

***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 Mr. Jason Branham

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

Official School Name Westlake High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 100 North Lakeview Canyon Road

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

City Westlake Village State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 91362-3802

County Ventura

Telephone (805) 497-6711 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL http://www.conejousd.org/whs E-mail sgreiner@conejousd.org

Twitter Handle

https://twitter.com/jasonbranham5 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. Ann Bonitatibus E-mail abonitatibus@conejousd.org

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Patricia Phelps

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
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):
- 17 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 5 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 26 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	253	313	566
10	256	281	537
11	353	319	672
12 or higher	309	262	571
<b>Total Students</b>	1171	1175	2346

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 14 % Asian
  - 3 % Black or African American
  - 20 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 59 % White
  - 2 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 7%

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

<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	63
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	112
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	175
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	2389
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.073
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2%  
47 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Armenian, Cantonese, Chaozhou, Dutch, English, Farsi, Filipino, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Taiwanese, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16%  
Total number students who qualify: 367
8. Students receiving special education services: 8%  
187 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.

- 13 Autism
- 1 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 9 Emotional Disturbance
- 2 Hearing Impairment
- 10 Mental Retardation
- 1 Multiple Disabilities
- 4 Orthopedic Impairment
- 54 Other Health Impaired
- 76 Specific Learning Disability
- 16 Speech or Language Impairment
- 1 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: 1
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	5
Classroom teachers	91
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals	10
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	10

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 26:1

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	97%	97%	97%	97%	96%
High school graduation rate	99%	99%	98%	97%	98%

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	576
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	61%
Enrolled in a community college	33%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	3%

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. 2004

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

To prepare students to function academically, vocationally, culturally, and socially as responsible citizens while encouraging personal integrity, pride and life-long pursuit of knowledge and well-being.

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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The Conejo Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) is located fifty miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles in Ventura County. Approximately 21,000 students are enrolled in grades K—12. The district consists of seventeen elementary schools, five middle schools, three comprehensive high schools, one continuation school, an online college prep school, preschool, TK, full day kindergarten, and an adult school.

CVUSD includes Westlake Village, Thousand Oaks, and Newbury Park. Our community holds high expectations for students in all domains. As a result, students hold themselves accountable for monitoring their own achievement and they take responsibility for their behavior, choices, academic progress, achievement and future plans. Our community is composed mainly of middle/upper income families. Growth in the Conejo Valley in the last decade has been among the fastest in the State of California. This rapid growth has changed the fabric of the community from agrarian to commuter residential. Employment opportunities available within the community are biotechnology, computer technology, light manufacturing, finance, professional interests, and recreation. Although the growth is substantial, the number of kindergarten students entering the school system is declining and therefore, declining enrollment continues to be a concern within the district.

Westlake High School (WHS) is a comprehensive suburban public high school, large enough to have diversity and range, but small enough to be friendly. WHS takes pride in the accomplishments of its students. The staff supports and encourages high expectations for all students. The emphasis of the curriculum is on academics, which is a reflection of the communities' values, and academic courses which are offered at multiple levels to accommodate the needs of all students. In addition, WHS offers career technical training and opportunities for enrichment in art/medical/entertainment, biotechnology, computer science, foods/culinary studies, and health science patient care. The band, orchestra, choir, and drama classes offer exciting opportunities for student participation, as do the numerous on-campus clubs. A wide range of athletic activities, including league competitions, are also a part of our school community. WHS has an active PTSA, School Site Council, and Scholarship Foundation. The community members, businesses, and agencies interact with the school and our students to enhance the learning process.

In 2016, the Westlake staff came together to write a snapshot overview of our school. Our staff wrote the following, Westlake High School's students, parents, and staff take great pride in the beauty of our campus, our impressive academic achievement, and the many extracurricular programs offered. The academic opportunities are abundant, and the quality of education is top notch as evidenced by our most recent Newsweek Ranking in 2015: #26 in the State and #210 in the Nation. Students feel welcome and supported by our friendly and helpful staff. The numerous opportunities for student involvement in extracurricular activities provide a sense of belonging and school pride. We are proud that 96% of our students move on to post-secondary institutions and almost 60% of those attend four-year universities. Overall, Westlake High School produces well-rounded, productive citizens who make a positive difference in the world.

Students have a wide variety of specialty programs to choose from based on their interests. The Westlake Innovative Technology (WIT) Academy, a school within a school concept, supported by a California Partnership Academy grant with a career focus on Art, Media, & Entertainment. Targeted students include at-risk students who strive to complete a college prep curriculum and work in a small group atmosphere. The elective offerings with the WIT academy are specialized for only WIT students and include Video Game Design, Computer Graphics, and Introduction to Digital Media Art.

Currently, the Career Technical Education Pathway Programs are continuing to expand at WHS. A pathway is a sequence of 3 courses that deliver relevant and rigorous academic and technical experiences that enable the student to acquire the depth of knowledge and skill linked with specific post-secondary programs that will lead to a certificate or degree and/or career. WHS supports 3 pathways: Biotechnology, Computer Science, and Health Science/Patient Care. WHS offers a Majors program that is facilitated by a full time Career Education Specialist and it allows students to focus on college and career readiness in one of 15 industry pathways through guest speakers, field trips, job shadowing, internships, and community service.

WHS also supports two career technical student organizations called Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA).

In 2004, WHS was a recipient of the National Blue Ribbon recognition. We celebrated the recognition by publicizing the honor on all of our promotional materials, advertising to local newspapers, celebrating with a student rally on campus, and posting a banner in the front of the school. Since 2004, the staff and community continues to require our students to perform at the highest academic level while changing our teaching philosophy to meet the demands of Common Core. Our teachers emphasize critical thinking and problem solving, while addressing the technological demands of our ever changing population of students.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

WHS offers students a range of English Language Development (ELD), College Prep (CP), Honors, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in four core areas: English, math, science, and social science. All four areas meet the state standards and are aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in math and English. The majority of our course offerings are California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC)-approved.

The English Department offers challenging ELD, CP, Honors, and AP courses. Through a designed career-preparation track, the Academy Program English classes (10th-12th) promote college and career readiness requiring internships and taking students on career style fieldtrips exposing them to the many careers available to them. WHS additionally offers an alternative English class at the 12th grade level: the CSU-developed, UC-approved Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC). Other writing-based electives in the English Department include Journalism, Yearbook, and Academic Decathlon. The focus of the English Department is on writing and on critical thinking. To promote achievement across all grade levels, a student-staffed Writing Center is open every day at lunch. At every level, students read and analyze enriching core literature. To support college and career readiness, every grade level also completes a research project, such as a paper on the 1930s in 9th; a controversial issue paper in 10th; a literary criticism term paper in 11th; and a college essay unit in 12th. Teachers collaborate in vertical teams to develop common assessments and to update curriculum, such as integrating additional nonfiction texts.

The Math Department's standards are closely aligned with the CCSS for mathematics. WHS mathematics teachers see math as a necessary and important skill that all students need in order to be successful in college and the work force. Teachers create and implement activities that promote mathematical practices as outlined in the CCSS. In these activities, students work in groups and independently to persevere through challenging, multi-step problems. Word problems are incorporated into classes to promote writing and reading across curricula. Students regularly practice how to construct viable math arguments and critique those of their classmates. WHS has a Math Center, led by a teacher with student tutors, where students gain additional support to help acquire both foundational and higher-level skills needed to be successful. Several specialized WHS math courses additionally prepare students for college and careers, including CP and AP Statistics, CP and AP Computer Science, AP Calculus, and CP Functions, Statistics, and Trigonometry (FST). Financial Math is a senior-level course designed to prepare students for entering the work force and for being financially responsible after graduation.

Science classes incorporate ELA and math CCSS as well as Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) at all levels; from CP courses, to the five AP-level classes provided by the department. Courses focus on student growth in a variety of common scientific practices including asking questions and defining problems, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, and constructing arguments based on evidence. Teachers are available to help students at lunch or after school and a student-run Science Center provides daily lunchtime tutoring. Science coursework frequently includes lab skills for health-related and biotechnology careers. Under the umbrella of the Health Sciences Pathway, the Patient Care Pathway is a new sequence of courses featuring guest speakers, field trips, and projects that allow students to explore various health professions. Students can choose from CP, Honors, and AP Biology and Chemistry. Unique courses offered are Advanced Anatomy (a human cadaveric dissection-based course, considered equivalent to a first-year gross dissection course), AP Physics II, Biotechnology, and Forensics.

The social science curriculum aligns with state and CCSS English Language Arts (ELA) standards. Teachers see the social sciences as an avenue for students to develop and master skills, such as critical thinking and analysis, essay writing, primary text-based research and analysis, and perspective-conscious reasoning. Students develop both comprehension of past events and the ability to synthesize, analyze, and parse information. The department fosters college readiness through reading of textbooks, case studies, primary source documents; writing essays, free responses, critical analyses of documents and news articles; and speaking through class discussion, Socratic seminars, presentations, debate, and group work. Teachers

assist underperforming students by providing one-on-one support outside of class and modifying, adapting, and scaffolding the curriculum and instruction as needed. In addition to grade-level CP and AP history classes, the department promotes career and college readiness through unique classes, such as AP Human Geography, AP and CP Psychology, and CP Sociology.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Westlake High School we offer a broad range of curriculum outside the core academics, all designed to articulate with, and enhance our core curriculum offerings and Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Our overall enrollment in non-core academics is 100% of our student body with many students enrolled in multiple areas of focus.

The Visual Arts department offers a variety of courses designed to allow students of all grades and skill levels to succeed whether they choose to pursue their specific course professionally or just want to learn the skills that apply to other real life contexts. The courses are also designed to informally bridge between content areas. For our higher achieving students, WHS also offers AP Art History for students wanting an AP class that also fulfills their Visual and Performing Art credit for the University of California college system. Visual Arts offers the following courses and note the associated student (s) and grade (g) count: Food and Nutrition (g 9-12, 60 s), Culinary Arts (g 10-12, 18 s), AP Studio Art (g 10-12, 40 s), Art Media (g 9-12, s 113), Ceramics (g 9-12, s 140), and Drawing (g 10-12, s 25).

For Technology, WHS offers the following courses and associated student/grade count: Web Page Design (g 10-12, 35 s), Computer Graphics 1-Advanced (g 10-12, s 71), Computer Programming (g 9-12, s 38), Personal Computing (g 9, s 250), Microsoft Office (g 10, s 11). Next year we will offer an Information Technology class for all grades. Additionally, we have a technology centric program (The Academy) that provides cross curricular and industry focus that functions as a school within a school. In January 2016, President Obama instituted an initiative to empower American students with Computer Science skills. WHS responded with a wide variety of Computer Science classes including AP Computer Science Principles, Computer Science Independent Projects, AP Computer Science, and CP level computer programming classes.

The Performing Arts department offers a variety of courses designed to allow students of all grades and skill levels to succeed whether they choose to pursue their specific course professionally or just want to learn the skills to apply in other creative contexts. The courses are also designed to encourage students of varied abilities to be included in the broader WHS community. For example, students with disabilities are seamlessly integrated into the classes without the need for prerequisite skills. Performing Arts offers the following courses and note the associated student/grade count: Theater 1-4/Tech (g 9-12, s 157), Choir multiple levels (g 9-12, s 216), Band/Orchestra multiple levels (g 9-12, s 323). The Performing Arts Department continues to grow and thrive, while earning numerous recognitions and awards both regionally and nationally.

The Physical Education (PE) department offers courses in a variety areas and team sports. Our PE department encourages students to become active and challenge themselves with a variety of athletic endeavors. For example, we have a built in swimming unit, all 9th/12th graders receive CPR training, and next year we be offering classes in both Yoga and Pilates. Physical Education (non-core), & Health offer the following courses and note the associated student/grade count: Dance (g 9-12, s 120), Health (required for graduation), PE (all students are required to take 4 semesters of PE). In addition to our PE offerings we have 24 varsity sports with approximately 1200 student athletes.

The World Language department offers courses designed to allow students of all grades and skill levels to succeed by learning the language skills that apply to other real life contexts. The courses are also designed to provide a cultural bridge between English speakers, and the global community as a whole. The World Language program offers the following courses and note the associated student/grade count: ASL 1-3 (g 10-12, s 216), Chinese 1-3, AP (g 9-12, s 97), French 1-3, AP (g 9-12, s 183), Spanish 1-3, A9 (g 9-12, s 824). Students involved in the World Language program are presented with numerous opportunities to enhance the cultural experience such as a yearly field trip to Olvera street in Spanish AP and the American Sign

Language classes participate in a Holiday Cheer signing event and the 24 hours of silence event where students can only use Sign Language to communicate.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

WHS faculty use research-based instructional methods to deliver course material, reinforce learning, and inspire students to extend their learning and supports struggling students through a Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS). Examples of instructional methods used to present new material support a Universal Design for Learning approach and include: direct instruction using interactive note-taking guides; video and audio displays to illustrate and provide engaging examples of course material; process-based guided inquiry learning; and discovery-based learning.

Teachers employ instructional methods to present and reinforce material that are often specific to their subject matter and chosen to engage students, foster their curiosity and inspire them to seek deeper knowledge. For example, science teachers often engage students in inquiry-based investigations and group work. English teachers utilize instruction in teaching students how to scaffold using the Jane Schaffer format. Social Studies regularly elicit dialogue through Socratic discussions. Math teachers implement problem-based learning and World Language teachers frequently ask students to engage in dialogues in the target language. Teachers make their classes interactive and engaging through the use of games, kinesthetic learning, art, music and drama. Technology-based reinforcement is used to provide additional practice through digital platforms such as Kahoot, GoFormative, Padlet and Edmodo. WHS teachers routinely differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

For students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), WHS offers multiple tiers of instruction including a Learning Essentials Academic Progress (LEAP), Foundations, Basic, and Emotionally Disturbed (ED) Program. Each program is specific to the students' needs as outlined in the students' IEP. Instructional methods include many of the strategies outlined above, as well as one-on-one instructional support in the general education and Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI) classrooms, small-group instruction, and individual social and emotional supports. For English Language Development (ELD) students, teachers use scaffolding and Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) techniques and receive classroom push-in support from a school site-specific translator and English Language Program coordinator. ELD students at the beginning to intermediate levels additionally receive instructional support minutes outside of their core courses. For Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) students, teachers use Depth and Complexity Icons and Prompts to promote understanding at deeper and more complex levels.

WHS uses a multi-tiered support system (MTSS) to provide intervention for struggling students. Teachers use scaffolding, remediation, technology-based support, and additional one-on-one support before and after school hours. WHS offers lunchtime peer tutoring through dedicated Writing, Math, Science and ELD Centers and access to a listing of approved student tutors outside of school hours. WHS's exceptional counselors bring these numerous elements of the instructional system together by regularly monitoring students and orienting them according to their areas of strength and growth.

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

At WHS, teachers effectively use assessments that build upon entry-level and intermediate skills to facilitate student content mastery. To improve student achievement, an in-depth analysis of student performance data through department-level collaboration is used to direct future changes to curricula. These results are communicated to students and stakeholders to show progressive improvement.

Effective assessments at WHS engage students and foster skills such as collaboration, creativity, communication, and problem solving and provide students with opportunities for revision based on feedback. This is achieved through the use of varied forms of assessment such as lab reports, presentations, debates, Socratic seminars, research papers, essays, portfolios, and oral assessments. Specific examples are seen throughout the departments. For example, math teachers use shared end-of-chapter exams. Students are provided with opportunities to correct missed test questions to gain a better understanding of the material. The Science Department uses labs as formative assessments; in small groups, students complete

experiments, regularly present their results to the class, and are encouraged to revise their experiments based on peer and teacher feedback. After evaluating essays, ELA teachers develop mini-units to address targeted areas of student need. The Social Science Department uses clickers and student cellular devices to provide feedback that addresses misconceptions immediately. Similarly, the World Language Department uses speaking dialogues in front of the class to provide immediate feedback of language mastery. Multiple departments use grading platforms such as ZipGrade and GradeCam to generate item- and standard-level analysis of student responses to test questions. Teachers across departments use submission platforms such as Google Classroom and TurnItIn to provide feedback digitally so students can refine and revise their work.

Staff and administration share and reflect upon school-wide assessment results at regular intervals throughout the school year. At the beginning of the year, administration meets with the staff to present school rankings, standardized and AP test results. This is followed by a department-specific analysis of the results to identify areas for improvement. Departments meet by subject area during Common Planning Time (CPT) twice a month to reflect on results of their assessments in order to re-adjust their curricula for the following chapter, unit, or year. This CPT period supports collaboration between teachers for analyzing data and implementing instructional decisions. Finally, students and parents receive assessment results through the internet platform Q Connection Index (Q). When necessary, teachers include comments next to assignments and meet with parents and students to provide further feedback.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

At WHS, we embrace a culture of high expectations for students and staff that supports a positive environment and motivates our students to make stronger academic, social and emotional connections to their education. Our students are expected to prioritize academics, extracurricular activities available to our students cultivate a strong sense of pride and connection to our Warrior community, and we have developed a safe learning environment that promotes safety and mutual respect between students and staff.

The WHS culture begins with a positive, supportive environment for students and staff. In order to enable all students to be successful and prioritize academics, we provide many programs and resources for students such as subject-specific learning centers, differentiated course levels, an exceptional counseling staff, and peer tutors. We currently facilitate writing, science and math centers during lunch and designated after-school hours for students to receive academic support. We encourage students to challenge themselves by selecting a rigorous academic schedule and to help one another succeed through peer tutoring. Teachers feel valued and supported by counselors and administrators and given time to collaborate and share best practices during bi-monthly Collaborative Planning Time (CPT).

WHS offers a variety of courses and activities that motivate and engage students such as technology, extracurricular classes, elective classes, and community outreach opportunities. Teachers incorporate technology in the classroom through the use of Google Applications for Education, mobile computer labs, and tablets, enabling students to develop and engage in 21st century learning skills. We offer a variety of academic and social extracurricular activities designed to complement and expand on what students learn in the classroom, develop a positive social identity within the school and create stronger relationships with staff and peers. For example, our freshman Westlake Orientation Week (WOW) is a three-day event in which incoming freshmen participate in activities designed to cultivate a meaningful connection to school before their first day. Activities include rallies, a school tour, club rush, school trivia games and an opportunity to meet upperclassmen and teachers.

Other examples of academic and extracurricular activities include our Associated Student Government (ASG), Mock Trial, Academic Decathlon, and a wide variety of clubs, sports and elective classes. There are a variety of teacher-advised academic and social clubs available including robotics, physics, Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), equestrian, and religious groups. The variety of choices provides all students with a group on campus in which they can feel supported emotionally, socially, and academically.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

At WHS, we have a strong connection to our parents as well as our local community, engaging these stakeholders in a variety of ways that allow for student success and engagement as well as school improvement.

WHS has a dedicated focus on parental outreach and involvement. Administration and staff utilize many strategies such as “all calls”, a counseling department YouTube channel, a school website, teacher websites, and online grading system to remain in contact about school information and student academic progress. This keeps parents informed of school activities, student progress, and programs that can provide their students with the ability to achieve and to access a variety of programs offering additional support. Parents visit the school during community events such as Back to School Night, and Future Warrior Night where they can see the campus and talk to teachers, counselors, coaches, and administrators. WHS also has active parental involvement in various athletic and performing arts Booster clubs, a thriving Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), and the Warrior Wishes program, which provides financial support to student athletics and academics, and provides teachers with additional supplies and technologies in their classrooms. The WHS ELAC team meets quarterly to support and engage families of ELD students. The presentations help connect families to school and community resources as well as post-secondary options.

WHS also has a strong connection to and presence within the community, connecting with community leaders, businesses, and other stakeholders to provide our students with additional educational and career-readiness resources. We closely follow educational and community goals outlined by our Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), which were created by our district with specific input from a variety of community stakeholders. WHS offers various opportunities for our students to engage in community programs through initiatives such as the Regional Occupational Program (ROP), our College and Career Center, and our Career Technical Education (CTE) Academy. These programs and supports allow students to engage in job shadowing, internship, and mentoring experiences. With the support of community foundations such as local grants provided by Amgen Biotechnology, Westlake teachers also engage members of the community to serve as guest speakers and as resources to educate students on career and post-secondary options.

WHS has one of the largest and most comprehensive Performing Arts Departments in Ventura County. WHS has four concert bands, three Orchestras, three Jazz bands, Marching Band and Color Guard. WHS also sponsors an award winning Choir and Theatre department. The WHS Performing Arts Department is a source of pride for our school and community.

### 3. Professional Development:

The Conejo Valley Unified School District (CVUSD), WHS provides extensive professional development opportunities with a philosophy of encouraging educators to create, develop, and lead fellow educators in growth and learning. Yearly, all instructors complete six hours of professional development that is designed to promote and increase instructional effectiveness, student improvement, and teacher collaboration. Instructors choose from a variety of district- and school-sponsored professional development workshops that best fit their needs.

Teachers are encouraged to engage in lifelong learning, and expand their instructional repertoire to include new technologies such as Google Applications for Education. In addition, instructors and staff meet bi-monthly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to develop relationships between department members, encourage cross-curricular articulation, and create assessments across the educational spectrum. In recent years, the English Language Arts (ELA) department has led various PLC meetings with each department to create a common writing assessment that aligns with the new Common Core Standards that has influenced school improvement by creating a school-wide understanding of writing expectations required by the Common Core.

Teachers at WHS have worked to engage in inquiry into their own practice by forming a teacher observation club. Targeting the challenge of a large staff and limited collaborative minutes, within this teacher-initiated PLC, instructors observe each other's classrooms across departments and engage in bi-monthly, collaborative, protocol-driven reflection. Teacher engagement in this group has resulted in analysis of student work and inquiry-action around topics such as growth mindset and student grouping.

Another challenge WHS teachers face is effective integration of instructional technologies in the classroom. To cope with this challenge, the district and school continuously offer professional development encouraging the implementation of new technologies with the goals of improving formative assessment and school-home communication. Training has provided teachers with skills needed to create and maintain teacher websites and effective digital platforms for grading systems, and have allowed parents and students to readily access information.

WHS administration encourages and supports faculty professional development outside of the district. Instructors spend weekends and summers attending academic conferences in various content areas. Advanced Placement instructors attend annual conferences and trainings and grade AP Exams; special education instructors attend the Council for Exceptional Children Conference; and the math department attends various UCLA common core in-service conferences, to name a few. The WHS staff uses many different professional opportunities to increase student learning and continue yearly school improvement.

#### 4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at WHS is characterized by articulating the pathways to success at the school for all stakeholders and influencing behaviors that lead to those pathways. The principal, as the standard bearer, serves the function of representing the spirit behind all efforts that contribute to personal growth of staff and students. Rather than influence by edict, the principal shares a sense of purpose and provides direction with staff. The principal's leadership effectiveness is evidenced through the awareness and support he enjoys from staff. Other school leaders contribute to the direction and influence by managing their divisions in ways that reflect the purpose and goals of the school's mission: To provide a comprehensive education in a safe and positive learning environment; prepare students to function academically, vocationally, culturally, and socially as responsible citizens; encourage personal integrity, pride, and the life-long pursuits of knowledge and well-being; prepare student to make a meaningful contribution to an ever-changing society. The Assistant Principal for Instruction serves as the resident expert of curriculum and student placement – working to ensure students are challenged within their abilities, yet outside of their academic comfort zones. The Assistant Principal for Athletics functions as a leader committed to producing scholar-athletes and creating an environment where competition is honored as a component of education – not its only goal. The Deans of Activities and Attendance work collaboratively to ensure students are included in the decision-making for all WHS activities and share responsibility for their behaviors.

Department chairs work closely with teachers within their departments as well as in cooperative cross-curricular activities to articulate and support course work across the curriculum. The Department chairs work closely with school administration to share ideas without intimidation and improve overall school content through each classroom. All school leaders and staff share commitment to diverse programs that seek to include all students regardless of academic strengths. Academic, social, cultural, and athletic programs all contribute to the school mission – with recognition given to those with demonstrated excellence and assistance given to those with areas that benefit from it. Specifically, with a student body of nearly 2400, WHS boasts a list of 80 student clubs outside of athletics. Athletics, with levels from freshmen to varsity, are competitive teams with opponents in throughout the Western US as well in local levels. Free-of-cost tutoring in core subject areas is available daily and students are continually evaluated to ensure proper placement.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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Westlake High School makes a concerted effort to support academic success for all students in a variety of ways. One signature practice we find particularly successful in supporting students is the design and implementation of our Academic Support Centers. Through our participation in the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation process during the 2011/2012 school year, we analyzed student academic performance data and found we had a need to support our struggling students in a more effective, data driven manner.

This realization spurred the development of our first academic support center during the 2012/2013 school year; our Writing (English Language Arts) Center. Through the development of the Writing Center, our school focused on a model that utilized peer tutors to enhance learning and support for all of our students. The peer tutoring model provided opportunities for advanced students to be engaged as tutors, and supported in their advanced studies, and for struggling students to receive the support of a helpful peer. In its initial year (2013/14), the Writing Center had 252 visitors and served the needs of College Prep (CP), Honors (H), and Advanced Placement (AP) students with a majority of the students who received support coming from the CP level.

Based on this initial data and positive feedback from students and teachers, we expanded our academic support center offerings to include the establishment of a Math Center and a Science Center. Developed using the same model used to develop the Writing Center, these centers have similarly been able to provide academic support for a wide range of students. As of this writing, in the 2015/2016 school year our Writing Center has received 402 student visits -- 57% CP students, 30% H students, and 13% AP students. Our Math Center has received 453 student visits -- 75% CP students, 22% H students, and 3% AP students in a range of courses from Algebra 1CP to Calculus AP. Our Science Center has received 690 student visits of which 33% were from CP students, 48% H students, and 19% AP students in courses from Biology CP to Physics AP. Our three academic centers are open every day at lunch and have an open door policy. Currently, only 10% of our student population has a GPA of 2.0 or below, and we attribute the development of our academic support centers as a critical component and signature practice in the success of our students.