

U.S. Department of Education
2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Douglas V. Whipple

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

Official School Name John Gomes Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 555 Lemos Lane

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

Fremont CA 94539-3750
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Alameda County

Telephone (510) 656-3414

Fax (510) 656-6817

Web site/URL

https://www.fremont.k12.ca.us/Dom

ain/893

E-mail dwhipple@fremont.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*Ms. Kim Wallace

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail kwallace@fremont.k12.ca.us

District Name Fremont Unified School District Tel. (510) 657-2350

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. Yang Shao

(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 2018 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 2012 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: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
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 (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 28 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 6 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 39 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	28	28	56
K	54	56	110
1	57	53	110
2	49	43	92
3	49	52	101
4	45	47	92
5	48	44	92
6	52	71	123
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	382	394	776

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 87 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 6 % White
 - 1 % 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 2016 – 2017 school year: 12%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

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, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	47
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	40
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	87
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	754
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.12
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 14 %
107 Total number ELL

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

Mandarin, Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Cantonese, Gujarati, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Punjabi, Spanish, Korean

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6 %
Total number students who qualify: 44

8. Students receiving special education services: 20 %
159 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>82</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>25</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>17</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>6</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 16
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, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	35
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 23:1

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
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 2017.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Endeavor to engage active and meaningful learning while striving to facilitate a love of learning, diversity, collaboration, and innovation in a safe and caring 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

John Gomes Elementary, home of the Gophers, is located in the Fremont Unified School District (FUSD) in Fremont, California. With a population of about 226,000 (over 76,000 households), Fremont is the fourth largest city in the San Francisco Bay Area and home to a growing number of innovative and advanced technology and manufacturing businesses. Gomes students reflect the diversity and global connectivity of this Silicon Valley location. In addition to English, Gomes students speak Mandarin, Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Cantonese, Gujarati, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Punjabi, Spanish, and Korean. The California Department of Education's School Dashboard shows state indicators for Gomes in the highest performance level for math, English language arts, and English learner progress. Recognized by the state as a Distinguished School in 2014, Gomes (opened in 1970) has for over forty-five years ranked at or among the top academic performing elementary schools in the district, county, and state. Test results from the recent 2017 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) show about 89% of Gomes students (grades 3-6 tested) met or exceeded state standards in English language arts and literacy; and for math about 97% of students met or exceeded the state standards. One contributing factor to the success of student learning is the dedicated teaching staff. Gomes boasts a vibrant, diverse, enthusiastic staff of professional educators who take pride in their work with students. A positive camaraderie exists among the staff and permeates the campus. Every teacher has or is encouraged to obtain GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) certification and GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) training. Gomes teachers collaborate in Professional Learning Communities (PLC), which meet regularly to examine how to improve learning and achievement for all students. Every PLC is driven by four essential questions: 1. What do we expect our students to learn? 2. How will we know when each student has learned it? 3. How will we respond when some students do not learn it? 4. How will we respond when some students already know it? A balanced and coherent system of assessments is utilized to determine students who might need support or ongoing remediation. Formative assessment in the classroom takes place on a daily or weekly basis. More summative benchmark assessments are developed at the district level to calibrate and pace the curriculum. Within each PLC team, participating teachers develop SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) goals in response to identified areas for improvement of student learning. Healthy PLCs rely heavily on using assessment data to inform practice. Measuring and analyzing our test data, however, is just one part of the work done to support student learning. Educating and developing the whole child academically, socially, physically, and emotionally is our end goal. We employ core assets of the Heart, Head, and Hands character education program. These "Eight Great Traits" are: 1. Caring - I take care of myself, others, and my world. 2. Honesty - I tell the truth. 3. Responsibility - I am responsible for what I do and say. 4. Integrity - I demonstrate integrity through my words and actions. 5. Respect - I am courteous and treat others fairly. 6. Citizenship - I help people in my classroom, school, and community. 7. Planning and Decision-Making - I manage my time and plan ahead to make good choices. 8. Problem Solving - I cooperate to resolve conflicts fairly and peaceably. Emphasis is placed on effectively building community and generating respect, tolerance, and compassion for others. Our student council (fifth and sixth graders) recently undertook a school wide collection of books, school supplies, and pajamas for donation to a Sonoma County school whose students had been displaced by the Northern California wildfires. After the heart-wrenching loss of a beloved Gomes teacher to blood cancer several years ago, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Pennies for Patients program has become a cause robustly supported annually by our school community. In addition, we participate each winter in a canned food drive to benefit Adobe Village, a local homeless shelter. We currently have on campus two inclusion classrooms (transitional kindergarten and kindergarten) with plans to add more next year. The inclusion classroom model secures opportunities for students with disabilities to learn alongside non-disabled peers in a general education classroom. Our youngest learners are given the opportunity to get acclimated to the school environment and develop needed communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. There are four pillars for our excellent school. First is our strong and efficient administrative staff. Second is a team of teachers who are dedicated and nurturing. Third are the engaged and highly motivated students. Last, but not least, is the incredibly supportive parents and families. Our strength is our community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Reading/English Language Arts:

Literacy time is structured to develop lifelong habits of reading, writing, and speaking. Emphasis is on comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and vocabulary expansion.

Priority standards are identified in reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language. Writing standards include student success in writing for a variety of purposes. Speaking/listening standards involve comprehension and collaboration to summarize orally. An example is a group presentation after collaboration to research climate change and its impact on the California drought.

Language standards include knowledge of the conventions of language as well as vocabulary acquisition and use. An example here is the study of Greek and Latin roots to help determine word meaning. Nuances in word meanings (figurative language, positive/negative connotation) might be explored with a reading of Norton Juster's *The Phantom Tollbooth* and provide an opportunity for sixth graders to observe the flexibility and playfulness of language.

Mathematics:

Our math standards begin at the kindergarten level with Counting and Cardinality. In grades one through five, standards include: Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Number and Operations in Base Ten, Measurement and Data, Geometry, and Number and Operations with Fractions. Sixth grade curriculum standards include Number Sense, Expressions and Equations, Geometry, Ratios and Proportions, and Statistics and Probability.

Across all grade levels, emphasis is placed on mathematical practices such as making sense of problems, persevering in problem-solving, reasoning abstractly, constructing viable arguments, modeling with mathematics, using appropriate tools, attending to precision, making use of structure, and expressing regularity in repeated reasoning. In a sixth grade classroom, a unit on statistics and probability might culminate with a survey project involving students working in pairs to establish non-biased survey questions, conducting a poll, and presenting survey findings orally with the support of a visual aid graphic created by the students.

Science:

In 2013, the California State Board of Education adopted the Next Generation Science Standards, and this is now the required science content standards for all districts in California. Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Disciplinary Core Ideas are the three dimensions that are combined to form each science standard. At Gomes, students focus on critical thinking skills and learning concepts through the science and engineering practices. Students in grades one through six have the opportunity each week to participate in hands on science experiments in our science lab. Science education here now involves more facts and terminology learned as needed, while developing explanations and designing solutions supported by evidence-based arguments and reasoning. Systems thinking and modeling are applied and practiced to explain phenomena and to give a context for the ideas to be learned.

We also utilize activities from two programs adopted by FUSD (Mystery Science and STEMScopes). An environment-based curriculum called Education Environment Initiative (EEI), which supports the state's vision of environmental literacy, encourages students to make real life connections to the environment and the problems and solutions related to current issues. Sixth graders at Gomes attend outdoor science camp for a week each school year. Mount Hermon Outdoor Science School in Santa Cruz utilizes the vehicle of experiential education to model and communicate science literacy. Students who attend outdoor camp gain an appreciation for the importance of preserving nature, and the critical role humans play in local and global

conservation efforts.

Social Studies/History/Civic Learning and Engagement:

A highlight of our third grade social studies curriculum, which focuses on local history and government, is an annual visit by the city mayor. Imagine the excitement this year when third graders learned our current mayor of the city of Fremont is a former Gomes parent! Having access to local leaders makes civic engagement tangible and real for our young students. It is empowering for children to learn about the benefits of community service and the possibilities of how individual and group action can positively impact our environment.

One example of this is in October, wildfires in neighboring Napa and Sonoma counties devastated those communities and displaced countless people. As smoke from these massive wildfires drifted over our own community, air quality deteriorated and all outdoor activities were restricted or canceled. Concerned Gomes students wanted to actively help. An effort was launched and led by student council to collect school supplies, pajamas, and money for fire victims.

The focus of social studies curriculum for grades TK-2 is centered on the understanding and development of community (classroom, school, neighborhood, and city). A highlight of the TK program is a walking field-trip visit to a local coffee shop (with their 6th grade buddies), where they learn the importance of supporting local merchants via the purchase of goods (hot cocoa). Good citizen behaviors are practiced at this time. Standing in line patiently, articulating confidently with others, and speaking politely with an “inside voice” while using words such as “please” and “thank you” are all important components of the day for our young learners.

Students in grades 4-6 participate interactively in the study of history. An educational presentation program from California Weekly Explorer is a highlight of the school year for our older students. Students dress up and portray historical characters from the past. Walk Through California is for our fourth graders, and involves a lively retelling of our state’s history via games, music, costume, dance, and acting. Fifth graders participate interactively with their program, Walk Through American Revolution while Walk Through Ancient Worlds allows sixth graders to discover Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome while dressing up and acting in various roles such as Cleopatra, Socrates, Zeus, and Osiris.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Art:

Students in grades four through six have a professional artist instruct them once a month. Classroom teachers at all grade levels support art instruction. Several teachers on staff are talented artists themselves, and they generously support and inspire colleagues. Students are encouraged to try materials they may not have tried before, to overcome fear of making mistakes in art, and to not say that they can't do art. Students learn color theory (primary, secondary, and tertiary colors), perspective, and application of various art materials. Art lessons are designed around the grade level lesson plans for the year. For example, fourth grade lessons support learning about California history. A fruit crate/seed packet design in shrink art magnets, a paddle riverboat on the Mississippi, a tin punch, a mise-en-scene with whales, Redwood trees, steam engine, etc. create a visual California story. Fifth grade study of American History is supported with a mise-en-scene illustration of the poem "Paul Revere's Ride" or the song "America the Beautiful" in markers. Also a kinetic bee sculpture with paper, wire, and beads, a paper curls/quilling project with black and white paper and glue to create an abstract design and they learn about the rule of thirds in the composition of art. Sixth graders focus on ancient civilizations with a Nile river drawing using colored pencils, Chinese dragon watercolor, Greek wax resist, compass and ruler (math) created Mandalas, and other works in pen and ink. Additionally, art projects are created in tandem with literature study units. After reading William Pene du Bois' Twenty-One Balloons, sixth graders create hot air balloon models out of papier mâché, paint, pipe cleaners, and recycled strawberry baskets.

Music:

The Music for Minors II program provides music curriculum to grades one through six. Students receive instruction two to four times per month. The program provides a basic music foundation teaching rhythm, beat, pitch, small and large motor movements, basic notation, instrumentation, and singing. Students practice public speaking and presentation skills. Public performances in music and dance help children gain confidence and overcome anxiety about speaking in public. Each grade level has an annual performance that ties directly to the curriculum. For example, fifth grade students all participate in a musical performance about the Lewis and Clark expedition. The fourth grade show is about the California Gold Rush.

Technology:

Students in grades one through six visit the computer lab once each week for periods of up to one hour. First graders learn to use a computer to safely interact with educational websites, including using URLs, the navigation buttons, and hyperlinks. Second graders master proper keyboarding techniques including posture and finger placement, and are introduced to the concepts of digital citizenship. Third graders explore creating documents using the functions in Microsoft Word, are introduced to Google Apps for Education and Google Classroom, and greatly improve their keyboarding speed and accuracy. Fourth graders are exposed to Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, and similar products with the Google Apps suite, while working on projects either individually or in groups, and understand the importance of internet safety and file management. Fifth and sixth graders press for improved speed and accuracy in keyboarding, and demonstrate confidence in learning any new applications to complete projects in science, math, and social science topics including internet safety. The sixth grade class completes the year with an average keyboarding speed of 60 words per minute with over 95% accuracy. Students can confidently perform internet research, and create original works using a variety of applications.

Physical Education:

The physical education program is standards-based and taught by two PE specialists twice a week to students in grades one through six. Stretching, core-strength-building exercises, and aerobic activity are part of each session. Additionally, monthly units teach skills in activities such as basketball, volleyball, soccer, etc. California Physical Fitness Tests are given to fifth graders, and 87% of students passed four out of the five assessed categories (mile run, push-ups, sit-ups, and two flexibility tests). Special Day class students are mainstreamed with general education classrooms. We emphasize sportsmanship, cooperation, fair play, improvement of individual skills, strategies for problem solving, and respect for individual differences and physical abilities.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Through the PLC work, our teachers share the belief that through their collective action, student outcomes can be positively influenced. PLC meets regularly to address four essential questions. What do we expect our students to know? How will we know when our students have learned it? What do we do with students who don't initially learn it? What do we do with students who already know it? Teacher responses to these questions are most often arrived at through the collaborative vehicle of the PLC, and are driven by assessment data. When intervention is needed, specific, measureable, achievable, relevant, time-bound goals are generated.

Educators at Gomes attend closely to the needs of students who might not be progressing well. Effort is made to support the student with an intervention plan and modification of that student's own perception of their academic ability. Our philosophy is that students can be shown that they are capable of doing well in school. We have an after-school intervention program called AOK Club. Students are paired with a local high school tutor under the supervision of a credentialed teacher. Each AOK student has individualized instruction planned for them by their classroom teacher that they work on with their high school tutor each week.

Grade level teaching teams work cooperatively to support students. For example, one teacher might gather all of the language learner students' forms throughout the grade level and work with just those children in a small group setting while the other grade level teachers supervise other activities with the rest of the students. Another example is one teacher who offers an after-school "math club" each week to help her struggling math students. Sometimes just providing a calm, quiet place to complete assignments and get

questions answered is what certain students need. When friends or siblings from other classrooms or grade levels show up and request to stay, the teacher okays it after clearing parental permission. In this sense, it is not uncommon at our school to find cross-age groups of children quietly studying or doing homework together on campus after school hours. A system of intervention means that providing support for students is a collective school-wide responsibility rather than the sole responsibility of an individual teacher.

Common formative assessments are often utilized by teachers to determine level of student mastery of one concept before moving on to another. This is a popular method with students because it reduces anxiety often associated with taking tests that are graded. Formative assessment might be as simple as, after a unit on fractions, students are asked to hold up fingers (one for "I understand how to divide fractions", two for "I sort of understand how to divide fractions but I make mistakes still", or three fingers for "I need more help with dividing fractions"). In this way, teachers get a quick overview of where all thirty students are, and this can drive decisions about applying next step differentiation practices. Additionally, more summative assessment such as paper and pencil quizzes or digital delivered district benchmark tests provide a teacher with critical feedback. It is important to give students the opportunity to use that feedback to continue their learning process. The goal is for the student to perform the skill correctly and receive positive acknowledgement.

Project GLAD is an instructional model that incorporates many research-based and highly effective instructional strategies. It is a project-based, student-centered curriculum process that is inquiry driven. Problem-solving with cross-cultural respect are hallmarks of a GLAD classroom, and many Gomes staff members have completed GLAD training workshops in recent years. New teachers are encouraged to seek training as GLAD practices are supported and applied school wide. With GLAD, teachers deliver academic content and language while using an integrated, balanced literacy approach. While originally developed for language learner students, it benefits all students through the use of high level thinking and academic language as well as cross cultural skills. GLAD strategies include use of graphic organizers, pictorial input charts, inquiry charts, sentence strip paragraphs, interactive journals, language retells, cognitive content dictionaries, poetry, song, choral reading, vocabulary process grids, and group exploration reports containing observations, questions, and predictions.

At Gomes, the key to maintaining a high level of academic performance from one year to the next is consistency. Expectations are high. Staff members all understand that there can be no complacency. Great effort is made to retain a team of high-quality educators who all share the common goal of fostering a culture of excellence at our school site. There is an attitude of responsibility to uphold the traditions of our school.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Gomes, we work together to create an academically rich and challenging environment while encouraging our children to be kind citizens of the world. Our staff members are clear and consistent with high expectations for every student. We emphasize basic skill development through our enriching and engaging curriculum as well as build student self-esteem and model respect for all. Our mission is to provide equitable opportunities that educate, challenge, and inspire students of all ages, talents, and ability levels while preparing each with the skills required to adapting and succeeding in an ever-changing world. At Gomes, the end-goal is for our students to be physically, mentally, and emotionally well-balanced. Our belief is that well-rounded children who feel secure, happy, and nurtured are in an ideal position to learn.

We currently have a population of 773 students from transitional kindergarten (TK) to sixth grade. We follow a traditional school year calendar. Gomes has two Special Day classes, three inclusion classes at the TK level, a Resource Program, and a Speech Pathology program. The teachers are well prepared with strategies for all types of learners. In every classroom, instruction is differentiated to meet the needs of our varied population.

There is a long history at Gomes of our students bringing recognition and honor to our school. Gomes students each year consistently score at or among the top teams in the California Math League contest. Science Bowl, Odyssey of the Mind, Science Olympiad, and Chess Club are also platforms where Gomes students perform at stellar levels. Our students participate in a variety of after school activities like sports, robotics, Scouts, band, and orchestra.

We have many ways for parents to be part of our learning community. We have heavy involvement with our Parent Teachers Association (PTA). Parents can also join our School Site Council (SSC) which works with the administration to oversee financial decisions at the school site. Parents are involved with the school's traffic and safety program to maintain a safe and efficient school drop-off and pick-up loop before and after school daily. There are parent-run programs such as Fine Arts Mini Experience (FAME) and Music for Minors that bring hands-on art and music practice and appreciation into each classroom.

Our theme this year at Gomes is, "Let's Do This Together." We not only aim to align our curriculum with Common Core standards, but strive to address the heart of every student, parent, and staff member of our community.

At Gomes, teachers feel valued and supported. The principal respects the teachers as professionals, and frequently includes the teaching staff in decision-making at the school site. Our Emergency Preparedness program at Gomes (earthquake response) is developed almost entirely from the ideas, observations, experiences, and knowledge of the teachers on staff. Teachers are encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities, and are always invited to share their knowledge, talents, and ideas with the staff.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Connecting families to school for the purpose of student success is a core purpose and value. Bringing families together on campus promotes a welcoming, accessible, and inclusive school culture. This year, we started in September with an "Aloha" Gopher Family Social Night that included food trucks, a DJ, and karaoke. We host a Movie Night, a Math Games Night, a Science Night, and a Story Time Evening in tandem with read Across America Week. PTA sponsors Gopher Spotlight, which is a parent education series that brings in speakers to share information with parents. Past Spotlight talks include "Fostering Independence in Your Child" and "Authentic Success: What Matters and What Doesn't?" We hold regular Walk to School Day events to encourage families to ditch their cars in favor of the health benefits of bicycles and walking shoes. Eco Club endorses this event as well for the reduced production of vehicle fossil fuel emissions.

Families work with the Eco Club students to help beautify our campus. We have campus clean-up days and students have planted a butterfly garden and positioned flower planters around campus. There is talk of putting in an herb and vegetable garden next year. Along with picnic tables for outdoor seating and dining, PTA-funded benches were installed outside of each classroom.

Parents lead the organization of Red Ribbon Week, Multicultural Week, Founders Day, Summer Reader Program, and various restaurant fundraisers. Public relations/communications occur some through social media platforms, but mostly through email and Konstella.com, a secure, private parent community communication tool. Teachers regularly post and update student assignment results securely and confidentially via Engradepro.com.

Parents are encouraged to be involved at Gomes. From helping out with pumpkin carving at Halloween to working our annual Walkathon, parents help lead in positive ways. Gomes students always seem to be on the move, so chaperoning field trips is another key way for parents to participate. Gophers go to the Exploratorium in San Francisco, the Chinese Lunar New Year Parade in downtown Oakland, the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in downtown San Jose, Ardenwood Farms in Fremont, and also walk among elephant seals on the beach at Ano Nuevo State Reserve. Many sixth grade parents even join us for the annual ascent of our local landmark, Mission Peak. This involves a challenging 5.8 mile round trip hike with an elevation gain of about 2,000 feet. Gomes families are fit and fabulous!

3. Professional Development:

The FUSD supports teachers with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the next Generation Science Standards. Each August, prior to the start of instructional days, teachers attend three or four days of required staff development. Agendas vary depending on policies, programs, or roll out of new curriculum. Most recently our staff development days focused on PLCs and involved team building and development of effective collaboration practices. Professional development opportunities are also offered over the summer break outside of the instructional school year. This occurs with a new curriculum adoption such as upcoming English language arts. The advantage is that teachers might like to preview new curriculum material before working with it during the school year.

Professional learning sessions are also offered throughout the school year. Effort is made by the district to make accessing these courses a convenient experience for teachers. A calendar and list of professional learning options is posted via the district website. The Curriculum and Instruction Department will also broadcast district-wide emails calling attention to or inviting specific groups of teacher or PLCs to attend certain workshops. Individual teacher attendance at optional workshops is compensated in a few different ways, depending on teacher choice. If a course is offered during the instructional day, this is a Release Day and required substitute pay is covered without marking the teacher absent. For courses offered outside of the instructional school day, teachers choose to be compensated at the hourly rate, by earning units (for advancement on the salary schedule), or by receiving PLC hours credit.

Sessions are most often offered at the district office in the professional development center (PDC), which is a sizable, comfortable classroom with ample light, ventilation, and power outlets. The district office building is conveniently located close to two major freeway access points, and is easily accessed from any of the forty-two schools that serve the nearly 35,000 Fremont students. In addition to the PDC, courses are offered in the dedicated Technology Lab inside the district office. An additional state-of-the-art technology room has recently been opened at one of the junior high schools, and classes are sometimes offered there.

FUSD offers a wide menu of professional development opportunities that are aligned with academic standards and support student achievement. Everything from GATE certification and refresher classes to Health, Puberty and Sexuality Ed Training is offered. Teachers may sign up easily and efficiently for courses through EROS (Electronic Registrar Online).

4. School Leadership:

At Gomes, the principal works with stakeholders to put the purpose of the school into a written statement. The mission and goals which emphasize academic accomplishment for students are communicated to all staff, students, and parents, and become internalized as a commitment to a core mission.

As the instructional leader, the principal helps teachers obtain resources, including staff development alternatives. The principal's visibility at school manifests strong leadership qualities. In addition, the principal ensures the school's climate is safe, pleasant, and conducive to learning. Relationships among people are based upon mutual respect, trust, and caring. School spirit is cohesive and morale is high. Students are actively involved in the development of school rules and cooperative projects. There are recognized opportunities for school self-renewal which reflect a responsive climate for change. Students experience positive feelings, growth, and development. School rules are uniformly and consistently enforced.

Gomes' School Site Council oversees the school plan. This group is composed of 50% parents and 50% staff, including the principal, certificated teachers, and classified staff. The council ensures that the school budget complies with federal and state regulations. Regular meetings occur to plan, monitor, and review programs. The PTA is another parent/teacher organization that monitors programs and budgets for the success of students at Gomes.

The Gomes' LEAD Team or leadership team meets once a month and comprises the principal and grade level representatives from TK to 6 grade. LEAD Team teachers work with their grade level colleagues and guarantors that the school's plan is implemented with the necessary calendar and structures for success. They ensure that feedback loops are in place between school-wide conversations and grade-level work. The leadership team also monitors and assesses the effectiveness of professional development. They look closely at the big picture of reform and make adjustments to the school plan as needed. Teachers are encouraged to take a leadership role in causes about which they are especially passionate.

The academic progress of students at Gomes is continually assessed. Teachers routinely inform students and parents about student performance on class work, homework, and tests. Teaching staff understand and use assessment information to improve the instructional program and to modify classroom teaching strategies. There is consistency between the curriculum objectives, the instruction, and the assessment of student progress. Rather than rely on a single measure of academic achievement, teachers incorporate a variety of measures in monitoring student performance.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Living in the Bay Area, many students and teachers at Gomes are Golden State Warriors fans. The morning after an exciting game has been televised, many classrooms are abuzz with chatter about game highlights and the performance of favorite athletes. When asked about the formula for the team's success, Warriors Head Coach Steve Kerr has attributed it to four emphasized values: Joy, Competitiveness, Mindfulness, and Compassion. At Gomes, we have asked our older students to also think, discuss, and write about how these four values might impact individual student success. Acknowledging and appreciating the potential of these four important values is a giant step toward one key idea that really defines the Gomes community. The one practice that is most instrumental to the success of our school is a shared passion for excellence.

Since its opening in 1970, Gomes has enjoyed a reputation for being an exemplary school. It should be mentioned that the high school that Gomes feeds into has 98% of its students go on to attend college. In other words, nearly every single Gomes Gopher is college-bound. Many Gomes alumni now work in the highest echelons of the Silicon Valley tech industry. Around the globe there are prominent doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, artists, and civic leaders who started off as Gomes students. We have among our alumni a former major league baseball pitcher, a member of former vice president Joe Biden's staff, a local high school principal, and a California state spelling bee champion!

Families move into this neighborhood specifically so their children can attend Gomes. Most students attend Gomes all the way from kindergarten through sixth grade. There is little mobility out. Teacher turnover is also low because those who work here rarely seek teaching opportunities elsewhere. People want to be a part of this amazing school. There is joy here. There is compassion. There is mindfulness. And there is academic competition.

Education is viewed in our community as the path to success. Parents have high expectations for their children, and for the school that is responsible for educating those children. Teachers and school administrators also set a high bar for student achievement, and ask much of parents and families in the way of support. There is agreement in the community that everyone must be held accountable. Students devote themselves to their studies in a focused manner because they believe that failure is not an option. Excellence is attainable if one works hard and perseveres. The whole team benefits when every stakeholder puts their whole heart and strength into doing their part. We attain excellence together.