

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Robert Ryan Elliott M.Ed.
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Elevate School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2285 Murray Ridge Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City San Diego State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 92123-3934

County San Diego

Telephone (858) 751-4774 Fax (619) 839-3700

Web site/URL https://www.elevateschool.com/ E-mail relliott@elevateschool.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* Dr. Lamont Jackson E-mail ljackson@sandi.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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 Carol Leighty Ed.D
(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 the 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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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	0	0	0
K	26	24	50
1	27	23	50
2	20	30	50
3	42	30	72
4	22	27	49
5	30	21	51
6	29	15	44
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	196	170	366

*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
 - 7 % Asian
 - 14 % Black or African American
 - 27 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 37 % White
 - 15 % 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: 6%

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	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	18
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	320
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

Spanish, Amharic, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Portuguese, Japanese, Armenian, Russian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %
37 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 38 %

Total number students who qualify: 138

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
46 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>6</u> Autism | <u>15</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>16</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: 7
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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	15
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

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 24:1

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

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

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

Elevate School equips tomorrow's global innovators by inspiring students to be excellent in academics, exceptional in leadership, and extraordinary in creativity.

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.

During the 2020-2021 school year, Elevate has operated two learning programs for students. All students have learned remotely for parts of the year in our Distance Learning program. As county health conditions allowed, families had the opportunity to enroll their child in our Blended Learning (hybrid) program, which provides three to four days of in-person instruction each week for four hours per day.

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

Elevate is a public charter school without any tuition fees. Admissions for each school year are determined by public lottery.

PART III - SUMMARY

The mission of Elevate School, a K-6 public school located in the Serra Mesa and Tierrasanta communities of San Diego, is to equip tomorrow's global innovators by inspiring students to be excellent in academics, exceptional in leadership, and extraordinary in creativity. Currently in our seventh year, Elevate serves a community of over 350 students that has become increasingly diverse each year of operation.

One reason Elevate was originally founded was to provide a high-quality, personalized educational alternative for students from military families. These students are three times more likely than their civilian peers to move during their school years and often attend multiple schools. These frequent moves can create significant learning gaps for these students. In the city of San Diego, where there is a high military population, this creates a need for many students to have access to a rigorous academic program that can meet the unique needs of military life. Our school population typically consists of 25-35% of students with at least one parent in active military service.

In addition to our students from military families, Elevate has a rich and diverse population of English Learner (EL) and immigrant families. We have had the opportunity of welcoming a growing number of families from all over the world, including Ethiopia, Columbia, Mexico, Brazil, and Russia. This combination of students with diverse backgrounds lends itself to dynamic classroom environments where students can build relationships with peers from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

Even with such a diverse population, the unifying characteristic of all Elevate families is a high level of parental investment in not only their own child's growth and success, but that of their child's peers. This is seen in our families' enthusiastic participation in classroom events and projects, and this is the main reason why students have been so successful over the years.

Elevate is a collaborative teaching environment. Rather than focusing exclusively on their own classes or grade levels, Elevate teachers view the entire student body as "our students." They work closely together as a staff to ensure that all students succeed, meeting regularly to brainstorm positive behavior support strategies and including students from other classes in their reteaching or enrichment small groups. Our teachers are committed to maintaining high academic rigor, helping students cultivate grit, problem-solving, and perseverance in the face of challenges.

Student learning throughout the year is organized into five thematic, interdisciplinary, project-based learning (PBL) units: Community, Character, Service, Justice/Diversity, and Discovery. Elevate's approach to PBL balances the imperative of being rigorous and standards-based while providing opportunities for student creativity, voice, and choice as students apply their learning in meaningful ways. Throughout each unit, students work toward answering an essential question within their culminating project, which they share with a public audience comprised of peers, parents, and/or community members at bi-annual Student Exhibition Nights and in other settings. Furthermore, capping all K-5 class sizes at twenty-five students provides the opportunity for each classroom teacher to continually assess and monitor each child's learning levels. This focus on academics led Elevate to be recognized as a California Distinguished School.

What sets Elevate apart is our core belief that every child is a leader. As a recognized Leader in Me Lighthouse School (www.leaderinme.org), Stephen Covey's timeless leadership principles are integrated into the culture of our school. The 7 Habits provide a common whole-school language and are integrated into each unit. Students practice leadership in the classroom, serving on the Peace Patrol, Safety Team, and Student Lighthouse Team. Additionally, over the course of the school year, every classroom leads two whole-school assemblies, where even our youngest students gain the invaluable experience of speaking to an audience of over 250 students and adults.

The same values that guide how we see every student as a leader also inform how we invest in each student's academic career. Students are recognized for their individual leadership qualities and academic strengths, and our curriculum, instruction, and special programs are designed to meet each student's needs. Our school-wide practice of Data Responsive Goal Setting and Response to Intervention (RTI) programs

give students individualized supports based on data, and students receive reteaching or targeted interventions in small group settings. By maintaining high expectations, coupled with a personalized learning experience, Elevate communicates to every student that their academic and leadership potential is seen and valued.

Adapting to COVID-19 has brought many challenges, but it has deepened our resolve to prioritize leadership and innovation at the forefront of the work we do with students. Annual school traditions have been transformed into meaningful virtual events, projects have been adapted to digital formats, and classroom communities have been built through Zoom screens. At Elevate, we believe that adversity can reveal our character. This year has shown us that Elevate staff, students, and families are people of creativity, resilience, and grit.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Elevate School’s curriculum is taught through our teacher-created units of study: Community, Character, Service, Justice and Diversity, and Discovery. These rigorous units begin with an essential question and incorporate an inquiry-based project that students work on throughout the unit. It is through this that our students practice and develop mastery in reading, writing, social studies, science, and math. Integrated throughout each unit is a focus on leadership using Stephen Covey’s 7 Habits.

Teachers design each unit by unpacking the California Common Core Standards (CCSS) to understand what learning outcomes are expected of students. Teachers then select an extended text they will use to teach the standards as they read with their students throughout the unit. These texts are the foundation of English Language Arts (ELA) standards instruction, providing access to grade-level texts for below-level readers. Students are asked high-level depth of knowledge questions throughout the reading. They participate in discussions using accountable talk: a style of classroom discourse where students are asked to build upon one another’s ideas.

Teachers have continued using the extended texts throughout Blended and Distance Learning and have adapted opportunities for discussion through Zoom. One strategy that teachers have utilized is a “fishbowl” strategy, where multiple students are called on to participate in accountable talk while the rest of the class listens. Teachers then call on others to add additional comments or ask follow-up questions.

Each unit is designed around the project-based learning (PBL) model, where learning happens in the context of solving a real-life problem through the completion of a group project. Each project is guided by the unit’s essential question and allows students to express their creativity, voice, and choice. Opportunities are provided to students to practice the ELA standards through their research and reading. Unit projects are based on the Next Generation Science Standards or the California Social Studies Standards, which creates cross-curricular standards integration. Tied to this is our STEAM program. Students participate weekly in hands-on science investigations and engineering. These are closely aligned with their PBL project focus and create additional support and enthusiasm for their projects.

While PBL and STEAM have been challenging to implement during the current school year, we have continued with both because it provides increased engagement, deeper learning, team building, and creative problem-solving. Teachers have adapted their unit projects to be digital, and students engage in small group discussions through Zoom breakout rooms and present their learning to their teachers, peers, or community members at the end of each unit.

Our instructional model for teaching standards is the Gradual Release of Responsibility. This provides the opportunity for explicit instruction and guided practice, so students can master the standards. This is particularly important for our military students who often come to us with learning gaps. Students are provided direct instruction and guided practice with grade-level standards while being supported with prerequisite skills. For ELA, standards are taught whole-group and in differentiated small groups. In math, all instruction is taught in differentiated small groups, allowing below-level students to learn challenging concepts with more student-friendly numbers, while the on-level learners can develop math concepts using more challenging numbers. All groups have the opportunity to learn the concepts deeply, creating math confidence for all students.

Elevate incorporates an instruction cycle driven by assessment data, and uses multiple diagnostic assessments and unit benchmarks to determine each student’s academic levels. This allows teachers to gain ongoing knowledge of how students are progressing in standards development. After assessments are administered, teachers meet in grade-level teams to analyze data and determine which students need reteaching on specific standards. Data is shared with students, and both teachers and students set goals for growth. As a Leader in Me Lighthouse school, this instills an important leadership quality - goal setting. These goals help students develop a sense of ownership of their learning, develop personalized strategies for academic success, and focus areas of support within the classroom. As a result of goal setting, students have

seen significant success year after year on state testing. In 2018-2019, the most recent administration due to the pandemic, 85% of our students achieved at the proficient or advanced level in English Language Arts and 86% achieved at the proficient or advanced level in math.

Though the current year has presented additional challenges to this instruction and assessment cycle, we have continued this process to ensure as minimal an amount of learning loss as possible. Benchmark assessments are still administered and goals for growth have continued to be set. Our February mid-year iReady Reading diagnostic data showed that our students are already at approximately 83% progress towards their typical yearly reading growth and 74% progress towards their math growth.

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

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Over the years, Elevate teachers have worked to enrich our core curriculum so students have a well-rounded educational experience. Through our PBL unit projects, students actively learn and develop their creativity. Students are given license to demonstrate their learning through art, graphic design, and technology platforms. Unit projects range from creating original characters and stories to developing innovative solutions to world problems. Our projects have included publishing class books, building businesses, planting gardens, corresponding with community leaders, and developing models for sustainable technology for use in the developing world.

As a Leader in Me Lighthouse school, we dedicate the first part of each day to leadership development. In kindergarten through fifth grade, students begin their day with LEAD time: Lead Every Awesome Day. Students learn about Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Leadership and ways to apply it in their daily lives--both at school and home. Our sixth graders participate in Leadership in Action at the start of their day, taking the leadership skills they learned in earlier grades and applying them in the greater community. While they were unable to physically go into the community this year due to COVID-19, students developed mock non-profit organizations to improve their community in areas of recycling, homelessness, and community clean-ups. To further develop their leadership skills in a typical school year, students lead our weekly assemblies. This year students have participated in leading monthly Zoom assemblies.

Students in kindergarten through fifth grade participate in Art Corps each month learning about artists, art styles, and experiencing various mediums. Art Corps is a community organization, partnering with our parents to teach lessons in each classroom. This gets families involved and provides meaningful times for art each month in class. At the end of the year, students' art is displayed at our Student Exhibition night.

Our sixth graders participate in an Elective Discovery Wheel allowing students to explore creative expression on stage, Spanish cultures, middle school foundations, and STEAM. As these students are transitioning into middle school, this wheel provides an opportunity for students to explore their interests and talents, helping them make informed decisions about future elective options available in the higher middle school grades.

Because we believe in a whole-child approach to education, students begin physical education (PE) in kindergarten. Our PE coach begins with foundational gross and fine motor skills and takes students through individual and team activities focusing on the 7 Habits. Students also learn healthy eating and living. This year, PE has looked significantly different than in other years. Students who are in Distance Learning have PE time via Zoom, where our PE coach does online physical fitness activities with them. For our Blended Learning students, our PE coach leads guided movement breaks with each grade after their snack time. This allows students to have fun and get exercise while being physically distanced.

It is important to Elevate School that each child finds his or her passion, leadership voice, and love of learning. Ensuring they have a well-rounded experience allows each student to find an area to shine.

3. Academic Supports:

A special population at our school is students from military families. John Hattie's 2008 meta-study related to influences affecting student achievement demonstrated that parental military deployment and moving between schools both have significant negative academic impacts on students (visible-learning.org). These students often have gaps in their learning and benefit greatly from our Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model. This system includes Elevate's counseling program, which offers support groups and family support for military students. Also included in our MTSS model is our RTI program. These academic and emotional supports allow our military students to feel safe, gain confidence, and have a positive and academically rigorous school experience.

Elevate School has a robust and comprehensive program tailoring instruction, interventions, and assessments to meet the diverse needs of our students. The first tier of our RTI model addresses supports through core classroom instruction. Elevate teachers incorporate GLAD Strategies (Guided Language Acquisition Design) in their lessons. These strategies benefit the entire class while providing scaffolded support for English Language Learners and special education students.

To meet the needs of students who are performing below or above grade level, reading and math instruction are delivered through differentiated and flexible small groups. Teachers provide targeted, scaffolded instruction to students performing below grade level or when data indicate they have not mastered a particular standard, and they provide enrichment or advanced instruction for those who are above grade level and need to be challenged.

Teachers implement our Standards-Based Reteaching Cycle, where assessment data are used to group students for reteaching. If students participate in these groups in the classroom and do not show growth in a follow-up assessment, they are moved to tier two of the RTI model, where students are assigned to an RTI group for math or reading. Each grade is assigned an Intervention Specialist who leads math and reading intervention groups based on indicated need, and student progress is regularly monitored and recorded. Students who do not show growth at this tier are referred to a Student Study Team (SST) for further evaluation to determine if special education assessments are needed.

The third tier of our RTI model focuses on intensive individual intervention for special education students. Elevate follows the inclusion model for special education, and the general education teachers collaborate with the special education teachers to meet the needs of special education students. While special education students receive small group instruction with the education specialist, a majority of support is pushed into the general education classroom. Synergy and thinking win-win are two values that are emphasized in the 7 Habits, and these values guide how our special education students are supported by other students in the general education classroom.

In addition to GLAD strategies implemented in the general education classroom, Elevate has an English Language Development (ELD) teacher who meets with our English Learners (ELs) for Designated ELD instruction outside of the classroom and push-in support within the classroom. Our English learners also have the opportunity to develop their English language skills through their PBL group projects, presentations, and assembly participation.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Student engagement is a critical component of any school year, but this year especially has highlighted the importance of engaging and motivating students.

When students come to Elevate after being unsuccessful at prior schools, we focus on building positive relationships and leadership skills. Often these students have never felt successful, and learning to be a leader instills self-confidence. When these students are recognized as a Leader of the Month, it is often the first time they have been recognized publicly. A parent of one of our most challenging former students shared, “We 100% credit Elevate with changing the trajectory of our child’s academics.”

The 7 Habits are the foundation of our social-emotional learning (SEL). Leadership attributes are celebrated through the use of Exemplar Tickets. When a staff member notices a student modeling the 7 Habits, that student receives an Exemplar Ticket where their positive behavior is recorded. Recently a fourth-grade student received an Exemplar when he offered his snack to a classmate who had forgotten his. These leadership behaviors are recognized at our school-wide assemblies where we randomly choose several Exemplars to celebrate publicly. This year we have digitized Exemplars for teachers to share with students through Zoom.

We provide authentic leadership opportunities for all students, which gives students a sense of belonging and purpose while cultivating positive leadership attributes. Leadership opportunities happen at both a classroom and school-wide level. Older students are invited to apply for campus leadership roles such as Safety Patrol and Peace Patrol. In the application, students share how they would model the 7 Habits in a leadership role. Other opportunities include tutoring younger students and campus tour guides and greeters for guests. Even our youngest students find ways to lead. Our kindergarten students collected plastic bottles to be recycled into a Buddy Bench, so students who are feeling lonely on the playground can find a friend. It is a rare day when a student does not have a leadership role somewhere on campus.

Elevate students are engaged in learning because they know their work has a real impact on others. Our year-long essential question is, “How do others benefit from my learning?” By the end of fifth grade, a student who starts kindergarten with us will have helped to lead approximately twelve assemblies, six special assemblies, and twelve in-class Leadership Days. Additionally, they will have completed thirty PBL projects that benefit others in their classrooms and around the world.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parents and families are a critical component to Elevate’s success - and more importantly to our students’ success. In a normal school year, we have many parents volunteering and supporting our teachers and students. One key area of participation is our student-led conferences when students share their leadership notebooks and highlight their celebrations, and academic and leadership goals for the next trimester and beyond.

We encourage parent participation and empower them to share ideas and ask questions. Our Executive Director hosts a monthly open forum called “Coffee with the Principal” to share school updates and receive parent input. During COVID-19, Elevate offered several Parent Town Halls in which our Leadership Team provided updates on our school’s reopening plans and created a forum for parent input. Quarterly Parent Workshops equip parents with topics ranging from strategies for parenting and supporting the social and emotional needs of their children.

Elevate hosts annual events to engage our local community. On Leadership Days, we invite community leaders to visit our school as our students present their learning and practice their leadership skills. This is an opportunity to gain new partnerships with community leaders as they learn from our students about our school’s mission, academics, and exceptional programs. This year we held our Leadership Day on Zoom

and had even more community guests in our virtual format than previous years. Elevate students also present their learning and leadership at our Student Exhibition Nights, where they showcase their PBL projects. Other events are designed to increase connection among families and support the social-emotional success of our students. These include a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, Talent Show, and Family Movie nights. Our annual Veterans Day Assembly is especially meaningful for our school as we devote time and attention to honoring the many individuals within our community who serve our country.

Learning and leading at Elevate extends beyond the four walls of our classrooms and into partnerships with local and global organizations. Students regularly engage with the community of San Diego through service projects with the San Diego Food Bank, Meals on Wheels, Gaylord-Hanson Outreach Program, Rady Children's Hospital, and GirlsWhoCode.org. On a global scale, our students have partnered with Heifer International, International Rescue Committee, Malala Fund, and the World Wildlife Fund. To address the needs of our military community, we have partnered with the Military Family Life Counselor Program and the Travis Manion Foundation.

We are excited about future opportunities to partner with other leaders as we develop our future global leaders.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

We want our students and our staff to grow and thrive. Teachers and staff members participate in multiple growth opportunities, including coaching cycles, safe practice cycles, peer coaching, and a yearly professional development focus that is data-driven and meets the needs of students.

Our school has committed to deepening our understanding of equity and growing as an antiracist community. Therefore, our professional development focus this year is on further deepening our understanding of culturally responsive teaching. PD happens weekly throughout the school year and includes a whole teaching team training one week followed by a structured Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting the next week. During PLC time, teachers collaborate on applying learning from PD to their classrooms.

Almost every teacher at Elevate participates annually in a coaching cycle. These last for six to eight weeks and teachers meet with the Director of Instruction to decide on an area of growth. This is followed by filming classroom lessons to provide an opportunity for self-assessment, conferencing, feedback, modeled lessons, and weekly observations. When reflecting on their Coaching Cycle experience one teacher wrote, "The coaching cycle allowed me to work closely with the Director of Instruction to focus on one area of improvement for the year. This time was invaluable and provided ideas for growth to better help my students engage in their learning, as well as ways for me to reflect on my teaching practices."

Teachers also participate in safe practice cycles, which is an opportunity for teachers to observe each other and provide peer feedback to one another. By the end of these cycles, we see teachers implementing strategies and ideas that they have observed, which creates consistency across all grades within the school and a collaborative community. Even in this year of COVID-19 challenges, teachers participated in a safe practice cycle to learn from one another about teaching remotely.

Our support staff also participates in training and coaching, and this year we added a Peer Coach to our team to lead these staff members in ways to implement Response to Intervention (RTI) and support student engagement.

Each person at Elevate is a critical member of our community. We utilize surveys and whole-team meetings to provide a space for input and voice on important issues, and to create an emotionally, physically, and professionally safe environment. Staff members give staff exemplar tickets to one another to show appreciation for their hard work. Most importantly, the leadership team avails itself to any team member who has a concern or needs support.

4. School Leadership:

As a Leader in Me Lighthouse School, we recognize that developing positive leadership qualities in our teachers and students begins with the work that happens in our school leadership team. Our philosophy of leadership aligns with Habit 8 in the Leader in Me framework: find your voice and empower others to find theirs. Because we believe that everyone is a leader, we trust the professionalism of our staff and prioritize clear communication of big picture goals over micromanaging details. We acknowledge one another's strengths and strive to provide opportunities where everyone on our team can take on leadership roles.

This has been especially important this year as our school administrators have worked together to keep our school safe and functioning in accordance with CDC guidelines during COVID-19. Our roles have shifted this year to include increased communication with other school leaders, our staff, and our community stakeholders. We have prioritized holding town hall meetings, sending out parent and staff surveys, and intentionally assigning leadership team members to check in with the staff members they supervise. This input has been invaluable for making decisions that best serve our students.

Elevate's senior leadership team consists of the Executive Director, Director of Instruction, Dean of Students, and School Counselor. Our Executive Director oversees big picture school operations and works closely with our school board to make decisions about budget and long-term plans for our school. The Director of Instruction oversees Elevate's curriculum, learning programs, assessments, and professional development for the teaching staff. Our Dean of Students oversees day-to-day operations on campus, provides behavior support for students, and coordinates our student leadership team. Finally, our school counselor leads our counseling department and the implementation of SEL lessons in each classroom and counseling group.

This year, Elevate's leadership team meets twice weekly to review school-wide goals and ensure that the many aspects of academics, social-emotional support, and leadership development are in alignment with one another and with our school's mission. Most importantly, student concerns in distance or blended learning are discussed and plans for monitoring are developed and assigned to various team members. These regular meetings have been essential in providing support to the entire school and maintaining role clarity in the midst of continuous changes as we respond and adapt to COVID-19 circumstances.

An ongoing central responsibility of school leadership is to anchor professional learning for teachers and staff in two critical elements: Why and How. Both at the beginning of the year and repeatedly throughout the year, attention is devoted to ensuring team members routinely return to their purpose for teaching and serving students. It is this sense of purpose that greatly impacts our students.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

We are committed to addressing the diverse needs and backgrounds of our school community. Three years ago, teachers engaged in a book study of Zaretta Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*. We focused on building rapport and a strong learning partnership alliance with our culturally diverse students. Teachers built their capacity to be warm demanders by validating diverse student experiences and providing specific and timely feedback, which supported our students in becoming independent learners who were capable of directing their own learning.

As racial injustices were brought to the surface this past year, we recognized the need to further deepen our cultural proficiency. We turned to our increasingly diverse school community to listen to the experiences, concerns, and suggestions of our families of color on how Elevate should respond and take action. With these conversations in mind, the Elevate Board passed a resolution in August denouncing systemic racism and affirming Elevate's commitment to ensuring a safe and equitable learning environment for students of color. We formed an Equity Task Force which includes Board Members, staff, parents, and students of color to provide support and accountability for this resolution.

To ensure our students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, teachers have examined each unit of study and implemented changes to include more texts with diverse characters and research from diverse perspectives, highlighting those who have made a significant impact on the world and have been historically underrepresented.

To ensure our students see themselves reflected in our staff, Elevate is committed to increasing representation. To that end, we elected two parents of color to the Elevate Board and are intentionally recruiting highly qualified candidates of color for new staff positions.

We continue to deepen the cultural proficiency and commitment to antiracism of our entire staff through a series of professional development workshops provided by the San Diego County Office of Education's Equity Department. We are currently doing deep reflective work on our own identity and implicit bias. Next, we will learn how to counteract our implicit bias and implement additional culturally responsive teaching practices to provide equitable access and opportunities for our culturally diverse students.

Because we are committed to teaching our students how to be transformative leaders, it is our hope that students will learn from our own growth in equity consciousness and be those leaders of tomorrow, who will stand against racism and fight for social justice.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

A tool that has been most instrumental to our school's ability to successfully educate and support students is our system of Data-Responsive Goal Setting. The purpose of Data-Responsive Goal Setting is to strategically set goals for growth by prioritizing what is most important, making a plan, tracking data, celebrating successes, and taking time to reflect before setting a new goal. Goals can be academic, behavioral, or personal, and have a set time frame. We set goals on a school-wide level, team level, classroom level, and individual level for both students and staff members. Even in this pandemic year, our staff and students continue to set goals that have also included self-care and engagement.

Two essential components of our Data-Responsive Goals are having clearly stated lead measures--the actions that will be needed to accomplish a goal--and data. These action steps and data points are a regular part of interactions between teachers and students. Each student at our school, from our kindergarten students to our sixth graders, knows their current academic levels and what level they are working towards. Our teachers work with their students to set goals for personal and academic growth, write a plan for how the student and teacher will work together to accomplish those goals and create a graph where students can monitor their own progress.

Most goals that we set at Elevate have a time frame of four to six weeks, typically aligning with our school-wide units. Following each unit benchmark assessment, teachers analyze the data to set new goals with their students, reflect with their students on previous goals, and then use those reflections to inform the lead measures for new goals.

Involving students in this goal-setting process is beneficial to students. Helping students set academic goals requires teachers to have a comprehensive knowledge of their students' current levels. This is accomplished through the strategic use of assessments to drive instruction and provides students with resources to master any skills or standards where they are not yet proficient. It also necessitates a small group learning model where students are receiving individualized instruction to help them reach their goals. Additionally, and most importantly, involving students in their goal-setting process gives them a sense of ownership and agency when it comes to their learning. Elevate's mission is to equip students to be leaders and innovators, but this mission is only possible if our students believe they are capable of creating real, positive change in their own lives and the lives of others.