

U.S. Department of Education
2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Brenda Barcellos Sylvia

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

Official School Name Clay Joint Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 12449 S Smith Avenue

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

City Kingsburg State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 93631-9717

County CA

Telephone (559) 897-4185

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E-mail bsylvia@clayelementary.org

Web site/URL http://www.clayschool.k12.ca.us

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*Mrs. Brenda Sylvia

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

E-mail bsylvia@clayelementary.org

District Name Clay Joint Elementary School District Tel. (559) 897-4185

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. Randel Yano D.C.

(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. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. 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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
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 has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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 (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - Middle/Junior high schools
 - High schools
 - K-12 schools
- 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, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	10	11	21
1	14	8	22
2	12	16	28
3	14	13	27
4	15	15	30
5	17	13	30
6	13	17	30
7	11	17	28
8	15	13	28
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	121	123	244

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 4 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 27 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 64 % White
 - 5 % 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 2015 – 2016 school year: 4%

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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	239
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.038
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7 %
16 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 15 %
Total number students who qualify: 36

8. Students receiving special education services: 5 %
11 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
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 including those teaching high school specialty subjects	9
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
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 27:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	97%	98%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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 2016.

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. 2001

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

To develop responsible and productive citizens with a passion for life-long learning and providing standards-based education in a supportive and safe learning environment.

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

Clay Elementary School is a one-school district located near Kingsburg in the rural Central Valley of California. When the morning bell rings, students and staff members gather from all areas to the center of campus for an opening ceremony. The principal greets all students; announcements are made, birthdays are recognized, and new students are welcomed. Many mornings, the snow-capped Sierra Nevada Mountains are visible while the older students lead the Flag Salute and announcements. Students are then dismissed to their classes and the instructional day at Clay School begins.

Clay maintains a long-standing tradition of excellence and high expectations from its community. Since 1880, Clay School has been a shining star in south Fresno County and the greater Kingsburg community. A kindergarten through eighth-grade school, Clay began as a one room school and is now a beautiful and modern, yet modest, rural country campus with an enrollment of 244. Some of the students at Clay, both past and present, are second, third, and even fourth generation Clay students. Many traditions of the school have been maintained over the years, such as the whole school gathering together for the flag salute. Clay students benefit from added upgrades to the school campus such as a beautiful music room, a library/media center, a learning center, multipurpose building, computer lab, as well as a kindergarten suite.

The Clay staff is one of exceptional experience and loyalty to the school district. Well over half of the employees at Clay have served over 10 years. Several of the newer staff members are either former Clay students or have had their children attend Clay School. Because of their love for the school and all it stands for, Clay School enjoys a staff who are eager to wear the many hats being part of a small district requires. The team consistently shows an ‘all hands on deck’ mentality, no matter the task! The many hands of Clay make the work of serving our students light and enjoyable. The certificated staff includes the Superintendent/Principal, a Director of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support/Special Education Teacher, a Program Manager/Intervention Teacher/English Language Development (ELD) Specialist, 9 classroom teachers, and a full-time music teacher/librarian. The classified staff includes four instructional assistants, a food service worker, an athletic director, an office secretary, an administrative assistant/business officer, a Director of Maintenance/Operations/Transportation, a full time grounds/custodian, and one part time custodian. We have three members on the Governing Board of Trustees.

The Clay community is tight knit and acts as a large family to ensure the best educational experiences and environment for all Clay students. The entire community shares the same desires and expectations for learners. Our vision statement sums it up nicely: ‘One Community, One Goal: to Exceed Expectations!’ We work hard to provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning. There is a special bond that is shared among staff, students, and parents. Students and parents feel that our school represents an ideal, safe, educational setting where a child experiences the security that is necessary for learning to take place. The district is one of choice for many families residing in southern Fresno and northern Tulare Counties. Parents arrive at Clay to complete an inter-district transfer interest form soon after the birth of their child. Consequently, approximately 74% of the students at Clay are enrolled on inter-district transfer permits from neighboring school districts. Some parents drive their children a great distance to attend Clay. Our small school atmosphere reflects respect, conservative family values, and a strong sense of community. The Clay School parent population is generous with its time and donates countless hours as classroom volunteers, trip and activity chaperones, as well as most other tasks requested by school personnel.

Each class at Clay School represents one grade level and averages 27 students per class. The Clay student population is diverse with an ethnic composition of 3% Asian, 27% Hispanic/Latino, 64% White, and 4% Multi-racial/Other. Up to 15% of the students ride the bus to/from school, and 15% take advantage of the free and reduced price lunch programs offered.

Our Clay Cougars continue their outstanding achievement as they attend high school. Over the years, Clay has consistently had at least one student represented amongst the group of Valedictorians in our feeder high school. Local high school teachers have communicated that Clay graduates are “always well prepared.”

Clay School is committed to providing a high-quality academic core program. Our teachers present a

rigorous and challenging curriculum that is aligned with Common Core Standards. Assessment is used to confirm the alignment of our teaching to our goals and expectations. Our California Assessment of Student Progress and Performance (CAASPP) scores are far above the statewide averages in both Math and English Language Arts.

Children are the most important part of Clay School. Our goal is to promote each student's intellectual, ethical, emotional, social, and physical growth, and prepare each student to become a productive and responsible member of our society. Class waiting lists for as far out as 2022 are maintained for families who chose to exercise their right of school choice. In addition to the community and culture of the school, the many statewide recognitions and previous national distinction have kept families interested in pursuing education for their children at Clay. Clay was recognized as a California Distinguished School in the years 1997, 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2014, and was honored as a National Blue Ribbon School in 2000-2001. The Clay team strongly agrees with Marian Wright Edleman that education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving the world better than you found it.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The vision of Clay School is to work as a community to exceed expectations. The students at Clay have consistently shown their ability to rise to this vision. It is evidenced in the statewide student assessment scores as well as in the large number of students who stand in front of an audience of family and friends to receive their Honor Roll, High Honor Roll, and Principal's Honor Roll awards each trimester. Clay students work hard and their teachers spend countless hours in preparing lessons and curriculum that will prove to be engaging and challenging to all students.

Clay's Language Arts program integrates reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking using core literary works that build on students' background and experience. The primary grades have implemented guided reading strategies as a main focus of their literacy instruction five days a week. Teachers form small, fluid, and responsive groups of two to six students and can directly target the skills needed to become better readers and differentiate instruction to each group's individual level and specific needs. In the upper grades, students can be found in literature circles or engaged in a book study led by the teacher where they are able to look for symbolism, different points of view, build connections, in a guided and non-threatening learning environment. Teachers have found value in dedicated daily writing time as students have begun to develop a passion for writing and teachers have built their confidence in addressing their students' work as writers. Students and teachers maintain a running menu of strategies they have learned. In addition, each child has a journal that is well worn from their daily writings. The end of genre piece that students produce is used to show students how far they have come, and is also evaluated by grade span teams of teachers to drive their focus on changes that need to be made or mini-lessons that need to be retaught.

Two years ago, Clay adopted Eureka Math. The first year of implementing the program was quite a shock to the students and parents due to the heavy shift toward conceptual learning of the math content. Nevertheless, the value of a school-wide program has been evident as teachers have observed students well prepared to embrace new concepts as students move grade to grade with an understanding of the strategies and vocabulary that rolls up through the curriculum. Clay's most recent Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) survey also evidenced parent comments of satisfaction as they are able to see the building of content knowledge across grade levels, and even among the work of their children in multiple grade levels. The growth of 5% to an incredible 78% of students who have met or exceed standard on CAASPP is further justification that our math curriculum and instruction is working to push even our high performing students to exceed expectations.

Science is integrated into every class through math and ELA. The second-grade teacher dedicated an entire writing unit to conducting labs and then writing reports in class. Since interdependent relationships in ecosystems is a Next Generation Science Standard (NGSS) in Kindergarten for science, our students get to watch a small caterpillar eat, grow, and spin a chrysalis before their eyes. Also in Kindergarten, eggs are carefully taken care of in a classroom incubator and in twenty-one days, chicks begin to hatch. Our 6th grade students get the opportunity to travel to Sierra Outdoor School and spend four days experiencing a hands-on approach to learning earth science. Students are immersed in the environment analyzing, studying, and learning wilderness skills. To meet the NGSS standard of Forces and Interactions, the 7th- and 8th-grade classes study rocketry, which includes building and launching of model rockets. Concepts taught and reinforced by this unit include: rocket design, phases of rocket flights, recovery systems, propulsion systems, and Newton's laws of motion. This unit also integrates theories in mathematics including metric measurement, trigonometric functions, and properties of triangles.

Social Studies is another subject that teachers integrate into their ELA time. Third grade engages in a Hero unit focused on how someone can help their community. Students can be found researching their hero, writing about that hero, and presenting their final piece to the class and community at Open House, in character as their hero. In 4th grade, students create a travel journal that describes a trip through California that includes visiting a national park, a gold rush town, a mission, and a tourist attraction. Students spend time researching information and writing about their stops and detail the trip on a map of California. Fifth

grade students spend time studying the United States; memorize states and the capitals while each student digs deeper to learn about a specific state for a report or project. Mastery of the US Constitution is an eighth-grade graduation requirement.

Due to Clay School being located in a rural area, the staff at Clay place a great emphasis on promoting civic engagement across the grade spans and through school-wide systems. Actively involving our school community in service projects sets the stage for positive involvement as citizens. It teaches students not only to receive but to give back to our supportive community. Examples of service include clean campus duty rotated weekly amongst every grade, volunteer work in the school-wide ballroom, assisting with lunch service, serving as a book buddy with a younger student, peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, daily flag display and retirement, daily announcements, food drives, gift drives, and hand-made thank you notes upon receipt of donations. Students in 6th-8th grade have many different leadership opportunities ranging from K-5 movie night organization, jog-a-thon leadership, and student council to Positive Behavior Interventions & Support (PBIS) student leadership. Clay Garden Club students volunteer their recess times working in the school garden tending to crops that they later donate to local families in need.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our school is proud to host an outstanding program in the Performing Arts. All students participate in the music program taught by a highly qualified, certificated full-time music instructor. In K-8 classrooms, our music education is taught bi-weekly for 40-60 minutes to each class. Our students receive more early music education than most schools statewide. Fourth grade students play the recorder. Students in grades 5-8 can choose a band instrument and play in the Clay School band. As with most of our programs, try-outs in this area are non-existent. Band is held three days a week with the opportunities to perform at the Winter program, a local Grizzlies baseball opener, the Clay Classic Concert & Car Show, at our feeder high school football game, and a band festival. Students who excel in music are offered a chance to go beyond the regular music curriculum by joining honor choir or jazz band. Clay School presents two major musical productions, the Winter program and the Clay Classic Concert & Car Show, during the school year with 100% of the students participating. Clay joined the Kennedy Center's Any Given Child art initiative to expand fine art experiences.

Clay School also provides the opportunity for students to join the drama club. Beginning in January, students are given the chance to try out for parts in the upcoming drama production. All students who try out are cast. A small group of staff members take on this task and lead students throughout the few months until their production. This year the students performed "Oz" in March and had a cast of 33 students. A new twist this year was involving the students in more of the behind the scenes aspects of production. One student served as the stage manager, and another choreographed the entire production and taught the dances to all the performers. This enabled the students to showcase their strengths while it offered them opportunities to lead without having to be on stage. Another annual event is poetry recital including participation in the CSU Fresno Peach Blossom event.

Every student at Clay School is provided with at least three days of PE every week. During this time students are taught skills about working together, the rules of games, and how to stay healthy. Students in grades 6th-8th are given the opportunity to try-out for the after-school sports teams. Once a year the school has an all school track meet where all students participate in at least seven events. Parents attend this event to cheer for their children and students are encouraged to try new events.

Clay School was delighted to find a way to implement foreign language into their already busy day. The team came up with a "wheel" schedule where students in grades 6-8 are given the opportunity to be exposed to and taught a foreign language. Three days a week students attend one of three different elective classes. Students spend six to eight weeks in each elective. The objective of the foreign language class is to learn Spanish while the other two electives are public speaking and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Since Clay currently does not have a teacher credentialed in a foreign language, teachers monitor students progress on an interactive online program where students are given lessons, activities, and quizzes in Spanish. To bring Spanish language to life, bi-lingual special guests are invited to offer class presentation(s).

Every student in 4th-8th grade enjoys a technology ratio of one-to-one with Chromebooks. The Kindergarten through grade 3 classrooms have a bank of six computers and one shared computer cart which houses 30 Chromebooks. The computer lab is available to all classes. Each child, K-8, has their own Google account assigned by the school. Teachers post assignments to their Google Classroom and students are taught to use Google docs, slides, and sheets. In 2nd grade, students create a set of slides to teach their classmates about a topic of which they are an expert. Four years ago, Clay School began using an online program called i-Ready. i-Ready is a K-12 adaptive diagnostic and instructional program that pinpoints students' learning needs while designing a tailored lesson plan that provides personalized instruction. It is used school-wide as a growth monitor for teachers to chart student progress. Teachers are able to monitor student lesson progress and time on task. Students are given a diagnostic assessment three times a year and as a result, an individualized lesson plan is designed and updated throughout the school year for each child. Advantages of i-Ready include the student experience with online assessments, development of new and different keyboarding skills, confidence in the navigation of a computer and exposure to significant CCSS academic language. The element of progress monitoring includes immediate teacher access to individual class and school/district performance reports. Finally, i-Ready supplements the bank of formative assessments available to staff.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Solid classroom instruction is a key component to Clay School's academic success. A variety of instructional practices are implemented at Tier 1 and teachers place value on student learning and mastery above meaningless completion of assignments. Teachers across the grade level continuum use a responsive approach to their instruction and regularly differentiate their instruction based on student needs. Structures like guided reading and literature circles are implemented to meet students at their individual levels. Writers Workshop allows teachers to facilitate on the spot mini-lessons with students who are struggling with a specific feature in their writing. Exit tickets allow teachers to see in the moment how students are processing the math lessons that are delivered. Number Talks allow students to verbalize their thinking and processing while building fluency around a concept. In addition, using technology like Google classroom allows teachers to give immediate and specific feedback to students on the assignments that are being created online. Teachers understand the concept of Universal Design for Learning and realize that accommodations that are good for students with special education needs may also benefit struggling general education students. Most teachers prefer project based learning to get students fully engaged in the content and allow for students to represent their learning in a variety of ways. Teachers deliver scaffolded instruction and support their struggling learners while designing opportunities to challenge the advanced students.

Student success in all areas is the primary focus of the Clay community. Every student and parent are known personally by the staff. This partnership is healthy as everyone looks out for one another. These relationships embody the Clay culture where everyone is safe and belongs. Three years ago, Clay began a tiered approach to intervention for both academic and behavioral issues. The first part of the system was the development of DEN (Differentiating for Every Need). DEN was created as a way to reach every student and provide services for each individual student need. DEN is a school-wide intervention system that allows 30 minutes a day per class where students are engaged in tier 1 enrichment with the classroom teacher, or deployed to either a tier 2 or 3 intervention group led by our intervention teacher and instructional aides or pulled for special education service. An essential component to the success of DEN time is the agreement that teachers will not teach any new material that all students are expected to learn while some of their students are out of the class for DEN time. The students who go to DEN are given explicit instruction based on their needs and are regrouped every 6-8 weeks depending on progress on weekly progress monitoring and a variety of end of session and trimester assessments.

Students in kindergarten through 3rd grade are assessed every trimester using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Kindergarten through eighth grade students are also assessed online with the Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR). All students take the i-Ready diagnostic in both math and reading every trimester. This also gives teachers information about student strengths and weaknesses within specific domains. Groups are formed after the intervention teacher and special education teacher have analyzed data. These two teachers use a shared google doc to input and color code numerous

forms of data and use the results to see which students are making growth and which need more intervention. Clay offers a menu of evidence based interventions that specifically address student needs in the areas of decoding, fluency, comprehension, phonics, phonemic awareness, and language. DEN is flexible, fluid, and allows for Clay to meet the needs of each child.

While DEN is accessible for any student who needs academic intervention, and the intervention content area focus is reading, positive impacts are noted across subject areas and subgroups. It is evident that improving reading and comprehension for all students also improves their reading and comprehension of math problems. Last school year, the lowest performing student subgroups at Clay all greatly surpassed the state average in all subject areas. Nevertheless, we continue to see the effects of our intervention when from 2014-15 to 2015-16, students in the Socioeconomically Disadvantaged subgroup grew at a rate greater than both our white and Hispanic subgroups, with growth of 5% in ELA and 19% in math. The Hispanic subgroup grew at an equal rate as the white subgroup, who both grew at a rate of 3% in ELA and 5% in math. In an effort to continue this progress and continue to close the achievement gap, Clay has also implemented before and after school math intervention facilitated by classroom teachers for any students deemed eligible and in need.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Clay is widely known for its small-school, family-like setting. Parents willingly drive their children a great distance to attend our school to experience the caring, friendly environment. Several parents make a 30-mile round trip journey twice daily to drop-off and pick up their children. Ninety-six percent of our staff members with school aged children choose to have their children attend Clay. Staff members and students know everyone on campus by name. Eighth-grade students can be often seen pushing kindergarten students on the swings or helping younger students feel comfortable to navigate the campus during their first weeks of school. Students at all grade levels can often be seen joining together for a game of football or basketball. All students are included and lasting friendships are developed. Staff enjoy annual team-building retreats. They celebrate each other with monthly potlucks and report out positive “Kudos” at weekly meetings. Parents sponsor an annual Staff Appreciation luncheon.

Clay School’s culture is one of support and belonging. Our staff, including the administrator, teachers, aides, bus drivers, and support staff are all willing to work harder because they are dedicated to the school’s values. We are actively demonstrating our commitment to adhere to these values by giving extra time and attention to students who are in need. We are cohesive and cooperative in our shared goal to maintain a positive, safe, and caring learning environment. We have set high standards for performance and students are encouraged to uphold the standards. Students are held accountable for their behavior, as well as their learning, at all times.

Three years ago, another layer to the school’s tiered system of interventions was added with Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS). Now in the third year of implementation, Clay has strengthened tier 1 school-wide systems and made expectations visible and understandable for all students. A Clay School Field Day is held at the beginning of each school year with a refresher each spring, where student council members guide the student body through the expectations for each zone of the school. Tier 2 and 3 teacher leadership teams meet at least monthly to analyze school-wide behavior data, as well as data maintained by the Director of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) on students who are working through interventions at tiers 2 and 3. Discipline is carried out in a timely and consistent manner. All staff understands and has adopted the belief that ‘Discipline is Teaching’ and any recommendations for discipline include opportunities for students to reflect, restore relationships, and learn from their behavior.

The partnering of family, community, and school to “exceed expectations” is a culture that began with one of the original superintendents, Mr. Gary Johnson. The culture is so ingrained that guests on campus describe it as being tactile. During a November 2016 visit, Jim Yovino, Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, described the experience as, “Incredibly unique, Disneyland like, and an example of what all schools should be.” Teachers work in unison and benefit from close relationships with one another. Communication and collaboration happen every day in the hallways, staff room, weekly staff meeting, and flag salute. Email communication is minimal with the team preferring personal contacts.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaged families and a supportive community are key components to the success of Clay School. Clay sponsors many different activities that foster relationships with parents and community members. This year we will be having our 10th annual Clay Classic, Car Show and Concert. This event is put on by our Music Teacher and Director of Maintenance, Operations and Technology with the support of our Clay staff and community. We have a great car show with food to eat and friends old and new to visit with. Following the car show is a theme based concert put on by all students. Two other community events that Clay supports are Culture Day and Career Day. Culture Day is a day that community members come to Clay and speak to students about their culture. Students are invited to try new foods, hear new languages, and learn about what makes each culture unique and special. Career Day is a day where students see and hear about different careers of members of our community. Clay School’s partnerships with the community has resulted in many positive outcomes. Over the last three years a single alumni has made

annual technology donations resulting in a total of 135 new Chromebooks complete with three storage and charging carts and two smart boards for student use. A grandparent has donated instruments for our band program and other individual community members have donated basketball systems, purchased new athletic uniforms, and given support to our sports program.

The Clay School Parents Club (CSP) is very active on campus. Parents are valued stakeholders and are expected to help in the classroom and at the annual events on campus. Parents average 50 hours per month of volunteer time. Parents chaperone field trips, assist with events and are generous contributors of supplemental classroom resources. The CSPC sponsors three major fundraisers per year and raise an exceptional \$51,000 per year on average. These funds are used to supplement classroom supplies, science camp, music/sports programs, student rewards and incentives, and field trips. One of the major fundraisers is the annual Fall Festival. This event is held on a Sunday at the Clay Historical Museum where community members from Kingsburg come play games, eat delicious food, and participate in the silent auction. This is a great experience for our students since the upper grade students offer their time and volunteer to work at the game booths. Overall, the parental involvement at Clay School is nothing short of impressive.

One of our most valuable partnerships grew out of a mature group of alumni wanting to formalize their support to Clay; thus the Clay School Education Foundation (CSEF) was formed in 1998. It has a board comprised of staff, parent and community members. The CSEF organizes an annual dinner/dessert auction. The CSEF is designed to supplement the positive and successful efforts of the Clay School educational program. The CSEF has contributed to numerous programs included but not limited to the purchase of assessment tools such as DRA; instructional materials such as non-fiction books; purchase of updated Destiny-Follett software program for our small library; financial support for the sixth grade science camp; and field trips. The Clay School Education Foundation shares the vision that all students succeed and its mission is to assist them in meeting their needs and goals.

3. Professional Development:

To enable Clay School staff to exceed expectations, professional development is, and will continue to be, a top priority. Professional development is designed with input from staff and community and is based on data-driven student needs with input from the LCAP survey. Clay School teachers have spent three days being trained in Kagan structures which were implemented efficiently and are now evident in each classroom. During classroom observations, guests will see teachers using 21st Century strategies such as cooperative grouping and student collaboration with shoulder partners or face partners. Students are all well aware of phrases such as, “stand-up, hand-up, pair-up” and “think, pair, share.” All of Clay School’s K-3 teachers have been trained in guided reading and receive coaching support on site. Guided reading has been a focus strategy as the staff works to improve early literacy for our students. All teachers and administration, opted to attend training in the summer to learn Units of Study in Writing. The staff agreed that putting writers workshop back into the classrooms would build academic rigor along with College and Career readiness. The Clay team understands the value of giving of their own time as opposed to having substitute teachers in the classroom for three days of off-campus learning during the instructional year. Our Administrator hired an ELA consultant from Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) to work with Clay teachers in small groups on designing ELA units, leading a guided reading group, reinforcing writing in the classroom, and how to use writing assessments to promote responsive teaching. This year’s plan follows a full year of focus on “Putting It All Together” with Eureka Math, Number Talks and Tape Diagrams. The Clay Administrator attends the annual CA School Board Association (CSBA) conference with the Trustees to grow the governance team. TCOE facilitates a Leadership and Learning series over the course of the school year in which the Administrator participates with the Program Manager. This menu of courses ensures our team is on the cutting edge of best practices.

Being a small school with only one teacher per grade level is a challenge that Clay’s teachers and administration have had to overcome when promoting professional collaboration. It was necessary to look beyond the standard makeup of a Professional Learning Community (PLC). The professional development with TCOE has been sorted by grade levels which created opportunities for Clay teachers to meet grade alike colleagues off campus. Instead of grade level teams, grade spans meet. Like when our Kindergarten

through 3rd grade teachers gather to meet with the Intervention teacher bi-weekly to discuss strategies used to implement guided reading or other targeted instruction. Advantages of our small school PLC model include the familiarity each teacher has about most students facilitating a unique ability to gather rapid data and support strategies along with standard teacher use of current data to determine where successes are happening and what changes need to be made. These collaborative groupings improve the clarity of their teaching and are valuable in their professional reflection and growth.

4. School Leadership:

The administrator enthusiastically shares numerous roles and responsibilities of leadership with the highly qualified staff. She and the Board of Trustees require that the staff model what we expect of the students. Our administrator plays the dual role of superintendent/principal with a focus on 21st century learning in a safe and caring environment. She works hard to keep our school abreast of changing education laws, grants, and Local Control Funding Formula budgets so the team does not become isolated and uninformed. Providing oversight to facilities maintenance is reflected in the many playground improvements, the Proposition 39 Energy efficiency improvements, the earned promise of State Financial Hardship Funding for a new West Wing including the process of bringing an Architect on board and completion of the West Wing design. Even with these serious responsibilities, it is her passion to communicate her key role as the instructional leader on site keeping the staff motivated to learn and implementing the most up to date and relevant instructional practices to ensure all students are College and Career bound. The administration encourages collaboration and values professional growth. She is there to define structure when needed and encourages staff members to risk and grow. Her leadership is evidenced by all staff in-services, professional development, weekly bulletin updates, weekly staff meetings, classroom visits, and personal contact with students, parents, trustees, community members and staff. Student growth is measurable as a result.

Due to the many jobs that fall under the title of administration, several other staff members take on specific leadership duties. The Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) director is responsible for consulting on behavior, keeping staff and parents informed of PBIS, facilitating IEP, SST and 504 meetings, and maintaining the Aeries student information system while monitoring and planning improvements for student attendance. The Program Manager is responsible for coordinating School Site Council meetings, organizing Student Success Team (SST) meetings, and leading the school through state testing. The 8th grade teacher serves as the vice-principal. Every staff member has an area of leadership. The job of leadership is embraced by the collective team at Clay.

The vision at Clay School is a shared one that was established by staff, board members, stakeholders, and parents. Those involved are able to participate in collective decision-making. Weekly faculty meetings, monthly all-staff meetings, and input from parents and board members all contribute to decisions that are made concerning Clay School. The School Site Council (SSC)/Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is made up of an administrator, teacher, support staff, and representative parents. The SSC/PAC meets at least four times a year to discuss decisions regarding budget and school programs. Annually a Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) survey is distributed to parents, students, staff and community members asking for their input. This year we received 132 responses compared to the 78 responses last year. Once input is gathered the administrator shares the data at staff and parent meetings in the spring. Together the work to improve is molded for the present and future.

All stakeholders have equal and easy access to the administrator. There is an immediate “open door” policy for any internal and external stakeholder and many take advantage of the freedom to express support, concerns, or to ask questions. Each new school year begins with a Back-to-School luncheon with all staff and board members attending. Each school year concludes with a Success luncheon or retreat. Last year’s event was at a Cabin in Shaver Lake and this year’s celebration is planned for the coast. These experiences deepen our relationships and our passion about student success.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The single practice that Clay most effectively implements is ensuring success for every student through a tiered approach of interventions both academically and behaviorally. Clay is unique in the fact that every teacher will have each student in their classroom at some point. The staff members view all of the students, not as students of a particular class, but simply as Clay students. This helps staff keep a larger focus when collaborating to problem solve student struggles, whether academic or behavioral. There are a series of teams that meet frequently to troubleshoot and brainstorm student support plans. Clay's Learning Center team consists of a part-time psychologist, intervention teacher, and MTSS/special education teacher who consult weekly. The PBIS team meets monthly to review school-wide data and identify areas of need and success. This report is brought to all staff monthly for added discussion. Student needs are addressed at every level and ensuring success for every student is a team effort that involves everyone on campus.

One ongoing success story is about a student who, in Kindergarten, couldn't go through a day without an extreme tantrum or crying fit, leading to several suspensions over the year. Through the tiered behavior approach, the team began with Student Success Team (SST) meetings with parents and then reconvened as needed to write and update behavior plans. By first grade, the team decided it was time to assess the student for special education. Though he presented with many of the markers that would make him eligible for the diagnosis of a student with Emotional Disturbance (ED), the team was unwilling to simply label the student and refer him out to an ED class. This student is now in 2nd grade and is getting through most days by taking his own breaks when he is feeling frustrated and has learned a handful of tools that he is able to use most of the time to calm himself. What is more impressive is his ability to thoughtfully apologize and show genuine remorse and use reflective phrases when restoring the relationships that were harmed by his behavior. This student is thriving academically and making growth emotionally. He is safe and well cared for by his school family. Because of the consistent support from staff school-wide, and the whole-school belief that the success of every student in every area of their life is important, cases like this will not be few and far between. They are the successes we consistently see from year to year.

When Differentiating for Every Need (DEN) was first rolled out, staff were hesitant to give up 30 minutes of their already limited instructional time. The first DEN session had representation from 8% of the school in Tier 3 and 21% of the population in intensive Tier 2. Every 6-8 weeks, students were regrouped and as time went on, Clay has been able to consistently exit students from DEN and move others into less intense interventions. Today, 3% of Clay's population is targeted in Tier 3 and 17% in intensive Tier 2. The staff fully supports the DEN master schedule and recognizes the effectiveness of our school wide system. Slow and consistent improvements are being made every day at Clay.