

U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[] Public or [X] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Challenger School - Berryessa
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 711 East Gish Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City San Jose State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 95112-2710

County Santa Clara

Telephone (408) 998-2860 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://www.challengerschool.com E-mail marketing@challengerschool.com

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* Mr. David Munteer E-mail dmunteer@challengerschool.com
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Challenger School District Tel. (408) 377-2300

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Hugh Gourgeon
(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, leave .blank*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
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

Data should be provided for current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	58	42	100
K	47	56	103
1	47	50	97
2	45	55	100
3	34	32	66
4	38	29	67
5	36	36	72
6	28	27	55
7	20	13	33
8	8	17	25
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	361	357	718

*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
 - 96.4 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 0.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 1.5 % White
 - 1.4 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: 13%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	46
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	45
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	91
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	718
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.13
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

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

Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Tagalog, Malayalam, Persian, Gujarati, Ukrainian, Spanish, Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Telugu, Tamil, Urdu, Kannada, and Kanartaka

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
3 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 0 %
0 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</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: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher, CTE teacher.	39
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	0
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 16:1

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

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	98%	98%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

We prepare children to become self-reliant, productive individuals who think with clarity, precision, and independence; and embrace challenge; and find joy and self-worth through achievement.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

From the first day of the 2020–2021 school year, preschool parents were able to choose between on-campus or online programs. However, due to local county restrictions, Berryessa was required to begin the school year with kindergarten through eighth grade programs online.

In late September, kindergarten through fifth grade in-person learning resumed with cohorting, increased sanitization, social distancing, and smaller class sizes. The middle school program was required to operate online a few weeks longer than the elementary program, but sixth through eighth grade students were allowed to return to campus the first week in October. Online and on-campus programs continue to run parallel to each other.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Challenger School was established in 1963 when founder Barbara B. Baker, a first grade public school teacher, saw the lack of learning in her students. So, she started her own preschool to teach phonics to students before they entered kindergarten. The Berryessa location was opened in 1998. Over the years, Challenger grew and added kindergarten through middle school programs, expanding to 26 campuses in 5 states.

The Challenger Berryessa campus is located in the heart of Silicon Valley. Its proximity to the epicenter of technological development is reflected in Challenger's diverse student population. Recently, the campus underwent renovations to accommodate more families who believe in the program Challenger offers.

Challenger School believes in starting early and starting right. The school accepts students as young as two years, nine months to take advantage of the window of opportunity when children's brains are primed to absorb a profound amount of information. Teachers introduce preschoolers to foundational language and numerical concepts, which they are eager to learn. Imagine, children as young as three years old beginning to read!

The school attracts parents who value education. Challenger's unique methods and approach produce extremely capable children. In each classroom, caring teachers provide an optimal learning environment that cultivates curiosity, independent thinking, and creativity. High expectations are met with great success. Through setting and reaching small, incremental goals, students embrace tasks with confidence, knowing they can succeed. Students are motivated by the joy they feel in their own achievements.

Additionally, Challenger students learn conceptually. Teachers inspire students to be discoverers rather than passive learners. Students not only discover the facts of the subjects that they study, but they also understand why they are learning the information and begin applying the concepts to their own lives. Through this process of making connections and integrating their knowledge into real-world application, students learn to reason and critically evaluate ideas independently and apply current knowledge to new ideas. These teaching methods stimulate children's minds to action as they find joy in learning.

When learning is enjoyable, students are eager to come to school each day. Challenger's well-trained teachers prepare thought-provoking lessons that not only lead children down a path of discovery and independent thinking but also allow them the freedom to have fun! Humor helps students really connect to the learning process. Teachers make intentional mistakes to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of concepts. This technique engages and stimulates students, as they love to correct their teachers and show off their knowledge. Another way teachers keep learning fun is through the use of music. Each classroom is equipped with a Challenger Media System that provides an array of teaching resources—songs, sounds, pictures, videos, stories, and dramas—at the touch of a button. Students enjoy learning songs and drills to reinforce concepts.

Challenger students' success is evident to anyone observing classroom discussions and lessons, but standardized test scores also stand out. Comparatively, the students' skill sets shine! In 2019, Challenger kindergarten students' average percentile rank on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) was 98; eighth grade students scored in the 99th percentile. While test scores are not the most important component in a child's learning, these scores do help measure the efficacy of the Challenger product.

Challenger seeks to develop students beyond the academic scope. The mission statement embodies values promoted by the Founding Fathers and the Constitution, such as self-reliance, productivity, and individuality. These values—which are prized in fellow citizens, neighbors, and employees—are woven throughout the lessons and reach outside of the school walls to prepare students for real life.

In a typical year, Challenger offers a variety of enrichment programs that cater to individual interests. After-school enrichment class offerings include computer coding, foreign language, "mad science," speech and debate, chess, art, and robotics. Enthusiastic PE specialists also offer sports classes to teach the

fundamentals of soccer, basketball, t-ball, and softball. However, many programs have been suspended due to COVID-19.

Challenger's Berryessa campus has grown and flourished due to committed teachers and administrators and the collaborative efforts between the school and families to make each child's experience positive and impactful. The 2020 pandemic has served to underscore even more clearly the effectiveness of Challenger's philosophy, the commitment of its staff, and the exceptionality of its student body. Challenger's curriculum department is constantly working to develop and implement classroom material to keep the product effective and strong. Customers are supportive of Challenger's mission, and students themselves demonstrate each day that the teaching methods and philosophy help develop great individuals who will lead future generations. Challenger's late founder, Barbara B. Baker, designed her school carefully to come up with the precise formula that leads students to success. Her vision continues to live on over 57 years later with each student who strives to reach his or her maximum potential.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Challenger’s philosophy is centered on establishing a strong foundation in the “bedrock of knowledge”: reading, math, composition, history, and logic.

Challenger first transitioned to an online program in March 2020. For each grade level, teachers prerecorded daily subject-area videos and prepared student work packets, giving parents and students flexibility to revisit lessons as needed. Challenger later implemented live sessions in order for students to review with teachers and interact with classmates. Since the campus reopened in September, Challenger has offered both on-campus and online learning. Parents choose which program their child attends. On-campus teachers review their online counterparts’ video lessons the day before in order to keep the programs consistent.

Challenger School’s proprietary curriculum is the brainchild of founder Barbara B. Baker. An in-house curriculum department oversees and adapts the curriculum, and each campus delivers it implementing Challenger’s proven teaching methods. Teachers are trained, evaluated, and given feedback in respect to these methods, making sure that students receive the top-notch education to which Challenger is committed. Challenger teachers teach conceptually in all subjects, using textbooks as resources, not as primary teaching tools. Challenger’s curriculum teaches students to identify cause-effect relationships and independently think and reason. Teachers strive to present information in a way that enables students to explain the “how” and “why.”

Each day, students begin their morning with board work review questions. Through this informal review, teachers assess how well students understand concepts and provide individual re-teaching. Verbal and written assessments offer teachers and administrators a means of tracking student progress throughout the school year. The success rate of verbal and formative assessments is generally high, as the presentation of new concepts is always sandwiched with review. After each test, review sessions occur in class and online to help students correct mistakes and understand concepts better.

All students are given Challenger Achievement Tests four times a year to assess and evaluate student progress. These tests help teachers plan future lessons for areas in which the students are struggling or excelling.

Reading/ Language Arts/ Literature

Challenger preschoolers use phonics to learn letters and sounds and are excited to realize they can decode words and sentences on their own.

Kindergartners have already begun to read and complete their very first chapter book as a class by the end of the year! From first through eighth grade, Challenger students analyze short stories and novels, study sequencing, compare and contrast, identify fact and opinion, and draw conclusions. Teachers guide students to make inferences and educated guesses, examine characters’ choices, and discuss important values demonstrated.

First through eighth grade students diagram sentences, which helps them see how the components of sentences relate to one another. Students apply grammar knowledge in compositions, following a five-step, month-long writing cycle: brainstorm, outline, first draft, edits and revisions, and final draft.

Math

Challenger’s math curriculum teaches students number sense. Students improve their math fluency daily by doing quick math facts ranging from arithmetic problems to simple unit conversion. With teacher guidance, students make connections between known and new concepts and become adept at breaking down concepts into smaller parts to discover and integrate the essential truths for themselves.

Knowing the real-world application of math is key to motivating students to learn the various concepts. At Challenger, teachers emphasize the why behind the what. Once children have learned to compute, they are introduced to additional math concepts that build upon one another. By the time Challenger students finish middle school, they have taken courses in pre-algebra, algebra, and geometry. Applying logic skills enhances students' algebraic reasoning and data analysis.

Science

Students learn about the scientific method in projects and experiments as early as kindergarten. Teachers use in-class demonstrations with entire classes or small groups for hands-on science experiments that help students discover how things around them work. In middle school classes, students look forward to completing dissection labs.

Science Fair is a huge event for Challenger School. In the lower elementary programs, students complete a class experiment. Beginning in third grade, students are responsible for completing independent projects, and by fifth grade, students present their projects before a judging panel. Challenger students are so excited about science that they continue researching and expanding their projects for outside contests.

History

Challenger first and second grade students learn United States geography and analyze the natural resources the land provides. Overviews of world history and American history in younger grades lead to more in-depth studies in later grades.

At Challenger, history is studied through the scope of freedom, entrepreneurship, and discovery. Students discover cause-and-effect relationships in choices people have made in the past and examine the consequences of historical choices in light of what they desire for the current world.

Challenger holds many assemblies that honor specific American events. Through these activities, students are encouraged to live lives as honorable American citizens.

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

At Challenger, students learn values that will help them succeed beyond the classroom. Self-reliance begins at the earliest grade levels; expectations such as completing homework independent of parents at home and self-correcting their own in-class work encourage students to take ownership and control of their own learning.

Challenger students from fifth through eighth grade have the opportunity to run for student council. Interested students can campaign and participate in the election process. Elected student leaders and classroom representatives participate in meetings, support fellow students and campus events, and plan and implement fundraising for student activities. When involved in these opportunities, students learn about the values of taking responsibility for the things that they do (e.g., being punctual and conscientious) and being productive towards an outcome that they wish to achieve (e.g., working together to produce a fun and memorable social event).

Students learn to use available resources (like using a dictionary instead of asking the teacher how to spell a word) and to problem-solve when facing an obstacle. Challenger students learn how to speak before a group and how to apply deductive reasoning, critical thinking, and problem solving strategies. Challenger teachers discuss values with students in history, literature, and other subjects. A study of economics helps eighth grade students to think about and be more aware of their futures.

These values and skills are necessary for success as students transition into adulthood and take hold of the responsibilities a life outside of primary and secondary school requires of them.

1b. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

Challenger School offers an excellent preschool program. Instruction begins early when children's brains are most primed for language and math acquisition and when they are curious and eager to learn. Challenger preschool's core curriculum emphasizes critical thinking to provide a strong learning foundation.

Challenger's curriculum sequence helps to solidify that foundational infrastructure. By teaching students the fundamentals of phonics, they are set up to be successful readers. The curriculum teaches children to learn conceptually and not through rote memorization. For example, when children learn letters, they also learn what the letters do. As lessons progress, they learn to blend and apply different phonics rules to decode words they've never seen before. The eager children begin to see and understand how reading allows them to become independent. The concepts Challenger preschoolers learn build the foundation for future learning. They have already begun to read and write by the time they are in kindergarten and soar above other students their age.

In math, students learn concepts like number recognition, forward and backward counting, patterns and sequences, colors and shapes, and simple addition and subtraction. Teachers even introduce place value and fractions.

Challenger's preschool science curriculum encourages students to become more aware of the world around them. They study topics from nutrition, space, and weather to wild animals and simple machines.

The core subjects are intertwined with one another to make learning even more impactful. Art projects review science lessons. Catchy songs help students learn and remember concepts.

Challenger's committed staff expertly modified its hands-on approach in 2020 to stay compliant with lockdown orders while continuing to provide the exceptional education parents expect. Currently, both online and on-campus programs are offered for preschool.

With such a strong foundation set in Challenger preschoolers' formative years, they are set up to be successful throughout their lives.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to the core concepts, Challenger also teaches ancillary subjects: science, geography, speech, music, computers, art, and physical education. With a solid foundation in the bedrock of knowledge, the ancillary subjects enrich a sophisticated learning experience.

When circumstances in spring of 2020 required on-campus classes to transition to online learning, Challenger focused on the core subjects of grammar/composition, math, and literature. In the fall, logic, history, and science were added to the online curriculum. On-campus classes resumed in September of 2020, offering all subjects except for computers (due to safety concerns with shared equipment).

To teach students how to communicate clearly and to present themselves with confidence, speech is taught from preschool through eighth grade. Preschool students begin with "show and tell," and kindergarten students memorize and perform selections as a group. Beginning in first grade, students give bi-weekly speeches and focus on skills like projection, emphasis, and articulation. Middle school students prepare and deliver debate arguments and theatrical scenes.

Challenger students learn basic computer programming skills and acquire literacy in a full-featured computer language. They become proficient in planning, organizing, and constructing projects that perform tasks in the right order to achieve desired results. In first through fourth grade, students create computer graphics; in fifth grade, students design computer animation projects; and in sixth through eighth grade, students produce interactive programs and games. These projects, which require pre-planning as well as focused construction, help students learn to think independently and apply logic and math concepts in their designs.

As they do in all subjects, Challenger teachers present art conceptually. The focus of art class is to teach

basic principles of art and techniques related to them. As students draw, teachers guide them to break down bigger images into smaller shapes. They use a variety of media like crayons, colored pencils, watercolor paints, and oil pastels. Student artwork is displayed in the classrooms, auditorium, and hallways.

Music is an important part of the Challenger curriculum. All Challenger students sing songs throughout the day to help review concepts in a variety of subjects. In dedicated music classes, students learn the fundamentals of singing and learn a wide range of songs and healthy singing practices. In addition to learning song lyrics, students identify the rhythm of a piece of music as well as its emotional content and historical relevance. Because of Challenger's conceptual approach, students learn to apply the skills of movement, rhythm, recognition, interpretation, and singing. Students learn about music history by studying different composers, and by the time they are in middle school, they can perform a song in a four-part harmony.

Physical education helps Challenger students develop healthy lifestyle habits. Preschool and kindergarten PE emphasizes large motor skill development. In first through eighth grade, a specialized teacher focuses on students' coordination, strength, speed, and stamina. Additionally, students learn the fundamentals of many sports.

Challenger's well-rounded curriculum helps students develop the skills, habits, and values that will equip them to pursue happy lives.

3. Academic Supports:

Challenger is an academically accelerated program. With the right teaching techniques and classroom pacing, most students excel. To best support preschool and kindergarten students, teachers start the school year with a quick assessment to determine what areas to focus on first. Teachers and Program Directors often recommend the Challenger Phonics Fun kit for home support.

Teachers verbally assess students daily and receive immediate feedback regarding students' understanding of concepts. Since lessons build upon another, it's essential that students progress well. When a student struggles during a lesson, the teacher rephrases or asks other questions to help guide the student to discover the concept. If several students are confused, the teacher recognizes that the lesson may need to be re-taught. Teachers also carefully craft daily independent board work questions to review concepts.

However, Challenger also recognizes that not all students learn at the same pace, and some students might need more support in specific areas. For this reason, Challenger has a program called Basic Keys, a small learning group led by a teacher who focuses on re-teaching and solidifying skills in language arts and math. When it is evident that a student needs this extra support, the teacher works directly with the parents and the Program Director to develop an action plan. The Program Director tailors the Basic Keys sessions to bridge learning gaps or address individual challenges so the child can be successful.

The Challenger Berryessa campus recently had a student with Tourette's Syndrome graduate from Challenger. This student attended Challenger from preschool to eighth grade and had earned an academic scholarship. This student focused, studied, and developed good habits, and, like many other students, was able to find success by working through challenges.

Challenger's own success is dependent on the success of its students. Parents and staff want students to succeed and thrive. When they do, there is no end to their potential.

To best serve their students, teachers must know where their students stand and what their needs

are. The name Challenger reflects the school's underlying philosophy—the staff is dedicated to challenging students to become the best they can be. Challenges are presented in achievable steps so as not to overwhelm or pressure the students. Challenger prepares students who, through their hard work, come to realize success and are motivated to continue to seek growth and improvement.

As a result, Challenger students perform well above grade level. But even though the typical Challenger student is exceptional, there are cases where students exceed even Challenger's high standards. The concern then is how to keep these students challenged and engaged. In these cases, teachers work with the parents and the Program Director for feedback and to develop an action plan to ensure the students continue to progress.

There are also many opportunities to participate in competitions both within the curriculum and in after-school enrichment classes. These activities stretch students' intellect and challenge them to do their most extraordinary work.

Challenger students find joy and self-worth through achievement.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Challenger’s mission statement is posted in every classroom from preschool to eighth grade. It is the driving force behind everything and helps create an environment in which students grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

Challenger teaches students that they are capable of doing things for themselves. Students recognize the crucial role they play in their learning, and they make choices that will ultimately help them throughout their lives.

In the classroom, teachers ask engaging and thought-provoking questions. Instead of “telling,” they teach concepts. Students are always thinking, questioning, and searching. Once they learn new information, new questions form in their minds. The classroom is a safe place where students can make mistakes and learn from them. Challenger teachers guide students and provide constructive feedback that leads them to internalize concepts. Through thinking conceptually, students develop ownership of their own learning and know how to learn, a skill that will serve them throughout their lives.

Challenger views students as individuals and recognizes that even as children, they have rights that cannot be transferred or taken from them. Freedom is highly valued at Challenger, and this is evident in the way teachers encourage students to make choices by independently applying their thinking skills.

The word challenge is within the school’s name. Challenging children motivates them to continue learning and achieving. Throughout grade levels, students have many motivating tools. Once preschoolers can read all their letters and sounds, they earn Alphabet Crowns. Once they can blend letters and their sounds together, they earn a Blending Badge. In kindergarten, the Golden Key is presented once students master their irregular vowel families. But more than any tangible reward, students find joy and develop self-confidence because of what they have accomplished.

To keep students engaged while they learn virtually, Challenger added live sessions between students and teachers so that discussions and socialization could be a part of their at-home learning environment. Online office hours (where students meet teachers for specific, individual needs a couple times per week) and Friday Fun Days personalize the learning and strengthen relationships with and between students.

Shortly after the Challenger Berryessa campus reopened for on-campus classes, many parents requested to transfer from online classes to in-person learning. For on-campus students, just being in the presence of their peers and teachers has kept them engaged as they are able to participate more easily in discussions and interact with one another.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Achieving students’ full potential requires collaboration between parents, the school, and the community at large. The Challenger Berryessa campus has a variety of ways of interacting with families and community.

Communication with parents has been extremely important during these unprecedented times. During the shelter-in-place order when the schools were physically closed, members of Challenger’s management team were provided with cell phones and remote computer access so they could continue to provide excellent customer service.

In the event of major changes and big news related to COVID-19, Challenger has corresponded with parents through email. Monthly newsletters provide key dates and note any calendar changes. If parents have individual concerns, teachers and administrators are available for phone conferences, and online teachers can be contacted through grade-specific email addresses.

Administrators set the tone for the school year at the Evening for Parents (held virtually in 2020) by describing the triangle of communication between the teacher, the student, and the parent. Through this connection and with every member actively involved, students experience success. Teachers also apprise parents of their children's progress through phone calls, conferences, mid-term notices, and achievement reports. With these intermediary tools, all parties can unite in helping students achieve their potential.

In conventional times, the Challenger Berryessa campus invites members of the community to come to campus, meet preschool students, and share their occupations or specialties, allowing students to become familiar and connect with community service members. Preschool and kindergarten parents enjoy special days like Small World Days and the Halloween Parade. For the older students, Challenger holds assemblies and commemorations in which members of the community may be asked to present. Firsthand accounts give students realistic perspectives. Elementary parents may attend contests and events to celebrate their children's accomplishments. Christmas Sings and Spring Programs are fun for the whole family, and the end-of-the-year Field Day and barbecue also creates a sense of community amongst families.

Since the campus is located in the heart of Silicon Valley, parents are highly enthusiastic about science and math. Some students engage in outside activities such as Math Olympiad, Science Olympiad, and MathCounts. Teachers help prepare students for these events, which are often run by parent volunteers. Community leaders with engineering, science, or technology backgrounds are often called on to be judges for the science fair.

The support and dedication of families and community help Challenger students to thrive.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

At Challenger, happy teachers make happy classrooms. Teachers' happiness comes from feeling valued and knowing that they are making a difference in the lives of students. Challenger's remuneration schedule is merit-based. Teachers know that if they put in the work, they will be compensated accordingly.

When it comes to the professional development of teachers, Challenger really goes above and beyond. Every year, the Challenger Berryessa campus hosts teacher training workshops for Challenger teachers from five states to maintain consistency in the Challenger curriculum and teaching methods. Over the course of the week, managers and master teachers provide specific examples of how to manage a classroom, communicate with parents, and teach the different subjects.

Once school starts, the professional development continues. Challenger's region team organizes monthly training meetings for all managers to discuss operational and administrative goals and information that will help campuses deliver the product successfully. Additionally, Program Directors meet each month for their own training. During these meetings, Challenger's curriculum department presents changes and updates to help meet students' educational goals. Moreover, Program Directors receive refresher courses on select topics, such as how to approach teaching a novel for a specific grade level. Program Directors then meet with teachers in grade-level meetings, ensuring that they are prepared when it is time to teach each concept. These monthly trainings provide a hierarchy of support so that students receive the best the school has to offer.

The campus staff supports one another. Teachers willingly help one another, no matter their grade level. Program Directors are also wonderful resources for teachers; they observe classes regularly and ensure that lessons are taught effectively. After each observation, teachers and Program Directors discuss what went well or what could be improved and analyze student work together to assess how students are progressing overall. Managers sometimes model teaching techniques to help teachers grow in their expertise. Professional development is a top priority for Challenger School.

When the Challenger Berryessa campus was shut down in March, many employees could not return to work for months. During this time, Challenger continued to pay all employees their regular wages and salary until the end of the school year. When school reopened for the new school year, increased restrictions caused

many employees to be furloughed. For these employees, Challenger continued to offer them the employee tuition benefit so that their children could continue their education.

4. School Leadership:

Berryessa is one of ten campuses that report to the California Executive Region Director of Challenger School. Challenger's leadership provides its campuses the support they need to ensure their success. At Challenger's Berryessa campus, the team of managers endeavors to truly model all the values they teach and build relationships with teachers and staff that reinforce a happy and productive environment. While each manager has a specific role, they all work together as a team to ensure the campus runs smoothly.

The Headmaster oversees the operations of the entire campus, implementing school policies and procedures and making sure that staff members consistently and correctly apply Challenger School's mission, values, and teaching methods to help students succeed. She manages the campus budget, creates master schedules, directs enrollment and class offerings, and organizes all campus events. Additionally, she is responsible for overseeing middle school: the teacher development and training, monitoring student progress and needs, guiding student council, and facilitating the application process for eighth grade students applying to private high schools.

The Preschool and Elementary Program Directors work with staff, students, and parents to offer guidance and support. Program Directors are remarkable leaders who demonstrate outstanding qualities. They spend 85% of their time inside classrooms to support and assist teachers and students. The Program Directors also have standing weekly huddles with each individual teacher. During the weekly huddles, teachers are welcome to address any need they may be facing or seek individual assistance with a project or subject matter. Having this individual, dedicated time helps build teachers' confidence, which benefits the students as well.

To meet the challenges of 2020, managers had to understand the new and immediate need to take on different roles. From the corporate level to the region level to the campus level, Challenger administrators worked together to create, deliver, facilitate, monitor, and assess online learning. Additionally, adjustments were made to campus routines and classroom set-up to meet new licensing and state health requirements. All worked hard to display and encourage positive attitudes while keeping the campus safe and functioning.

All staff members contribute to and support the development of all aspects of students' well-being. Each and every staff member plays a key role when it comes to the students' safety, well-being, and success. Student achievement is a team effort, and this collaborative model is an essential component of Berryessa's reputation for excellence.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Challenger encourages students to learn about and respect other cultures. Moreover, Challenger's overall philosophy, values, and methods encourage all students and staff to pursue success and achievement.

One standard set of classroom rules (which is posted in every elementary classroom) governs how Challenger operates: I am here to learn. I respect myself and my rights. I respect others and their rights. It is a conceptual solution to what can be a common problem of poor student behavior. Rather than post a list of actions the students shouldn't do (do not hit, do not make rude comments, etc.), we focus on what students should do: respect themselves and others.

It's a simple concept, and once students understand it, they can easily use the principle to guide their choices. And, because Challenger values independence so highly, students are purposely given opportunities to make many decisions in the classroom.

At Challenger School, justice is not just an act of being fair or just, but also understanding the principle that individuals give and take what they earn. When students observe their peers following the same guidelines and being held accountable, they learn to recognize justice. Students are taught that it will be through their own efforts that they can achieve; they find joy in their accomplishments knowing that they earned them.

Students and staff who are productive have positive and just consequences, whether that be students making good grades or winning competitions or staff achieving bonuses and merit-based pay increases. Challenger's virtues of self-reliance and productivity give the student or employee control over the consequences. However, one does have to be cognizant that choices come with consequences, and that consequences—positive or negative—will result from their actions. Challenger does not punish under-performers. Rather, students and employees understand that if they want to achieve or reach goals, the consequences are naturally positive when they make rational choices and approach their goals under the banner of mutual respect. If a student is on campus and in a classroom to learn, that should lead to rational decisions in comportment and academics. The student will have just consequences such as higher grades and freedoms and will be empowered to be creative, leading to discovery.

Due to the inherently natural foundation that justice and productivity lend, students recognize that respecting individual rights shapes their own happiness, and they are motivated to become not only good students but also good citizens.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Educating students involves and requires more than just an academic focus. It is essential to teach children positive behaviors through values. At Challenger School, the mission is to not only inspire children to learn, but also to prepare children to enter the world beyond elementary school with a motivation to continue to pursue life-enhancing values: rationality, self-reliance, individuality, honesty, justice, and productivity. This practice of teaching positive behaviors through values has significantly contributed to the success of the students and, thereby, the success of Challenger School.

This foundation provides the self-reliance and knowledge that allows students to function well in any subsequent learning experience.

Challenger students commit to a comportment code each academic year that establishes the expectation that students will respect fellow students, teachers, staff, and school property. When students agree to the comportment code, they agree to a philosophy that emphasizes respect but also the power of their own choices. Teachers refer to this philosophy throughout the year to help students understand that they shape their own happiness with every decision they make.

The practice of integrating values through teaching is presented in many subjects. At Challenger, the curriculum department carefully selects literature that illustrates values. For example, in third grade, students read *Pinocchio*. Not only are teachers able to discuss the value of honesty, but also how one must persevere and stay focused to accomplish goals. In history studies, classes examine the human choices (and their consequences) that have shaped civilizations. Through literature, history, and other subjects, students can further explore and discuss life-enhancing values and how to incorporate them in daily life.

Challenger School's positive-behaviors-through-values approach has helped students to rise to the challenges of 2020. Working at home with different levels of distraction and accountability requires a high level of independence and self-control as well as a high level of integrity to complete assessments and assignments independently.

Challenger students learn from day one that they own their own life, and as a result, they must own every choice that they make. Students understand that decisions they make will bring consequences, both positive and negative. They learn to analyze the possible results and determine which will bring the most desired outcome. At Challenger, students are taught to take ownership of their choices and to apply reason in all they do. This process of teaching values in addition to academics makes Challenger School and its students successful.

PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

1. Non-public school association(s): Independent

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes X No
3. What is the educational cost per student? \$14711
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$0
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 0%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 0%

PART VIII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

Non-public schools must report norm-referenced test (NRT) results in reading and mathematics for students tested in grades 3 and higher in the most recent administration of the test within the most recently completed school year (2019-2020)¹. Each school must obtain grade level summary reports from the test publisher for students tested in reading and mathematics for each of these grades.

These reports must include:

1. the number of students tested;
2. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for all students in each tested grade; and**
3. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for each sufficiently large subgroup² in each tested grade.**

Please make notations on these reports to explain results that represent fewer than 95 percent of the students enrolled at the time of testing (e.g., the number of students who took alternative assessments³).

A copy of these reports (in a PDF file) must be uploaded through the National Blue Ribbons Schools Portal.

Also, one hard copy of these reports must be submitted by mail to CAPE with two hard copies of this application.

¹ Because of school closings due to COVID-19, schools may use test results obtained in the fall or spring of 2019 or the fall of 2020.

² Possible subgroups are those identified in Items 4, 6, 7, and 8 in Part II of this application (racial/ethnic groups, ELL students, students eligible for free or reduced meals, and students receiving special education services). A sufficiently large subgroup is one that represents at least 10 percent of the school enrollment as reported in these items.

³ Alternate assessments are used to evaluate the performance of students who are unable to participate in a school's norm-referenced test (NRT) even with accommodations. These assessments are based on the grade-level content covered by the NRT, but at reduced depth, breadth, and complexity. (adapted from National Center on Educational Outcomes)