

**2012-2013 A+ SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE™ APPLICATION
COVER SHEET**

Official School Name: Kyrene de los Cerritos
District Name: Kyrene School District

Level (circle all grades that apply): Pre-K K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11 12

Previous A+ School of Excellence™? _____ Yes No **If Yes, Year(s)** _____

Name of Principal: Darcy DiCosmo

School Mailing Address: 14620 S Desert Foothills Parkway

City: Phoenix **Zip:** 85048

Primary Phone: (480) 541-2200 **Principal Phone or ext:** (ext) 2250

Principal Email Address ddicosmo@kyrene.org

Name of Superintendent: Dr. David Schauer

District Mailing Address: 8700 S Kyrene Road

City: Tempe **Zip:** 85284

Primary Phone: (480) 541-1000 **Superintendent Phone:** (480) 541-1100

Superintendent Email address: dschau@kyrene.org

If your school is selected to receive a site visit, the review panel members will need directions to your school and will need to know dates that will present potential conflicts. Please complete the following:

Street Address City & Zip of school (if different from mailing address): SAME

Detailed travel directions indicating surface streets that lead to your school:

Take I-10 East toward Tucson. Merge onto 202 West which becomes Pecos. Continue West on Pecos to Desert Foothills Parkway. Turn right. Continue for approximately two miles. Cross over Chandler Boulevard. Cerritos will be on your left side. Pass the first parking lot (staff and bus lot) to second parking lot. This is Altadena Middle School. Park anywhere in the lot.

Calendar information:

Best days of week, and times, to observe: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
7:45am-2:35pm
(Wednesday is an Early Release Day -12:35pm)

Time school buses begin arriving in the morning: 7:20 am **Time classes begin:** 7:45 am
Time classes dismiss: 2:35 pm **Spring Break dates:** March 11-15, 2013

Standardized testing dates: April 15-26, 2013

Early release, overnight or all-day field trips or other out-of-the-ordinary activities planned that might interfere with a site visit for the period February 4 – April 19, 2013; indicate grade level(s) affected:

- February 14th- Class Parties (whole school)
- February 18th- President’s Day (NO SCHOOL)
- February 25th-March 8th Parent Teacher Conference Window (all grade levels)
- March 7-Picture Day
- March 19th- 4th grade Field Trip
- March 26th- 2nd Grade Field Trip, 3rd Grade Musical
- April 15th-19th- AIMS Testing (whole school)

SIGNATURES:

I have reviewed the information in this package including the eligibility requirements, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate. If my school is recognized as an A+ School of Excellence, the contents of this application may be made available to the public. The school will comply with the logo and name usage agreement related to “A+ School of Excellence™”, which will be given to the school upon earning the award.

_____ Date _____

Principal’s signature

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____

Superintendent’s signature

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____

School Board Member’s signature

Printed name of School Board Member

SUBMIT APPLICATION TO:
Arizona Educational Foundation
6155 E. Indian School Rd., Suite #106
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Applications must be received no later than **5:00 p.m. on January 18, 2013**; Call 480-421-9376 with questions.

Preparation of A+ School of Excellence™ Application

Representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups, i.e. administrators, teachers, other school staff, students, parents, and community representatives, should be involved in the preparation of the application. List the individuals *actively* involved in preparation. Insert additional page(s) if needed.

Name (list primary author(s) first)	Position/Title
Darcy DiCosmo	Principal
Sarah Collins	Student Advisor
Erin Cook	2 nd Grade Teacher
Richard Pysher	5 th Grade Teacher
Kali McKenna	4 th Grade Teacher
Emily Mazer	2 nd Grade Teacher
Melissa Thomas	Parent
Deb Foote	Resource Teacher
Dena Lock	Kindergarten Chair
Kiirsti Makela	First Grade Chair
Tara Andren	Second Grade Chair
Nancy Corrion	Third Grade Chair
Cindy Eger	Fifth Grade Chair
Tracey Nordahl	Special Areas Chair

PART I: DISTRICT AND SCHOOL INFORMATION

DISTRICT INFORMATION:

1. Total number of Pre K-12 students enrolled in the district: **18,067**

2. Number of schools in the district:

19 Elementary 6 Middle/Junior High Schools 0 Pre-K-8 0 High schools

TOTAL SCHOOLS: 25

SCHOOL INFORMATION:

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- Urban or large central city
- Suburban
- Suburban w/characteristics of urban areas
- Small city/town in rural area
- Rural

4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school? 6 (see Eligibility Requirements)

If less than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school? N/A

5. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in the school:

Pre-K	<u>28</u>				
K	<u>69</u>	5 th	<u>112</u>	10 th	<u> </u>
1 st	<u>96</u>	6 th	<u> </u>	11 th	<u> </u>
2 nd	<u>100</u>	7 th	<u> </u>	12 th	<u> </u>
3 rd	<u>99</u>	8 th	<u> </u>		
4 th	<u>82</u>	9 th	<u> </u>		

TOTAL: 586

6. Racial/ethnic composition of students in the school:

- 0.51% American Indian or Alaska Native
- 5.12% Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- 5.12% Black or African American
- 14.51% Hispanic or Latino
- 72.7% White
- 2.04% Other; specify: Two or more racial/ethnic backgrounds

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 5.9%

8. Limited English proficient students in the school:

Total number 7 As a % of total student population: 1.19%

a. Total Number of languages represented: 2

b. Specify languages: Spanish and Mandarin

9. Students who participate in free/reduced-priced meals:

Total number: 57 As a % of total student population: 9.8%

If this method is not a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how the school arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services:

Total number: 57 As a % of total student population: 9.73%

16 Specific Learning Disability

20 DD/Health Impaired/Autistic

2 Other Severe (specify): ED

Indicate if your school is the district site for any specific special education magnet program(s); if so, include student enrollment for program(s). Our school is one of nine sites within the district that offers a developmental preschool program. We have one full time preschool teacher who teaches two sections of half day preschool; Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<i>Number of Staff</i>	
	Full Time	Part Time
Administrators	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>23</u>	<u>5</u>
Specials: Therapists	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
Resource Teachers	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Other Specialists	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>14</u>
Other Support Staff	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>
Total FTE:	<u>32</u>	<u>34</u>

Describe any significant changes in the data reported in items 1-11 that have occurred during the past five years. Explain why the changes occurred and the impact on your school programs (use additional page if necessary).

Kyrene de los Cerritos, A Leadership Academy has been a part of the Kyrene community since 1994. At that time, the housing market in this area was booming. Cerritos was almost at capacity for student enrollment. Since then, we have experienced a slow decline in student enrollment. Many community members are business owners or work for larger corporations. Several families experienced the difficulties of the recession. Unfortunately, we have had families lose their homes or move to an area that better meets their financial obligations.

Around the area, we have also seen many new charter schools open. We have faced a competitive challenge as parents make decisions for their child's education. Typically, the primary grades have been most affected due to Montessori, church primary schools and parochial options. Cerritos experiences an increase in enrollment from second grade through fifth grade. We are very proud that once students come to Cerritos, they do not leave unless they are moving out of the area. Parents and students find Cerritos meets and exceeds their educational needs.

PART II: SCHOOL SUMMARY

The **Kyrene de los Cerritos, A Leadership Academy** (Cerritos) in Phoenix, Arizona is grounded in the belief that building cooperative relationships and cultivating responsibility, compassion, and good judgment are the basis for creating a successful community of learners. Built in 1994, Cerritos, which means “Little Hills”, has a large campus in the Ahwatukee Foothills adjoining the Altadena Middle School. The school currently services 586 students, with the capacity to hold up to 1,000. This space offers great opportunity for expansion in enrollment, and the ability to host a variety of after-school enrichment programs and clubs with no disruption to the classrooms. Sharing the middle school library resources offers more variety and advanced literature than a typical elementary school.

For the past three years, the dedicated staff has focused on the school mission statement: ***“Leaders of today inspiring leaders of tomorrow.”*** We are a ***Leader in Me*** School, incorporating the 7 Habits in all we do. This serves as the foundation upon which our learning environment is built, and along with our academic teaching and learning, the 7 Habits provide our students with the 21st-century skills they will need in order to be successful in the world. Our vision is to help every student recognize his or her **leadership** strengths and to build upon these talents. Cerritos strives to teach the whole child—socially, emotionally, academically, and ethically—and create a climate of principle-centered personal **leadership**. We embrace a culture of continuous performance excellence, real-world problem solving, academic rigor, a focus on blending specific skills with content knowledge, innovative support and embracing diversity that makes us a district school of choice.

Cerritos has many well-established school traditions. A dynamic Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Board maintains a membership of eleven volunteer parents and extends to all members of the community. Together they organize and host annual events such as the Ice Cream Social, book fairs, the Decades Dance, the Pumpkin Walk, Winter Wonderland, and an end of year Kindergarten orientation. Each year, families are invited to attend events that are teacher and student-led such as Meet the Teacher, Curriculum Night, **Family Leadership Nights**, Mission Statement Night, Lunch on the Lawn, Patriotic Assembly, Naturalization ceremony and two **Leadership Days**, one in the Fall and one in the Spring. An important component of the PTO is to organize and complete fundraising. Each year they focus their efforts on raising enough money to support classroom needs, professional development and special projects. For 2012-2013, their hope is to raise enough to fund a shade structure.

Awards and recognitions are an important part of our culture. In 2010, Karol Pacheco received Instructional Specialist, Volunteer of the Year. Michelle Lamp received the Junior Achievement Teacher of the Year. Our school was awarded as a Panda Restaurant Group, **Leadership** School Sponsorship. We received the Seed Keeper Project Award and Mr. Gilbert Rascon was named the “Sparky” Sun Devil Athletic Award winner. In 2011, Rich Pysher was recognized as a Guest Writer in the Arizona Republic News and Bondurant Racing provided our school with a **Leadership** School grant. In 2012, Breyer Law Offices awarded Michelle Mandola and Linda Wolf the Teacher of the Month award that included \$250 to use in their classrooms. Melissa Foster, received the AZ Cardinals Hero award and Su Rogers received the prestigious award of being nominated as the Tempe Diablos Kyrene Inspirational Teacher of the Year.

PART III: CLEAR FOCUSED MISSION

When Cerritos open in 1994, the mission statement, although written and posted throughout the school, did not seem to have the effect of positively driving educational decisions. In 2009, Cerritos began to focus on the process of becoming a **leadership** school and realizing that our philosophies were evolving. We needed a new vision and mission statement. All staff, PTO parents and community members were invited to participate in a mission/vision day.

Our school goals focused on increasing student achievement, developing 21st century learning skills and preparing students for a world that cannot be predicted for their future. After brainstorming, we found that six areas stood to help us develop a new mission that aligns to our goals. Those critical areas were: *curriculum*-what we will use to teach standards and **leadership**; *traditions* -what is important to the culture of our school, *systems*-the structures within our school that maintain organization, *modeling*-the expectations we hold for ourselves and one another, *environment*-the way we display what is important to our community and *instruction*-the strategies used to maintain best practices and student motivation. We wanted a focused, clear and student-centered mission statement while incorporating the philosophy that all students are **leaders**. Each area had its own list of important details to keep in mind but as we compared the charts, we realized that everything came back to emphasizing the practices of **leadership**. After many attempts to express what we hold dear to our hearts, our mission, *“Leaders of today inspiring leaders of tomorrow”* was born. It encompassed all components of the six criteria and expressed our goal to nurture **leadership**.

In addition to the school-wide mission statement, each classroom has a mission statement. Students review it frequently to assess whether or not they are on track for meeting their goals. The school’s mission inspires teachers to connect with their students through collaborative learning and teaching.

Every student, as part of the **Leadership** Academy’s policies, maintain Data Passports in which they declare their personal mission statement, then set specific and measurable goals with action-oriented, time-based results. Models of research-based strategies are implemented into our **leadership** framework; Stephen Covey’s Seven Habits of Highly Effective People and Principle-Centered **Leadership**, LEGO Serious Play Program, Ron Clark’s Essential 55, and Rick Dufour’s professional learning communities. The Covey principles have assisted us in creating a culture that supports our mission, *“Leaders of Today Inspiring Leaders of Tomorrow”* and that guides us in bringing to fulfillment our vision.

Cerritos is a *Leader in Me* School, incorporating the principles of the seven habits. We have taken a ubiquitous approach to embedding these practices into our daily activities. **Leadership** is built into everything we do. It serves as the foundation upon which our learning environment is built. The habits arm our students with the 21st-century skills they will need in order to be successful in the world. People often comment about the happiness they feel when they are at Cerritos. They sense the delight we all embrace. The entire Cerritos community believes in our vision and mission which is why others feel the joy too.

PART IV: EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS EVIDENCE DOCUMENTATION

A. Strong Instructional Leadership

A1. Leadership structure, roles and functions are important at the school.

Mrs. Darcy DiCosmo has been principal of Cerritos since 2007. Having been a teacher for many years prior to administration, Mrs. DiCosmo knows first-hand the tremendous amount of daily responsibility placed upon the teachers. She is a very present and hands-on **leader**, frequently passing through classrooms to chat with students about what they are learning to help reinforce the instruction. Mrs. DiCosmo's typical over-extended day would include directing traffic, meeting with parents, reading to students, providing formal and informal feedback to teachers, and some nights, ended at 9:30 p.m. mopping floors after an event.

In addition to Mrs. DiCosmo, Cerritos has Sarah Collins, the Student Advisor who also acts in a **leadership** capacity. Among the many groups and committees she leads, Mrs. Collins is the head of the *Parking/Playground Assisting and Leading Safety* (P.A.L.S.) group. Fourth and fifth grade students assist staff in the mornings and afternoons, including greeting visitors and encouraging safe behaviors on the playground. Mrs. Collins is also the supervisor of the Instructional Assistants. Once a quarter she holds a support staff meeting to discuss any concerns or issues, review current teacher meetings and provide on-going instruction to implement the 7 Habits. Mrs. Collins also celebrates the efforts of our Instructional Assistants with certificates, token gifts and public praise.

Mrs. DiCosmo maintains high expectations for the staff and students. She personifies **leadership** through modeling and communicating those expectations. She can often be heard reminding students that, "Good character is doing the right thing even when no one is looking." Students look to her as the **leader** of Cerritos yet they also know she will hold them to high standards to achieve their personal best. Her philosophy that all students are **leaders** and they each have a personal strength to contribute is reinforced through her interactions each day.

Teachers and staff obtain feedback on their own professional performance through an informal means and a formal evaluation process. With the district implementation of Robert Marzano's Art and Science of Teaching Evaluation System, both Mrs. DiCosmo and Mrs. Collins have had extensive training to become qualified evaluators. There is currently a district standard for each certified teacher to have at least 13 walkthroughs along with the state requirements for yearly formal observations and evaluations depending on teacher years of experience. This evaluation system gives the teachers at Cerritos immediate feedback on their instructional effectiveness while giving both evaluators an opportunity to be in classrooms much more often. The partnership between instructional **leader** and classroom teacher is much stronger with the trust that DiCosmo and Collins have built with the staff.

Recognizing the ability of all teachers, staff and students to be **leaders**, Mrs. DiCosmo and a group of teacher trailblazers brought forward Stephen Covey's The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People in 2009. The habits are embedded throughout the school, and include: Habit 1, Be proactive; Habit 2, Begin with the end in mind; Habit 3, Put first things first; Habit 4, Think win-win; Habit 5, Seek first to understand, then to be understood; Habit 6, Synergize; and Habit 7, Sharpen the saw. The employment of the seven habits has been so successful that Cerritos recently went through a rigorous evaluation from the Franklin Covey Company to become a

Lighthouse School. Cerritos is now the 27th school in the world to be considered a model in the effective deployment of the seven habit concepts.

A2. The school improvement process or Strategic Plan is organized and managed to ensure that the school is always moving forward.

The school improvement process is directed by the State of Arizona, but modified within each school district, and then organized within the schools based on assessment data. Cerritos meets on a regular basis within grade level professional learning communities to ensure the understanding of these school improvement goals. Grade levels interpret the data and set S.M.A.R.T. (specific, meaningful, attainable, relevant, timely) goals according to the needs of the students. Data is monitored at monthly grade level and staff meetings to ensure instruction is moving forward. The school has a formal School Improvement Plan (SIP) that guides all decisions regarding student progress. Every teacher has his/her own Data Passport that includes every student in the class. The Data Passports include a grade level SIP that supports the school wide goals. Using each student's data, teachers meet weekly to discuss next steps to assure students are receiving instruction to meet their needs.

As a commitment to the success of our students, Mrs. DiCosmo adjusted monthly staff meetings from day-to-day informational discussions to focused professional development that teachers can immediately implement in the classroom to ensure students receive current best practices. Meetings are rich in dialogue as teachers learn from colleagues and administration. Over the past three years, teachers have received instruction on engagement strategies, phonemic awareness, phonics and comprehension instruction, data analysis, implementation of technology, student-led conferences and **leadership**.

Along with the implementation of Robert Marzano's Art and Science of Teaching model to evaluate teacher effectiveness, as discussed above. The district provides a program named *iObservation*, to communicate growth to teachers and administrators. Prior to and after each observation, teachers have the chance to sit down with their evaluator and reflect on their teaching practices according to the framework.

A3. Leadership is inclusive and engages staff, teachers, students, parents, and community in decision-making.

Parents and the community are very involved in the **leadership** model of Cerritos. Using teacher suggestions, parent input and ultimately student choice decisions are made about academic growth, personal goals, action steps and school wide ideas to implement. All stakeholders have an opportunity to decide which areas of strength they would like to foster. Families are invited, twice a year, to **Leadership Day** in which students showcase their **leadership** skills for families, the community and state and national figures. In our first three years of implementing **Leadership Days**, distinguished guests such as author Sean Covey, State Representative Jeff Dial, Senator John McComish and Assistant to Governor Jan Brewer were among our guests. These special days serve as a way to highlight the students' **leadership** skills they have been working to achieve throughout the school year. Students work together to prepare and organize this day. They determine the schedule and meet with students to rehearse and plan.

Parents and community members are also invited to **Family Leadership Nights** that staff members organize to engage families in the positive aspects of this innovative **leadership** program. Utilizing a survey, our community expressed ideas for our **Family Leadership Nights**. Through the survey, we found that parents had an interest in learning how to use the habits at home, write a family mission statement and learn how to “Put first things first.” Our first Parent Night hosted eight parents. Our second night hosted 20. Our third, and most popular evening, taught over 50 adults and students. Each time we offer a **Family Leadership Night** we continue to grow in attendance as the community shares the night’s excitement and engagement.

The Cerritos Site Council is a **leadership** body made up of administration, teachers and parents. This group is responsible for directing school efforts and activities that utilize tax credits for funding, including identifying and purchasing extra-curricular resources, targeting age-appropriate field trips for grade levels and coordinating with the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) to sponsor and jointly fund projects. Site Council also reviews and discusses test scores, satisfaction surveys and targeted responses from the community to develop action plans and understand the findings of trends.

A4. Leadership models the use of available 21st century tools and applications in the roles of principal, manager, teacher leaders and staff leaders.

With the implementation of the new Common Core Standards, which are defined as “State Standards that provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them.” The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that students need for success in college and careers, the importance of using technology is even more important than it has been in the past. Each classroom at Cerritos has a SMARTBoard, which is an interactive white board, allowing teachers to display, manipulate and record interactive lessons effortlessly. Additionally, primary grade levels have five laptops per classroom, and intermediate grades have six for student use. Classrooms also share laptops if more are needed for a lesson. Each class has computer lab once a week. Teachers provide instruction in software programs and students work on subject-related projects. Students can be observed creating their own traveling brochure, developing a student-friendly website that delineates facts about historic figures and merging partner-made graphs into reports.

Administrators and teachers also model the efficient use of technology by using Schoolnet, a reporting and analysis system that provides teachers and principals with an interactive Key Performance Indicator (KPI) dashboard that offers views of current performance at the school, student group and classroom levels. With SchoolNet, teachers are able to easily drill down from higher-level views to individual student data to help teachers analyze and digest student performance and assessment scores. Together they collaborate to plan instruction and interventions based on student data.

Teachers at Cerritos model the use of their teacher Data Passports for their students to enhance the students’ interpersonal and self-directional skills. A Data Passport binder is also held by each student to record their progress and reflection on their learning. Teachers have learned to proficiently use Data Passports to analyze information and set goals based on the data for both themselves and their students. By using this approach, teachers model the proper process of

setting S.M.A.R.T. goals, thereby preparing them to take their place as **leaders** in the 21st century.

Finally, teachers and staff utilize the Cerritos Listserv and classroom email groups in order to communicate valuable information via technology about changes in policy, upcoming events and important announcements, including newsletters. All teachers keep their individual websites up to date to offer parents on-going real-time information about their child and classroom assignments.

B. School Organization and Culture

B1. Underlying values, beliefs, and traditions ensure that people work together to solve problems and confront challenges.

Cerritos has a culture built upon the foundation of inclusion, acceptance, engagement, and high expectations of both the staff and the student body. The entire staff collaborates to plan, execute, and reflect on programs that enhance student learning and development. There is a sense of shared **leadership** not only among staff members but also among the students. We focus on giving students a voice and developing their individual talents that will make them **leaders** of tomorrow. Through the use of Data Passports, Mission Statements, and *The Seven Habits of Happy Kids*, written by Sean Covey to support the *Leader in Me* model adopted by Cerritos in teaching the 7 Habits, Cerritos welcomes individuality and encourages both academic and personal growth in our students. Cerritos offers extra-curricular clubs and classes to foster student **leadership** at our school. Students, parents, staff, and the community encourage a unified partnership to support our mission.

*“We are very proud to have our son attend Cerritos Elementary. ... we learned about the **Leadership Academy** and its 7 Habits and what it was about. We then incorporated that into our own home. New words were being used at dinner and our communication was easier with this new language. Our son began to advance in his learning... The love and respect that he had for his teacher allowed him to want to achieve more. We believe that this was due to his exceptional teacher and the school.”*

--- Nicole Bondurant, former parent and PTO member

Cerritos welcomes the outside community into the school through many celebrations, traditions and information-sharing opportunities. The events hosted by the teachers and staff are extensive and informative, including Meet the Teacher, Kindergarten Orientation and Curriculum Night. Cerritos also holds very unique meetings with families, community and stakeholders, that encourage the development of the whole child and family values including **Family Leadership** and Mission Statement Nights. These nights, families are taught how to utilize the Seven Habits in their home and build a Mission Statement expressing their personal values.

“Try hard, do your best and always be prepared”

---Powell Family Mission Statement

Twice a year, parents and community **leaders** are also invited to **Leadership Days** in which students showcase their own cultivated **leadership skills**. Students are given the opportunity to choose an area of strength for our **Leadership Days**. Tour guide, **Leader of Art, Leader of**

Speech Giving, Leader of Singing and Leader of Kindness are just a few of the many areas students find their voice to present on this very special day. In February, kindergarten students also perform a Patriotic Assembly to honor national heroes in the military, local police and fire personnel. The students, as well as these local heroes, are invited to listen to patriotic songs and speeches performed each year during the week of Presidents' Day.

In collaboration with our Tempe high school, Desert Vista, twice a year, after important testing times, we celebrate our accomplishments through a Lunch on the Lawn event. Parents are invited to bring a blanket, a lunch and any guests to enjoy a picnic lunch with their child, chat with teachers, neighbors and administrators, to listen to the High School Jazz Choir and Band perform.

At Cerritos, school safety a top priority. Lockdowns are practiced twice annually and fire drills are practiced monthly to ensure students are prepared in case an emergency occurs. Each classroom is equipped with a safety evacuation plan and emergency backpack filled with supplies. A Safety Committee meets monthly to review the procedures and discuss any needs that may arise during drills. In addition to school-wide evacuation plans, Cerritos implements the CARES (Cooperation, Accountability, Respect, Excellence, Safety) system to communicate expectations and encourage safe work and play at all times. CARES are posted throughout the school. Students will find these expectations in the hallway, restroom, café, for dismissal, and during an assembly. The implementation of CARES has given all staff the ability to provide students with common language for behavior and to assure everyone's safety.

The front office staff also promotes school safety through the monitoring of campus visitors. All visitors must sign in at the front office before entering the classrooms or hallways. Each staff member and visitor is required to wear a badge throughout the school day. This allows for staff to quickly identify visitors in the building. All outside access doors remain locked throughout the school day and after school, and all visitors must enter and exit through the front office. Visitors are required to leave their driver's license with the office staff before receiving a visitor's badge. To maintain the highest levels of security, even familiar faces are not allowed on campus without providing identification.

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) also organizes and hosts multiple events, such as the Spring Carnival, Pumpkin Walk, Turkey Trot, Ice Cream Social and a Decades Dance, themed after a selected decade. Most recently, we danced to the music of the 80's. With 200 in attendance, the evening was a huge success. The PTO sponsors the Winter Wonderland. The community is invited to donate toys, make ornaments, have holiday pictures taken and purchase local goods from vendors.

The annual Roadrunner Bowl is a football game that allows for friendly competition between the fifth grade students and teachers. The entire student body is encouraged to make signs for the "team" they support. Everyone brings a chair to sit and enjoy the fast paced game. Cheering and encouraging for both teams builds a win-win attitude as the fifth graders give their all during this exciting annual rivalry.

B2. The school environment or climate is conducive to *Learning for All* and moves beyond the elimination of undesirable behavior.

Many traditions and celebrations join students together in honoring our school and community. The Walk of Fame tradition was started when Sean Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Happy Kids*, chose Cerritos to view the transformation, firsthand, into a **Leadership Academy**. As a celebrated author, everyone wanted the opportunity to meet him. We decided to honor him, as the first **leader** to come through our campus since we became a **Leadership Academy**, by lining the main hallway, waving a silent good-bye and having our youngest **leaders**, the kindergarteners, sing their “Goodbye” song. This gesture became a tradition for all **leaders** as we acknowledge their accomplishments. Recently, the school song was rewritten to express the mission as a **Leadership Academy** and is sung at each assembly by the entire student body and staff.

As part of the mission of **shared leadership**, staff and students assist during morning recess and afternoon dismissal. Staff members are assigned designated duty areas to ensure students are arriving to school and heading home safely. The P.A.L.S. Program (Playground/Parking Assisting and Leading Safety), is a group of fourth and fifth grade students who assist staff members in the morning and afternoons, including greeting students and parents in the morning and encouraging safe behaviors on the playground. P.A.L.S. also helps students leave school safely by helping those students cross parking lots and get into their cars. A friendly morning greeting and a kind goodbye are an important component of becoming a P.A.L.S. **Leader**.

B3. The school fosters positive interactions, respect, cooperation, and collaboration between and among students and adults, and promotes a healthy peer climate among students.

The Cerritos CARES expectations provide a common language for students school-wide to encourage positive behavior and safety. The letters in CARES stand for Cooperation, Accountability, Respect, Excellence, and Safety. Each area of the school, down to the individual classroom, has CARES expectations for students to follow.

The **Leadership** philosophy embodies the importance of learning and using social graces such as manners. Cerritos is the only elementary school in Kyrene that uses round tables during lunch. CARES expectations are extended into the café as a way to promote community and manners. Half of the cafeteria has the usual rectangle tables and half utilize the round tables. Students rotate through the round tables every few days. When it is their turn, lunch staff and administration encourage community building even during lunch time. Students have the opportunity at the round tables to display their best “restaurant manners”.

Community Circle is a “morning meeting with a twist”. It occurs every morning in every classroom across the school. Community Circle is a time for students to gather together and discuss the day’s events as well as share stories, experiences, and common ideas. It is part of every teacher’s morning routine as the students enter and settle into the classrooms.

Have you filled someone’s bucket today? If you are a student at Cerritos, “filling someone’s bucket” means making them feel good about who they are. All of the students and staff work hard to build positive friendships and relationships with others at the school. Both staff and students have paper water drops on which they can choose to write a compliment about someone

else and share it on the wall on the main hallway. Recently a fifth grade student wrote a slip to a third grader. On the playground, the third grader came over and asked if she would like to play with her because she was alone. The fifth grade girl wrote her a note to let her know that she had filled her bucket that morning.

C. Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

C1. The curriculum reflects current research and use of curriculum development best practices across all grade levels.

The Kyrene Elementary School District provides all of the schools with the proper curriculum maps that follow the Common Core State Standards. Having access to the curriculum maps provides all the schools consistency in learning throughout the district, to make sure that the students are learning the required material at each grade level. Teachers at Cerritos highlight specific skills and areas to focus on each school year. Following the big ideas as prescribed by the district, teachers are now responsible to teach the new Common Core Standards. The new standards require students to have a deeper understanding of standards by demonstrating their knowledge. All of our teachers have completed English Language and Math Common Core district trainings. Our entire second grade team also volunteered to attend Common Core training outside of our district to have a greater knowledge base. Continued classes will be offered to all Kyrene teachers, however, at Cerritos, funds are set aside to give teachers the option to attend any professional development that aligns with the curriculum.

At Cerritos, we believe that students are more successful when teachers and staff collaborate in planning and preparing for instruction. Although teacher across all grade levels plan based on the Common Core standards in ELA and Math, there are several areas in each grade level that allow for teachers to plan for unique and challenging units. Teachers work across grade levels, and with their own teams, to make sure each grade level's "big ideas" in science, social studies, math and language arts are taught to mastery. Whether it is the music teacher collaborating with the kindergarten teachers on a patriotic performance or the fourth grade team planning an Arizona history day, students in each grade level experience lessons and activities that push them to their highest potential. A matrix of themes in each grade level is provided below. These are the key concepts and ideas that are focused on in each subject area across the grade levels.

Grade	Science	Social Studies	Math	Language Arts
Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Five Senses •Earth's Materials •Living & Non-Living •Magnets •Properties of Objects •Weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship • Communities around the World • People Long Ago • Looking for New Places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing and comparing whole numbers, initially with sets of objects • Describing shapes and space 	Harcourt Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to Know You • I am Special • Family Ties • Animal Families • Bug Surprises • Animal Adventures • Around the Town • Under the Ocean
First Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Living Things & Habitats •Movement •Rocks & Earth's Materials •Sky & Weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship • Early Civilizations • European Exploration • Pilgrims • Thirteen Colonies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing understanding of addition, subtraction, and strategies • Developing understanding of whole number relationship and place value • Developing understanding of linear measurement • Reasoning and composing and decomposing geometric shapes 	Harcourt Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am Your Friend • Just for Fun • It's my Turn Now • I think I can! • Hello, Neighbor! • Going Places
Second Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Human Body •Mammals & Insects •Solids, Liquids, & Gases •Weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship • Early Civilizations • Colonization and American Revolution • Westward Expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building fluency with addition and subtraction • Extending base-ten notation • Using standard units of measure • Describing and analyzing shapes 	Harcourt Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being Me • Helping Hands • Our World • Imagine That! • Neighborhood News • Travel Time
Third Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Erosion & Weathering •Light & Sound •Plants •Rocks •Ecology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities • Early Civilizations • Exploration and Colonization • Civil War and Reconstruction • Emergence of Modern US-Immigration • Postwar US 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of multiplication and division and strategies • Understanding of fractions • Understanding of the rectangular arrays • Describing two-dimensional shapes 	Harcourt Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something Special! • What a Team • Friends to Grow With • Tell Me a Story • Good Neighbors • Celebrate our World
Fourth Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Electricity & Magnetism •Renewable & Nonrenewable •Structures & Animal Classification •Water & Weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arizona's Geography and People • Settlement and Change • Arizona Statehood • Arizona's Government and Economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing understanding multi-digit multiplication and division • Developing understanding of fraction equivalence • Understanding that geometric figures can be classified based on their properties 	Harcourt Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You Can do it! • Side by Side • Make Yourself at Home • Creative Minds • Community Ties • New Lands
Fifth Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Biomes •Earth & Space •Force & Motion - Simple Machines •Human Body •Matter & Energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration and Colonization • Revolutionary War • New Nation and Westward Expansion • Civil War 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing fluency with and of division of fractions in limited cases • Extending division to 2-digit divisors, into the place value system • Developing understanding of volume 	Harcourt Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look Inside • Team Work • A Changing Planet • Express Yourself • School Rules • American Adventure

For the past three years, Cerritos has focused professional development on data analysis and specific skill teaching strategies. Engaging in common planning times each week, grade level teams use current learning about formative and summative data to analyze the individual needs of each student. Team decisions are made to assemble small, specific skill teaching for the week. Thirty minutes of uninterrupted reading and math time in these small groups, *Instructional Focus Groups* (IFG), assure students display continuous growth. Maintaining a common language for learning is key across our grade levels. All teachers use the 95% Group Phonics program. Since its school wide implementation, our primary students' DIBELS scores have shown great improvement. In 2010-2011, Kindergarten ended the school year with 24 students identified as *intensive*. After utilizing the new phonics program in 2011-2012, only four kindergarten students were *intensive*. Of the 24 current first graders, all but 8, who now receive Tier 3 interventions, moved out of *intensive*. We continue our commitment to implement research based best practices.

C2. Select two curricular areas OR one curricular area and one unique program to discuss in depth.

Along with each content area, students at Cerritos have a special areas schedule that allows them to have extensive learning in areas outside of the immediate academic areas. The special area classes that students attend are library, P.E., art, and music.

We are very proud of the connections our special area teachers make to the classroom concepts, Common Core Standards and **leadership** principles. Providing a seamless correlation between the general education class and the arts defines our belief that all children possess gifts and talents. Given the many opportunities to find their strengths is an essential component of developing the whole child.

Students at Cerritos attend art as a 45 minute special, one time each week. Based on district and state visual arts standards, through a variety of teaching methods, areas of Create, Relate, and Evaluate are discussed and taught. The lessons are hands on and they relate to the grade level's core curriculum. In fourth grade, for example, Ms. Rogers instructs the class using ideas of geometry, color mixing, science reactions, history and geography to increase students' understanding through art. On a weekly basis, students use their art time to reflect and evaluate their own learning. Evidence of art lessons incorporating **leadership**, becoming a Lighthouse school, bullying, and the Seven Habits is displayed throughout the halls of our school. A recent lesson on lines and color used words students selected from their own mission statements to create beautiful murals.

Students also attend music as a 45 minute special. During music they learn about rhythm, keeping a beat, and how to read music. Cerritos has a large variety of instruments for students to practice and learn. Many unique opportunities are given to provide students choice and exposure to their personal musical potential. As students practice and try new skills through instruments, music and song, they apply their talents during school musicals and most importantly, they provide the music during our two school-wide **Leadership Days**.

C3. All students, including learners with unique needs, have the opportunity to learn challenging content and achieve at high levels.

Every student keeps track of their own academic and personal goals, including formative and summative statistics in their Data Passports. We are confident that all students go beyond the already rigorous curriculum provided by the district in these areas. Research shows that the use of goal-setting, students, along with some guidance from teachers and parents, charting their own academic journey and reflection on successes and areas of refinement lead to increased achievement. Teachers meet with students individually and with parents at student-led conferences are held to discuss and suggest different approaches to help students reach their goals. This individualized style of goal setting and reflection assures each student's education is based on their needs. This important structure leads to maximized student achievement, an anticipation of high expectations, positive outcomes, and student accountability.

Cerritos boasts several different committees and groups that manage student progress and development. There is a collaborative approach among all staff and community to guarantee our students are succeeding academically. One collaborative approach is a committee named the Kyrene Student Intervention Team (KSIT) that assists teachers and oversees student progress. This group of teachers meets to review any teacher's concerns regarding a student's progress in academics or behavior. Data collection begins after the committee makes decisions about implementing changes. This is considered an informal step in the process of accommodating students and providing immediate actions. After, the team meets again to decide if the process of attempting new strategies has made an impact on the students' area of need.

The Special Education Department cooperates with general education teachers to ensure progress is made with all students who have been identified to need extra support through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). They are responsible to assist the teachers with the accommodations provided in the IEP. Guidelines for academic structures and testing environment needs are delineated in the plan. Along with this team, Cerritos also has a gifted program that services a pull-out program for 4th and 5th graders who qualify in language arts and math. Mrs. Lamp, our gifted resource teacher, provides a diverse curriculum that is a grade level above for those fifteen students. For our kindergarten through 3rd graders who are identified as gifted learners, Mrs. Lamp works collaboratively with their classroom teachers to ensure that their curriculum is being monitored, challenged, and changed to meet their academic needs. We use a cluster model when placing gifted students in classes. This practice gives students who have similar learning style the opportunity to work with others who learn in the same manner.

Assuring all students receive a rigorous and challenging academic education is at the forefront of all we do. Teachers manage their own Teacher Data Passport that includes the academic records of the students in their classroom. Whole class assessments, individual data and grade level improvement plans are organized together for quick access during data analysis and planning. Passports also contain records of past assessments to be used as a source of comparison and growth. A team of teachers were trained in the process of beginning Professional Learning Communities. Since the training, each grade learned the steps to effective data analysis and now meet two times a month to discuss grade level and school data. Throughout the school year, teachers closely monitor and assess students to ensure they are prepared for the succeeding grade. Three grade levels have begun the process of developing their own formative assessments

that support their teaching. Grade level collaboration takes place to ensure that students and teachers are reaching their highest potential.

D. Active Teaching and Learning

D1. The school ensures that there is a systematic way for novice and experienced teachers to develop instructional expertise in the following areas: planning and preparation; instructional strategies and behaviors; reflection on teaching; and collegiality and professionalism.

Novice and experienced teachers are provided with specific instructional strategies and planning feedback from administrators. This year, the Kyrene District adopted the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model. It is a research-based teacher evaluation model which identifies the direct cause-and-effect relationship between teaching practices and student achievement. We use a system-wide common language of instruction. This model helps all teachers make the most informed decisions that yield the greatest benefits for their students. Strategies and tools from this form of ongoing assessment empower our teachers so they can focus together on improving student learning. There are four domains of the Evaluation Model that contain 60 elements and build on each other to support teacher growth, development, and performance. Of the domains, the most important is domain 1: Classroom Strategies and Behaviors. This domain contains not only the largest number of elements but those that have been shown to have the most direct effect on student performance. Together, these four domains help new and veteran teachers define a knowledge base for teaching and a framework for their own development of expertise.

D2. A purposeful decision-making process that is researched based governs all aspects of teaching and learning; there is a discernible link between instructional strategies and student achievement.

Cerritos utilizes a purposeful research-based decision-making process to govern all aspects of teaching and learning. Cerritos links instructional strategies to student achievement by using Robert Marzano's methods detailed in the book The Art and Science of Teaching.

Cerritos teachers develop curriculum units and lesson plans across grades and levels to engage students, reduce duplication, and assure consistency with state standards. Teachers meet on a weekly basis with their grade level team members to plan the instruction for the upcoming week/month/year while looking at the District/State/National proved curriculum and create/adapt lessons that will teach those standards and concepts, as well as develop pre-assessments and post-assessments that will measure student knowledge prior to and immediately after delivery of standards and concepts.

We also recognize that students are coming to Cerritos with vastly different experiences and education. Differentiation will continue to be our most important challenge. Through our journey to become a school that has a climate of collaboration and trust, we tap into the potential of every professional on our staff to provide various sources of intervention. On our Kyrene Student Intervention Team, (KSIT), teachers provide ideas and problem-solve immediate interventions together. Teams develop lessons that meet the needs of our struggling learners as well as our students that require enrichment.

Teachers at Cerritos use the Thinking Maps program to generate an atmosphere of critical thinking in the classroom. Thinking Maps give students a framework in which they can analyze

and compare texts, thereby challenging the critical understanding of all types of literature. Examples include flow maps to sequence narratives, tree maps to organize non-fiction information, and circle maps for brainstorming.

D3. Students have opportunities to apply learning to real world situations.

Students have significant student **leadership** and service opportunities at our **Leadership Academy**, which provide them the chance to integrate quality work-based and experiential learning experiences. In 2011-2012, five teachers began our Student Lighthouse Team. This student-driven group has decision making abilities that affect the school. Run as a Site Council, students have real-world roles such as note taker, grapher, lead, and fun czar. Important discussions are conducted as students develop school goals, community outreach projects and assembly coordination. Students have the opportunity to learn about government and administrative roles.

The 6th Habit, synergize, is evident as Cerritos students work collaboratively and solve real-life problems through teaching practices that provide hands-on, investigative activities. Utilizing a model of teaching math through *Investigations*, our district math program allows students to solve mathematical problems using student created tools and collaboration. First grade recently read a book about double-decker buses. This fun story motivated students to “help” their teachers figure out how all of the students in a class could fit on the bus. Together partners drew charts and patterns to discover the best way to sit on the bus. Student interest increased as students were given options about continuing research and discovering more out about double-decker buses, tours in other cities and England.

Cerritos also uses *Fosnot* units in math that require students to practice mathematical concepts that have realistic themes. Students make their own connections and correlations between what is taught in the classroom and how it can be used outside the classroom. Extracurricular activities, such as field trips, allow students to attend events and sites that they may have not otherwise experienced. Fourth grade’s social studies theme is Arizona. Learning about Arizona history, traditions, geography and government are the central focus for the year. Culminating the unit on government, the entire fourth grade went to the State Capitol. Seeing firsthand a government building and where our officials make decisions about our state made the learning real. Upon returning, one fourth grader said, “That’s the best trip I’ve ever been to. I got to see where the governor works!”

D4. Resources are available to teachers and students for instruction, gathering information and sharing the results of their efforts.

All teachers have access to several programs that allow data sharing between them. SchoolNet captures student information, displays assessment progress, and has the ability to create skill-based teacher created testing and lesson planning. Using SmartBoard, teachers can also create discussions on Blackboard to communicate with one another, journal with students and graph information. Cerritos students, teachers, and all staff have equitable access and opportunity to utilize technology at the school. Every classroom contains five to six student laptops, one teacher laptop, one to two desktop computers, a SMART Board, a ceiling mounted projector, and a document camera. When a classroom needs more laptop computers, the teachers have a system in place where students may borrow a laptop from a different classroom.

As a *Leader in Me* school, teachers and students have access to the *Leader in Me* website. Here, teachers share stories, ideas and blog with others around the world. Teachers are encouraged to use the site to share their ideas and discover new ones that follow **leadership** principles. For example, one resource is titled: Data Notebooks and Data Collection. Teachers are able to scroll through different styles of graphing and ways to track progress. 80% our teachers have shared at least one idea on the *Leader in Me* as a contributor. Students use their Data Passports to share individual goals, action steps and growth. Students are encouraged to use the *Leader in Me* site to view 7 Habits videos and play principle-based interactive games.

D5. Available technology supports curricular goals and teaching and learning.

Kyrene supplies a variety of resources for students and teachers for instruction and sharing results. All grade levels use the Cerritos Library and other media to match their learning style along with level of technological understanding. Students and teachers have the option to borrow from the school's high-tech tools including digital cameras, digital camcorders, assorted digital photography equipment, audio equipment, and audio books to enhance learning in the classroom. Teachers also have the ability to check out professional learning materials and lesson planning resources from the Media Center. All resources are aligned to Common Core standards. Having such a large selection of tools assures students learn 21st century skills. Our Media Center also includes two computer labs with a total of 60 desktop computers that classrooms use on a weekly basis to practice technology skills. The desktop computers allow students to opportunity to learn how to implement and become proficient in using programs such as *Frames*, *Share*, *Pixie*, *Kidspiration*, *Dreambox*, *Fluency Tutor* and *Thinking Maps*.

D6. The school tailors professional growth and support to address the differences in career experience and professional needs.

Cerritos tailors professional development and support to address the diverse needs of our students as well as teachers. We recognize that our novice teachers need more encouragement as they acclimate to the culture of the school as well as work to implement the new curriculum. Along with novice teachers, we have differences in the levels of understanding with veteran staff. We embrace these differences and plan professional development with their diverse needs in mind.

We have had several Train-the-trainer models for our development. Veteran teachers attend classes and return as the “expert” and teach our staff. In the past three years, this model has been used for Thinking Maps, Professional Learning Communities, 95% Group, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teachers, Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) math practices, data passports and goal-setting with children. We have seen great success as teachers mentor one another and offer suggestions and assistance. This also assures that we have an available specialist on campus. Beginning teachers and newly hired teachers are provided with an open door and warm welcome.

Cerritos provides differentiated opportunities for teachers to choose their own needs for professional development. Specific funds are set aside in our school budget and our PTO to assure prospects of choice are not limited. Some of the areas teachers have selected are Love and

Logic, Common Core and Response to Intervention. Strategies are shared with other staff members who would like information during staff meetings and/or during a voluntary idea exchange set up by teachers. Each week, teachers gather with their grade level teams to plan lessons, assemble resources, and exchange ideas about upcoming concepts to be taught in the classroom.

Cerritos assures significant on-site and off-site training for all staff, including teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, and other support staff, in curriculum, instruction, and content areas by providing guest teachers to fill in for teachers who attend workshops at the District Office. Also, any Cerritos teachers who would like to observe other Cerritos teachers may either observe during their planning time or ask administration for classroom coverage during a convenient time.

Cerritos embarked on a journey to utilize the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model to enhance the specialized learning of staff. The groups meet monthly during staff development time to share what they have discovered during reading/research time. Teachers are further motivated to learn more about what they are passionate about and bring that knowledge to our staff and classrooms.

E. Student Focus and Support

E1. The academic and nonacademic and cultural needs of the student population are addressed through a network of cohesive and integrated programs and services, which demonstrates a learning climate that is stimulating and nurturing to all students.

Ahwatukee is a suburban village within Phoenix, Arizona with a population of 77,061 and an average median household income of \$87,575. Cerritos has a current enrollment of 586 students with 57 on the free/reduced lunch program. The racial/ethnic breakdown of the student body is 72.7% white, 14.51% Hispanic/Latino, 5.12% black, 5.12% Asian, native Hawaiian or other pacific islander, 2.04% other and 0.51% American Indian or Alaskan Native.

Student, staff, and community satisfaction are paramount in the processes and culture of Cerritos. Everyone feels as if they are a part of a connected, caring community. Cerritos makes it part of the mission to include all students in not only academic, but social growth as well.

Cerritos is structured to accommodate this with many teacher initiatives as well as student club offerings.

Diversity within our clubs is evident. All students are able to “apply” and “interview” to be a member of any club. Students who have the desire and perseverance to tryout are almost always accepted. We encourage students with special needs as well as students who have behavior challenges to “find their voice” as Dr. Stephen Covey calls the 8th Habit. Students write goals and action steps that they need to follow in order to stay in a club. We have observed students managing their own behaviors. For example, one fourth grade boy has been identified as an Emotional Disability student, had great difficulty maintaining appropriate ways to engage with other students and in class. His teacher encouraged him to apply for our P.A.L.S. (Playground/parking Assisting and Leading Safety) club. His enthusiasm and success as a P.A.L.S. member has not only made a difference in his classroom behavior, he was recently “promoted” to the P.A.L.S. Lead. He now teaches new club members what their responsibilities

are. After our last break, he was eagerly helping move cars along during parent pickup and expressed his enthusiasm for his membership by saying, “Oh, my gosh. I am so glad the break is over because I really missed this job.”

One of our most successful clubs is the Broadcasting Club. These students meet with one of three teacher **leaders** each day to script and record announcements for the school. Within the goal of prompting **leadership** in each student, the Broadcasting Club give students autonomy to create and produce a very “news-like” program while also communicating the events and activities to the student body each morning. Students are assigned rotating roles including camera crew, director, and anchor. In the past, the students have taken a field trip to Fox News to see how a real newsroom operates. They also visit the broadcasting room at our adjoining middle school which also helps to prepare them for a successful transition to middle school.

Running Club is a lunchtime program that promotes fitness. Teachers and parents volunteer their time at lunch to run laps and help students record their progress on our field. Students earn running “feet” that they collect and wear on a necklace to show their progress. The program is at no cost to students and anyone can join. Cerritos has also partnered with Kyrene Community Education to provide various after-school activities for students to participate in as well. For example, students may choose art and foreign language classes, and fitness/sports practices on our outside field, chess and tumbling

E2. The school addresses students’ physical, social and emotional needs, and intervenes when students’ personal needs are preventing academic success.

A major aspect of Cerritos is to promote **leadership** and strength in all of the students. In order to encourage student **leadership** and ownership, Cerritos has developed many programs to include all students while promoting school-wide wellbeing. Cerritos partners with our adjoining middle-school, Altadena, in a Peer Mentoring Program. Eighth grade students serve as peer mentors for some of our at-risk students. The middle school students use their study hall time to help with goal-setting and positive behavior reinforcement to promote student success and self-esteem. They also assist students with classroom assignments, projects, and promote positive interactions on the playground and in our Cafe.

Cerritos is also proud of our Extended Resource Developmentally Delayed (DD) Classroom. The DD students are integrated into general education classroom activities including community circle in the morning, special areas, and special projects including Art Masterpiece and Junior Achievement. Our DD students work with the general education students to develop positive peer relationships and cultivate social and life skills with their same-age peers.

The Cerritos Buddy Club is a partnership between the general education students and developmentally delayed students. To encourage inclusion and acceptance, students in fourth and fifth grade sign up to be a part of this club. They assist and model appropriate behaviors with a “buddy” from our special education program. Due to the popularity of this club, we needed to set a limit for the number of students who can participate. Students spend time in one another’s classroom and form relationships with one another that carry beyond the walls of Cerritos. We know we have achieved a major mile marker when our students who experience emotional, academic and/or behavioral struggles are invited for a play date. We believe that the philosophies we embrace and model are developing a generation of acceptance and understanding.

F. Parent and Community Involvement

F1. Families, partnerships and the community play an important role in supporting learning.

The faculty and staff at Cerritos pride themselves on successful collaboration efforts among the staff, parents, and our close-knit community. The devoted interworking relationships of our school enhance our students' learning, growth, and development. Cerritos has a long-standing history of parent and community support. We all believe that to provide the best and most beneficial education to children, it is paramount that we work together as a staff and community. Our relationships with parents and the community help us to accomplish our mission, **“Leaders of Today Inspiring Leaders of Tomorrow”**.

The PTO promotes all of the parent and community involvement at the school by recruiting parents and volunteers for school-wide events and helping teachers and students in and out of the classrooms. The PTO sends a monthly newsletter, the Beep Beep, to the community via our Cerritos Listserv to ensure that all parents are aware of volunteer opportunities and school events. This year, the PTO designated a “Teacher Work Day.” They help reduce the workload of teachers by running copies, laminating, and assisting in any other form of classroom preparation. The PTO leads the school in fundraising and has provided funding for additions such as shade structures for outdoor recess and physical education classes, a mural in honor of a retiring art teacher, and many other amenities to make our school a better place for our children to learn and grow. The Cerritos PTO works hand-in-hand with the Mrs. DiCosmo and Mrs. Collins to plan events and delineate expenditures that are beneficial to the school culture. Staff members and teachers regularly attend after-school events and volunteer their time to be an active member of the school community in addition to their regular classroom hours.

*“I am so fortunate to be able to be in the school on a regular basis, be it helping in the classroom or setting up for a PTO event. I am still amazed of the dedication that the administration, teachers and support staff have in ensuring that each student reaches their individual potential. Be it writing individual goals, Art Masterpiece, Junior Achievement or daily journal writing our school is focused on the students being well rounded **leaders** today, tomorrow and years to come!”*
–Marcy Theisler, PTO President

In 2010, Mrs. DiCosmo and Mr. Flatley, a current father at Cerritos, shared a vision that embraced dads becoming more involved in the school environment. Together they created the Dad's Club. Currently, our Dad's Club has over 40 members. Dad's Club works with the PTO, Miss Cook and Miss Makela our two lead teachers, and Mrs. DiCosmo to assist in funding and planning school events. They participate in community service projects, host family movie nights, and plan events for dads at the school. Many of the Dads' Club and PTO events are free of cost and provide food and drink to the 200 people who attend.

“I felt that a Cerritos Dads' Club could do a lot to enhance the positive aspects of family involvement at an already terrific school. I feel having dads more involved with the school, community, and children leads to a better educational experience on the whole. The Cerritos Dads' Club mission is to foster a more dynamic

educational experience in the Cerritos community. This will be accomplished by facilitating dad-driven, child-centered activities focusing on sharing experiences between all dads, their children and each other.” –Brian Flatley, Dads’ Club President

Our Site Council is responsible for designating tax credit monies to fund extracurricular activities at the school, including field trips, educational assemblies, and school safety initiatives. The Site Council is made up of two administrators, three teachers, three parents, a support staff associate, and a community member. Together this group uses the perspectives of all stakeholders to make the best decisions for tax credit funding at Cerritos.

One goal Cerritos is to ensure that all families feel welcomed and are given information in a timely and efficient manner. There are various modes of communication in place to inform our parent population about happenings at the school and inside our classrooms. Teachers send out weekly newsletters to communicate information on school happenings, weekly learning goals, and friendly reminders. Each teacher also has this/her own classroom website that parents can visit to find assignments, due dates, and educational links for their children. ParentVUE is an online platform that allows parent access to their child’s grades and progress throughout the year. A principal’s newsletter, The Roadrunner, is sent out once a monthly by Mrs. DiCosmo to update parents on school-wide news and curriculum information. The school marquee and website are also updated regularly to provide current and up-to-date information to our parents and community.

In order to educate parents on the vision and mission at Cerritos and involve them in the culture, Cerritos holds **Family Leadership Nights** throughout the year. During these parent workshops, teachers plan and deliver lessons and activities for parents to use at home with their children. The activities center on the **leadership** vision and incorporate the Seven Habits. The workshops teach parents how to use the language of the Seven Habits at home to create consistent verbiage for all students. All of the parent nights are planned and implemented by Cerritos teachers. Family Mission Statement Night was organized and executed by a group of teachers to have families involved in creating a family mission statement. PTO provided pizza and drinks for the families so they could focus on the task at hand.

Parent volunteers fill the hallways of Cerritos on a daily basis. Parents offer assistance in the classrooms by assisting with small learning groups, reading to the class, speaking to the students about their area of expertise or working on projects with the kids that enhance learning in the classroom. Art Masterpiece involves parents and community members who teach a monthly lesson about a different artist and plan an art project to complete with the students. Junior Achievement also utilizes parent and community volunteers that come into classrooms and teach the students about business and their community.

Two days each year, one in the Fall and one in the Spring, the students and staff at Cerritos host **Leadership Days**. On **Leadership Day**, students’ talents and skills are showcased as they present skits, speeches, and the various clubs at Cerritos to community members, educators, administrators, local politicians, and our community at large. Students display their talents as **leaders** in our school and community. They present information on our school routines and how

the practices of the 7 Habits assist them in their lives. Teachers supervise groups of students while assisting them in preparing for their presentation or **leadership** role. The main hallway hosts international flags, representing the countries that our students were born in, to exemplify the diversity we embrace. At this time, we are proud to display thirteen flags to showcase the various countries of origin.

At the beginning of each school year, every teacher makes a “Welcome to Cerritos” phone call home to each and every family in their classroom. Assuring that that all families, community members, and students feel safe and welcome within the school walls is the motivation for this communication. This in turn creates an open line of communication between teachers and parents while establishing a positive parent-teacher relationship.

On average, Cerritos has a 97.5% student attendance rate. Since 2009, the teacher turnover rate has dropped from 12.2% to only 6.98% in 2012. Much of the teacher turnover in the last three years was due to the RIF (Reduction in Force) process that needed to be put in place in the Kyrene School District.

F2. Educational resources in the school and the community are used to extend learning opportunities for students, teachers, and families.

Cerritos also offers many enrichment programs for students to hone their talents, some of which include: Running Club, Broadcasting Club, Shutterbugs Club, and Newspaper Club. Cerritos also hosts district sponsored enrichment classes after school. Options are: Chess, Golf, Fitness, Spanish, Art, and Keyboarding. Over 200 students participate in our enrichment clubs at Cerritos. Odyssey of the Mind is an after-school program for students interested in expanding their creativity and thinking. Facilitated by one teacher and one parent volunteer, Odyssey of the Mind extends learning beyond the classroom and into real-world problem solving experiences. Projects range from building mechanical devices to interpreting literary works. Cerritos also offers the Girls on the Run program that promotes self-esteem and physical fitness in adolescent girls. The focus is on young ladies who may struggle with fitting in or may need healthy options support. The program began with six girls and has recently blossomed into thirteen. Community members volunteer two days a week after school to work toward setting goals and establishing positive relationships among one another. Our own Health Assistant, Mrs. Collette, organized and volunteered her own time for the girls. The club is open to girls in third through fifth grade. The finale of the club is for all girls to participate in a 5K race at the end of the spring semester. Girls are matched one to one with an adult running buddy that day.

Students are provided opportunities through classroom instruction and through school-wide activities and/or out-of-school initiatives. One example is the Junior Achievement Program. Junior Achievement is a non-profit organization designed to teach students real-life skills to be successful in today’s businesses and the economy. All classrooms throughout the school take part in this program, learning about how the academic skills students gain in the classroom apply to the business world. In fifth grade, the program culminates in a trip to *BizTown*. Students are given a chance to try their hand in running a business or a local government for a day. BizTown encourages students to learn about the free enterprise system by participating in a simulated town. Student experiences vary from working in a bank, a television station, or a retail store, to managing personal finance, writing checks and accounting. Students realize the relationship

between what they learn in school and their successful participation the economy. The Junior Achievement organization has worked with Cerritos for over 10 years running.

F3. The school welcomes and respects families from all walks of life, solicits and values their input, and finds multiple ways to invite and involve them in school initiatives to build a shared commitment to student success.

Not only does Cerritos welcome the local community, but international neighbors as well. Nuevos Horizontes School in Mexico visits Cerritos each year and spends a day with students. Students from Mexico appreciate the display of international flags lining the main hallway honoring the birthplaces of all students at Cerritos. They feel welcomed and honored. This annual visit promotes diversity and educates both our students and the students from Nuevos Horizontes on the importance of cultural acceptance.

The students at Cerritos participate in many community service projects throughout the year that give back to the local community. The Garden Club has planted and sustained a vegetable garden in the courtyard and each harvest is donated to families in need at the Kyrene Family Resource Center. The Student Council initiates a food drive each year around the holiday season and has funded many of the projects to beautify the school including the quotations on the walls and the international flags in the hallway. Kid's Care is a lunchtime program for all students who may choose to give their lunch recess to use their creative energy for the good of our community. Each month, the Kid's Care Club embraces a theme and group to focus on to support. In the winter, students work to make fleece blankets. These blankets are donated to the Kyrene Family Resource Center and the Cardon Children's Hospital. In January and February, students will be writing letters to soldiers and making valentines for a nursing home. Students sign up with their parents to participate in the delivery of the goods. This gesture has been life changing for many of our students. Encouraged by a recent community delivery, one student developed a plan to have her own fundraiser for a dog shelter. She made posters for the halls and sold donuts one morning before school. Her efforts collected over \$400 kind of student **leadership** embody the belief that children can make a difference in the world.

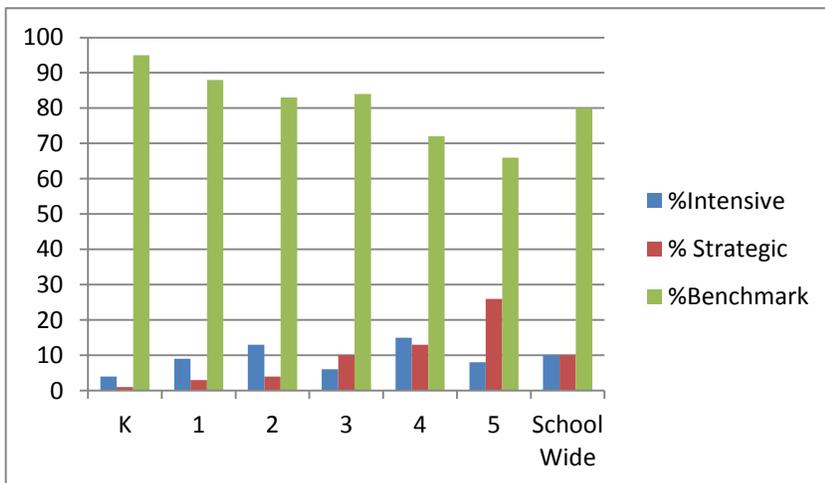
G. Indicators of Success

G1. A coherent school-wide assessment program is tied to the school's mission, which shows through multiple measures that high levels of learning are achieved, or that there is significant student progress over time.

The school's overall approach to assessment is systematic and ongoing. The district calendar designates a specific schedule to ensure that all students across the district are assessed in formative and summative assessments. Cerritos goes beyond the required assessments by also implementing assessments that will further increase student achievement according to specific needs. Through the new Professional Learning Communities (PLC's), each grade level is responsible for designing their own formative and summative tests that align with the district curriculum maps. Teachers are given designated planning times to meet with their teams and review progress in order to create action steps to improve their instruction and therefore increase student achievement.

The district provides significant assessment resources. There are district math, writing, and reading assessments throughout the year to provide current assessment for continuous

monitoring of student progress. Those assessments are directly aligned with the district curriculum and state standards. Cerritos uses this testing data to plan instruction and formulate lessons that are most beneficial to student achievement when meeting as a staff, in grade-level planning meetings, and in the PLC groups. Testing data is also used to identify teachers' areas of strengths and areas of improvement. This allows the teachers to work in a collaborative environment where students can receive the best instruction possible through the use of skill-based grouping. Students are placed in groups during the Instructional Focus Group (IFG) times with teachers whose strengths are most beneficial to those individualized groups. Teachers also share effective strategies with other teachers and therefore improve instructional practices on the whole. This collaboration between teachers at Cerritos creates an individualized and highly effective educational environment for all students. Instructional units are based on the district curriculum maps which align with the district and state assessments. This ensures that instruction is aligned between all facets of the curriculum- intended, taught, and assessed.



Cerritos uses many district-wide summative and formative assessments to monitor student growth and achievement throughout the year. In reading, DIBELS is used at all grade levels, providing benchmark assessments as well as weekly and bi-weekly progress monitoring for students who are intensive and strategic in the areas of reading. Along with the use of DIBELS, teachers are using phonological awareness

screeners and phonics screeners to diagnose specific student needs to further increase the students' reading skills. These screeners are given throughout the year and instruction is planned according to the areas of need for individual students. Formative assessments include the Reading and Math Benchmark assessments given three times per year for grade K -5. Summative assessments include the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) for grades 3 through 5, and Stanford 10 for grade 2. Fourth grade students are tested in the area of Science on the AIMS assessment, and fifth grade students are also assessed in the area of Writing. The district also has summative assessments that are given in grades 1 and 2 for reading and math.

Standardized Test Analysis Report (Test Performance Level by School Year)							
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Falls Far Below	8	9	8	10	15	18	12
Approaches	10	19	11	17	30	28	30
Meets	162	140	135	145	141	132	110
Exceeds	189	212	189	197	155	149	121

G2. All subgroups of students achieve at high levels or have improved significantly in achievement.

All students grades 3 and up are required to take the AIMS or AIMS-Alternative (AIMS-A), however AIMS-A is reserved only for the small population of students who have a Mental Retardation component to their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The AIMS-A has the same categories as the AIMS test- Reading and Math. The Science assessment for AIMS-A is given at the fourth grade level as well. The results from the AIMS-A look the same as the AIMS, where students can fall into the categories of “Exceeds”, “Meets”, “Approaching”, or “Falls Far Below”. Often the AIMS-A data is reviewed and averaged in with the teacher-collected data to gain a true picture of what the student is capable of and what their goals should be. For students who are K-2 and are AIMS-A classified, they would not complete any assessment until they reach 3rd grade.

Some students are excluded from the AIMS or Stanford 10 tests at Cerritos due to their categorization of Developmentally Delayed (DD). In grade 2, we have a mental retardation component as part of their IEP. At this current time, there are only two students who fit into this category. Every other student takes a form of the AIMS (grades 3-5) or Stanford 10 (grade 2) assessments. These particular students are assessed using teacher observation, data collection, and teacher created work based on their individual needs.

As we analyzed our data, we found patterns of slow gains within reading for our special education students, particularly in our second and third grades. We selected classroom and resource teachers to attend a rigorous professional development that focused on improving reading scores within the primary grades. This training assisted teachers to implement strategies that focus on the learning styles and needs of our students. Since implementation, we have seen growth in our special education students.

G3. A balanced assessment system and approach includes high quality formative, benchmark and summative assessments used to improve teaching and learning.

The teachers use benchmark and summative data in assessing their students and monitoring individual progress. Each teacher has access to this data through technology and student data collected in their Data Passport. This data is discussed monthly by grade levels, and across grade levels to provide continuous monitoring of student progress, so that adjustments can be made in instruction as needed. As **A Leadership Academy**, the students also monitor their own progress through individual student goal setting and Data Passports. This raises the level of student accountability and makes students responsible for monitoring their own learning and success. Students track personal as well as academic goals in their Data Passports and reflect on their continued progress. They reference assessment scores when setting and tracking their own goals. Each classroom teacher assists students in maintaining their passport, setting goals, and reflecting on their individual progress.

G4. Data Collection

*as reported to the Arizona Department of Education

Criteria	<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2010-2011</u>	<u>2009-2010</u>	<u>2008-2009</u>	<u>2007-2008</u>
Daily Teacher Attendance	97.67%	96.90%	96.20%	96.71%	96.61%
Teacher Turnover Rate	6.98%	2.27%	12.20%	10.20%	6.00%
Average Daily Student Attendance Rate	97.00%	97.00%	97.00%	98.00%	97.00%
Student Promotion Rate	99.40%	100.00%	100.00%	99.70%	99.70%

At Cerritos the average daily student attendance over the last five years is 97.2%. Students enjoy coming to school each day and being a part of the Cerritos culture. The daily teacher attendance rates have stayed at an average of 96.8% since the 2007-2008 school year. The teacher turnover rate peaked in the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years due mostly to the Reduction in Force (RIF) process that was put into place. Due to a cut in funding, many teachers were laid off and others were displaced to other schools in the Kyrene district. Since 2010, the average teacher turnover rate has decreased to about 4.6%. Students' promotion rates have also remained at 99% or above over the last five school years. Cerritos strives to create a positive climate and provide positive engagement with staff, students and the community.

Quality and equity of instruction are a major focus at Cerritos. Teachers analyze data from assessments, student work, and observation to group students and create a learning environment that is best for each individual child at our school. Teachers use data to differentiate instruction within the classroom and divide students into groups that tailor lessons around the individual needs of each student. Whether it's utilizing manipulatives in math, or structured grouping during reading instruction, teachers focus on catering to the individual needs of each student in their classroom. At team meetings, teachers collaborate and use their areas of strength to brainstorm ideas to increase effective instruction and therefore students' achievement in the classroom.

H. Challenges

Over the past five years, Cerritos has faced challenges that have, at times, been discouraging; however, the journey has strengthened our staff and community bonds. We encountered challenges related to the culture of our learning environment. The response to these challenges included efforts such as reducing bullying, managing classroom and school-wide discipline, and developing methods to engage our students, staff, and community. Other challenges included building positive relationships, shared **leadership**, and establishing standards for how people are to interact personally and toward others.

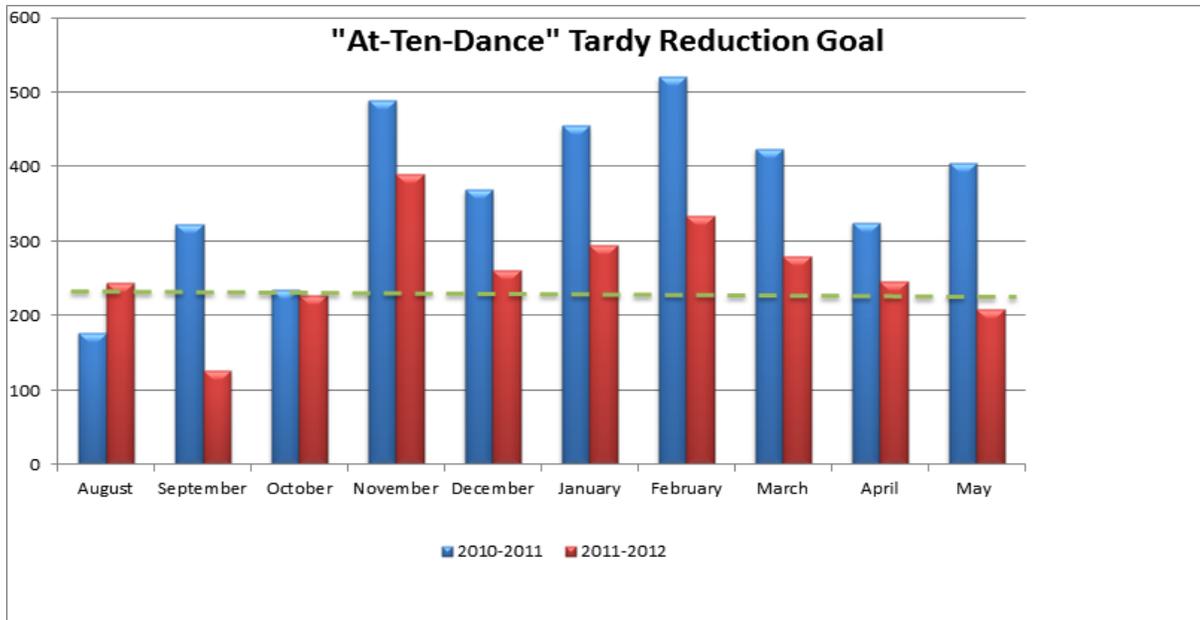
Our first step in the journey was to change the culture of the interactions from staff member to staff member. We were known as a school in which privatized teaching had become common practice. Attendance for staff was at an all-time low and job satisfaction was negligible. The atmosphere was melancholy. In 2009, the entire staff received The Seven Habits of Highly

Effective People professional development training. Through the training, teachers and staff were able to acknowledge their role in choosing how to engage with one another and the community. The personal changes began to affect attitudes and values of which we held in high esteem. From the onset our focus was on how the habits could help our students become **leaders** and learners, however, we are happy to report that the Seven Habits have also opened the door to help teachers to connect better with students, the community and one another.

We have experienced a major growth in job satisfaction based on the Kyrene Gallup Survey from 2011. We had many different categories of growth according to our Gallup Survey, but the two main results that were reflected as progress to our environment change were Recognition (Q4), employees' feelings about quality work (Q9). These two categories showed a significant amount of development. Employees at Cerritos in 2010 went from a 3.44 average to a 3.96 in Q4, and in Q9 went from a 4.26 to a 4.32. These two areas showed growth of satisfaction among our employees. Although the numbers may seem insignificant, according to the Gallup poll, a tenth of a percentile gain is a vast improvement. Overall, on the Gallup Survey our staff increased from a 3.92 average in 2009-2010 to a 4.10 average in 2011-2012. We were also proud to show a decrease in teacher absences.

The second step in our journey focused on the success of every student. We have always been fortunate to be in a community that supports the academic achievement of children. However, in the past, many parents had the ability to work at home to assure their children practice schoolwork and are prepared for school. Over the past five years, the gap of student achievement began to increase. The economic impact during the recession greatly affected the dynamics of families. We had always relied on the strong partnership of parents but this began to change. Our data indicated a slight decrease in end of year testing scores. Fourth and fifth grade AIMS scores have, on averaged, been in the 90th percentile. In the past three years, the scores have averaged 83% in math and reading. Staff recognizes that students have abilities and learning styles that require differentiated instructional methods. The principles of the 7 Habits were implemented, along with the belief that all children have the potential to be **leaders**, and students began to flourish in brand new ways. Cerritos staff has utilized a variety of measures to understand students academically. However, using a new lens to view each child's potential meant that a new "greatness" began to emerge. Students take personal ownership in their learning. They understand the value of completing homework and being responsible. Through innovative professional development, teams collaborating, and students' believing in their abilities, Cerritos is back on the trail of academic success.

Cerritos also experienced a high tardy rate in the 2011-2012 school year. Students, teachers and administrators focused on developing an idea to decrease the number of tardy students each month. Together, the staff implemented the "AT-TEN-DANCE." We set a goal for less than 15 tardies each day. If we met that goal, we would surprise students at 10:00 with an impromptu song over the loud speaker. Students and staff would get out of their seats and "boogie" for 30-second dance to celebrate the accomplishment of the tardy goal. This motivated students to be more proactive in getting to school on time in the morning. Since implementing the AT-TEN-DANCE, the overall number of tardy students has significantly decreased.



One of the major educational challenges Cerritos will be facing is the decreasing student population. Our community has witnessed many families moving for economic purposes. However, as a *Leader in Me* Lighthouse School, we know that the potential to attract families from around the world is promoted through the principles we hold and demonstrates the values we embrace for educating every student. This recognition is promoted through the Franklin Covey Corporation. The **leadership** model provides new families a choice when researching innovative schools.

Due to the continuing reduction, staff has not been able to remain stable. This effects team collaboration and trust when we teachers often change to grades that are new to them. Maintaining professional growth is key to ensure students receive rigorous instruction and the most current methods. Teachers are encouraged to seek out additional training that best suits their needs to bring back their new learning and share it with the staff.

Together we have been able to manage many challenges and complications. We have been trailblazers through passages that had the potential to unravel our spirits. We have experienced both encouraging achievements and disappointing letdowns over the past five years. Yet, through it all, Cerritos has maintained strength of character and a relentless belief that every child is a **leader**. These principles have guided us through this journey and continue to motivate our actions each day. We are proud of the school we have built. Painted in our office, as a daily reminder of the roads we have traveled is the quote by Lao Tzu, *“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”*