



## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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

1. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	12	10	22
K	32	35	67
1	27	33	60
2	43	22	65
3	44	36	80
4	35	44	79
5	49	42	91
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	242	222	464

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 15 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 69 % White
  - 11 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 7%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	32
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	464
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Farsi, French, German, Hungarian, Indonesian, Mandarin, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 15%  
Total number students who qualify: 71

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %  
63 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>17</u> Autism                 | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>1</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>15</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>22</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</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: 14
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 21:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	94%	94%	95%	95%	96%
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 2018.

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

Each student gains the knowledge, experience, world perspectives, and skills needed to become a lifelong learner and producer in a competitive and interconnected world.

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

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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El Morro Elementary School is located on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean near the northern border of Laguna Beach and is surrounded by Crystal Cove State Park on its southern and eastern borders. This ideal location allows our students to participate in hands on and interactive learning experiences with the environment around us. We serve a wide range of students from all over the community of Laguna Beach and a portion of Crystal Cove, including English Learners, students with special needs, and gifted students. The main goal from our Single Plan for Student Achievement is to increase all students' academic achievement and social emotional strength through collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. Our school community is focused on providing our students with a world class education allowing students to compete and participate in a global society by implementing rigorous California State Standards and high expectations for all students. El Morro Elementary School was recognized as a California Distinguished School in 2008 and 2014, as well as a California Gold Ribbon School in 2016. Our collaborative, systems based approach to education has helped student learning continue to grow as evidenced by our students' performance on the 2018 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). Eighty-two percent of our third through fifth grade students met or exceeded the standards in English Language Arts and 78% of our students met or exceeded the standards in Math.

These results were accomplished by a hard working, highly qualified staff of teachers who have embraced the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model. El Morro Elementary School is a Professional Learning Community dedicated to meeting the needs of our students by using data to support our decision making. We are so dedicated to the PLC model, that we modified our bell schedule to allow time for teacher collaboration. Every Wednesday, the students are dismissed an hour early so our teachers can collaborate. It is important to note that this schedule was created by adding instructional minutes to the other days of the week so student contact time was not diminished. This allows our teachers and staff to work together to review assessment data, determine which students are in need of intervention or extension, and create standards based lessons built on research validated instructional strategies. Teachers use a wide range of screeners, common formative assessments, and summative assessments in English Language Arts and Math to monitor student progress. This PLC model is one of the key ingredients to the success of our school.

Although providing a rigorous curriculum where student learning thrives is our top priority, we also believe it is equally important to educate the whole child. We strive to create an outstanding social emotional environment for students to develop and grow through our Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program (PBIS), Second Step Social Learning curriculum, and by using a positive growth mindset. Our PBIS program explicitly teaches the students our schoolwide expectations and positively reinforces the students for following the school rules. This program emphasizes using a ratio of 5 to 1 positive adult interactions to negative adult interactions with students and rewarding students for doing the right thing. Second Step strives to teach students values and behaviors for school success such as respect, empathy, problem solving and self confidence. Through a positive growth mindset, we teach the students the power of "Yet" and that failure is part of the learning process, not the end of it.

To ensure we are educating the whole child, we have created what we call an Encore Schedule, not a "pullout" schedule. English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Science are our core subjects, while Music, Physical Education, Technology, Library/Media Center, Science Lab, and Foreign Language (Spanish for 4th and 5th grades) are our encore. We have Chorus, Band and/or Strings instruction for students in grades Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through 5th. TK through 2nd grade students participate in Chorus once a week. While in 3rd grade, students receive instruction in recorder, violin, and chorus, and in 4th and 5th grade the students get to choose among Chorus, Band instruments or String instruments. These encore classes enhance our core curriculum. For instance, all students regardless of their ability, are included in Science lab each week. This provides all students the opportunity to participate in hands-on learning, giving them another avenue to demonstrate strengths they may not otherwise develop. Finally, Laguna Beach is an artists' colony and we enthusiastically include the visual arts and performing arts as part of regular school day. Teachers use curriculum-based art projects and plays to teach the visual arts and performing arts standards at each grade level. It is through these well rounded programs focusing on meeting

the needs of the whole child that we strive to attain our school district's vision: "We take ownership of each child's learning in our schools, accepting no limits on potential."

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

Our curriculum for English Language Arts/English Language Development (ELA/ELD) encompasses a blended approach to meet student needs for 21st century learning. We have adopted the McGraw Hill Education Wonders program as our core curriculum. This ensures that all students receive well-rounded, systematic, sequential reading and writing instruction. Teachers foster a love of reading, prepare students to be lifelong learners and critical thinkers through a collaborative classroom culture. ELA/ELD instruction is student-centered, encourages teaching in small groups and has additional support embedded for English Learners as well as gifted students. Teachers have the freedom to integrate technology components, core literature books, and leveled readers in each grade level to enhance the strategies in the Wonders program and differentiate for the various needs of our learners. In addition, teachers have been trained in supplemental programs for targeted instruction in tiered intervention. We use Orton Gillingham strategies to intervene with students who need additional phonics and decoding support, Thinking Maps enhance comprehension instruction, and Word Study supplements our spelling instruction. The Curriculum Associates i-Ready computer program further supplements instruction by providing teachers with formative assessment feedback, specific lessons for student remediation, and computer adaptive lessons for student need. Our K - 5 District Assessment Calendar includes benchmarks four times a year as well as progress monitoring assessments. We use a combination of DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessments, Scholastic Reading Inventory Lexile, Basic Phonics Skills Test, and Wonders curriculum assessments. Teachers meet regularly to evaluate student progress using assessment data. Students are grouped in flexible groups according to need so that intervention and extension can be provided for all students. Students with the most intensive needs receive systematic phonics intervention using Orton Gillingham strategies in groups of no more than 4 students per group. With all these resources available for our teachers we are able to ensure all students succeed.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

The math curriculum used at El Morro Elementary is Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Math Expressions. This program encourages students to use critical thinking skills for daily problem solving and emphasizes there are multiple methods to solve problems. While our instruction encompasses all Mathematical state standards, all grade level teams have identified Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) during our Professional Learning Community (PLC) time. These standards are essential and non-negotiable for student success as they move to the next grade level. Teachers identified formative assessments which are directly tied to ELO's so that student progress can be gauged, and teachers can determine which students may need additional small group intervention. Seventy-eight percent of our third through fifth grade students are meeting or exceeding the standards in math on the summative state test. Teachers and the Principal examined the data and set an instructional goal for math in the area of communicating reasoning. To support this, the Principal has provided professional development during staff meetings in using the Eight Standards for Mathematical Practices to continuously improve math instruction. The practices are designed to help students make sense of problems and attend to precision in addition to other problem solving skills. Our math curriculum is supplemented by Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) and ST Math technology. CGI allows students to use exploration and experimentation to solve math problems using manipulatives, drawings and models, and choosing a method that is most accessible to them. ST Math is an online computer program focused on mastering math standards using a visual conceptual model. Teachers have access to the assessments from ST Math and can use this immediate feedback to drive small group instruction. During intervention, staff utilize strategies such as Touch Math and Facts Wise to improve math fact fluency and meet the diverse needs of students. Teachers use all of this information to drive instruction.

#### **1c. Science:**

When the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) were released the Principal and teachers had a vision for a new science program at El Morro. With the support of the school district, a science specialist was hired, and a classroom transformed into a state-of-the art STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) Lab. Our science curriculum became a blended approach between classroom instruction and hands on lab learning. Teachers embraced the change to NGSS developing new curriculum and lessons. The science specialist and classroom teachers examined the three dimensions of learning: Science Performance Expectations, Cross Cutting Concepts and Disciplinary Core Ideas and a yearly plan for vertical alignment across grade levels was designed. Students now engage in a wide variety of learning methods: building models, planning investigations, online simulations and exploring phenomena that occur in nature. Teachers worked in grade level teams utilizing the Mystery Science and STEMscopes curricula to create science units and lessons that encompass the five E's of Science: engage, explore, explain, evaluate and elaborate. The master schedule was modified to include STEAM Lab once a week for all students in grades TK through 5th. Lab time has become a student favorite! This has helped create a seamless flow of science instruction between the classroom and STEAM Lab. Students engage with a science concept in the classroom and explore it in the STEAM Lab. This is followed by further explanation, elaboration and evaluation in the classroom. Third through fifth grade students use Gizmos online simulator, which gives teachers immediate assessment feedback. At all grades, teacher created formative and summative assessments ensure that as students articulate through the grade levels at El Morro, they are well prepared for the summative California Science Test. Our science program prepares students with real world problem solving skills to compete globally in the 21st century.

#### **1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

Social Studies is taught using Harcourt Reflections along with many secondary sources and supplementary materials to promote inquiry based learning. Each grade level uses Social Studies and ELA/ELD standards to incorporate writing, listening and speaking standards along with different hands-on experiences and projects. Teachers identify cross curricular units whenever possible. On a trimester basis, students are instructed in following scaffolded steps for a culminating project including a classroom presentation using a gradual release of responsibility. Teachers have planned together so the curriculum articulates well and each grade level builds on what the previous grade has learned. For example, kindergarteners focus on learning the basic American symbols of the United States flag, Statue of Liberty, the Bald Eagle and the Liberty Bell as well as learning about our community partners the Police and Fire departments. First grade adds national symbols such as the Declaration of Independence, Mt. Rushmore, and the Golden Gate Bridge along with mapping skills. Second grade students choose a historical figure and follow the steps for a written and oral biography presentation. Third graders create a living museum of national symbols, while 4th graders research California history and present current events each trimester to their classmates. Fifth grade culminates with the students participating in a historical "Walk Through the Revolution" dramatization re-enacting the American Revolution and learning about the "Fifty Nifty" United States. Field trips are also incorporated throughout the year to enhance our Social Studies curriculum. A few highlights are third graders taking a field trip to City Hall to learn about our local community and meet with the Mayor. Fourth grade visits Mission San Juan Capistrano each year to learn more about the California Missions as part of their social studies instruction. The goal is to bring history to life to make it more engaging for the students.

#### **1e. For secondary schools:**

#### **1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:**

### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Our philosophy at El Morro encompasses teaching the whole child. Students have a wide range of opportunities to develop strengths in many extra curricular areas. Our master schedule includes blocks of time for Encore classes. Each week all students, Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through fifth grade,

participate in STEAM lab, Physical Education (PE), music, Spanish, technology, and library classes. Additionally, the arts standards are incorporated throughout the curriculum.

PE is taught twice a week for all students using a health and fitness approach instead of team sports. In addition to physical education classes, students at El Morro have more opportunities to learn about health and nutrition through our PE and Learning Garden programs. Jog-a-Thon, Jump Rope for Heart, and nutritional tips provided by our PE Teacher enhance student learning about their own health. In our Learning Garden, teachers and parent volunteers coordinate lessons related to science standards so that classes can visit the Learning Garden on a regular basis. Students observe changes in our garden as well as participate in growing and tasting a variety of fresh vegetables. We have even had some of our classes pickle vegetables for a fundraiser during Open House.

For music, all students in grades TK through second meet once a week for choir. Beginning in 3rd grade, students spend one semester experiencing both wind and string instruments in preparation for choosing band, strings, or choir in fourth grade. Schoolwide, students are able to participate in arts activities to meet Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) standards. Special lessons are conducted through the Art Masters Program 6 times year. With Laguna Beach being an artist community, students are fortunate to be able to take advantage of many different art opportunities. Laguna Outreach for Community Arts (LOCA) teaches art lessons in second and third grade. Third grade participates in a field trip to the Laguna Beach Art Museum, which enhances lessons meeting VAPA and social studies standards. Fourth grade students participate in a “Plein Air Paint Out” and experience painting in the Plein Air style so integral to our Laguna Beach community traditions. In addition to visual arts, grade levels perform plays, which connects listening and speaking standards, core literature lessons, and performing arts standards.

We are fortunate to be able to offer second language classes to our fourth and fifth grade students. This was part of the district wide plan to introduce second language learning for our students at a developmentally appropriate time. These lessons are hands on, interactive and highly engaging for our students. Additionally, first through third graders have the option of beginning second language learning even earlier in their development through our after school programs.

Several years ago our district became a 1:1 device district. We started at fifth grade level and scaled up the program adding a grade level each year. We currently have a Bring Your Own Device program available for fifth graders as well. Students have the option to bring their own device from home or borrow a Chromebook from the school. Having 1:1 devices allows students at all grade levels to access a variety of instructional and supplemental programs throughout the school day for both ELA/ELD and Math. Our Technology Paraeducator, instructs the students in typing skills, appropriate use of technology for learning and how to create engaging presentations. Technology time is a weekly part of our encore schedule covering a variety of skills from learning how to use Google Drive to evaluating credible online sources for research. Teachers also have the option to work with our Technology Teacher on Special Assignment for weekly coding lessons.

Our Media Specialist meets with all students once a week to enhance research skills and promote a love of reading. Students have access to Scholastic Reading Counts, where each child receives a Lexile, so they can check out books at the appropriate reading level. Students also have access to an online lending library, SORA, for visual and audio books. By providing a well rounded educational experience, El Morro nurtures student interests as well as provides a much needed break from the rigors of academics. All of these programs enhance the student experience and allow for the development of the whole child.

### **3. Special Populations:**

El Morro Elementary School has a strong cultural belief that all students can learn. Our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) strives to identify and deliver the best instruction for all students at their instructional level. Although 14% of our student population is currently identified for special education, we have strengthened our MTSS to ensure targeted general education interventions are delivered prior to a referral for special education assessment. Teachers conduct schoolwide benchmark assessments three times yearly in the areas of English Language Arts and Reading. We use Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early

Literacy (DIBELS), SRI Lexile, Basic Phonics Skills Test, and a Universal Writing assessment to initially identify skill strengths and needs. Students scoring below benchmark are given diagnostic assessments to pinpoint skill gaps. Students are categorized as advanced, benchmark, strategic or intensive based on screening and diagnostic assessments. Next, teachers collaborate with the reading intervention team to form intervention groups across the grade level. Target students receive interventions delivered by classroom teachers and instructional aides. Grouping is flexible throughout the school year and students move in and out of intervention groups depending on periodic measures of mastery. Strategic and intensive intervention lessons are delivered four times weekly for 30-40 minutes during a scheduled review and intervention block called Intervention/Extension (I/E) time. This enables all students to receive supplemental instruction and activities at their instructional level, such as intensive intervention, additional on-grade level practice, or enrichment activities for advanced learners.

El Morro serves students across the district in second through fifth grade who are placed in Special Day Classes (SDC). General Education and SDC teachers work collaboratively for inclusion opportunities for students in SDC throughout the school day. Students in SDC are included in general education classes to the greatest extent possible, and during encore classes such as music, science lab, and physical education. Our resource specialist program also provides supplemental support based on student needs.

Additionally, our students, designated as English Learners (EL), receive support during classroom instruction and our I/E time. Students who are EL benefit from both designated and integrated EL instruction as needed according to English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) assessments. Students who are EL have equal access to supplemental intervention and may receive additional small group instruction within the classroom and participate in reading intervention groups when necessary.

Our special populations refer to more than struggling students. We provide our advanced and gifted students various extension opportunities that go beyond the standard curriculum. For example, students who are advanced may take a pre-assessment before beginning a new math unit and if they have already mastered the content, they are given alternative extension activities. Additionally, students are able to design their own supplemental projects to enhance their reading activities. Lastly, our science specialist provides monthly science extension lessons to differentiate for our gifted learners. These are some of the variety of ways El Morro strives to meet the needs of our special populations.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

El Morro Elementary School is forward thinking and ahead of the curve when it comes to the social emotional health of our students. In an effort to meet our students' growing social and emotional needs, a full-time Elementary School Counselor was added to our campus. Through staff collaboration, we have been able to cultivate a school campus that engages, motivates, and provides all students with a positive school environment. Our goal is to empower the students and staff with the social skills and tools to thrive on our campus and in the community.

Each fall and spring our school conducts schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) assemblies to proactively teach academic, behavioral, and social emotional expectations for all our students. These assemblies model playground and behavioral expectations to all our students, highlight schoolwide incentives, as well as teach consequences. Staff members look to highlight students who model what is learned during the assemblies in order to promote, encourage, and reinforce positive behaviors.

We believe building relationships and character is essential. Throughout the school year, students participate in a character-building initiative, entitled Character Counts. This initiative highlights the six essential pillars of character: Respect, Fairness, Citizenship, Trustworthiness, Caring, and Responsibility. Character traits are spotlighted across the school in many different settings: monthly school calendar, morning announcements, classroom lessons, books read by our school librarian, and other students recognizing one another using compliment cards. Students are selected for recognition based on exemplifying these traits at a schoolwide assembly each month where teachers, staff, and students are able to celebrate their achievements.

In an effort to reduce bullying, our school has been an active participant in the No Place for Hate Initiative. In 2017-2018, El Morro was proud to be one of a few schools throughout the nation identified as a "spotlight school" in the No Place for Hate Initiative by the Anti Defamation League.

Our staff has made a concerted effort to proactively teach social emotional learning using the Second Step curriculum. Second Step is research-based and classroom-tested to promote the social emotional development, safety, and well-being of children from Transitional Kindergarten through fifth grade. Teachers received modeling and instruction on how to implement classroom guidance lessons. Our social emotional team of professionals have utilized a gradual release teaching model to empower our teachers with the social emotional vocabulary, curriculum, and pedagogy to create a common language of grit, determination, persistence and resiliency on our campus.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

We are very fortunate at El Morro Elementary School to enjoy strong engagement in our school from parents and the community. El Morro PTA is extensively involved in our school. Last year parents volunteered over 20,000 hours! They not only fundraise to enhance programs at our school such as arts instruction, equipment, and supplies for the STEAM Lab, and the Learning Garden, but also create opportunities to support our instructional program by volunteering through activities like Book Club and Colonial Days. Parents volunteer in third grade classrooms and lead a "Book Club", which allows for smaller groups of students to engage in meaningful conversations about what they are reading. Without these smaller groups, some student voices may get drowned out by the larger class. Colonial Days transforms our multipurpose room back in time to a Colonial village complete with candle making, sewing, wax sealed letters sent home, leather stamping and jewelry making with beads. This tradition is a community favorite all coordinated by parent volunteers!

Our English Learners (EL) and their families are also an integral part of our school community. They are encouraged to participate in their children's education through outreach from our teachers, the principal and our School Community Liaison. Monthly District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)

meetings allow EL parents to learn more information about school programs, parent education opportunities and how to volunteer at the school. An example of these programs is Juntos, which means friends in Spanish. Juntos matches a trained high school tutor with an elementary EL student to help complete homework, reinforce concepts taught at school and serve as a positive role model.

We also believe in the importance of parent education opportunities. These include district supported presentations from experts such as Dr. Denise Pope, entitled, "Overloaded and Underprepared: Strategies for Stronger Schools and Healthy, Successful Kids" and Julie Lythcott-Haims "How to Raise Successful Kids Without Over Parenting."

El Morro enjoys a strong sense of support from the greater community as well. Our annual The Learning Club (TLC) after school tutoring program enjoys support from the American Association of University Women (AAUW). This program matches a volunteer from the AAUW with a student who is in need of after school support two days a week in an effort to improve student success. When students experience a sense of active parent and community involvement, they perform better on standardized academic assessments, and experience higher levels of self esteem and engagement in school.

### **3. Professional Development:**

The goal of our professional development program is to strengthen the teachers abilities to respond to the diverse needs of students. Our district offers many different professional development opportunities for teachers and staff during the year. Professional development needs are determined by teacher request (surveys), new curriculum, and changing standards. Some professional development offerings are required, while other trainings compensate teachers for attending on their own time. In conjunction with our school and district goals of continuous improvement, every student, every day and meaningful relationships, we began the year with a StrengthsFinder 2.0 training. This program identified each person's strengths and how these strengths help our staff work together more effectively.

When the new Language Arts curriculum was adopted two years ago, professional development was required for all teachers to ensure fidelity of implementation of the McGraw Hill Wonders program. Coaching opportunities were also provided by our Teacher on Special Assignment as teachers implemented Wonders for the first time. In addition, teachers are given the opportunity each year to participate in Pathways to Proficiency to further their knowledge on incorporating reading strategies and Thinking Maps into instruction. This program provides the teachers with scaffolding strategies to support EL students and struggling readers in accessing the core curriculum. New dyslexia legislation offered another opportunity for teachers to be trained in foundational reading skills and Orton Gillingham based reading intervention strategies to enhance instruction for both on-grade level students and struggling readers. Professional development is ongoing and not a one and done type approach. Data from multiple measures supports the effectiveness of this model. We are currently going through a similar cycle of professional development for Math.

Our district also takes an innovative approach to professional development. One such project which has had a positive impact on teacher and student efficacy, is called Rocket Ready. This approach is designed to make the staff development process meaningful, engaging, and immediately useful to teachers working with students. Rocket Ready requires teachers to engage with technology, Universal Design for Learning and Project Based Learning as they solve real world problems with their students. Mentors and coaches from the local community collaborate with teachers to integrate technology while working toward their goal of cross-curricular projects creating global awareness for students. Then teachers are required to show evidence of their learning through screenshots, reflections, activities or student work samples. The focus is on how teachers are engaging with students, not just attending a class.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The Superintendent and the El Morro Elementary School Principal believe in a continuous improvement school leadership model. This model is based on using data to inform decision making. School goals are identified each year based on a review of a wide variety of school performance data. Assessment and

survey data are analyzed each year to create continuous improvement goals. For example, two years ago, the Principal determined the school's reading scores on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) could be better. Working with instructional staff, a schoolwide goal to improve student reading scores on the summative assessment was created to better reflect student and staff capabilities. With continued focus, improved Reading/Language Arts instruction, and a lot of hard work, students' reading scores improved. El Morro was able to increase the number of students scoring above standard in reading on the 2017-18 CAASPP from 51% to 54%. This year, the Principal and instructional staff set an instructional goal in the area of communicating reasoning in math based on a review of the school's math performance data.

El Morro Elementary School also employs a "bottom up" leadership approach as opposed to a "top down" approach whenever possible. The Principal utilizes a school based Leadership Team of teacher representatives from each grade level, support staff and special education to share leadership responsibilities. This team tackles issues at the site level to make positive changes to the school culture, climate and programs when necessary.

The school district also gathers feedback from all stakeholder groups annually. They accomplish this through outreach and surveying stakeholder groups several times a year. Our Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) survey goes out annually to all parents, staff and students in fifth grade through seniors in high school. The district also uses an annual School Climate survey to gather feedback on the culture and climate of each of its schools. Both of these surveys are analyzed by administration and an outside agency to identify areas for improvement. This survey data along with student performance data is used to set goals and create the school's annual Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). Finally, teachers take an annual Professional Development survey to identify where they need support professionally. This information is used each year to plan professional development for staff when they return in August and throughout the school year.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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One strategy for success at El Morro is our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). MTSS relies on data cycles for continuous improvement. We assess, analyze data, implement instruction and revisit the effectiveness of instruction and interventions. Our assessment calendar includes, formative, summative and progress monitoring assessments in core curricular subjects and student social emotional well-being. Refinement of ELA and Math benchmark screening assessments, listed in the Special Populations Section, allows us to identify at risk students. We also monitor student attendance. Twice a year we conduct Student Risk Screening Scales on internalizing/externalizing behaviors to determine who is at risk for emotional and behavioral problems. MTSS monitors all aspects of students' wellness to remove barriers which may keep students from learning at their highest potential.

As part of our MTSS process each grade level meets together as a Collaborative Academic Support Team (CAST) comprised of teachers, principal, school counselor, school psychologist, special education teacher, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, and reading intervention teacher. In addition to data collection for weekly PLC data cycles, CAST convenes twice a year. We monitor progress of data to identify students who need additional interventions in attendance, academics, or social emotional health. Collaboratively we determine the best 6-8 week intervention plan for at risk students, identifying who will be responsible for implementation in the classroom or small group during the I/E block. Group and individual counseling interventions are available for students showing high risk for internalizing or externalizing behaviors. The power of our MTSS data cycles is the information we gather to intervene across grade levels and to provide teachers with additional support to meet student needs. As an example, a high percentage of students were having difficulty with fine motor skills and printing in kindergarten and first grade. As a result, the CAST team provided teachers with additional training and materials in the Handwriting Without Tears program. High levels of behavioral needs have also been identified through our social emotional screening data. This triggered lessons on growth mindset and multiple assemblies on respecting others with different abilities. Over time, data collected regarding behavioral needs led to implementation of the Second Step curriculum in all classrooms. We have seen a decrease in behavioral problems and office discipline referrals through implementation of these additional behavioral supports. By following a continuous MTSS data cycle we are able to proactively meet student needs in all areas, addressing the whole child in preparation for 21st century learning.