

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Julie Harris

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

Official School Name Sun Valley Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 75 Happy Lane

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

City San Rafael State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 94901-1004

County Marin

Telephone (415) 485-2440 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL http://sv.srscs.ca.schoolloop.com E-mail jharris@srscs.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. Michael Watenpaugh E-mail mwatenpaugh@srscs.org

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

District Name San Rafael City Schools Tel. (415) 492-3233

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. Rachel Kertz

(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

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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

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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):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 3 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 12 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                     | 49         | 42           | 91          |
| 1                     | 46         | 34           | 80          |
| 2                     | 50         | 38           | 88          |
| 3                     | 43         | 47           | 90          |
| 4                     | 48         | 32           | 80          |
| 5                     | 39         | 40           | 79          |
| 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           |
| <b>Total Students</b> | 275        | 233          | 508         |

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 5 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 17 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 46 % White
  - 30 % 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: 6%

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

| <b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>   | <b>Answer</b> |
|--|---------------|
| (1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year   | 11            |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year | 18            |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]  | 29            |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014   | 514           |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)   | 0.056         |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100  | 6             |

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 12 %  
63 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Spanish, Cantonese, German, Russian, Vietnamese, all other

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 17 %  
Total number students who qualify: 84

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %  
50 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>3</u> Autism                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness              | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness        | <u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>31</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment    | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation    | <u>1</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: 11
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

|   | <b>Number of Staff</b> |
|---|------------------------|
| Administrators  | 1                      |
| Classroom teachers  | 23                     |
| Resource teachers/specialists<br>e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.  | 2                      |
| Paraprofessionals   | 4                      |
| Student support personnel<br>e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 1                      |

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

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

| <b>Required Information</b> | 2014-2015 | 2013-2014 | 2012-2013 | 2011-2012 | 2010-2011 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance    | 95%       | 97%       | 97%       | 97%       | 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.

| <b>Post-Secondary Status</b>                  |    |
|---|----|
| 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.

Sun Valley staff and families collaborate to develop a nurturing learning environment that motivates students to develop to their fullest potential intellectually, socially and emotionally.

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

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Sun Valley Elementary is a reflection of the diversity of the greater City of San Rafael, the beauty of Marin County, and the heart of a community that treasures education and its learners. Founded in 1951, Sun Valley sits nestled against the rolling hills of Marin's 16,000 acres of protected open space. Sun Valley was modernized and expanded in 2002-2003, and has an open, welcoming campus to create a nurturing environment for our students and their families.

At Sun Valley Elementary, you will find a diverse community of learners. Specifically, Sun Valley is 72.4% Caucasian; 16.9% Latino; 7% Asian; and 3.7% two or more races. With 515 students coming from a variety of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, Sun Valley has worked tirelessly to create an inclusive community that addresses all of our learners' needs.

To that end, we were inspired by a 2006 professional development conference led by Richard DuFour. Sun Valley's motto became "teach to the high learners and provide scaffolding and support for every child to reach his or her potential." After the conference, our first priority was to develop a master schedule that ensured all grade levels' core instructional blocks were aligned. This master schedule, designed to provide guaranteed uninterrupted ELA and math instruction, included time for designated ELD as well as integrated ELD, daily intervention supports, and daily enrichment (art, music, P.E., library/technology). This daily enrichment block of time provided the opportunity for teachers to meet in weekly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Additionally, as our population increased, we added staffing, recruited additional parent volunteers, and invited and trained volunteers from the AARP's Experience Corps. With this high level of community and staff involvement, we are able to provide additional support to students who need it.

Another significant influence that drives our work is Richard Elmore's model of the instructional core, which is a dynamic process consisting of teacher instruction, student data, and curriculum. It is the interaction between these three focal points that remarkably improves student learning. In our weekly PLCs, teachers analyze student data and work samples, collaboratively design lessons, and develop curriculum to improve student skills while addressing any areas of concern. PLCs specifically allocate time to determine criteria for a pullout intervention program as part of our Pyramid of Interventions. All of this work is facilitated by a great collaboration between the principal, teachers, staff and the Instructional Core Coach.

Sun Valley has a team of talented and dedicated teachers and staff, which include several key support positions. Our staff includes a full-time (1.0 FTE) Instructional Core Coach. This position is co-funded by our site budget (0.5 FTE) and by the district (0.5 FTE). Thanks to this focused position, the Instructional Coach is able to directly support and align our PLCs with our intervention program and facilitate a balanced literacy program. Intervention support is considered a priority and is generously provided by the PTO and site funds. This Instructional Core Coach also facilitates the Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) model. The SEAL model is designed to provide comprehensive literacy and ELD professional development in grades K-3. Simultaneously, this additional staffing supported the implementation of the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) model providing school-wide behavioral expectations and common language for both home and school. Lastly, a Bilingual Community Liaison was hired to strengthen relationships between second language learner families and the school community. All of these people and systems work in concert to ensure that we are able to meet our goal that every learner achieves to his or her potential.

A welcoming environment that nurtures social and emotional development is equally important to student success. From the first day of school, we welcome students and families with our open-door policy. We further this communication by using a common language site-wide. Beginning in kindergarten, all students are taught our three school-wide expectations: 1) Be respectful, 2) Be responsible, and 3) Be a learner. Students are publically recognized for achieving these expectations and making positive choices at weekly assemblies. Additionally, we developed a beginning-of-the-school-year curriculum that teaches students about how to recognize and regulate their emotions, develop a growth mindset, and set goals to be a 21st Century learner. This past year, we expanded upon this curriculum by incorporating eight weeks of mindfulness training for all students. This curriculum, and information about school-wide activities is shared

with parents through our weekly newsletters, on our websites, and through the many personal conversations among parents, teachers, and leadership.

In summary, Sun Valley Elementary School is a high achieving school because we believe every student should be provided the tools to reach his or her potential, and we back that up with the support necessary to achieve this. We have a collaborative, motivated, and dedicated staff; committed, enthusiastic parent and community volunteers; and inquisitive and happy students who feel supported and encouraged to be their best selves.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

#### Reading-Language Arts

Sun Valley’s Language Arts program is based on a Balanced Literacy model that is aligned to CCSS. Since 2011, Sun Valley has written Common Core thematic units collaboratively with our Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) partner schools, integrated small group leveled reading instruction, participated in rigorous on-going professional development, and developed a differentiation model to support all learners. It is our goal to develop college and career ready learners who are proficient in reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The SEAL model was developed to provide classroom teachers the instructional strategies and skills to develop and implement a balanced literacy program that supports all students. The SEAL program strongly supports English language learners acquiring English language reading and writing skills, significantly reducing the percentage of Long Term English Language Learners. The model combines research-based, high-leverage pedagogical practices; a classroom environment that affirms and enriches its learners; grade level and school-wide articulation; and strong partnerships between families and school. K-3 SEAL teachers participate in 12 days of professional development to write units that are aligned with the California History Social-Science Standards, the Next Generation Science Standards, and Common Core state standards. SEAL instructional strategies are also incorporated into the units. Some examples of practices include: teaching oral interaction and academic discourse through “Collaborative Conversations;” songs, chants, and well-planned learning centers; purposeful-interactive Read-Alouds to build vocabulary and expressive language; exposure to high level informational text through “just right” leveled books, to build comprehension and prediction; and multiple opportunities to engage with a print-rich environment filled with student created charts. One of the highlights of our SEAL classrooms is the signature gallery walk at the end of a unit, where students take ownership of and pride in their learning, guiding their families around the classroom describing what they have learned about the unit’s essential question and enduring understandings.

Our K-5 Balanced Literacy Model includes the SEAL strategies described above, GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition and Design) strategies in fourth and fifth grades, and a strong, leveled reading program. Since we have a range of readers, we use our PLC time to analyze data to level students based on reading ability, align reading texts to social studies/science themes, and specifically target skills and strategies. For example, when a teacher introduces the use of author’s craft in leveled reading groups, students practice the strategy during “Read-to-self” and then confer with the teacher to ensure understanding. Struggling readers also receive 30 minutes of aligned strategies and content in our intervention program.

At Sun Valley, our writing program is designed to have students demonstrate their understanding, convey their thinking clearly, and use writing to communicate and collaborate with others. All types of writing (narrative, informational, and opinion) are embedded in our units. We use Step-Up-To-Writing to teach foundational skills and the writing process to have students develop and strengthen their writing. Each grade level conducts research projects and integrates technology on a regular basis. Individual teachers PLCs analyze writing samples to provide small group differentiation and align lessons in the designated ELD program. Writing is shared with families at conferences, gallery walks and at Open House.

#### Math

Sun Valley has been implementing Everyday Math (EM) curriculum since 2008 and is currently using the latest Common Core correlated version. San Rafael City Schools adopted EM because of its effective use of mathematical strategies to build a strong foundation of mathematical understanding. Each day in our classrooms, lessons are being linked to math everyday experiences, connected to past lessons, include hands-on activities, and build foundational skills through oral practice and games. An instrumental part of the curriculum is encouraging students to share their thinking and problem solving approaches. The scope and sequence of the curriculum is designed with a spiral approach that exposes students to concepts and then revisits the same concepts throughout the year.

## Social Studies and History

All grade levels have created cross-curricular units that incorporate California Social Science and History Standards. Each cross-curricular unit has the following common elements: Enduring Understandings, Essential Questions, Themes, Anchor Texts, Supplemental Texts, Culminating Projects, Related Technology, Related Arts, Formative Assessments, and Performance-Based Assessments. Some hallmark culminating projects include: then/now historical museums in kindergarten and first grade, interactive wax museums of famous heroes in second grade, PowerPoint presentations highlighting thematic units and recreating Colonial Days in fifth grade.

## Science

All grade levels have created cross-curricular units that incorporate Next Generation Science Standards. Some examples of our science themes are: impact of weather and hazards (third grade) and relationships between biospheres in fifth grade. Examples of some of our hands-on engineering practices include building bridges and nests that can withstand natural and extreme weather changes.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

### Performing Arts:

Sun Valley offers a comprehensive, contiguous music program kindergarten through fifth grade in accordance with National Standards in Music Education. It is an Orff Schulwerk based program, which means that it is child-centric. It draws on the elements of language and movement to promote rhythm, keeping time, tuneful singing and instrumental skills. Music at Sun Valley is about great musicians, growing great human beings, incorporating team cooperation, improvisation and positive risk taking skills. Most importantly, music at Sun Valley is about preserving an essential part of our culture, while exploring and honoring the cultures of other lands.

### Art

The art teacher works collaboratively with grade level teams to align art with units of study. Students create artwork in many different styles as they explore and develop their ideas with varied art medium. Students develop their ability to recognize, and artistically express the visual components of color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value. The art curriculum also introduces students to master and modern artists, inspiring students in their own artwork while instilling a foundational knowledge of great artists and art.

### Technology

Our philosophy about technology is to integrate it into our core curriculum and teach students the skills necessary to utilize technology for communication. Students in third through fifth grades have their own Chromebooks and kindergarten through second grade students have iPad mini-stations. Additionally, everyone participates in weekly technology lab time. Examples of technology integration include: PowerPoint presentations about the lifecycle of trout, digital sketches of the first version of the American flag, or fifth graders selecting and researching their own areas of studies for the Genius Hour program. Through these projects, students are learning technology basics as well as advanced skills.

### Physical Education

Physical education is designed to promote enjoyment of physical activity, self-confidence, physical fitness, improved motor skills and exposure to different physical activities throughout the 200 minutes every ten days. As in classroom instruction, physical education begins with the unique skills and abilities of each child and systematically develops aerobic fitness, gross motor skills, and sports-based skills. Our goal is to have students develop healthy minds and bodies that incorporate movement into their lives.

### Mindfulness

Our recently added Mindfulness program has had a significant impact on the culture of our school as seen in student thought, behavior and learning. Mindfulness at Sun Valley is a form of attention and awareness training that can be applied in any activity throughout the day. Each of the 16 sessions builds on the next, from practicing mindful bodies and mindful listening, to ultimately providing a tool for creating “space” for a child between their big feelings and reactions. This mindful space allows a child to respond thoughtfully

instead of with impulsivity. We see Mindfulness practices in action as our students react more calmly to social challenges and persevere through academic challenges. Part of our program includes weekly written parent newsletters and a series of parent education.

#### Experiential Learning Opportunities

Sun Valley has incorporated several experiential programs enhancing the holistic education of our students. Our “Artist in Residence” weeklong program centers around a marine biologist/storyteller who brings Native Americans folklore to life while guiding students through directed drawings. Another experiential program includes fifth graders attending a local science outdoor education program at Walker Creek Ranch. This annual tradition holds great value as students learn how to interact with children from other schools in our district, gain knowledge and hands-on experiences with local plants and animals, and better grapple with the impact of humans on our environment. We also partner with California Poets-in-Schools for a six-week program for second through fifth graders. Our poet guides students to think about the structure of poems, rhyme, figurative language and imagery. Using these structures students are able to find their own poetic voice, creating unique pieces of work to share with classmates. For the past three years, all students at Sun Valley have rehearsed and performed in a school-wide dance showcase called the Classroom Connections Festival. Students in each grade learn and perform an integrated dance perspective of a relevant curricular theme. For instance, a third grade curricular theme of understanding the phases of the moon culminated in a theatrical dance using eight large inflated plastic balls colored to illustrate the different phases of the moon. Then the students manipulated the props, and danced to a folk song in a Bollywood dance style. These experiential programs enhance our outstanding core curriculum and help bring joy to learning for all students.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Sun Valley’s ambitious goal of educating every student necessitates thoughtful decisions about the instruction of each child. We are attuned to individual student differences and implement instructional approaches that benefit all learners. Many of these instructional approaches are taught and reinforced by the Instructional Core Coach/SEAL Coach.

SEAL strategies are based on a foundation of research and designed to increase language proficiency for English Language Learners. Because of their rigor, they are highly effective for all learners. Some examples of the practices are: Complex Academic Vocabulary Development, which manifests in the classroom through Draw and Label Charts, content-based chants, and cooperative strip paragraphs; Structured Oral Interaction and Academic Discourse which presents in the classroom as collaborative conversations, songs and chants, and carefully prepared centers; Graphic Organizers and Visuals; Continuous Checks for Comprehension; Authentic writing; Dramatic Play and Dramatization, which also include academic research centers for themed units; Collaborative Practice and Teamwork. Teachers use the lesson study model to improve and align their strategies.

The instructional methods describe above are proven to be effective with all learners, however within one classroom there will be a variety of learning styles. To differentiate instruction teachers are continuously using formative assessments to monitor progress. Teachers utilize different groupings, gradually releasing from whole to group to individual. Teachers also work with small groups to accommodate different learning styles. Content is provided in different formats to appeal to multiple intelligences and often includes technology. Above grade level learners are challenged through leveled reading, questioning, and project-based learning.

Despite all of these approaches, there are students who need intervention to succeed. If data indicate a student is struggling, we have a three-tiered intervention system. First, the classroom teacher requests an RTI meeting to brainstorm ideas with his/her peers. Next, the team creates and implements SMART goals. Progress towards these goals is monitored by the classroom teacher, who reports back to the RTI team. If Tier One interventions are insufficient, the student can be referred to a pull-out intervention program. Components of the intervention program include: Fountas and Pinnell, PAL’s, Rewards and Signs For Sound. Students not making progress in Intervention over a significant period of time are referred to the Student Study Team for possible special education assessments.

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

Sun Valley systematically uses data to ensure that every child achieves high academic success. To achieve this goal, the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) annually studies results from the following: the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), summative assessments such as Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), and Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to look for trends in ELA. Math data trends are based on Everyday Mathematics assessments, district benchmark assessments, and SBAC results. The ILT develops school-wide action plans around data trends, which are then shared with various stakeholders (i.e. faculty, Site Leadership Team, PLCs, Executive PTO, and SELAC (Site English Language Advisory Council)). These developed action plans become part of the School Based Coordinated Plan, which is presented the Board of Education annually. The ILT continues to monitor the action plans and data throughout the year.

Another system we use to analyze data is the Response to Intervention team. This team includes the principal, the Instructional Core Coach, the RSP, and RTI coordinator. The team reviews grade level data three times a year to develop an intervention matrix, which is shared with the PLCs. This matrix outlines individual students and appropriately tiered interventions. For example, a student who is “At Risk” on Dibels and SRI needs specific targeted intervention on fluency and comprehension. The Instructional Core Coach (who oversees the intervention program and the PLCs), is able to align targeted strategies and metacognitive skill development both in the pull out program and also work with classroom teachers to align strategies. Families are updated at conferences and receive a progress report from the Instructional Core Coach. We are thrilled to report that our SRI growth scores indicate that only eight out of 268 students fell into the Below Basic Category by the end of the year.

From our analysis of the data we were able to discern a trend: data indicated that the English only subgroup out performed the English Language Learner subgroup on ELA assessments. To close this gap, PLCs met and fine tuned integrated and designated ELD strategies. One example of an integrated ELD strategy we utilized was tiered sentence frames for think/pair/share dyads. In addition, all ELLs participate in 30 minutes of daily designated ELD instruction taught by a grade level teacher. The teacher focuses on academic vocabulary, front-loading concepts, and oral and written language practice. Ninety-two percent of our ELLs are re-designated by the end of fifth grade.

Should a student require more support than intervention, we use the RTI process. These comprehensive meetings include families and any support staff necessary to develop goals and action steps.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

What makes Sun Valley unique is that all members of the school community – staff, parents, community members and students – are all focused on one thing: promoting life long learning for all! This is felt the moment a kindergartener is greeted by a PTO “car door opener;” when fifth graders ventures off to Outdoor Education and their second grade buddies wave and cheer as the bus leaves; as staff intensely collaborate in instructional rounds; on the “Day of Giving” when over a 100 people gather to share in community service; to the weekly rendition of our school song, “...we are laughing and learning a big family....” This positivity and connectivity can be felt and heard throughout the day, every day.

Our culture begins with our mission, which is: Sun Valley School, parents and staff will work together to develop a nurturing learning environment promoting positive self-esteem, fostering intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and motivating students to develop to their fullest potential intellectually, socially, and emotionally in order to become cooperative, productive citizens and lifelong learners.

Sun Valley’s mission statement guided the development of our three PBIS expectations for both adults and students:

- 1) Be respectful
- 2) Be responsible
- 3) Be a learner

Because our school-wide expectations are so important, we developed “The 20 days of School Mindset & Procedures” curriculum. This curriculum includes breaking down our expectations by location in the school, social/emotional strategies such as the zones of regulation, growth mindset, bucket filling, and whole body listening. Lastly, we teach students the importance of education through describing our own pathway to college and careers as well as what a 21st Century learner looks like. We relate each of the social emotional curriculum elements to our PBIS expectations and show how, for example, whole body listening is one way for a student to be respectful and be a learner.

Throughout the year we look for and celebrate good choices. Learners are given “Good Choice Tickets” by any adult on campus when it is noticed that they are doing expected behaviors. The entire school gathers every Friday morning to build community, reinforce expected behaviors, motivate students and positively acknowledge students and staff. We begin with a mindful moment, a video clip or slide show of students demonstrating expected behaviors, and announcements of weekly activities (including a variety of noon-time options like the “fix-it club”, Green Team, Community Heroes and Game Club). We end our assembly with positive acknowledgement of the “Good Choice Ticket” winners. Families are invited to attend weekly assemblies and are specifically notified when their child is getting an award. Our school-wide expectations, along with all of our weekly happenings, are published in the Principal’s Newsletter, the PTO Newsletter and website, teacher newsletters, and daily emails to ensure that the home-school connection stays vibrant and strong.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Sun Valley, we pride ourselves on maintaining a welcoming school environment for all learners and families. The school staff and PTO work in concert to ensure that all families are engaged and included in their child’s education. As a result, families feel welcomed and an equal part of the home-school team.

Having a welcoming school environment is one of the key priorities outlined by the San Rafael Board of Education and superintendent. Our staff and PTO work collaboratively to ensure that this happens. From the moment a visitor sets foot on our campus, they are welcomed with a smile and encouraged to become part of our community. The Bilingual Secretary/Community Liaison is available on-site, makes home visits, and translates school documents. This welcoming environment is one of the reasons that the National

Experience Corps Volunteer programs selected to work with Sun Valley School and why over 200 parents volunteer each year.

The PTO and principal worked strategically on a Community Building Plan in 2006. This effort resulted in expanding the Executive PTO to include Grade Level Representatives, a Volunteer Coordinator, Dad's Club representation, and a SELAC representative. The idea behind the expansion was to bring more voices to the table, coordinate our efforts more effectively and build stronger connections between our Spanish speaking and English speaking families. The result is that we have over 95% positive feedback in all areas on the School Improvement Survey. We have expanded community events to include grade level play dates and potlucks, a SELAC sponsored "Dia De Los Muertos" celebration, and events sponsored by the Dads Club.

One of the keys to our family engagement model is communication. The principal, teachers, and the PTO create weekly newsletters, update websites, and send e-mails to keep families informed of upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. Our outreach also includes: School-wide notification calls, positive personal phone calls from the principal and staff, and weekly teacher communication.

We are in deep gratitude for the volunteer and fundraising efforts of our PTO. We have almost 100% participation in our annual Pledge Drive. Funds raised support our comprehensive enrichment program (art, music, P.E., dance, poetry and more), classroom and school-wide materials, intervention, mindfulness supports, and so much more. It's no wonder we have a full house for all music concerts, PTO sponsored events, and great representation in our District Foundation.

### 3. Professional Development:

#### Literacy and Language PD

Student data indicated our English Language Learners (ELL) and low socio-economic status (SES) students were not achieving at the same rate as our higher SES, English-only students. This led Sun Valley to implement the SEAL model beginning in 2014-2015, which involves 12 days of PD for K-3 teachers. The PD includes: two years on high level pedagogical strategies in language development, guidance and support to create academic thematic units based upon science and social studies standards, fostering students' enduring understanding through oral expression of high-level concepts using complex language components, and collaborative reflection and planning to strengthen SEAL-based instructional strategies. In year three and beyond, Sun Valley's Instructional Core Coach will be provided continuous training and support.

#### STEM PD

In order to adopt the NGSS, research and our own observations suggest that we needed to deepen teacher STEM knowledge. Through a district grant we were able to become a part of I-Teams, professional development designed to deepen teachers' STEM knowledge. Teams of teachers work with the math department at San Francisco State University and the Exploratorium Museum to hone their STEM instructional skills. Teachers are learning to adapt their classroom practices to include STEM projects that utilize deep thinking. Students and teachers are engaging in growing and releasing trout fish, building bridges, creating bird nests, marshmallow challenges, and straw sculptures, and 3-D models.

#### Social Skills PD

A few years ago, teacher and staff observational data combined with research about educational environments that encourage student learning, inspired Sun Valley to implement PBIS. As part of the PBIS implementation, Sun Valley leadership and teachers participated in PBIS professional development for three years to create school-wide consistent strategies for reinforcing learning-focused student behavior and improved the social, emotional and academic outcomes of our students.

#### PLCs

Finally, we believe improving instruction is a collective practice. Not only do we learn through off-campus professional development, we also learn from each other. Every week teachers meet in professional learning communities to analyze student data, evaluate student learning, and problem-solve solutions. We

learn by doing the work. At Sun Valley we have created a culture of shared responsibility for each other's learning and development that is built on feedback, reflection and collaboration.

#### 4. School Leadership:

Sun Valley is truly a special place to be a principal, teacher, staff member, student, family member, or volunteer. For over a decade, we have had consistent leadership and positive relationships between all stakeholders. The school's principal believes strongly in a distributed leadership model. As a result, the staff, PTO, and administration have worked collaboratively to create systems that involve all members of the school community. These systems guarantee that every member of the community is invested in each child's success.

There are several leadership structures that ensure academic achievement. They include: the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), PLCs, Response to Intervention Team (RTI), and the Site Leadership Team (SLT). Our Instructional Leadership Team takes a deep dive into data every year to set the goals aligned to our District LCAP. Looking at the data the team decides on a focus for instruction for each grade. The ILT representative reports back to the PLCs who formulate a plan to address student needs. Students who have been identified as needing additional support are then referred to the RTI team. At that point tiered interventions are determined and individual progress is monitored.

The socio-emotional health of our students is as important as their academic success. Under the leadership of the principal, Sun Valley implemented a PBIS model. This led to the creation of a PBIS team comprised of the school counselor, psychologist, teacher and staff representatives, parent representatives, and the school principal. The implementation of this program has significantly decreased negative behaviors in the classrooms and out on the play yard. Students, parents and staff are united around our school-wide expectations and children love receiving recognition with "Good Choice Tickets," positive personal parent calls home and monthly award ceremonies.

Having a positive home-school connection is an important part of our leadership philosophy at Sun Valley. Under the leadership of the principal, Sun Valley developed a Community Building Plan. The goal of this plan was two-fold. First, it increased connectivity between families, and second, it strengthened the home school connection. Because of this, more parents have become involved and parent leadership has increased. Communication between home and school is part of the culture. The principal, classroom teachers, and the PTO send home weekly newsletters, email blasts and social media updates so that families can stay informed and connected. To ensure that all members of our community are equally informed, the Bilingual Community Liaison translates all written communication and supports communication with individual families.

The effectiveness of shared leadership at Sun Valley is evidenced by our high student achievement on standardized tests and our over 95% positive ratings on the School-based Coordinated Plan Survey.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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Sun Valley was nominated for the Blue Ribbon distinction as an exemplary high performing school due to our performance on state assessments. However, what we are most proud of is our focus on helping each individual child reach his or her full potential and working intentionally to close the achievement gap. What Sun Valley does exceptionally well is take an integrated approach to the education of our students. The instruction, curriculum, master schedule, intervention, enrichment, professional development, data analysis, school culture, and community engagement are all interconnected. This guarantees that all of our students are challenged, engaged, and perform at high levels, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

John Muir once said, “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.” This view of interconnectivity is how Sun Valley approaches education – everything is interconnected. From a child’s perspective, this interconnectivity means her education makes sense. As a child progresses from kindergarten through fifth grade, her mind is able to focus on learning because of the coordination and consistency throughout her school years. Her curriculum is aligned K-5, teachers use common instructional strategies, school-wide expectations are clear to her, and she knows there is open communication between her home and the school. What this child doesn’t know is that if she should struggle, there is a network of people and resources well prepared to address her needs. This is what makes Sun Valley powerful and so successful for all learners.

We cannot separate any one aspect of what we do because it is the interconnectivity of our systems and people that result in Sun Valley’s achievements. We have created and continue to improve an integrated model of education that produces strong results by providing rigorous and equitable education for our students.