

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Nona Richard

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

Official School Name Torrey Pines Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 8350 Cliffridge Avenue

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

La Jolla CA 92037-2106  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County San Diego

Telephone (858) 453-2323

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Web site/URL

<https://www.sandiegounified.org/schools/torrey-pines>

E-mail nrichard@sandi.net

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. Cindy Marten

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail cmarten@sandi.net

District Name San Diego Unified School District Tel. (619) 725-8000

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 Dr. Sharon Whitehurst-Payne

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

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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

1. 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

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
  - 126 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 24 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 22 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools

172 TOTAL

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

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
  - Urban or large central city
  - Suburban
  - Rural or small city/town
- 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	0	0	0
K	33	52	85
1	48	33	81
2	37	51	88
3	41	34	75
4	40	26	66
5	33	47	80
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>	232	243	475

\*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
  - 14 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 17 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 54 % White
  - 13 % 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: 9%

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

n/a

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	23
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	19
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	42
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	480
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 13 %  
61 Total number ELL

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

Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian, Dutch, Farsi (Persian), German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Korean, Mandarin (Putonghua), Marathi, Pashto, Polish, Portugese, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0%  
Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %  
62 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>7</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>27</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>19</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: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 22:1

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	96%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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. 2013

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

Each child feels successful, achieves academically, and thinks critically. Teachers, students, administrators, parents, and community work together to maintain curriculum based on student needs and state standards.

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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Torrey Pines Elementary School (TPES) is located on a high bluff, overlooking the Pacific Ocean, in La Jolla, California. Its 476 students represent a plethora of countries throughout the world, as students often join our school community while their parents and guardians work and study abroad at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD). The school is known not only for its high academic standards and talented student body; it is also recognized as leading the San Diego Unified School District in its efforts toward social-emotional learning, inclusiveness, diversity, and critical thinking.

Built in 1980, TPES has a strong history of providing an outstanding neighborhood public school experience for students who would otherwise attend private schools. The partnership between parents, community and staff at TPES is exceptional; this facilitates small class sizes and students' access to a variety of learning opportunities, generally in existence only at affluent private schools. These opportunities include music, dance, art, theatre, gardening, coding, Spanish and specialty sports such as gymnastics, swimming, lacrosse, basketball, volleyball and golf. The school was named a National Blue Ribbon School in 2013 and became a California Gold Ribbon Distinguished School in 2016. Torrey Pines Elementary School is committed to meeting the needs of all students, including students with disabilities, students who are learning to speak English, and students in the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Cluster and Seminar programs.

The hallmark of Torrey Pines Elementary School is its commitment to Critical Literacy Instruction. When one asks TPES teachers and parents of what instructional aspect they are most proud, they will tell you it is the relentless focus on making text relevant to students. More than anything else, TPES kids are “thinkers,” and this feature of students is cultivated by increasing students' ability to actively read literature and non-fiction in a way that promotes a deeper understanding of socially constructed concepts such as power, inequality and injustice in human relationships. Becoming critically literate means that students have developed and mastered the ability to read, analyze, critique and question the messages inherently present within any form of text. Torrey Pines teachers challenge students to do more than read and write; they should become agents of social change. This is evidenced by a recent experience the principal had with a first-grade student. The student, who was out to lunch with the principal and had ordered a child's milk, received the beverage in a plastic cup. At the end of lunch, when the principal and child were leaving the table, the principal asked whether the child wanted to take home his cup. The first-grader's response was, “No, thanks. I already have some at home. I really hope they wash and reuse those cups instead of just throwing them away. Have you seen what is happening with our oceans lately? They are so polluted with overuse of plastic. It's the same thing with straws. No, I don't need to contribute to that.”

One factor that makes the school unique is that all of the subgroup populations are supported through relationship building. For example, students who are new to the United States and are learning English are offered small-group classes before school, in addition to the instruction provided in class, to improve their conversational skills. Because these students are at TPES for a short time only, likely just one to two years, one might think their language needs may not be adequately addressed. In addition, due to the temporary nature of their stay and parents' limited English proficiency, one might imagine both student and parent might feel isolated from peers. This is simply not the case. These students are celebrated, and parents regularly attest that what makes our school so special is the fantastic global representation. As one of our fifth-graders recently explained, her best friend is a Danish girl, a peer she met in kindergarten and who moved back to Denmark in first-grade. When the principal asked the Torrey Pines fifth-grader what she is looking forward to most this summer, she remarked it was her family's annual vacation to Denmark to spend time with the special family friends they met at our school six years ago. Moreover, while the principal was recently eating lunch with the TPES fifth-grader, the student let the principal know her goal is to be the President of the United States, desiring to team with other nations to improve the outlook of developing countries.

Another notable feature of Torrey Pines Elementary is its commitment to creating a campus accepting of differences. The 4U Squad Diversity Club, in its second year, is a group of some thirty students that meets before school twice a month to discuss different topics such as being an up-stander in a difficult situation, embracing diversity and communicating effectively. Parents of the students in this club also meet together,

along with the principal, counselor and district representatives, regarding such topics as anti-bully efforts on campus, coordination of assemblies and other activities such as Kindness Week and discussion around the relevance and appropriateness of long-standing campus traditions. The 4U Squad Diversity Club recently organized and choreographed a two-and-a-half hour Variety Show in which each child was celebrated and showcased in a way that made all students and families proud. Perhaps a traditional Variety Show would be more like a “talent” show; kids would try out, audience members might judge one act against another and families could be found cheering for their own child but not for others. The TPES Variety Show was phenomenal, celebrating the power and capability of each child. Students who wanted to take part in the show but did not feel certain about what talent to perform were invited to participate in one or more choreographed group dances and skits. All eighty students in the Variety Show participated in opening and closing acts as well. Creating this masterpiece of a Variety Show took the commitment of many parents, and since January, the students had been coming to school each morning for a daily rehearsal. There are many schools that are fortunate to have high levels of parent involvement, but what sets TPES apart is that these parents are invested in the success of all students and operate with common goals of inclusivity and kindness on campus.

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

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

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

Torrey Pines’ reading and English language arts curriculum is founded on the premise of Critical Literacy, offering a carefully engineered progression of thinking and content understanding. Its interim goals for each of the grade-levels are derived from two distinct sources--the expectations of California state standards for middle school and high school and the definitions of elite literacy. The study and synthesis of these two unique sources result in a highly ambitious set of expectations and thinking objectives—one that meets and exceeds Common Core Standards. The interim goals ensure that students make constant and measurable progress toward an overarching objective. The objective is to use both content expertise and productive thinking-dispositions to interpret fiction and to masterfully manage informational text in the abstract and conceptual manner that characterizes the highly literate citizen.

The curriculum enables children to make substantial progress towards this goal through a rational and realistic set of gradual progressions. These ends may appear extremely ambitious, but the carefully mapped progression of the curriculum from one strategically constructed understanding to the next places all young children on a trajectory towards truly advanced literacy. This model is based on engaging students in the very active process of moving their natural thinking toward increasingly sophisticated thinking and expression of ideas. Besides explicating main understandings, the curriculum features classroom examples of students and teachers discussing and deliberating the suggested texts.

All other components of a balanced literacy program are evident in each classroom, including daily read aloud, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading during which teacher-student conferring occurs regularly. In writing, students have understanding and experience in all genres, and there is particular emphasis in writing about reading. Students engage in all components of the writing cycle and frequently work in partnerships to revise and edit their work. Students understand that writing occurs across all disciplines and regularly explain their thinking in science, social studies and mathematics as well.

Several grade levels have created and vetted their own report cards, in addition to the San Diego Unified report card. This report card better details students’ progress in all components of literacy, including following: fluency, accuracy, comprehension, word study, writing content, writing structure and writing grammar. In addition, students reading levels are assessed and reported to the principal on a monthly basis using the Fountas & Pinnell leveling system. Teachers also work in their grade level teams to design and refine end-of-unit assessments as one measure of students’ understanding, and these examples of student work are reviewed against exemplar samples during weekly collaboration time. In addition, teachers collect quick-writes throughout the week to determine students’ understanding and inform next instructional steps.

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

John A. Van de Walle’s approach to student-centered mathematics instruction forms the foundation of TPES math. Van de Walle notes, “Most, if not all, important mathematical concepts and procedures can best be taught through problem solving. That is, tasks or problems can and should be posed that engage students in thinking about and developing the important mathematics they need to know.” Torrey Pines works with mathematical consultant, Mike Fitchett, to augment the delivery of the San Diego Unified math curriculum, deepening students’ process understanding and critical thinking. This is achieved through a launch-explore-summarize format in which children learn to think and persevere during the lesson, since the majority of the time is spent problem solving. Teachers’ provision of “just right” problems, meaning the task is not too easy and not too difficult, facilitates student engagement and challenge. Working collaboratively with peers, students justify and explain their answers and the methods used to find these answers. TPES students learn to approach problems from multiple dimensions.

Computational fluency is not overlooked, and teachers at all grade levels provide time throughout the day to

facilitate students' understanding of basic facts by use of addition and multiplication strategies. In addition, all teachers lead number talks in which students identify patterns and relationships between both numbers and mathematical expressions. Students are expected to agree or disagree with a particular contribution and offer a reason for their thinking.

Since the current work at TPES goes beyond the Common Core requirements, teachers are given tools to always be one step ahead of their brightest student. Curriculum compacting is common, and at the beginning of each mathematics unit, students are provided the opportunity to show what they know in an area. If a student is already demonstrating proficiency, he/she is allowed access to above-grade level content related to the unit at hand. In addition, for higher-level students who move at a quicker pace, teachers can increase the difficulty level of individual problems. Bonus problems are always provided to supplement the lesson being taught.

Math practice standards drive learning at all times, both at school and during study sessions at home. Teachers suggest that parents have their child explain what he/she is thinking about the problem and how he/she is solving it. Parents are encouraged to let children grapple with the problem and to ask probing questions of their student, including, "How did you know?" "Can you explain?" "Will you tell me again how you solved the problem?" While it is important for parents to share how they would personally approach to a problem, it is critical that adults refrain from rushing to the algorithm or increasing the difficulty of the work prematurely. Instead, students are expected to show their thinking in more than one way, using diagrams and manipulatives and always including a written explanation describing why an approach makes sense.

Teachers agree to a common assessment calendar and report monthly grades to the principal and to the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). Students in grades 3-5 participate in state-mandated assessments in mathematics each year.

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

Torrey Pines Elementary School is fortunate to have two science teachers and a science laboratory classroom. Students receive science lab instruction one time per week, and science is also taught in the classroom two to three additional times a week. Following the Next Generation Science Standards, students' learning includes instruction in three main scientific branches: earth science, life science, and physical science. When planning lessons, teachers use the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) 5E Instructional Model, wherein students follow a five-stage cycle of learning: engage, explore, explain, elaborate and evaluate.

At all grade levels, learning centers on four primary components, and these stalwarts of thinking facilitate foundational knowledge of the world around us. First, students must understand what they are learning and why they are learning it. When presented with a phenomenon, students describe an aspect of it; generate questions about the problem at hand; provide ideas they currently have to answer the dilemma they are facing; and explain a solution they will use to determine why the phenomenon under study occurs. The second component of TPES science education is that students engage in essential learning events to build, extend and apply their understanding. In other words, students experience phenomena, make observations and collect data through investigations; they then make sense of the patterns and relationships in observations and data through representation, analysis and interpretation. Next students are expected to construct models and causal explanations of phenomenon using evidence and reasoning. They finally must revise their ideas, models and explanations through critique and argumentation. At TPES, students use literacy and language to communicate in disciplinary ways, and this is the third component of our comprehensive science education. Students ask and answer questions to clarify their thinking and to understand explanations of phenomena. They must both speak and listen to others to understand and communicate ideas, models and explanations of phenomena. In addition, students are expected to read and write to understand and communicate ideas, models and explanations of phenomena and solutions. At last, the fourth component of science instruction at Torrey Pines is that all students self-assess and reflect on their learning and understanding. They must summarize ideas they have learned and identify those about which they still struggle. Teachers help students connect their new ideas and understanding to previous learning,

providing reflection time for students to identify how their understanding has changed. It is expected that students will have new questions that have emerged in light of their recent experiences.

At the younger grades, assessment of science education is made informally and upon review of students' lab notebooks. Older students, too, are expected to maintain science journals and are also assessed more traditionally when tasked with explaining phenomenon using scientific vocabulary appropriate to the context. Fifth-graders participate in a statewide assessment in science during May of each year.

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

Torrey Pines has a strong tradition of social studies instruction and civic practice, aligned with the 2016 California Department of Education History-Social Science Framework. These standards encourage students to learn about the world from several perspectives, local to global, in a deliberate and careful sequence. As they look at both current and historical events through multiple lenses, they are expected to develop thematic and conceptual understandings of the world in which we live. Teachers guide students through content by asking provoking questions and facilitating appropriate, vigorous classroom discussions to make connections between classroom material and broader issues. From a very young age, students learn about family and community structures, regional and geographic characteristics and then about people and institutions on a broader scale. In the upper-elementary grades, social science instruction involves chronology and geography. Students learn from a variety of primary and secondary sources; explore multiple and often competing pieces of information; garner their own interpretations based on evidence; synthesize their findings to communicate their overall understanding of an event or time period; and relate their knowledge to larger, often still-existing, social issues.

The California framework and standards highlight the understanding the history is a narrative that is continuously being reshaped and retold. Torrey Pines, itself, has strong traditions in the area of social studies and civic learning, and students and teachers are increasingly viewing the traditions from a critical perspective. For example, fifth-graders have an annual Colonial Day in which their study of Puritan, Colonial America culminates with an array of activities akin to those experienced by the colonists. Students dress in colonial style, crafting different hats for boys and girls. They participate in multiple stations throughout the day, including dancing, cooking, printing, blacksmithing, weaving, painting, etc. Students and parents have recently started to question how the situations of Native Americans and slaves during the Colonial Era are represented in the Torrey Pines Colonial Day celebration. Similarly, fourth-grade students studying California history question the complex relationships between Native Americans, Catholic missionaries, Mexicans, and pioneers; moreover, students trace competing interests of these groups centuries ago to present-day repercussions.

Assessment in the social studies curriculum is less formal than in other disciplines, but the expectations are that student discussions and reflections provide evidence that history very much informs the present. To this end, TPES students' questions and critiques are valued and cultivated.

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

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

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

Visual Arts: All students receive an hour of art instruction each week from a specialized art teacher, along with various art lessons and activities in the general education classroom. Instruction follows the California Visual Arts State Standards and consists of four categories of anchor standards: creating, presenting, responding and connecting. These categories are evident in all arts disciplines. In the visual arts, students first must generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Students learn that risk taking is part of a

creative and innovative process and that artists can choose to both follow and break with traditions as they pursue their art-making goals. They understand the balance between experimentation and safety and come to realize the importance of reflection and critique in their work. In these ways, students recognize the power of art to inform and enhance their lives. Second, students must develop, refine and prepare artwork to share with others. This requires students to consider both audience and the use of technology to protect and preserve pieces. Third, children must practice perceiving and analyzing artistic work. They develop aesthetic and empathetic awareness through engagement with pieces, and this leads to appreciation of self and others in the natural world, along with human-designed and constructed environments. Leading students in interpreting intention and meaning of artwork, the art instructor provides instruction in visual arts vocabulary so students can articulate their conclusions. Finally, the fourth anchor standard involves connecting, the process of synthesizing and relating knowledge and personal experiences to make art. Students learn that their participation in art enhances their lives and can be a tool for regulating and expressing feelings, attuning the individual to his/her/their surroundings.

**Dance:** All students receive twelve-weeks of dance instruction each year, each class session lasting approximately one hour, and following the anchor standards. Proficiency in dance requires students to discover the expressive elements of dance; know dance-based theory, terminology and symbolism; embody various forms and styles of dance; and reflect upon, critique and connect personal experience to dance. These are expectations that can be applied regardless of dance style, genre, or culture. Students are inspired to partake in this deep human tradition of artistic movement. A culminating showcase opportunity provides students with the opportunity to experience the joy that performing can bring.

**Music:** Music instruction occurs approximately one hour per week for twelve weeks in the school year for all students. All fifth graders receive an additional hour of instrumental music, learning to play the ukulele, drums and other instruments throughout the school year. During the music rotation, students follow the anchor standards in pursuit of literacy in music. This includes discovering the expressive elements of music, understanding the basic concepts of music, knowing the terminology used to comprehend music, developing the skills necessary to produce music and being able to reflect upon, critique and connect their personal experience to music.

**Theatre:** All students receive weekly instruction in drama and theatre for a twelve-week period each year. In addition, all students are invited to participate in an afterschool play produced each fall. During the theatre rotation, students learn that acting does not need to end in a performance to make it worthwhile. Their involvements in dramatic activities, during which they creatively envision worlds and embark in unscripted exercises, are valid expressions of theatre understanding. In addition, students study the broader and more traditional conventions of the theatre craft, including scripted plays, acting, public performance and technical requirements.

**Gardening:** All students visit the school garden for twenty to thirty minute sessions every other week. There, they work with UCSD ecology students in hands-on lessons around planting, seeding, weeding and cultivating vegetable and flower crops. All lessons are aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards. At Torrey Pines, students are encouraged to get their hands dirty as they assist with composting. Students find value in growing and then tasting the organic vegetables and fruits.

**Spanish:** All students receive weekly instruction in Spanish from twenty to fifty-minute periods, according to grade level. Young students learn basic words and phrases through singing and role-playing. Students in second and third grade learn the Spanish alphabet and sharpen their skills in reading and writing conversational Spanish. Students in the upper-primary grades further develop their vocabulary, all while conjugate verbs, studying tenses and grammatical structures and memorizing irregular words.

**Technology and Coding:** Torrey Pines partners with ThoughtSTEM, a San Diego-based company offering computer science instruction, to provide in-class sixty-minute coding sessions twice a month to all students. Instructors employ the latest technologies, such as Scratch, Arduino, Minecraft and App Inventor, with proven project-based curriculum to offer students unparalleled experience in computer science at the elementary level.

Physical Education (PE) and Health: The School PE Coach leads all students, grades K-5, in the required 200 minutes of physical education every ten school days. TPES follows the California State Standards for Physical Education, and there are five overarching model content standards for elementary school students. First, students must demonstrate the motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of activities. Second, students must understand movement concept, principles and strategies that can be applied to the learning of physical activities in general. Third, students should also assess and maintain a level of physical fitness to improve health and performance. Fourth, students at Torrey Pines demonstrate knowledge of physical fitness concepts, principles and strategies to increase their health and performance. Fifth, students utilize their knowledge of psychological and sociological concepts to apply to learning and performing all physical activities.

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

Gifted and Talented Education (GATE):

San Diego Unified fosters two categories of GATE learners: Cluster and Seminar. In second grade, all students take the CogAT assessment of reasoning. Cluster students score between 121-134 on this test, and Seminar students score 135 and above. Based on these designations, students are placed into Cluster classrooms, taught by a GATE-certified teacher and composed of 25% GATE students. The other 75% of students must reflect the composition of the school. Students who score in the Seminar range on the CogAT have the option to attend a neighborhood school where the Seminar program is offered. The majority of Seminar students elect to remain at Torrey Pines. Seminar students, ranging from five to 12 students at each grade level, form a cohort that are assigned to the same classroom for grades three through five. Grouping Seminar students with like-minded peers enables greater learning, and Seminar students form close relationships with their peers.

At our school, however, it is critical that students understand that hard work and excellent effort drive success; and, because all our grades 3-5 teachers are GATE certified, students are all offered the opportunity to work to their potential. GATE teachers create opportunities for students to experience cognitive dissonance, and working together, students prevail through potential frustration to reach understanding. Redundant busy work and additional packets are nowhere to be seen as students are provided differentiated math projects that allow for open-ended investigation and findings. GATE instruction is about a disposition and critical attitude in all subject areas.

English Learners (EL):

TPES is fortunate to have many bilingual learners whose primary languages are diverse. Our bilingual students are provided daily instruction in English language within their classrooms, and teachers receive regular training on best practices to support these learners. In addition, students who are learning English are offered two additional early-morning classes each week to practice their skills in a smaller setting. The principal understands that meeting the needs of EL students requires a greater understanding of the community than cursory recognition of primary language types. The principal conducts a yearly community scan following Dr. Alberto Ochoa's protocols to understand the context in which these learners persist. In addition, the school's parent group, English Learner Advisory Committee, meets alongside the School Site Council to keep parents informed and up-to-date on state and federal requirements for monitoring of this subgroup. Student reclassification rate falls in the good to excellent category each year, and students who do reclassify regularly outperform their monolingual peers. EL achievement rates are monitored monthly by the principal and reported to School Site Council (SSC) and ILT members.

Students With Disabilities (SWD):

The Torrey Pines team that supports SWD includes school resource teachers, school psychologist, speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, adaptive PE teacher, mental health clinician, behavior support specialists, nurse, paraprofessionals, and the principal. The SWD subgroup's academic performance is carefully monitored and reported to teachers and SSC members, and case managers engage in regular collaboration with classroom teachers to ensure work in a pullout setting is integrated with grade-level, classroom objectives. Resource teachers develop data logs so students' performances toward meeting goals indicated in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) are tracked and communicated to parents. IEP meetings

are student-centered and follow an agenda that places parents' concerns first. TPES believes all students can achieve at a high level, as long as they are provided the necessary supports and tools to meet their goals.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

TPES educators and parents value student autonomy and independence. When the new principal first arrived at Torrey Pines in February, one of her first course of actions was to survey the students to learn what they thought was most important for her to know about their school. Students shared their frustrations over having to wait in a long line for lunch, and they remarked that their teachers were the best part of the school. Hearing this feedback, the principal visited classrooms to speak with students and create a plan for lunchtime that met everyone's needs. She also celebrated the wonderful feedback about teachers! Heavy emphasis on academic excellence is metered by social emotional learning programs, including the twelve lessons the school counselor provides to each of the twenty-one classrooms throughout the school year. When students have a problem, they are taught to assess whether it is a small or big problem. If it is a small problem, students are then asked to make a choice from a wheel of choice to try to solve it on their own. In addition, students are taught self-regulation using the Zones of Regulation behavioral approach. When trying situations test students, they identify that they are becoming less regulated and are equipped to manage their feelings to get themselves back to a healthy place. All noon duty and recess supervisors are trained in the wheel of choice and Zones of Regulation to ensure common problem-solving tactics among all adults supporting students on campus.

TPES educators have high expectations for all, including themselves. We believe every child deserves the opportunity to have an excellent educational experience. The "Torrey Pines Three" is the motto of the school: "We are respectful. We are responsible. We are kind." These admonitions play out across all subject areas and on the playground. For students who need additional support to meet these objectives, the school counselor meets with children during lunch for Circle of Friends activity groups. While sharing lunch, students practice important friendship and problem-solving skills to improve interpersonal relations.

Our teachers feel supported at the school in many ways. First, the principal is responsive, follows through, and always strives to be consistent and fair. Also, the principal is always available, evenings and weekends, to respond to teachers, and readily supplies her cell phone and her time to ensure teachers' needs are met. In addition to surveying students, the first step the principal took, months before her first official day, was to survey all teachers and staff members to identify areas of strength at the school and areas in which teachers felt attention was needed. Decisions are made collectively, and administration views its role, except in issues concerning safety, as providing opportunities for the collective consciousness to be heard and to inform action steps at TPES.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

The relationships between students, staff, families, and community members are essential to the success of our school. We work in partnership with the Torrey Pines Elementary School Foundation, a group of parents who are dedicated to building a fantastic school for our children. The Foundation hosts events and fundraisers throughout the year to purchase additional full-time classroom teachers for our school; to provide a half-time resource teacher; to fund specialty classes and opportunities for students; to pay for an extra half-day of counselor support; and to supply additional monies for classroom incidentals. Foundation meetings are well attended, and parents take an active role in producing an annual gala, jog-a-thon, Science Discovery Day, block party and variety show. In addition, Foundation parents sustain the Garden Club, Running Club, and the 4U Diversity Squad. We are fortunate to be located across the street from the La Jolla YMCA. The YMCA provides before and after-school childcare, sports camps and other activities during holiday breaks and summer weeks. In addition, during specialty PE rotations, our students swim, play volleyball and basketball, play golf and lacrosse, and use the gymnastics mats and equipment at the facility. Local businesses play an active role in providing refreshments and incentives to students and staff members. Our proximity to UCSD enables university tutors to work at our school as part of their work-study program. These college students assist our elementary students in both reading and math.

In addition to participation in the Foundation, parents take an active role at our school through membership

in the School Site Council, School Governance Team, and the Safety Committee. The principal hosts a monthly Principal Chat, where parents have the opportunity to ask questions of the principal in an intimate environment. Most recently, the discussion at the chat centered on the school's efforts to instruct about and mediate climate change. In other meetings, parents have shared their opinions about the number of teachers per grade level and number of students in each classroom. Discussions are driven by research and educational theory, and while parents may differ in what they would like to see prioritized at the school, the discourse is respectful and student-centered.

Parents are treated as partners, and there is an enormous amount of trust between families and the school. The principal, for example, hosts several students as "Principals" of the day and takes these students out to lunch. Outings with teachers, the PE coach, the principal and other support staff are large fundraising efforts. Parents are welcome on campus and volunteer frequently in the classrooms and at various rotation activities.

Torrey Pines partners with other cluster schools in the La Jolla area, including the two other public elementary schools, the middle school and the high school to discuss and organize Cluster initiatives, including social-emotional wellness efforts and the promotion of late-start school times. The administrators at each of the schools work together to align learning opportunities for both teachers and students to ensure a spirit of cooperation over competition. Currently, the three elementary schools are coordinating a dinner at a Torrey Pines family's neighborhood restaurant to celebrate each school site's teacher of the year.

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

Professional Development is determined by the needs of the teachers and students as evidenced through classroom walkthroughs, teacher feedback, and student data. At the end of each year, the ILT meets together to outline the plan for professional development for the upcoming school year. A two-hour professional development is held monthly, and this occurs after school on a minimum day. All certificated staff members are expected to attend and partake. During the 2018-2019 school year, professional development efforts centered on ways to support students' social-emotional learning and emotional regulation. Since the arrival of the new principal in February, professional development has included team and consensus building; a focus on differentiating instruction based on the needs of SWD, EL and GATE students in each classroom; a study of the reading behaviors exhibited across Fountas & Pinnell reading levels; lesson planning for both guided and strategy reading groups; and curriculum calendar creation for the upcoming school year. May's professional development will provide teachers background on historical and current state and federal policy related to the instruction of EL students. A session's impacts on teacher instruction and student achievement are measured through walkthroughs, reading and math assessment data and teacher reflection. At the end of each PD, teachers provide written feedback indicating their needs for continued support in the topic area, including additional resources, time, modeling or practice.

Professional development plans for the 2019-2020 school year include an investigation of student-centered learning in all subject areas. With new leadership, the administration and ILT believe it is critical to review the basic tenets of student-centered teaching and learning in balanced reading, writing, word study, math, social studies, science and technology. These professional development sessions will be led by both outstanding and talented TPES teachers and, as needed, by consultants.

The teachers engage in a relentless pursuit of learning. Currently, on Wednesday mornings before school, twenty teachers meet together in the library to study Critical Literacy. Facilitated by a teacher leader, these seminars enable the teachers and the principal to better lead classroom discussions around cultivation of critical dispositions. In a recent study session, teachers read an article designed for the kindergarten classroom describing the life of a Pilgrim child. The question was posed, "If we are teaching children to read to be moved, changed and touched, how would we assist kindergarten students in deriving meaning from this historical account?" It was determined kindergarteners would learn perspective and begin to realize there was a time before electronic devices. This thinking could facilitate further class discussion on what is better for kids: a more simple life in the past or the life we have now?

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

Parents have the opportunity to choose from a variety of schools, and leadership at Torrey Pines follows a service-orientation wherein parents and students are treated with appreciation and respect. The principal's mentality is to be of assistance and to provide support to meet teachers' needs so they may better instruct students. Clear expectations for staff members are set, and if a staff member is demonstrating difficulty following the expectations, the principal swiftly converses with the individual to understand the area of need.

The focus of the leader's efforts is on improving teachers' instructional capacity by appreciating their strengths and listening to their needs. This is done through lesson studies, including planning, co-teaching and modeling of lessons. Teachers value specific, constructive feedback, and the principal is a daily visitor in classrooms. Parent meetings are generally held before and after instructional hours, so the business of learning receives the administrator's fullest attention. The goal for literacy achievement is 92% of students meeting or exceeding standards and 90% of students meeting or exceeding standards in mathematics as measured by end-of-year state tests; and all staff members, from the building crew to noon duty staff to the counselor, are aware of these goals. The principal recognizes approximations of achievement on a regular basis. If a student initially takes a test and does not score proficiently but retakes the test and scores well the second time, the teacher puts the retest in an envelope on the principal's door. At the end of each day, the principal visits classrooms to celebrate student success.

In addition to modeling a service mindset, the principal cultivates leadership throughout campus. Each grade level team, and special education team, elects one teacher to be their representative, and before instructional and operational decisions are made, these leaders generally first vet them. As the principal comes to know, trust and align expectations across classified staff members, these team members are increasingly empowered to act with initiative and independence. The School Governance Team, which meets monthly, is tasked with overseeing such details as how teachers' preparatory time is committed; which assemblies are held throughout the year; and what information should be included in the handbook.

The school leader models balance between work and life and encourages employees to do the same. The principal never expects teachers to avoid responding to email in the evening or on the weekends. Teachers and staff members can better serve students and families when they are rested and settled in their home lives.

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

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TPES is committed to building and refining data and research-driven systems and structures to ensure students' academic success, including Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), Instructional Study Team (IST) meeting and Response to Instruction (RTI).

Teachers attest to the fact that their weekly time in PLCs, a dedicated two and a half to three hour block, allows grade level teams to determine next instructional steps to promote achievement. PLCs operate around DuFour's essential questions: 1) What is it that we want students to know? 2) How do we know when students have obtained mastery? 3) What do we do when students do not initially achieve mastery? 4) What do we do when students exceed mastery? During PLC time, teachers bring student work to assess using the same norms for students across classes. Teachers have identified target students representing each of the school's subgroups, and the overall classroom percentages, along with scores of target students, are presented in a poster format at the ILT meeting. The ILT is composed of a representative from each grade level who is committed to leading data-driven work, and this leadership group offers feedback to grade levels to continuously improve student achievement.

When teachers have exhausted Tier I academic strategies and students are in need of additional support, their names are provided to the school counselor with a request for an IST. This team includes the teacher, education specialist, school counselor, administrator and parent, and the members brainstorm together academic, behavioral and social supports that could benefit the student. Often times, a Tier II strategy is required, and students are referred to the RTI program on campus. This part-time teacher offers reading and math intervention groups in six to eight-week cycles. Teachers use data reflecting students' comprehension, fluency and decoding abilities to create intervention goals, and student participation in the RTI program is re-evaluated based on students' progress and needs at the conclusion of each cycle.

The principal's feedback to teachers, during informal and formal visits, is also data-driven. Each teacher has his/her/their own Google document running record, and when the principal enters the classroom, she asks the teacher's target students the following three questions: 1) What are you learning? 2) How do you know when you have learned it? 3) Why is this learning important? The principal collects students' responses and records them on the Google document. The principal also records information for the teacher related to the instructional focus outlined in the weekly bulletin, which may include instructional strategies and techniques such as clarity of purpose, student engagement, checking for understanding, naming and noticing, and release of responsibility. The final column in the Google document provides a place for teachers to record their reflections based on the observation feedback. This procedure creates a lasting narrative about the performance of a teacher and uses objective data to track a teachers' efficacy in the classroom, ultimately leading to student success. These are examples of data-driven structures that inform the academic achievement of Torrey Pines children.