

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Wendy Hudson

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

Official School Name Tustin Memorial Academy

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 12712 Browning Avenue

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

City Santa Ana State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 92705-3465

County Orange

Telephone (714) 730-7546 Fax (714) 730-7524

Web site/URL http://www.tustin.k12.ca.us/tustinmemorial E-mail whudson@tustin.k12.ca.us

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/tustinmemorial 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. Gregory Franklin E-mail gfranklin@tustin.k12.ca.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Tustin Unified School District Tel. (714) 730-7301

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Lynn Davis
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 19 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 4 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 28 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	51	37	88
1	43	58	101
2	47	58	105
3	48	67	115
4	48	48	96
5	53	59	112
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	290	327	617

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 44 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 38 % White
 - 6 % 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: 1%

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	6
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	652
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.009
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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

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

Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Korean, Philipino, Portuguese, Mandarin, Japanese, Khmer, Arabic, Farsi, German, Hindi, Urdu, Cebuano, Gujarati, Taiwanese, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, Kannada

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 7 %
Total number students who qualify: 43

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %
21 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.

- 3 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 1 Other Health Impaired
- 4 Specific Learning Disability
- 13 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	21
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	3
Paraprofessionals	9
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

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 29:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2007

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

All Tustin Memorial Academy students will develop a love for learning, read at/above grade level, and meet/exceed grade level standards in a scholarly environment.

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

The only criteria to attend Tustin Memorial Academy is that a student must reside within the Tustin Unified School District boundaries. All students, including those who have been formally identified for the Gifted and Talented Education program, are selected to attend through a lottery system.

PART III – SUMMARY

Tustin Memorial Academy (TMA) was established in 1995 as the singular elementary magnet school in the Tustin Unified School District. Located in a residential neighborhood in the heart of North Tustin, our campus is a vital and dynamic learning center that fulfills our community's expectations for educational excellence. Crafted as a "school of choice", TMA overwhelmingly meets and surpasses the needs and desires of our community. Recognized as a 2007 National Blue Ribbon School, the prestigious designation is proudly depicted on banners and murals, reinforcing why families choose TMA: our tradition for academic excellence, high achievement standards, strong character programs, and philosophy of dedicated parent involvement are matchless. The result: each year more than 300 students seek admission to our school via lottery.

The absence of attendance boundaries means we draw students from all corners of our district, signifying a wide-range of cultural and socio-economic groups. With twenty-two different languages represented on campus, our student body is rich with cultural diversity. As both a Fundamental and Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) magnet school, our curriculum encourages all students to become inquisitive learners and collaborators while grasping a wide variety of academic skills. In our unique self-contained GATE classrooms, we provide students with differentiated instruction and foster intellectual growth by encouraging higher-order thinking skills, problem solving, creativity, and critical thinking. Results of the 2015 Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) reveal 81% of students met or exceeded standards in math and 90% met or exceeded standards in English Language Arts, demonstrating unyielding evidence that the precedence of high standards first envisioned in 1995 remains true today.

A strong sense of community and unparalleled parental involvement are defining characteristics of TMA. Parents and families contribute more than 15,000 hours of volunteer service to our school each year. Our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is unstoppable with 54 well-organized committees to support teachers and students by providing innovative programs, facility improvements, and educational resources. Generating \$210,000 annually, their assistance supports a multitude of school-wide programs to augment curriculum: arts, music, Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) courses, the provision of four reading specialists, a Physical Education teacher, professional development for staff, and technology resources to directly benefit every student. In addition to the daily classroom support and enrichment, their reach extends to ensuring we have state-of-the-art technology at the forefront of our instruction as we strive to prepare our 21st century learners to compete in a global job market. One of our most impactful parent programs is our award-winning dads' group H.E.R.O.E.S. (Helping Enrich the Resources of Every Student). Now in its twelfth year of successful implementation, the program evolved from the need and desire to actively include fathers in their children's education. The Organic Children's Garden and Nature Center, entirely built and sustained by scores of parent volunteers, serves as an "edible schoolyard" and outdoor classroom to meld project-based, hands-on learning with resourcefulness. At every turn, there are passionate and committed parents on our campus willing to go the extra mile whenever, wherever, and as often, as necessary.

Our students contribute to the climate of equity, caring, and respect that is prevalent in our halls, classrooms, and playgrounds. "Character Counts" is more than a motto; the phrase serves to empower students to do what is right— be respectful, be responsible, and build relationships. Universal positive behavior expectations are posted in every room so all students understand that the rules are the same everywhere and the same for everyone. Student Council leaders organize ongoing school-wide service learning projects such as Team Kids Challenge, which supports local animal shelters and military personnel, or filling Joy Jars with small toys for pediatric cancer patients. Doing so provides the inspiration and impetus to show our children how to give to those less fortunate than ourselves— that giving is what we do and who we are as a passionate community.

Our conviction in emphasizing the significance of health, physical and emotional well-being of children as a pre-requisite for academic excellence has been a driving force behind our comprehensive Wellness Policy. Our unwavering commitment to improving student well-being was recognized in 2014 when TMA was designated as one of seventeen schools state-wide to be awarded with the California Exemplary Program

Award in Physical Activity and Nutrition. Additionally, our school received recognition as a California Distinguished School in 2006, 2014, and as a California Gold Ribbon School in 2016.

TMA is synonymous with excellence; through dedicated collaboration with our parents and community we have created an environment that generates success. Together we strive to instill in all students the promise of Theodore Roosevelt, “Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.” At TMA, our worthwhile work is our steadfast commitment to shaping the students entrusted to us today into the leaders of tomorrow.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At TMA, our charge is to promote high levels of learning for every child. To do so, we skillfully manage a core curriculum, driven by rigorous standards, that establishes clear expectations for student learning, promotes higher-order thinking to allow students to problem-solve and analyze, builds deeper knowledge with exploration of relationships and connections, and prompts practical and essential dialog between teachers and peers to build shared understanding of ideas.

We utilize a balanced literacy approach to reading and writing across all grade levels, combining the strongest elements of best instructional practices to actively engage students in meaningful learning. Skills are explicitly modeled each day throughout all balanced literacy components: mini-lesson, read aloud, guided reading, shared reading/writing, independent reading, interactive writing, Reading/Writing Workshop and word study. Students are provided direct instruction to scaffold learning and are further supported with visuals such as anchor charts and process charts. Independent reading intervals afford time for student conferring to sharpen reading and writing skills. A deliberate balance between fiction and non-fiction text, and argument and informational writing provides a robust approach to English Language Arts instruction.

A minimum of three times a year all students' reading levels are assessed using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessments to ascertain each student's instructional reading level. Leveled readers augment small group instruction to build accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. An array of authentic and motivating literature is provided to meet the broadest range of abilities. Classroom libraries are well-stocked with leveled books, each with a clear label affixed, creating ease of access for students when self-selecting texts. Students at each grade level are schooled in finding their own "just right" books, serving to empower and build reading independence in all. To provide further individualized support, we utilize Lexia Core5 as a technology-based approach to accelerate reading skill development. Accessed from home or school, it is designed to meet rigorous state standards while providing explicit, systematic, and personalized reading instruction. Norm-referenced performance data and analysis predicts year-end performance for students and provides teachers with a data-driven action plan to differentiate instruction.

Four years ago our staff embarked on a journey to incorporate real-world relevance into our math program. We trained extensively in the theories of Cognitively Guided Instruction that acknowledges that children arrive at school with an intuitive understanding of mathematics which serves as the basis for developing more formal instruction. Our belief is that children can solve mathematical problems without first having a strategy provided. Emphasis on interest-based activities and application skills allows students to see math in action. TMA students are unafraid of "math-talk" as they describe to peers their problem-solving strategies while comparing/contrasting tactics used by others. We call upon all students to support and defend their mathematical reasoning; in doing so, confidence grows in tandem with their passion for math.

Upper grade students rely on math journals to record data, notes, reflections, and to process ideas. Differentiation and individualization occur for all students with variation in number sets; when mathematical acceleration is necessary, we advance students as appropriate. Currently, we have two students who attend math each morning at the middle school, returning to our campus afterwards to complete the remainder of the fifth grade coursework.

Science and social studies are brought to life by infusing project-based, hands-on learning at every turn. Our teachers skillfully connect relationships across and between disciplines to extend understanding for all students. Third grade teachers depict Tustin History in a Box, which incorporates realia, historical artifacts, and engaging literature to transport students back in time to explore the unique history of their own city. Lazy W Ranch is the destination for fourth graders, where they spend a day in real-world simulation of early California life making adobe bricks and panning for gold. After fifth graders study the American Revolution, they select open-ended projects to represent their learning. Product examples have included battlefield models, colonial food, PowerPoint presentations, and student written and directed videos. Parent-

led and sponsored events such as Women in History, Colonial Days, Walk through California, Walk through the American Revolution, and Gold Rush Days serve to bring learning to life in meaningful ways for our students. Projects, independent investigations, simulations, and dramatizations are found in every classroom at TMA.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Learning to perform and speak before an audience is a skill we strive to cultivate in our students, thus we emphasize visual and performing arts. Every grade level produces a play, musical, or vocal performance for families and peers. A full-scale talent show is created annually, involving 140 students in 45 acts, culminating in a grand showcase for 500 parents and families. All fourth and fifth graders receive weekly one-hour lessons from a credentialed music teacher, including vocals, violin, recorder, music appreciation and theory. Each student participates in a trimesterly showcase to highlight their learning. Six times a year, kindergarten through fifth graders study with a local musician, learning the fundamentals of rhythm and harmony, while taking in the history of folk songs from around the world. A series of five cultural arts programs bring in the opera, dance troupes, and a vast array of musicians to perform everything from jazz to blues to doo wop for every student. All students partake in art lessons through Fibro Art, which introduces classic and contemporary artists. After studying style and historical context, students create artwork in a similar fashion as the artist.

TMA employs a fully-credentialed physical education (PE) teacher who works tirelessly to advance PE skills and promote lifelong well-being for students. We believe structured group exercise and moderate-high levels of physical activity improve academic achievement, on-task time, and test scores whilst decreasing absenteeism and disciplinary referrals. Each year, TMA students outpace and outperform the district, county, and state in academic and fitness assessments as indicated by our current Academic Performance Index score of 963 and our 83% pass rate on the Fitnessgram. First through fifth graders receive instruction in PE twice every week for 50 minutes each session. PE progressively increases in complexity and difficulty based on assessment of the students' emerging motor skills and in alignment with the "Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools". For example, first graders rehearse movements from left to right as they learn to maneuver the left and right sides of their bodies. Fourth grade students are expected to explain the difference between offense and defense and demonstrate as such during an organized game. Second graders are learning to enjoy and participate in challenging activities for longer periods of time as fifth graders are demonstrating how to warm up the associated muscles before a particular activity. All students start their day with warm up exercises and a lap, which increases in length slowly and steadily from the time the students are in first grade until their departure after fifth.

In 2005, a cadre of dedicated and enthusiastic parents, unafraid of hard work and armed with a dream, turned an unused 1/3 of an acre plot of land on the outer edge of campus into a thriving area in which to learn. The result: TMA students enjoy their own "edible schoolyard" by way of our Organic Children's Garden and Nature Center. A comprehensive school garden curriculum aligned with Common Core Standards blends together the best of both nature and learning, thereby allowing the acreage to stand as an outdoor classroom. Students grow and harvest seasonal produce which serves to shape their understanding of the connection between what they eat and from where it originates. Experiences in the garden give them a clearer perception of how the natural world sustains us and promotes nutritional and environmental consciousness. Students are lead through monthly lessons, which include learning to maintain, plant, and compost, and encompasses lessons in horticulture, earth science, and ecology.

Technology is integral to student learning at TMA. Students in grades 3-5 are part of our 1:1 iPad program, while our K-2 students share their devices with a partner. Instruction is designed around the SAMR model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Re-definition) to fully integrate technology as a learning tool. While utilizing TMA's state-of-the-art technology, first graders create Wiki pages to present their animal research projects using Haiku, our Learning Management System. Third graders work on a year-long class Wiki page uploading videos, games, and photos that dive into exploration of the Sun, Moon, Earth's rotation, constellations, and seasons. "The Genius Hour" affords rich opportunities for students to research high-interest topics in multiple subject areas of their own choosing.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

We commit to the belief that students learn best when they are highly engaged, thus we continually seek ways to enhance content learning. To support high levels of learning in all students, our teachers are driven to utilize strategies at the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. One hundred percent of TMA teachers are trained in differentiation for GATE and high-achieving students using the research of Dr. Sandra Kaplan at the University of Southern California. All students are provided with opportunities for compacted curriculum using pre-testing as a means to assess what children already know; instruction is then modified for challenge and acceleration, as necessary. Teachers employ a gradual-release-of-responsibility instruction model, resulting in confident learners who accept responsibility for their learning.

To reach the highest level of achievement for all students, we reach consensus in defining proficiency through rubrics and student work samples, drawing from a broad range of performances. Curriculum, instructional strategies, common pacing, academic support, and assessments are skillfully coordinated among teachers and determine the logical sequence to present the content standards. Technology is at the forefront of our instructional practices as we strive to personalize learning--SMART Boards and voice amplification systems are standard equipment in every classroom giving rise to improved student focus and on-task behaviors. With nearly 600 iPads at our disposal, teachers are empowered to create lessons in all curricular areas that prompt interaction and challenge. The physical environment and furniture arrangement in each classroom facilitates inclusion, interaction, collaboration, and purposeful engagement. Teachers model fairness, respect, and equity at every turn by promising that all ideas are valued and academic risks are worth taking.

Valuing each student as a learner demands we provide a comprehensive support system for those in need. Teams of teachers meet weekly to analyze formative assessment results to quickly identify students who need additional support. Timely feedback is instilled as a function of learning and directs us to plan for immediate interventions rather than remediation at a later date. Four intervention specialists, trained in Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention Kits, are poised to step in and provide additional support when reading progress stalls. Over time, students who are not demonstrating appropriate progress based upon assessment results are referred to our multi-tiered Student Study Team. To coordinate the range of services, our team of experts assembles monthly to develop, and begin, a plan of action and response for each child.

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

Our quest to continually advance student achievement drives the TMA staff to focus on results; to that end, a wide range of assessment data are used to monitor individual student progress in meeting or exceeding standards. A system of balanced assessments informs instruction; progress monitoring examines general skills and knowledge while summative assessments reflect long-term growth. Curriculum frameworks provide the blueprint for organizing our instructional roadmap for students to meet or exceed the standards. To encourage the highest level of achievement for all students, our weekly work in grade level teams defines the explicit content skills and knowledge that all students must attain at every grade.

Every August, staff collectively reviews data from the California Standards Test and the SBAC and completes a thorough analysis of results from claims, multi-year comparisons, and subgroup data to form instructional decisions. The pertinent data provided is two-fold: when analyzing scores for the departing class, we identify areas of strength and weakness in instruction; for the incoming class, we pinpoint areas of strength and weakness in their learning. Recently, results from the first year of SBAC determined that more focused practice with performance tasks was needed. Teachers worked collaboratively to calibrate scoring using common rubrics. The result: a collective understanding of what students need to know followed by an intentional shift in instruction.

Our teachers recognize the pivotal role assessment plays in driving curriculum and regularly access class data and individual student achievement results. We employ standards-aligned checkpoint assessments each trimester to measure student progress in language arts and math. Fountas and Pinnell running records are administered to all students each trimester to determine instructional levels. End-of-unit assessments in

math, social studies, and science, as well as teacher-generated assessments and checklists form the foundation for modifications and differentiation in instruction, including acceleration.

Communication at TMA is designed to proactively inform and involve our stakeholders. Annual fall goal-setting conferences are attended by 100% of our parents and set the stage for defining the roles and responsibilities of home and school. We openly explain annual learning expectations and results to students, parents and families in varied settings: rubrics, progress reports, report cards, newsletters, emails, phone calls, and conferences. When relaying results of assessment data to parents, our teachers not only communicate results but define what students know and are able to do, what they need to learn, and what will be done to facilitate improvement

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The culture at TMA is best summarized by our motto: “Helping children reach for the stars.” Active parent and family involvement is an established tenet and one of our most valuable and long-standing assets—all stakeholders recognize and accept participation as their responsibility in contributing to academic success and emotional well-being. With each family volunteering an average of 30 hours per year, parents are a daily mainstay on campus, visually reinforcing the importance of school to their children, and making the art of education a family affair. The resultant solid base of support ensures student success and affirms that teachers at TMA are highly valued for their work—in six years, only two teachers have elected to leave our school.

Involvement and inclusion begins before the first bell rings on the first day of school. Back to School Night is held prior to the start of school, with parents and children collectively learning and sharing in the excitement of the upcoming year. Potential nervousness and first-day jitters are eased as families meet their prospective new teachers and begin to lay the groundwork for building relationships that frequently transcends their years at TMA. The overwhelming success of the strategic timing and format of our Back to School Night program is evidenced by its annual 95% family participation. We host a kindergarten family picnic before the first day of school for our youngest learners so parents and children alike have the opportunity to forge vital social connections with their peers. A Kindergarten Liaison expertly guides new families throughout the school year as they navigate what is often a brave, new world. Mentors are afforded to new families, serving as ongoing resources for information and advice.

We place extraordinary emphasis on the importance of building character. For four years, we have embraced the wisdom of former UCLA Coach John Wooden to integrate character traits into curriculum. Through the language of children’s literature in “Inch and Miles: the Journey to Success”, he thoughtfully presents fourteen traits to better our personal skills. Each trimester, we honor students who best exemplify the selected traits. Our highly successful Positive Behavior Intervention and Support plan expects all students to demonstrate three behaviors in all arenas: be respectful, be responsible, and build relationships. “STAR Bucks” are recompense for demonstrating kindness, following rules, and including others. An atmosphere of belonging permeates our campus, contributing to our student mobility rate of less than 1% each year.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

It is the charge of all TMA stakeholders to sustain an environment that promotes high academic success and excellence for all students. To do so requires the efforts of all participants to work together to improve student achievement. Our TMA staff embraces the critical connection between parent support and student success; to that end, we offer a wealth of learning opportunities and resources to aid our staunchest allies. We continually work to facilitate the participation of family members as decision-makers, volunteers, financial contributors, benefactors, and most importantly, partners in educating our students.

With a yearly operating budget of \$210,000 our PTO magnanimously provides much-needed materials and programs to impact learning, including state-of-the-art technology to revolutionize the delivery of curriculum and instruction. These resources, coupled with the power of parental involvement, have allowed TMA to sustain a long history of high Academic Performance Index scores (963), and contributed to our number one ranking each year within the Tustin Unified School District. The success of our parent-inspired learning lab in the garden, which brings project-based learning and hands-on science lessons to life for every student, is reflected in our state science scores: 94% of our fifth graders were proficient or advanced in 2015. Further, the results of our 2014 Parent Surveys present prevailing evidence of the successful collaboration between school and families: 99% agreed “Various opportunities for parent participation are provided” and 96% agreed “The school communicates with parents about programs and events.”

Timely two-way communication is critical to our partnerships so we provide a variety of forums for parents to discuss their ideas and concerns, including annual surveys to solicit parent opinions on the operation of the school. Drawing together voices from School Site Council, Parent Teacher Organization, Special Education Advisory Council, and GATE Advisory Council, we establish a culture within our school in which effective research-based programs and practices are valued and demanded by all stakeholders.

All classroom teachers utilize the Haiku Learning Management System to expand the boundaries of the classroom to encompass and engage students and families from home. Class announcements, calendars, and homework assignments are disseminated from each classroom's Haiku page, while discussion forums allow students to participate in threaded dialogue on a given topic, which can be accessed from their homes or mobile devices. The enduring partnership we have formed with our parents and community continues to significantly impact the learning and the lives of our students.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is at the center of our practice of improvement at TMA. Delving deeper into research-based instructional strategies, we attend professional development that centers solely on improving instruction. We are fortunate to be part of a larger district where professional development is a priority, and employees are rewarded for pursuing personal development and career advancement by offering pay scale support for advanced degrees and additional specialization. Weekly collaboration time is built into our day through dedicated time for Professional Learning Communities and through our modified-Wednesday schedule. We teach an extended school day four times a week to allow staff a block of uninterrupted time for professional development and collaboration on Wednesdays when students go home early.

Knowing the profound effect our own expertise has on student learning drives us to pursue every opportunity to improve our craft. Every August staff attends a three-day Summer Literacy Institute to deepen our understanding of the structures of balanced literacy such as word study, shared reading and writing, and interactive read alouds. Throughout the year, ongoing follow-up sessions are offered via Google Classroom, webinars, and teacher-directed "Share Fairs". To further strengthen our practices, TMA contracted with a consulting team to provide bi-monthly clinics in Readers'/Writers' Workshop. For two years now the team has utilized the demonstration lab model so our teachers can observe experts firsthand teaching mini-lessons, strategy groups, and conferencing.

By tradition, our TMA scholars have performed far above average in mathematics on both local and statewide assessments. Results of the state testing since 2010 indicated that school-wide nearly 75% of our students were performing at the advanced level in math. To promote high levels of learning and to provide a more rigorous math curriculum, staff has engaged in the study and theories of Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), which emphasizes problem solving over basic algorithms. Utilizing real-world problems has developed a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts for all of our students.

TMA GATE teachers must fulfill the requirements of our district's intensive GATE certification training program before embarking upon the challenge of teaching a self-contained class. Over the course of three years, teachers experience the differentiated learning strategies and techniques of renowned expert Dr. Sandra Kaplan, Professor at the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education, to study the characteristics of scholarly behavior and construct a teaching portfolio of differentiated lessons and independent study projects designed to extend the curriculum.

4. School Leadership:

Our principal and leadership team continually foster an environment in which we accomplish together what cannot be accomplished alone: to build consensus around high academic goals, individualize instruction to support all students, and to use results to modify curriculum and instruction so every student attains proficiency or beyond. The hallmark of our success is a shared sense of what we are trying to accomplish: everyone belongs on a team that focuses on student learning and achievement. Wednesdays are the

established day for comprehensive teamwork when we meet as an entire staff, a grade level, smaller collaborative groups, or to attend professional development.

We steadfastly believe we cannot improve our craft in isolation from others. To tap into a wide range of coaching expertise for instructional leadership, we need not look far. For two years, staff was supported by a Digital Learning Coach as we transitioned to fully integrating technology into teaching. We are in our second year of a partnership with the Cotsen Foundation Art of Teaching program, which provides a full-time on-site mentor to coach six teachers as fellows. Our mentor serves as a change agent, leading individual fellows through weekly meetings, setting goals to grow in content knowledge and pedagogy, and providing feedback sessions. The mentor facilitates monthly inquiry meetings where together they examine teaching and student learning, read and discuss professional texts, look at student work to plan instruction, conduct action research, and participate in common lesson planning. The impact: we perpetually harness the power of collective leadership by investing in our own.

Parents engage as vital partners and consultants on curriculum-related committees, including the GATE Advisory Council, the English Language Advisory Council, and the Special Education Advisory Council. The School Site Council, comprised of parents and staff, provides input on the implementation of the Single Plan for Student Achievement, budgeting and the safety plan. The Superintendent's Task Force includes teacher leaders, support staff, and parents who meet throughout the year to provide input on current educational issues. All stakeholders are regularly afforded information, training, and parameters to make qualified decisions and are fully involved in decision-making. The result: all members joins forces to endorse the educational decisions that impact our students. The process of perpetual renewal continues each year as new stakeholders are recruited to join the leadership ranks as we review and refine our mission, vision, values, and goals.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Advanced learners need tailored learning experiences and teachers who monitor the match between learner and learning. Individual customization is the hallmark of our success as a GATE magnet school. To do so, we use differentiated instruction to accommodate the diverse needs of GATE students. This approach creates an environment that maximizes student capabilities and requires teachers to define challenge and growth differently in response to students' varying interest and readiness levels. By differentiating the curricular elements of content, process, and product, we present different approaches to what students learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate their learning. Tiered activities allow our gifted learners to work with the same important understandings and skills, but proceed with different levels of support, challenge, or complexity. Differentiation ensures our high-ability learners are adequately challenged and make continuous progress.

We steadfastly believe that students learn best when highly engaged. We modify content and learning experiences through acceleration, curriculum compacting, pacing, or by using advanced, abstract, or complex concepts. Curriculum compacting and acceleration reduces the time spent on grade-level work when the student already knows the material or learns at a more rapid pace. Assessment is inextricably linked to our instruction as students are measured individually to define the extent of their knowledge. Information about student readiness, interest, and learning helps to plan our next steps in instruction.

We define process as learning how to learn. Research, inquiry, reference, and organizational skills, as well as written, oral, and visual communication skills play key roles in GATE classrooms. Fifth graders participate in Toastmasters Junior, by selecting a topic of interest, utilizing research skills, and practicing public speaking. Third graders use project-based learning to become experts on California Native American tribes, focusing their discovery on cultural differences between tribes and how their contributions impacted California history.

To differentiate product, students demonstrate leaning that reflects their knowledge, ideas, and creativity. The “Genius Hour” capitalizes on their curiosity and interests as they construct individual culminating projects to rehearse, apply, and extend their learning. The focus is on synthesis rather than summary of information. We perpetually keep our finger on the pulse of best practices in the field of gifted education. Being responsive and sensitive to the unique characteristics of gifted learners enables us to provide a myriad of opportunities for academic growth thus our GATE students continue to demonstrate high levels of learning in all curricular areas.