated in a six-week Mindfulness course that provided staffers with tools to develop mindfulness practices around breath, body, and emotions. Teachers then apply these practices to their classrooms, creating times for personal reflection and growth. Another focal area was around gender diversity. Teachers, parents and community members took part in learnings that focused on creating safe spaces for all students as well as classroom resources to support Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Questioning

(LGBTQ) inclusive schools. Additional training is planned for the future to continue to build more capacity around social-emotional learning.

4. School Leadership:

Thornhill Elementary School uses a distributive leadership approach where the principal, along with an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) outlines the professional development plan for the school year. The ILT includes lead teachers in the following content areas: English Language Arts, Science, Technology and Mathematics, and each member is considered equally valuable in contributing to needs of the school in his or her area of expertise. Each ILT member has opportunities to further their leadership skills with conferences and site visits.

Each member of the team has taught at least 6 years and is selected to help meet the school's needs in implementing Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. The school has three focus areas: Writing, Blended Learning and a Culture of Mutual Accountability.

This school year Thornhill has launched blended learning in four grades. Although the school has integrated some technology, this is a large paradigm shift to get all teachers and students supported with using technology. A member of our team worked with the principal and district personnel to develop a coherent plan for using technology. The lead teacher also connected with our computer teacher to develop a plan to support teachers implementing blended learning. This has been done through bimonthly technology team meetings, and various technology workshops for teachers.

The Student Success Team (SST) is comprised of teachers, school psychologist, speech therapist and the special education teacher. Each week this team meets with parents of students that are struggling academically or socio-emotionally. Thornhill utilizes the SST team as a support structure to determine what resources and interventions are needed for student success.

The School Site Council (SSC) includes parents, teachers, community members, and the principal. The council is responsible for approving the school site plan, and allocating resources that impact student achievement and school culture. This year the School Site Council has specifically allocated resources for Blended Learning with the purchase of ST Math, a leading, internet-based visual math instruction program that supports differentiated learning. School wide student achievement in mathematics is improving and students are exceedingly more adept with technology.

The faculty council includes six teachers from all grade levels that serve as a staff representative body to communicate with the principal. The faculty council advises on the school's instructional program.

Our Parent Faculty Club is run by a board that includes parent volunteers, the principal and two teachers. The PFC works closely with school leadership to ensure the school's vision is carried out. The PFC is Thornhill's fundraising arm as well as a community building leader. The board meets monthly, and runs separate monthly meetings for the PFC general membership.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

A unified practice that Thornhill uses to drive student academic success is through the creation, implementation, and analysis of Focal Student Plans (FSP). This process starts at the beginning of the school year and it is driven by reading data. Teachers administer benchmarks three times a year using the Fountas and Pinnell Assessment System and the Scholastic Reading Inventory. With the first benchmark completed at the start of the school year, teachers jump right into creating intervention and extension plans to support student growth in reading.

To create our FSP, we look at current benchmark data starting with grade level, then whole class, then individual students. Teachers create intervention plans within their grade level teams to focus on the skills students need to be successful. These plans outline, what students still need the skill, what students have mastered the skill, what interventions/extensions are needed, and who is going to administer the intervention/extension. From there, teachers look at their own class and create a plan for instruction. This plan outlines the students in their class who are below, approaching, at, or above the benchmark. From that list, teachers choose five focal students who need intervention support.

Once teachers have identified their five focal students they create a FSP; where they analyze the benchmark data for each individual student. Teachers use a common system and analysis tool to do this. The Qualitative Analysis of Student's Reading Level provides teachers with specific data around what foundational, comprehension, or fluency skills the student has strengths in and what skills the student still needs development in.

The implementation of this plan is a powerful part of this process. Teachers create small group and individualized instruction plans to meet the needs of their five focal students. Teachers are supported by intervention specialists and instructional aides to help lead guided reading or skills/strategies based groups. They also provide 1:1 instruction through conferences, where they set goals with students.

In order to keep instructional plans timely and data-driven, teachers meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to analyze data, set instructional next steps, and refine intervention plans. Teachers then meet with the Principal in a data conference to review the plans and outline additional interventions, supports, or resources the teachers or students may need. This data is used to create data walls, featuring students across grade levels who need intervention supports. The data wall provides transparency amongst grade levels and helps teachers see on a larger scale what students need support and what skills should be emphasized.

The Focal Student Plan is a data-driven instructional practice that has contributed to continued academic success amongst students in all grade levels and has built a culture of mutual accountability amongst teachers.