

2011-2012 A+ SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE APPLICATION COVER SHEET

Official School Name: Kyrene de la Esperanza

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? Yes No If Yes, Year(s) Awarded in 1999

Name of **Principal**: Dr. Cheryl Greene

School Mailing Address 14841 S. 41st Place

City: Phoenix Zip: 85044

Primary Phone (480) 783-1700 Principal Phone or ext. (480) 783-1781

Principal Email address cgreen@kyrene.org

Name of Superintendent: Dr. David Schauer

District Mailing Address 8700 S. Kyrene Rd.

City: Tempe Zip: 85284

Primary Phone (480) 783-4000 Superintendent Phone (480) 783-4161

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): _____

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

From central Phoenix: I-10 East; Exit on Ray Rd. and turn right (west); travel approximately 3 miles on Ray and turn left on Ranch Circle South. Take Ranch Circle South approximately 1 mile to 41st Place and turn left. School is on the corner of Ranch Circle South and 41st Place. Front Office faces 41st Place and our school's visitor parking lot.

Calendar information:

Best days of week, and times, to observe: Mon, Tues., Thurs., Friday. (Wednesday are early release days)

Time school buses begin arriving in the morning: 7:15 a.m. Time classes begin: 7:45

Time classes dismiss: 2:35pm (Wed. 12:35) Spring Break dates: March 12 – 16, 2012

Standardized testing dates: April 16 – 24, 2012

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 1 – April 13, 2012**; indicate grade level(s) affected:

Wednesdays are early release days; Feb. 9 2nd Grade Field Trip; Feb.20: President’s Day – School Closed

March 5 – 9: Parent Teacher Conferences after school and in the evening but day time site visit okay; March 12 –

16: Spring Break

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.

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 Michelle Hirsch

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 pages if needed.

Name (list primary author(s) first)	Position/Title
<u>Cheryl Greene</u>	<u>Principal</u>
<u>Nikki Rignall</u>	<u>Kindergarten Teacher</u>
<u>Sarah Friesth</u>	<u>1st Grade Teacher</u>
<u>Martha Takacs</u>	<u>3rd Grade Teacher</u>
<u>Sylvia Rios</u>	<u>4th Grade Teacher</u>
<u>Patty McDonald</u>	<u>5th Grade Teacher</u>
<u>Janice Levenson</u>	<u>2nd Grade Teacher</u>
<u>Terri Terry</u>	<u>4th Grade Teacher</u>
<u>Marcia Middleton</u>	<u>2/3 Multiage Teacher</u>
<u>Debbie Ward</u>	<u>Literacy Coach</u>
<u>Carol Muggeridge</u>	<u>Math Coach</u>
<u>Tika DeGraffenreid</u>	<u>Assistant Principal</u>
<u>Suzie Mason</u>	<u>Resource Teacher</u>
<u>Wendy Cornacchio</u>	<u>Resource Teacher</u>
<u>Kristin Vega</u>	<u>6th Grade Teacher, Centennial MS</u>
<u>Jane Slovenske</u>	<u>Retired Esperanza Teacher</u>

Name (list primary author(s) first)

Position/Title

Danielle Lowe

Site Council, Parent

Josh De La Ossa

Site Council, Parent

Wendell King

Site Council, Parent

Debbie Lunn

Site Council, Parent

Shannon Haskin

2nd Gr. Teacher, Site Council and Parent

PART I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**DISTRICT INFORMATION:**

1. Total number of Pre K-12 students enrolled in the district: 18,162
2. Number of schools in the district:
- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <u>19</u> Elementary | <u>6</u> Middle/Junior High Schools |
| <u>x</u> K-8 | <u>x</u> High schools |
- TOTAL SCHOOLS: 25

SCHOOL INFORMATION:

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
- X 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? 8 (see Eligibility Requirements)
- If less than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
5. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in the school applying for A+ status:
- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Pre-K <u>24(PS) 93(K)</u> | 5th <u>84</u> | 9th <u>X</u> |
| 1st <u>102</u> | 6th <u>X</u> | 10th <u>X</u> |
| 2nd <u>94</u> | 7th <u>X</u> | 11th <u>X</u> |
| 3rd <u>82</u> | 8th <u>X</u> | 12th <u>X</u> |
| 4th <u>100</u> | | |
- TOTAL: 581
6. Racial/ethnic composition of students in the school:
- 3.14 % American Indian or Alaska Native
- 4.71 % Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- 11.17 % Black or African American
- 19.90 % Hispanic or Latino
- 54.68 % White
- 2.44 % Other; specify: "two or more" (biracial or multiracial)
7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 18.40% (Calculate this rate by taking the total number of students who transferred to or from your school between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in school as of October 1, and multiplying by 100.)
8. Limited English proficient students in the school:
- Total number: 13 As a % of total student population: .70%
- a. Total Number of languages represented: 6
- b. Specify languages: Spanish, Hebrew, Bosnian, African, Polish, Navajo

9. Students who participate in free/reduced-priced meals:
 Total number: 168 As a % of total student population: .30
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 it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services:
 Total number: 47 As a % of total student population: 8.09%
11 Specific Learning Disability
10 DD/Health Impaired/Autistic
4 Other Severe (specify): 2 PSD -Preschool Severe Delay; 4 ED (Emotional Disability)
23 Severe Language Impairment (Speech Only)

Indicate if your school is the district site for any specific special education magnet program(s); if so, include student enrollment for program(s).

*Extended Resource for K-2 Emotionally disabled students

*Integrated Preschool for Typically Developing and Special Needs; total enrollment:27; with 13 Special Needs and 14 Typical

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

	<u>Number of Staff</u>	
	Full-time	Part-time
Administrators	<u>2</u>	<u> </u>
School Psychologist	<u> </u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>22</u>	<u> </u>
Specials: Therapists	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Resource teachers	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>
Other specialists (Art, Music, PE, Gifted Teachers, Math & Reading Coaches)	<u> </u>	<u>12</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Other Support Staff	<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>

TOTAL FTE: 46.149

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).

Our Integrative Preschool program is new to our school. This program has impacted our overall enrollment and the number of special education students. Our KinderKid classroom is also a District-housed program for Early Entrance Kindergarteners. This is the 3rd year of housing this program. K-2 Extended Resource program is also a District housed program. This program only slightly impacts our total enrollment as we've had this program at our school for a very long time and total students in the program has remained steady.

The current percent of students on Free and Reduced Lunch (30%) has increased significantly from just 5 years ago when it was at 20%. This increase reflects the current downturned economy and its impact on our students and families. We work collaboratively as a staff and community to best support our families in need, i.e. Snack Drives for students.

PART II and PART III: SUMMARY AND MISSION

Kyrene de la Esperanza, located in Phoenix (Ahwatukee), opened its doors in 1993 as a “neighborhood” school. Students arrived by bus, walked, or rode their bikes to school. Esperanza served as a “hub” for family events and social gatherings. Families, children, neighborhoods and the entire Esperanza school community grew up together. Like the old days of the west, “barn raising”—being there for one another, was the norm. A strong sense of community was established, built upon a solid foundation of a dedicated and caring staff.

Esperanza’s first principal established small “*Learning Communities*,” within a larger school community. Each Learning Community or “pod” housed students in grades 1 – 5. Eventually, pods were identified by a particular shark. Large, colorful shark murals were painted by Joan Bourque (Artist in Residence) then displayed outside each pod’s hallway. Students went to lunch and recess with their pod family, and were placed in the same pod year after year. Teachers and students within each pod interacted regularly, establishing strong bonds and traditions within and across grade levels. Vertical conversations occurred naturally as teachers discussed students’ academic, social, and emotional needs. Family ties were equally strong, as siblings were routinely placed within the same pod.

Today, eighteen years later, students still arrive by bus, walk, or ride their bikes to school. However, other factors have dramatically changed within this time span. Esperanza’s mobility rate of 18.40% is higher than average for Kyrene. Thirty percent of our students are on the Free and/or Reduced Lunch program, compared to 20% five years ago. Thirty-five percent of our students reside outside school and/or district boundaries. Some students participate in district housed programs, such as our Early Entrance “KinderKid” classroom, Integrated Preschool (“typically developing” and special needs’ students), or Extended Resource program for K-2 students with Emotional Disabilities. For other out-of-boundary families, Esperanza is simply the school of choice. One family makes the trek each and every day from Casa Grande!

In the past 5 – 7 years, vast changes in curricular standards, student outcomes, technology, and funding have also occurred at school, district, and national levels. In response, Esperanza embarked on a “*journey to excellence*,” implementing system-wide changes in our educational practices and procedures. We engage in professional development and trainings to meet diverse needs of our students and increased cognitive demand of our curriculum. Master schedule changes were made to maximize core instructional time and provide flexible groupings for differentiated instruction. Influenced by DuFour’s, “*Whatever it Takes*,” we embraced the concept of professional learning communities (PLCs) and created an infrastructure for uninterrupted team planning time. We participate in data chats to analyze data and inform our instruction, and to create flexible groupings based on students’ needs. We explore new ways of actively engaging our students in meaningful instruction by incorporating movement into our learning activities, such as *Brain Breaks* (Dave Sladkey), *Action Based Learning* (Jean Blaydes Madigan) and *Impact Teaching* (Richard Allen) strategies.

Our journey shifted our focus from teaching to a focus on learning. Our tiered model of intervention helps all students achieve academic and social success. Our Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) initiative, based on the acronym SHARK: Safe, Honest, and Respectful Kids, minimizes behavior disruptions and promotes positive, prosocial skills. Our pod “school within a school” model has evolved over the course of time; the physical layout of classrooms (1st – 5th) within each pod has remained. It serves as the vehicle for creating and sustaining positive learning communities within a larger school community. Students know and interact with students and teachers within and across grade levels. “*Esperanza is a wonderful*

place to be. It makes me feel like family here in Esperanza.” (4th Grader) Vertical conversations still occur regularly and teachers enjoy their friendships with pod and grade level teammates. Staff is very collegial, always there for one another in times of celebration as well as times of crisis. New members to our Esperanza family are genuinely welcomed. *“As a long-term substitute, I have worked at a lot of different schools. Some schools are very welcoming, some are not. The first thing I noticed when I came to Esperanza was the overwhelming sense of community among the staff. I felt welcomed from the first day and always knew I could go to anyone for help if I needed it. It is truly an amazing school made up of amazing people!”* (Chris Epolite, Substitute)

Our staff’s collaborative spirit, coupled with a “*whatever it takes*” approach to helping all students achieve at high levels, creates the conditions for our students’ success. *“Esperanza’s teachers do not care what level a child comes in at... they’re going to help every child succeed.”* (Josh De La Ossa, parent) This commitment and dedication to teaching and learning earned Esperanza an A+ award in 1999, an “*Excelling*” school label for the past seven years, and an “A” grade by Arizona Department of Education. In 2007, Esperanza was awarded a \$10,000 Heritage Grant from the AZ Game and Fish Department. Grant funds along with district and community contributions of time, money and donations helped to create the Discovery Garden—an outdoor “classroom” for learning. We have a highly effective and well educated staff, comprised of two National Board Certified teachers, two with doctorate degrees, 24 master’s degrees, 24 with 10 years or more teaching experience, and one named “*Best Teacher of Ahwatukee.*” Eight staff has presented at national conferences, one is published in Harry Wong’s *First Days of School*, four have worked with ADE on writing and revising AIMS, and one received recognition at Glenn Singleton’s, “*Summit for Courageous Conversations.*” One teacher was awarded Kyrene’s Ron Clark Inspiration Award (2009), and another teacher trained with Erin Gruwell. Five staff, including four teachers, has been at Esperanza since 1993!

Site Council members collaborated to revise our school’s mission and identify key concepts missing from our old mission and reviewed work from the 2006 Site Council. Our mission and core values were then reviewed by our staff for feedback. Our mission and core values now accurately reflect our current school culture, focus, and Kyrene’s vision, mission, and goals. ***Kyrene de la Esperanza’s mission is to provide a positive and engaging learning environment that promotes student achievement and inspires success in every student.***

Diversity: We embrace diversity and recognize the unique attributes and strengths that each and every student, parent, and staff member brings to our Esperanza community.

Respect: We demonstrate respect by modeling and fostering respect with every student, parent, and staff member.

Equity and Excellence: We are committed to achieving equity and academic excellence for all students.

Safe and Nurturing Environment: We are dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Collaboration: We work collaboratively with staff, students, parents, and community to maximize student learning.

Integrity: We exhibit integrity in our decisions, words, and actions.

Our school’s mission and core values serve as our anchor amidst the changing landscape of our school community and that of our greater society. They help us remain a “neighborhood” school, not in terms of where our families live, but in a nostalgic way. Esperanza is like the “old time schoolhouse” – serving as the community “hub” for teaching, learning, and family fun!

PART IV – SCHOOL CRITERIA

A. School Organization and Culture

A1. What are the underlying values, beliefs, and traditions that have built up over time as people work together, solve problems and confront challenges?

Esperanza’s values and beliefs center on the role of the “school community” in helping all children achieve success. **Celebrations of success and involvement of students, staff, and parents are reflected in many activities and traditions occurring** throughout the year:

Meet the Teacher Night (MTN) and PTO Welcoming Activities: Provides an opportunity to meet teachers and get oriented to their new classroom. Pizza and T-Shirts are sold, information is provided on volunteer opportunities, lunch program, and child-care. (Average attendance: 90%)

Curriculum Night: Teachers share behavioral and learning expectations based on school and curricular targets. (Attendance ranges: 80%-95% for grades K-3; 75% - 90% for grades 3-5)

Kindergarten Brown Bag Supper: Laughter fills the room as families eat and play games together. This marks the beginning of lasting friendships. (Attendance range: 70% - 90%)

Decade Dance: Sponsored by Student Council, this popular event brings in 300 attendees who can’t resist dressing up in their favorite decade, dance to oldies, and see teachers perform!

Walk to School and Post Walk Assembly: This event promotes health, safety, and energy conservation. Staff, student, parents and community members meet at Sun Ray Park and walk to school together, followed by an assembly on Esperanza’s backyard plaza!

Parent Teacher Conferences and PTO Book Fair (Fall and Spring): This collaborative partnership promotes literacy and parent involvement in education. (85% of families attend)

Fall Festival: This event averages over 300 people! Students enjoy playing on Inflatables, dunking their favorite teacher or parent in the Dunk Tank, or watching the principal kiss a pig!

Thanksgiving Turkey Trot and Lunch: A family favorite that promotes fitness! (85% attend)

Family Math Game Night and Milk and Cookies Night: These two evenings provide fun interactive learning activities that can also be enjoyed at home. (Attendance range: 200 – 250)

Esperanza’s Got Talent: Students perform their talent in front of 300 (average) adoring fans!

Friendship Day Lunches: Parents and students eat lunch together as they celebrate love and friendship. Esperanza’s Mallet Band provides musical entertainment. (75% of families attend)

Volunteer Breakfast: Esperanza staff host the Volunteer Breakfast to recognize and acknowledge our parent volunteers for all that they do on behalf of our school.

Evening and day performances/informances: These performances celebrate and recognize the musical talents of our students while highlighting students’ mastery of curricular targets.

Kindergarten’s Patriotic Assembly: Kindergarten social studies curriculum is showcased as students sing patriotic songs and recite facts about our country. (Average attendance: 90%)

Art Fair and Ice Cream Social: Students’ art work is displayed throughout our hallways and walls for all to see! Families enjoy ice cream as they mingle and socialize. (Attendance: 250+)

Movie Night: This end of year celebration typically draws 90% of our families. Staff, students, parents, and alumni camp out on our “backyard” lawn as they watch a movie on the big screen.

5th Grade Celebration: The 5th grade celebration provides a formal way to celebrate their accomplishments and transition to middle school. Songs are sung and essays on “Favorite Esperanza Memories are shared. A slide show of students’ baby picture with a caption of their dream job, is followed by their current picture. Students love guessing baby picture identities!

Proud Principal Awards recognize students exhibiting outstanding academic or positive character behaviors. Twice monthly, the Principal, Proud Principal Awardees and families, eat lunch together on the stage in celebration of students’ accomplishments.

Artifacts abound the walls of our school speaking to our celebration of learning, sense of community, and positive school culture. A beautiful planter made from students' hand painted tiles (created with Joan Bourque, City of Phoenix's Artist in Residence Program), welcomes families entering the building. **The tiles reflect Esperanza's student-centered "Shark" community and spirit.** Each "pod" (six classrooms that share an inner work space) boasts the mural of their pod's Shark name, also painted by Joan Bourque. A unique feature of our school is the physical arrangement of grades 1-5 within each pod. This pod system creates a "school within a school" environment that helps **create a positive learning community.** Pods participate in learning activities, i.e. reading buddies and quarterly celebrations of learning.

By "walking the walls," both inside and outside classrooms, evidence of outcome based student learning is seen on students' writing samples, projects, and classroom displays. Our interactive **SHARK (Safe, Honest, and Respectful Kids) walls** boast the names of students **displaying outstanding character.** The **SHARK acronym** was developed as part of our Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (**PBIS**) **initiative to teach, model, and reinforce positive behavior.** Also posted in every hallway and common area is Esperanza's SHARK matrix, displaying our school-wide behavior expectations. On Wednesdays, a 3rd grade teacher along with students, perform a character rap for morning announcements. These reinforce **SHARK expectations** and the importance of being a good *Shark* "**no matter what**" every day!

A strong sense of community is also evident in Esperanza's Discovery Garden, made possible through the **Arizona Game and Fish Department's Heritage Fund grant,** support from Kyrene School District, and donations of time and money from our community. The pathway of the Garden is lined with engraved bricks naming past and present Esperanza students, families and staff. The Discovery Garden also displays tile plaques to commemorate memories of former Esperanza parents. Within the Discovery Garden, the pond's running water and fresh air, students are able to reconnect to our planet and find many sources of inspiration.

All stakeholders work together on behalf of the school to create and sustain a positive school climate for students. **PTO** sponsors many fundraisers throughout the year, and other events with the **sole purpose of bringing our school community together.** **Students** play a key role in **contributing to our positive school climate.** **Student Council** plans and organizes many activities and events: spirit days, holiday drives for Kyrene Family Resource Center (KFRC), Fall Festival, Decade Dance.

Volunteers, guest teachers, service learning students and student teachers play a vital role in our students' learning and promoting a positive learning environment. Guest teachers are welcomed with a bottle of water, granola bar and note of appreciation. **Service Learning students and student teachers become members of our Esperanza family** in monthly team sponsored breakfasts, staff meetings, and professional development. Volunteers are recognized with appreciation at a Volunteer Breakfast.

A2: How does the school foster positive interactions, respect, cooperation, and collaboration between and among students and adults, and promote a healthy peer climate among students?

Students are encouraged to build sustainable, caring relationships with teachers, adults, and other students. Teachers build strong relationships with students in their classroom as well as students within their "pod family." Student Council Advisors work closely with Student Council members in planning and implementation of sponsored events. **Dr. Greene works closely** with our Student **Superintendent Advisory Council representative** to identify and resolve school concerns. Positive peer and mentoring relationships are promoted in peer mentoring programs, such as our **5th Grade Lunch Monitors** who volunteer to help

kindergarteners during lunch. **Reading Buddies** read to younger students, support them in classroom, and computer lab learning activities.

Esperanza helps students feel important as members of our school community.

Families first arriving at Esperanza, are given a guided tour by an administrator, then greeted by their classroom teacher and assigned a peer buddy on their first day of school. English Language Learners (ELLs) new to the school are placed in close proximity (pod or classroom) of a student or adult who speaks their native language. **Shark Chums**, a peer mentoring program, reinforces leadership skills and promotes positive social interactions, between special needs and typical students.

The celebration of diversity is a core value at Esperanza. Cultural awareness and sensitivity is weaved into everything we do. **SHARK PBIS expectations** encourage students to display positive behavior toward all students. They learn to handle frustration, anger, and issues with teasing and bullying through skills taught with **Second Step and Steps to Respect**.

All stakeholders contribute to a positive impact on school environment. Formal committees such as Site Council, Team Leaders, and our PBIS Committee provide the continued **input on all issues related to our school community.** (F1) Informally, all staff affects the school climate by **modeling and upholding our core values** in all interactions with students. All staff, including crossing guards, duty teachers, building manager, instructional assistants, and office personnel, interact positively with students and families to help them feel welcomed and safe. Administrators make Esperanza a positive place to learn. They are attentive to all students, by always considering individual circumstances.

A3. What is the school's plan for school-wide safety, discipline and drug prevention?

As mentioned previously, **Esperanza has implemented our SHARK PBIS initiative providing** positive behavior support for all students, in classrooms as well as in non-classroom settings (i.e. playground, hallways, and restrooms). When first developed, **SHARK PBIS initiative was shared with parents at a PTO General Meeting, and school newsletter, Shark Bytes.** Suggestions were given to parents on ways they could support our SHARK PBIS initiative, and how to implement a PBIS program at home. **School discipline data, school safety issues and concerns are discussed regularly during PBIS committee meetings.** We identify what is working and what needs refinement. In the first year of implementation (2010 – 2011), office referrals were slightly lower than the previous year. We believe the decrease in referrals is due to implementation of our PBIS SHARK matrix – clearly defining and teaching our expectations. For the 2011-2012 school year, office records indicate referrals have increased. (H1) PBIS members cite consistency in making referrals as the reason for this increase. The PBIS committee is identifying ways to build-in more school-wide support of positive behavior.

In addition to **identifying, modeling and teaching expectations for positive behavior,** we have a **step-by-step, school-wide response system for students not exhibiting positive behavior.** Similar to a tiered RtI (Response to Intervention) model for academic success, approximately 85-90% of our students respond positively to our PBIS initiative. When additional support is needed, the classroom teacher collaborates with administration, resource teachers, and Behavior Intervention Teacher (BIT) to design an individual positive behavior support plan..

In 2009, Esperanza implemented **Success Club**, an alternative recess program for students needing academic and behavior support. Referred by administrators, students work with a trained instructional assistant in Success Club. Using Top 20 Teen tools, and other strategies, students learn to make appropriate choices. Success Club students connect with a caring adult, reflect on their behavior, and **acquire strategies** for interpersonal and intrapersonal success.

Safety as a priority is evident in our clearly communicated procedures and our diligent supervision of students. **Emergency drills** are practiced regularly to help **students feel safe**. An Esperanza second grader wrote, “*Esperanza is a safe school; we have lockdowns, fire drills and evacuation drills.*” We have newly installed external and internal security cameras, which provide a **complete video surveillance system**. When students and/or families are in crisis, we work with **district staff, police, and community agencies, such as EMPACT**.

B. Student Focus and Support

B1. How is the school’s population best described?

Kyrene de la Esperanza is primarily a **neighborhood school** located in the Ahwatukee area of Phoenix. Average household income is \$110,949 for families living within school boundaries. **Overall student population is diverse in many ways**. Of 580 students, 27% live outside our boundaries, 8% live out-of-district boundaries; 8.45% are Special Education students; 2.76% are ELL, 30% are on Free and Reduced Lunch Program (FRL); and 1% homeless. Ethnic breakdown of our students is as follows: Asian: 5%; Black: 11%; Hispanic: 19%; Native American: 3%; Pacific Islander: .34%; White: 53%, and bi-racial/multiracial: 2%.

On average, we have 12-18 ELL students each year, and 8-10 Continuing English Fluent Speakers (CFEP). Students are from Japan, China, Korea, Vietnam, Israel, Russia, Central America, Mexico, Spain, Africa, India and Poland. Esperanza is the school of choice for many foreign families moving to the Phoenix area to work at Intel for 6–12 month assignments.

Upon registration, **45-day screeners are initiated** to identify students’ language, academic, health or behavior needs. ELLs are identified as are Gifted or Special Education students. Our Structured English Immersion (SEI) Coach administers the Arizona English Language Learners Assessment (AZELLA) to all students whose primary language is not English. Our Resource Team receives Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for new students identified as Special Education. Their IEP goals are incorporated into our program.

Identification of Gifted students occurs three times a year. Identified Gifted students are placed in appropriate grade level gifted cluster classrooms (1st – 3rd), or pull out Math and/or Language Arts classroom for grades 4 and 5. Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are developed for every identified gifted child in areas of Verbal, Non-Verbal and Quantitative.

B2. How is your school structured to meet the varied needs of your student population?

To fulfill our mission, Esperanza has curricular and non-curricular structures to **meet diverse needs** of our student population. A master schedule includes uninterrupted blocks for core reading and math instruction, and a 30-minute block for reading and math Instructional Focus Groups, or IFGs. During IFGs, differentiated instruction is delivered to meet specific needs of all students including intervention and extension learning activities, flexible groupings across the grade level, within a classroom, and “push-in” or pull out support.

Esperanza follows a **3-tiered RtI model, called KSIT (Kyrene Student Intervention Team)** to address **academic and behavioral needs of all students**. (A3) KSIT is a comprehensive response system designed to maximize student achievement and reduce behavioral problems. KSIT consists of grade level teachers, administrators, special education teachers, parents, Literacy and Math Coaches, examining data of “at risk”(behaviorally and/or academically) students to establish appropriate goals, resources, and interventions. If data suggests students are not making adequate progress toward their goals, KSIT may modify the interventions and/or schedule a **Review of Existing Data (RED)** to determine if additional testing and evaluation for Special Education is warranted. Students qualifying for Special Education, have **Individual Education Plans (IEPs)** for their specific needs.

Students' academic needs are assessed using a variety of diagnostic assessments, including **Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next)**, which is a set of procedures and measures for assessing acquisition of early literacy skills for kindergarten through fifth grade students. Kindergarteners - 3rd graders identified as **"intensive" on DIBELS** receive intervention services via our **K3 Literacy Program**. Under supervision of our literacy coach, highly trained instructional assistants facilitate small reading groups, using research-based systematic resources. Overall effectiveness of this program is measured by the percentage of students moving from intensive to strategic or core (benchmark). Fall DIBELS data indicates 13 (37%) of K3 students moved from Intensive to Strategic or Core; in August, 64% of all kindergarteners were Core versus 82% in December.

With Math Coach supervision, our Math Intervention Program (MIP) instructional assistant works with identified **students three times a week, reinforcing key skills taught in core math instruction**. Students have an opportunity to acquire and practice skills and receive immediate feedback and support. Teacher and District formative assessments are used throughout the year to monitor students' progress and develop flexible groups. Our resource teachers also provide specialized math and IFGs for identified resource and KSIT students.

Further academic support is provided through Success Club (A3) and Homework Club, which is run by a team of teachers, as an **after school support program for students in grades 3, 4 and 5**. Homework Club (HC) teachers provide re-teaching opportunities, answer questions or clarify assignments, and assist students with organization. **Feedback from parents and students** is very positive. A student reported, *"It helps me and my mom because she is always at work and comes home late,"* while a parent stated, *"I love homework club. I like that my boys got one-on-one attention with math homework. Great program!"*

Co-curricular and extended learning programs abound at Esperanza. Students in grades K-5 participate in **45 minutes per week for art, music, library, and PE**. Additional **learning opportunities** are provided via **author visits, assemblies, and special events (A1)** Formal **parent/teacher conferences** are held twice a year, but teachers meet with parents as needed throughout the year. After school **KSD Youth Enrichment classes**, such as: Tumble Town, Spanish FUNdamentals, Keyboarding, Mad Science, Tennis, Engineering with Legos, Reach Football, Young Rembrandts, and Chess Club provide additional learning opportunities. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts also meet at Esperanza. **Girls on the Run (GOTR)**, a national non-profit program for 3rd – 5th grade girls, averages 25 participants each semester, and teaches life skills through group processing, running games and workouts. *"I love GOTR because it makes me proud of myself. It shows me fun, healthy things and helps give me more confidence."*

On-site child care is provided through Kyrene Kids' Club and Phoenix Parks and Recreation Program (PAC). Esperanza administration collaborates with Kid's Club and PAC to enforce school rules, including our **SHARK PBIS** initiative. A consistent message of **expected behavior and importance of safety** while engaging in fun after school programs is **reinforced** to Esperanza students. Before/after school day care vans provide transportation to offsite programs such as Tutor Time, YMCA, Child Time, Teach and Fun, Sunrise, and KinderCare.

B3. How does the school address students' physical, social and emotional needs, and intervene when student personal needs are preventing academic success?

As previously described, our **SHARK PBIS initiative, KSIT process, and Success Club program** are specifically designed to **support academic, social and emotional needs** of students. Our **504 Coordinator works collaboratively** with parents, teachers, and the health assistant to develop plans with specific accommodations for students qualifying under **Section**

504, (Americans with Disabilities Act, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act), to access curriculum. Health/medical plans, with detailed flow charts, procedures and responsibilities are created for students with medical issues such as diabetes, asthma, and life threatening allergies.

For families **experiencing severe financial issues**, Esperanza staff work collaboratively with KFRC and **community agencies** to provide resources such as food, household necessities, clothing, temporary shelter, and medical/health services. Each year, **Student Council sponsors a drive (food and toiletries) for KFRC**. Each semester (or as needed), Esperanza conducts a **Snack Drive** to provide snacks for students. Each year, three or four **families qualify for services under the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act**. Services for homeless students include transportation to and from school and on-site tutoring after school.

Many **formal and informal processes are in place to help transfer and first-year students**. ELL students are placed with students who speak their native language, and/or are assisted by parents who converse in their language. (A2) Teachers assign a **“peer buddy”** to new students to help them transition. Shark Chums have lunch together monthly, and participate in a mini-class. This supports students who struggle socially and/or are new to the school. (A2)

Esperanza staff continually collaborates to **address and minimize effects of special or negative factors on school climate and achievement**. Two years ago, due to severe budget constraints, kindergarten classroom assistants were eliminated. Traditionally, kindergarten instructional assistants provided 20 hours a week of classroom and playground assistance. As a result, our **Kindergarten Volunteer Program was created**. All parents are recruited to **volunteer in kindergarten classrooms, cafeteria, and playground the first month of school**.

Other examples of staff coming together to address a shared concern include our **PBIS initiative and our Safety First program**. Both initiatives began as a “grass roots” effort on the part of teachers. **PBIS emerged in response to an increase in disruptive and disrespectful student behaviors** that interfered with learning. **Safety First** was in response to **a shared concern about safety of our student and parent community**. Staff volunteered for extra duty during arrival and dismissal. Increased visibility of duty staff, along with gentle, but firm reminders of our safety procedures and expectations, diminished parent and student infractions.

B4. How has your school demonstrated a commitment to addressing the accessibility and safety for students with disabilities?

Esperanza is **committed to addressing accessibility and safety for all students, especially students with disabilities**. We comply with all ADA requirements, including handicapped restrooms, wide hallways and doors, and accessible ramps. Our picnic tables provide easy wheelchair access. Comprehensive medical/health and 504 Plans are created to address students’ health/medical needs and cafeteria tables are designated “peanut free.” Annually, all **staff participate in training for emergency treatment of severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis)** caused by allergens and use of the **Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)**. Our preschool program, comprised of 50% typical and 50% special needs children, includes students with a range of disabilities, from medically fragile to speech impaired. Our preschool staff, health assistant, and administration participate in additional training as needed.

C. Professional Learning Communities

C1. Describe your coherent approach to professional development that ensures ongoing learning for staff.

Ongoing professional development (PD) is **highly valued at Esperanza**. We created the **infrastructure to support high quality, systemic, PD based on district, state, and national initiatives aligned to our school’s mission**. The infrastructure includes monthly professional

development, quarterly district driven staff development, a master schedule with shared planning time, regular data chats, and “**Sacred Wednesdays,**” established by **staff consensus** and renegotiated yearly, for team and individual planning time. Teams work **collaboratively**, often with **specialized site** and/or district **representatives**, i.e. literacy or math coaches, Behavior Intervention Teachers, technology representatives, administrators, to plan instruction.

This infrastructure also includes Tuesday rotating committee meetings such as: Learning Team, Team Leaders, PBIS, Technology Committee, and Site Council. Each of these committees represents a “**Professional Learning Community**” or PLC, where **professional development is an integral component of the committee**. The Learning Team focuses on all aspects of achievement, including data analysis, assessment, equity, and quality instruction. Committee members participate in a **book study every year**. The goal is to build knowledge and expertise on key aspects of student achievement and share with colleagues.

Multiple data sources are used to identify PD needs including: District formative and summative, State, and classroom-based assessments, walk-through data, and results from Learning Forward’s *Standard Assessment Inventory (SAI, a survey examining quality and effectiveness of a school’s PD, across many indexes, including: Learning Communities, Leadership, Resources, Data-Driven, Evaluation, Research-Based, Design, Learning, Collaboration, Equity, Quality Teaching, and Family Involvement*. Varying forms of PD are then strategically planned to help teachers best meet students’ needs. Literacy and Math coaches provide ongoing PD with **data chats, job embedded co-teaching and mentoring, staff and team trainings**. Data chats are used to analyze data, reflect on individual and team challenges and successes, acquire new instructional, intervention, and assessment strategies.

Multiple district-level and site opportunities and support systems are in place for beginning teachers and newly hired teachers. New teacher orientation includes a comprehensive overview of District mission and goals, Kyrene initiatives, and differentiated training. At the site level, our New Teacher Mentor provides year-round support, as do grade level teammates and other colleagues. Literacy and Math Coaches provide job embedded PD and support in the classroom. Systematic training for new teachers, i.e. Best Practices in Reading and Math, ensures all teachers have the same foundational training.

If a teacher, new or returning, is **experiencing unusual challenges, additional support is provided**. A Kindergarten teacher was struggling with challenging student behaviors. A district-level mentor worked closely with her to establish classroom management **techniques** to better manage the behavior of all students. A Behavior Intervention Teacher wrote positive behavior support plans for individual students and a Regular Education Assistant Program instructional assistant worked with a challenging student. By working together, the teacher was able to effectively manage behavior and provide quality learning opportunities for all of her students. This year we have a teacher who is newly assigned to a 2/3 multiage classroom. She has site level support from our Literacy and Math Coaches, administrative and other staff support, and a district mentor. In addition, **Teachers** undertaking a **significant change in responsibilities** receive **release time** to work collaboratively with team members.

We have **multiple opportunities for teachers and other staff to share their expertise**. This sharing occurs regularly as part of our monthly PD/staff meetings. Last year, two teachers who presented at a national technology conference on digital student portfolios, shared their presentation with staff. Following a **release day of planning together**, our first grade team shared curricular mapping and assessment tools they designed, including a quarterly spreadsheet of all curricular targets and corresponding checklists/assessments. In August, teachers who

attended various summer trainings, conducted **mini-presentations** on **topics such as:** Brain Breaks, Thinking Maps, RtI, Impact Teaching II, Number Talks, and Common Core Standards.

All staff is included in PD related to school-wide and district initiatives. Last year as we presented our SHARK matrix, we included everyone from our bus driver to teaching staff. Dr. Greene also worked with Kid's Club and PAC staff to develop a shared understanding of these expectations and ways to model, teach and reinforce them.

Last January, a team of three staff members attended training on **Top 20 Teachers**. Top 20 Training is designed to help staff create a positive school culture by developing the potential of students and colleagues. Information gained at the training was shared with the PBIS Committee and Team Leaders. Staff consensus was achieved for a 1-day Top 20 training in August. All staff received a "*Top 20 Teachers*" book prior to training. One teacher wrote: "**Top 20 Training reminded me why I love teaching and why I wanted to be a teacher in the first place.** *It was so refreshing to hear an expert teacher remind us all that our kids are human beings who have different strengths, weaknesses and personalities, and that we really do make a difference in their lives to help them be successful. I feel so refreshed and I feel like I am starting this school year like a brand new, enthusiastic teacher again! Thank you for giving us the training and encouragement to teach positive behavior and philosophies to our kids.*"

At every staff meeting, PD training, and committee meeting, **Feedback Sheets are provided** for participants to share their "**pluses**" (what worked for them and/or they liked) and "**deltas**" (things they would change) regarding the meeting/training, and share topic ideas for future trainings/meetings. The feedback sheets give **all stakeholders an avenue for input.**

A variety of significant on-site and off-site training occurs for all employee groups. District-level trainings are offered throughout the year, including **Trainings of Trainers**, designed to build the capacity of all staff. Eligible Career Ladder teachers can receive funds to attend off-site workshops and conferences, or to purchase books. With **collaboration of PTO**, additional funds are available for conferences and educational books, materials, resources and financial assistance for educational expenses such as National Board Certification fees.

During Kyrene's annual **Staff Development Day**, District and site-level PD opportunities are available for all staff. **Release time** is available for **job embedded staff development**, such as observing other teachers' or to work collaboratively with colleagues. Our master schedule provides the infrastructure for PD, in addition to individual and team planning. Classroom teachers have 45 minutes, 4x a week for planning, PD and training.

C2. What opportunities do teachers and other staff members have to participate in professional learning communities that enhance their ability to support student learning?

We work together as a professional learning community (PLC), as an entire faculty, and within smaller PLCs, such as our grade level teams and school committees. In 2004-2005, all staff participated in the book study of Richard DuFour's, "**Whatever it Takes.**" We examined ourselves and our teams in relationship to DuFour's concept of PLCs and three Critical Questions: 1) *What do we want all students to learn?* 2) *How will we know when each student has acquired the knowledge, skills, and dispositions deemed essential?* 3) *How will we respond when students are not learning?* After Learning Team members read, "**Raising the Bar, Closing the Gap** (DuFour et al, 2010), a 4th "Critical Question" was added: *How will we enrich and extend learning for students who are already proficient?* As a result, we moved from a focus on teaching to a **focus on learning**, and created the infrastructure to sustain our PLCs, including Sacred Wednesday time when teams work within their PLC to plan lessons, discuss students who aren't making progress, reflect on their teaching practices, and share ideas and strategies to help

students move forward. KSIT meetings and data chats help staff problem solve and support student learning. **(B1, C)** Other learning opportunities available through district-led committees include Literacy, Math, and Social Studies Steering Committees and Curriculum and Assessment Council. In these meetings, staff, PLCs, examine current research and practices.

C3. How has teacher professional development improved teaching, school culture, and student achievement and success?

PD is directly aligned to our school mission. **Significant gains in data are the direct result of collective work, PD, and focus on helping all students achieve success.** From 2010 to 2011 we had significant gains in AIMS Reading and Math across grades 3, 4, and 5 with 5th graders showing the **highest increase (12%)** in Meets and Exceeds students. We credit these gains to ongoing professional development: Best Practices in Reading and Math, Best Practices in Grading, Inclusion, DIBELS Next, professional development in the classroom and data chats.

Multiple sources of data (staff feedback and evaluations, student achievement data, and walk-through observations) are used regularly to identify areas of strength and growth. Teachers and staff obtain feedback on their professional performance. Our Teacher Evaluation and Growth System (TEGS) is designed to help teachers reflect on teaching practices, analyze student data, and identify areas for reinforcement and refinement. Evaluator feedback occurs during pre and post observation and evaluation conferences. Assessment results serve as a tool for giving teacher effectiveness feedback. Informally, both written and verbal feedback is given, i.e. after walk-through observations. Math, Literacy, and SEI Coaches give immediate feedback in job embedded professional development, co-teaching, mentoring, and other forms of support.

Esperanza staff is recognized in a variety of ways. Each week, in Dr. Greene's **Shark Scoop** (weekly staff newsletter), individuals and teams are recognized for outstanding contributions to events, program assistance, and other accomplishments. **Staff frequently praises** colleagues through emails, notes and verbal recognition. Every staff meeting begins with **"Celebrations and Recognitions"** which sets a positive tone for each meeting, and gives staff an opportunity to connect and share in each other's celebrations. Teachers also share stories involving a positive interaction with a student (related to Top 20 concepts or our SHARK PBIS initiative), or successful strategy. Recognition for achievements occurs at the district and community level via the *"Insider,"* (Kyrene's employee newsletter), district website, and governing board presentations. Ahwatukee Foothills News (AFN), a local publication, highlights teachers' accomplishments such as presentations at national conferences, local, and national awards. In 2011, AFN recognized an Esperanza teacher as "Ahwatukee's Teacher of the Year."

Esperanza staff is collegial, supportive, and generous in their praise of other's accomplishments. We are **an extended family**, there to celebrate a colleague's milestone, or be there in a personal or family crisis. One staff member recently suffered extensive injuries from a car accident. After several surgeries and a 10 day hospital stay, she was moved to a rehabilitation center. Overwhelmed with the amount of support from Esperanza staff, including personal visits, phone calls, and well-wishes, she commented on how blessed she is to work at Esperanza. *"I always thought Esperanza was a special place to work. But now I know it is. Support from Esperanza staff is what's helping me get through this."*

D. Active Teaching and Learning

D1. How are teaching practices and learning experiences consistent with current knowledge and research about successful teaching and learning?

Curriculum units and lesson plans are aligned to Kyrene Adopted Curriculum and the new **Arizona 2010 Standards (Common Core)**. We regularly review curricular standards and

remain abreast of current educational trends and research. As State and District revisions are updated, corresponding PD is provided. Teams use curriculum maps, pacing guides, and student data to collaboratively develop engaging units of study and lesson plans. Vertical and horizontal articulation occurs regularly to minimize redundancy and avoid gaps in instruction. Teams utilize Sacred Wednesdays, common planning time, and release time to engage in collaborative lesson planning, including identification of key curricular targets and corresponding assessments.

Classroom placement is a highly collaborative process between classroom, resource, special area teachers, and administrators. It is designed to provide each student with the **optimal learning environment**. Many variables are considered during class placement, including students' academic, social and emotional needs, as well as teacher and parent input forms.

Teachers collaboratively **“unpack” curricular targets, plan instruction, analyze student work, and design assessments**. This data-driven decision-making process, and implementation of best practices, ensures students' contextual understanding, depth of knowledge and skill mastery. Of critical importance is **integration of core literacy and critical thinking skills** across content areas. Teachers explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies to help students independently construct and gain meaning from all types of text. Teachers frequently use lessons from McGregor's book, *Comprehension Connections*, to help students learn strategies in meta-cognition, building schema, making inferences and connections to text. Using non-fictional texts such as, *Time for Kids*, students demonstrate literacy skills through class discussions, group projects and writing assignments.

Through **Cognitive Guide Instruction (CGI)** teachers help students deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts and strengthen reasoning skills. During CGI problem solving activities, teachers strategically ask students to share their strategies. Teachers ask clarifying questions to help all students make connections between various strategies demonstrated. Through this process of mathematical discourse, students are engaged in higher order thinking, enabling them to synthesize new learning with prior knowledge.

Teachers implement scaffolding techniques to support learners in acquisition of new knowledge, especially for struggling students. Thinking Maps are used to promote specific thinking processes. This provides an interactive and engaging way for students to demonstrate learning. (Currently, nine Esperanza teachers are Thinking Map trained. Our goal is to have all of our teachers trained within the next few years.) Student learning is further supported by building connections and relationships with students. Whether a teacher or instructional aide is supervising the playground or cafeteria, or interacting with students during arrival or dismissal, student learning is promoted.

Our core value of **Excellence and Equity** is expressed through **high student behavioral and academic expectations**. They are communicated and modeled in daily student and parent interactions, from highly engaging lessons described above, to purposeful homework designed to help students achieve mastery. When students are not making adequate progress, additional resources, strategies, and interventions (KSIT) are implemented. (B1)

Esperanza students are intimately involved in their learning, which is evident during daily classroom activities such as learning stations, and student-led conferences. Within appropriate guidelines set forth by teachers, students make critical decisions when creating their portfolios. Students may determine what areas of learning they will “showcase” and which areas of improvement they will refine. Other students are given creative license to digitally display contents of their portfolio, personalizing it with their favorite colors and images. Students are often given a menu of choices, such as a selection of books or type of final project to

demonstrate learning. Goal setting, progress monitoring, and self-evaluation give students a voice in their learning, and help promote students' motivation and responsibility.

D2. What does the school do to accelerate the learning of students who fall below basic standards, and/or mastery?

Many structures are in place to **meet diverse needs of students**. (B2) We utilize uninterrupted blocks of core instruction; 30-minute math and reading IFGs to provide accelerated learning opportunities for students who fall below basic standards and/or mastery. "Push-in" or "pull out" support by specialized teachers or highly trained instructional assistants provides direct instruction on deficit skills and curricular targets. Using our 3-tiered KSIT model, systematic research based interventions are implemented, with continual progress monitoring. Some of our most at-risk students in K3 Literacy Groups may receive additional support beyond their small group, such as one-on-one instruction. If students do not make adequate progress toward their goals, the KSIT may modify intervention(s) and/or schedule a RED meeting. (B2)

Recently, several teachers participated in training on a variety of newly adopted technology based tools to further support student learning; these **Fluency Tutor, SMART Math, and DreamBox**. All teachers participated in Schoolnet training, a comprehensive, integrated data driven software program, which gives immediate access to each student's assessment profile, such as classroom, formative and summative assessment data. Teachers efficiently track student progress, individualizing instruction for unique student learning.

D3. What processes, strategies and management systems are used to assure safe, orderly school and classroom environments?

The SHARK matrix and agreed upon steps to misbehavior, coupled with our systematic office referral procedures help ensure that Esperanza is a **safe, positive learning environment with a fair and equitable discipline response system**. When students are referred to the office, administrators meet with the student to gather information and investigate the incident. This is done by talking to the referring staff member and students who were involved or present during the incident. When determining consequences, administration uses the guidelines set forth in the Kyrene Family Handbook with consideration of the unique circumstances surrounding the incident and the child's history. Misbehavior is viewed by administration and teachers as "teachable moments," opportunities to help our young students learn from their mistakes and acquire new skills for making better choices in the future.

D4. What opportunities (provide specific examples and outcomes) do students have to apply learning to real world situations?

Many real-world learning opportunities occur as a **result of a school-wide response to a local, national or global crisis or need**. Following the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004, Esperanza students participated in a Read-a-Thon fundraiser for the American Red Cross International Response Fund to support relief efforts for Tsunami Victims. Students felt good about helping others, and it motivated students to read and log their minutes. One student singlehandedly raised over \$1,000, and was personally recognized by the Red Cross.

In **February 2010**, Esperanza staff, students, PTO, and entire school community participated in our **"Hearts for Haiti" fundraiser**. Each morning, students dropped various amounts of coins in appropriate grade level jars. Students raised \$2,477 and **demonstrated important character traits of caring and citizenship as they helped Haiti children and families**. Teachers used our "Hearts for Haiti" fundraiser to promote global awareness, make connections across curricular targets, and teach the importance of helping others in need.

In the fifth grade economics curriculum, students apply classroom instruction with “real” on the job challenges at **Junior Achievement’s simulated town, BizTown**. Students participate in a semester-long social studies curriculum integrating math, language arts, and technology standards. Prior to their day at Biztown, students learn a variety of workplace productivity and career related skills, including: balance a check book, write a resume, complete a job application, interview for a job, and develop a product within a work group. At BizTown, students learn first-hand about the free enterprise system, linking classroom knowledge directly to their experience.

Esperanza staff **embeds learning in contextual activities** that are meaningful and engaging for students. By using a variety of instructional activities to meet students’ diverse learning styles and needs, mastery is achieved. Investigations and Catherine Fosnot math resources provide **hands-on investigative learning activities and projects** to foster a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts and strengthen students’ ability to apply efficient and effective problem solving strategies. Students become intrinsically motivated to learn more about nature when they have experiential learning opportunities in science, such as 2nd graders watching butterflies emerge from a chrysalis; 4th graders creating a habitat for the dwarf African frog; kindergarteners watching baby chicks hatch from eggs in their classroom’s incubator.

Esperanza students provide meaningful community service through a variety of service-learning activities. Students collect recycled items weekly from each classroom and pod. Recycling is connected to the larger issue of limited resources and the need to recycle, reuse, and reduce consumption. We **participate in a district-wide “Lights Out”** – a day of minimal use of electricity. These experiences promote an increased **awareness and sense of responsibility to be good stewards of our planet**.

Another community service project, a “**Mitten/Hat Drive**,” is led by a first grade teacher and her students. During December and January, a mitten tree is displayed outside her classroom door. Parents, students, and staff are **encouraged to donate hats and mittens and hang them on the tree**. They are donated to the Kyrene Family Resource Center. This service project raises students’ awareness of families in need within our Kyrene community. **Students feel empowered** by their ability to help Kyrene children. Esperanza’s **Student Council takes** the lead role for **community services projects** such as their annual Holiday drive. (B3)

D5. How are resources made available to teachers and students for instruction, gathering information and sharing the results of their efforts?

Located in the center of our building, our **library is the hub of the school**. Materials are readily available for teacher check out or to request in advance, including books, magazines and research materials, digital cameras and tripods. Teachers use the library when our Media Specialist is at another school to provide additional opportunities for research, group-projects, and library check out. All students participate in 45-minutes of Library, 1x a week. Our Media Specialist delivers instruction on library standards, resources and lessons aligned to curricular targets, and provides students the opportunity to check out books/resources.

Our **Literary Room and Math Lab** house additional resources for instructional support. These resources provide **differentiated instruction, extension or intervention activities**, such as literature circles or math workshop. Resources include: trade books, high frequency cards, skill reinforcement activities, professional math books, manipulatives, and math games.

Every K-3 classroom has five laptops with six in 4th and 5th grade classrooms. In addition, every classroom has 1-2 desktop computers; wall mounted SMART Boards, mounted projector, document camera, wireless mouse/keyboard, VCR, and multiple headphones. Esperanza has two computer labs housing 30+ computers with head phones, a printer, SMART

Board and projection system. Printers are located in the library for teacher and student use. Scanners and printers are available in each pod. Installed on every Kyrene computer is a comprehensive toolkit of software applications including Destiny and Encarta. The district's portal system provides administrators and teachers access to district web resources from home, such as Schoolnet, Genesis (student information system), and other network tools and resources. Use of the library, multi-media and technology, support classroom instruction by giving teachers and students multiple avenues to **research, locate information, create projects, share and publish finished products**. In this manner, students are able to develop essential 21st century skills that will help prepare them for future success.

D6. What technology applications is the school using? How do they relate to the curricular goals, and how do they support teaching and learning?

Technology is seamlessly **embedded into all aspects of teaching and learning**. As described above, a multitude of technology resources are available to students and staff. Installed on every Kyrene computer are software programs including *Microsoft Office* and related software, *Inspiration*, *Kidspiration*, *Pixie 2*, *Read and Write Gold*, *Audacity* and *Share*. Internet availability provides immediate access to educational websites, including web-based interactive tools and activities aligned to adopted resources. **Assistive Technology programs and tools are available based on student needs, including AlphaSMARTs, overlays, or FM systems**. Teachers use these technology tools to provide **engaging instruction, develop students' skills and knowledge, and to reinforce learning**. Daily use of interactive SMART Board provides small, whole group, or rotating station activities. Every day in primary classrooms, SMART Boards are used as part of our systematic phonics instruction. Students use the document camera and projection system to share work with classmates, such as sharing problem-solving strategies during math. Teachers create PowerPoint presentations to share information or skill building, i.e. vocabulary. Our music teacher incorporates technology daily into her lessons to strengthen students' skills in music.

This year, **new software includes DreamBox and Smart Math**, which provide another avenue for giving **students additional practice opportunities for skill reinforcement**. Also new this year is **Fluency Tutor**; it provides **additional intervention and support opportunities** for students struggling with fluency. Technology tools, such as Schoolnet, provide assessment and evaluation tools. (D2) Parent/teacher communication, including access to grades, homework, etc., is available through regular email communication, electronic newsletters, and Genesis.

Challenging Curriculum Standards

E1. How is the curriculum developed, monitored, evaluated and improved at your school?

The Kyrene School District prides itself on a **rigorous curriculum** aligned to State standards. School administration ensures that teachers use district adopted resources and materials, such as curriculum guides, to plan and deliver instruction. In 2010, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) adopted Common Core (CC) Standards, now referred to as Arizona 2010 Standards. KSD developed a transition plan for implementing these standards. Full implementation of Math CC for grades K-2 is occurring presently; full implementation across grades 1-8 is slated for 2012-2013. Kindergarten is currently implementing English Language Arts (ELA) Standards. Full integration of ELA standards in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects is scheduled for the 2013-2014 school year.

The Kyrene School District works with representative **teacher/administrator groups to develop curriculum maps, pacing guides, and other support material for implementation of adopted curriculum**. District-level committees work collaboratively with district leadership to

provide guidance and expertise in articulation and implementation of new CC Standards. (C2) Esperanza **teacher representatives, serving on these committees**, inform staff of new curricular developments, teaching and assessment practices.

Clear articulation occurs in **vertical and horizontal team meetings** that examine curricular targets. (D1) Administration and the fifth grade team work closely with middle school administrators and teachers to assure clear articulation of curricular expectations. Feedback from the 6th grade advisor is consistently positive, reporting that our students are well prepared with knowledge and skills required for their future success in middle school.

E2. Provide a brief description of the curriculum across all grade levels for the following core content areas:

*** Reading/Language Arts:** In grades 1 – 5, our current reading and writing curriculum is aligned to the old Arizona State Standards. Teachers provide an integrative literacy approach to help students develop 21st century skills in media literacy, information, and communication. (D1) Students’ mastery on curricular standards is measured via formative, classroom-based, and summative assessments, and teacher observation.

***Mathematics:** As stated above, **grades K-2 are fully implementing the new AZ 2010 Standards** in math. In grades 3 – 5, teachers are following curricular maps aligned to the previous Arizona math standards, but are incorporating some of the new Math CC standards and mathematical practices in preparation of full implementation next year. Teachers use engaging CGI problem-solving methods and questioning strategies to encourage higher –level thinking and to raise the cognitive demand of instruction. Students’ mastery is measured via formative, classroom-based and summative assessments, and teacher observation.

***Science:** Our science curriculum (based on National Science Standards), and **corresponding interactive science kits** make science come to life with laboratory studies involving mealworms, millipedes, butterflies, and frogs. Teachers integrate reading and writing skills, i.e. science journals, and challenge students to think critically through higher-order questioning strategies and applications to real-life problems and situations. Students’ mastery on curricular standards is measured via classroom based assessments and authentic assessments.

***Social Studies:** Current social studies curriculum focuses on academic content and skills in the **four interrelated disciplines of history, geography, civics/government, and economics**. Esperanza teachers currently integrate reading and writing to raise the rigor of current curriculum and better prepare students for the AZ 2010 Standards. In addition, teachers incorporate non-fiction informational resources, such as *Time for Kids*, to further integrate reading and writing skills within the context of social studies and current events. (D1)

***Special area instruction in Art, Music, Physical Education, and Library (D5) occurs in a 45-minute block, 1x a week.** ***Art:** Visual Arts instruction is based on National Standards for Art Education and Arizona State Standards. The focus is to help students **grow in their ability to describe, interpret, evaluate, and respond to work in visual arts**. ***Music:** Music education includes six standards of music - singing, instrument playing, moving to music, reading and writing music notation, composing and improvising, and performing. Our music curriculum is highlighted through musical performances, classroom informances, and participation in co-curricular activities such as our annual Talent Show and Mallet Band. (A1) ***Physical Education:** The goal of elementary PE is to instill, promote, and motivate students to personally value a healthy and physically active life style. Curricular targets are reinforced in fun and engaging ways during our annual Turkey Trot and Field Days. (A1)

E3. Select two of the content areas in E2 to discuss in greater depth. Choose these two areas or programs because of their central importance to the school's vision and mission, and their special significance to the school.

Reading/Language Arts and **Math** are of most importance to our school's mission. These standards provide a clear and progressive set of high expectations across common clusters/domains for all grade levels. Our challenge is to **transform teaching and learning practices** to help students **achieve academic success** within this new framework. ELA Standards, which provide an **integrative and comprehensive approach to literacy focus on:** text complexity; reading and writing across the curriculum; analysis of informational text; writing arguments and drawing evidence from sources; participating in collaborative conversation; and integration of media sources across standards. Deep learning of concepts is emphasized, enabling students to apply knowledge and skills to new situations and across content areas. Our Kindergarten team attended a district training to **acquire new skills and strategies for introducing never before taught K standards, such as research writing skills.** Kindergarten students read informational texts and record learning in "research journals." Teachers in grades 1-5 are participating in professional development focusing on **best practices in reading** and implementation of core literacy strategies across content areas. Teachers are raising the rigor and cognitive demand of instruction in all subjects by scaffolding and making connections across curricular targets. Many teachers are using **Thinking Maps** to **engage students and extend learning.** (D1)

As stated above, Math Common Core standards and mathematical practices **represent a clear and progressive set of high expectations across common domains.** Across K-5, standards provide students with a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions and decimals. Standards stress procedural skills and conceptual understanding to ensure student learning. Teachers are participating in trainings to effectively deliver instruction aligned to new math standards, and help students develop expertise in corresponding mathematical practices. Teachers, in all grade levels, regularly engage students in problem solving activities to further their ability to make sense of these problems, reason abstractly and quantitatively, and strategically use appropriate tools when problem solving. (D1)

E4. How does the school ensure that all students, including learners with unique needs have the opportunity to learn challenging content and achieve at high levels?

Our master schedule is built upon a **philosophy of inclusion** and our mission to help **all students achieve success.** Uninterrupted blocks of time for core reading (80 minutes) and core math instruction (60 minutes) is built into our master schedule. All students (with the exception of students with severe special needs), **participate fully in core reading and math instruction.** Flexible groupings are implemented during Intervention Focus Groups (IFGs) to meet students' specific learning needs. (B1, D2) During IFGs, students participate in learning activities aimed at **reinforcing curricular standards, accelerating learning for students who are behind, or extending learning** for students ready for additional challenge. **Research based and systematic intervention programs** are provided within a smaller group setting for identified KSIT, K3 math and literacy, and resource students. Students' progress is **monitored and evaluated** to help all students make continuous growth and to achieve mastery of grade level standards. Identified gifted students in grades 1 – 3 are placed in grade level gifted cluster classrooms, 4th and 5th grade gifted students are in a "pull out" gifted reading and/or math class. (B1, D2)

E5. What requirements must be satisfied before a student is promoted to the next grade or level of schooling?

Esperanza follows KSD's Board adopted policies and regulations regarding retention and promotion, and procedures for determining accelerated course work. **A Child Study Team, or CST** (comprised of school psychologist, referring classroom teacher, administrator, a resource teacher or math/literacy coach), assembles to discuss the possible retention of referred students. They review student's past and current academic progress and evaluate effectiveness of current interventions (i.e. KSIT) and support programs. Parent involvement is established from the moment the teacher expresses a concern. Conferences are held with parents to review their child's progress, explain the retention process and their rights according to State statutes. Prior to May 1st, the CST reviews the retention case and sends their final recommendation to the Superintendent. The Superintendent brings the recommendation before the Governing Board for review. Following the Governing Board decision, parents can appeal.

Teachers promote students to the next grade level based on students' attainment of grade level, curricular learning outcomes. **Assessment and evaluation of student progress is ongoing.** As indicated above, student retention is a **step-by-step collaborative process**, where the CST and teacher closely monitor student progress. A retention candidate is often an identified KSIT student who is already receiving systematic, research-based interventions to help him/her achieve academic success. **Continuous progress monitoring occurs to determine effectiveness of interventions and if other interventions are warranted.**

When circumstances indicate **acceleration in grade** is in the best interest of the student, administrators work with parents and other school/district personnel. Considerations and decisions are based on **student's academic progress as well as emotional and social development.** A final decision (resting with the superintendent), is based on **multiple data sources collected over time.** The goal is **placement in a school program for optimal success.**

Esperanza is committed to **continuous progress of all students. Differentiated instruction is the norm.** If a student demonstrates **ability to advance in a content area that is beyond the scope of their classroom**, we will do whatever we can to provide appropriate learning experiences. For example, a former Esperanza student demonstrated a highly advanced level of mathematical proficiencies, beyond the level provided within the gifted program. Esperanza administrators worked collaboratively with his parents and district staff to provide an alternative opportunity in middle school. By designing our master schedule to align with the middle school's schedule, our student was able to participate in a Geometry class during the same time his peers received 5th grade math instruction. Recently, parents of this student thanked Dr. Greene for giving him the **opportunity to advance** in his math coursework. This student, now a freshman at Desert Vista High School, **successfully completed his first semester of Advanced Placement Calculus, the youngest student ever to participate in this rigorous course!** The student's parents shared with Dr. Greene, *"His current success is because of the opportunity you provided him as an Esperanza student. Thank you for making it all possible."*

F. Leadership and Educational Vitality

F1. Describe the leadership structure, roles and functions that are important at the school and tell why.

As **instructional leader and lead learner** for the school, Dr. Greene sets high expectations for both staff and students. Expectations are clearly communicated, modeled, and reinforced in everything we do. Her focus is on high quality teaching and learning, recognizing that this does not happen in isolation. She believes in **building the capacity of her staff** (as well as the parent community) as the most effective way to achieve our school's mission. By creating **PLCs (C)**, we are able to maximize our ability to meet students' diverse learning needs.

Esperanza has many teacher and staff leadership roles and positions that provide an essential framework for our stakeholders' voice to be considered in everything we do.

Team Leaders: Focus is on overall management and operations of the school; comprised of a representative from each grade level, special areas, special education, and support staff; address school-wide, non-curricular management issues/tasks, such as scheduling, special events, conferences, etc.; one representative per team; application required.

Learning Team: Focus is on school improvement, best practices in instruction and assessment, and data analysis with a lens of equity; members participate in book studies to increase skills and are often called upon to lead PD and/or model best practices (C1); comprised of a least one grade level representative, but may have more than one; membership requires an application.

Site Council: Comprised of teachers, parents, administrators, and interested community members; oversee our school improvement planning (including our A+ application), approves/monitors Tax Credit funded activities, and serves as the lead for our Discovery Garden.

Technology Committee: Minimum of one representative from each grade level; meet regularly to discuss technology needs of staff and students; problem solve tech issues; provide support to team and other staff members when needed, and plan and facilitate site or grade level trainings.

PBIS Committee: Continually work to refine SHARK PBIS initiative; examine behavioral data and effectiveness of our SHARK PBIS initiative; goal: provide positive supports.

We have staff members serving in the role of Assessment Advocates, PTO Liaisons, Spelling Bee and Poetry Contest Coordinators, and Student Council Advisors, etc. and others who serve on District steering committees. (C2) Staff members also serve as chairs for the multitude of special events, programs, and activities that occur at school. (A1)

F2. How is the school improvement process organized and managed to ensure the school is always moving forward?

School improvement at Esperanza is an on-going, participatory and collaborative process with the collective goal to help all students achieve at high levels. The fundamental assumption underlying this goal is our core belief that **all students can learn at high levels**. Each year, grade level teams establish summative goals for reading, writing, and math based on students' performance on previous years' summative and formative assessment data. Data sources include AIMS, DIBELS, District end-of-year assessments in math and reading, and district benchmark School Improvement Plan (SIP) assessments in reading, writing, and math. (H1) Teams write detailed action plans for each goal specifying key instructional strategies, with corresponding timelines and assessments for monitoring progress. Data chats, formative assessments, intervention strategies, and progress monitoring ensure that **evidence of student learning** is used to inform and improve our practices, and students are **progressing**.

As a PLC, we participate in **data chats to analyze data, determine effectiveness of core instruction, KSIT interventions, and extension activities**. Subsequently, differentiated core instruction and IFG learning activities are based on students' needs. As a result, huge gains were achieved. (C3, F5) As needs are identified, resources are allocated. After our first DIBELS administration in August, K3 Literacy staff used DIBELS and other data to identify our most intensive students and schedule push-in and pull-out support. (B1, B2).

Our school improvement is an on-going, participatory and collaborative process. Grade level teams determine annual SIP Goals with corresponding action plans. Data chats and KSIT meetings are vehicles for ongoing progress monitoring and collaborative dialogue regarding instructional practices, resource allocation, and intervention strategies.

F3. How does leadership engage staff, teachers, students, parents, and community in decision making?

Esperanza's **committee framework** is specifically designed to give staff, parents, and community members the ability to be highly engaged in many areas of decision-making. As mentioned above, committees such as Team Leaders, Learning Team, and Site Council play a key role in management and school improvement decision, which gives our key stakeholders a **voice in critical decisions impacting the school.**

Dr. Greene **collaborates with Esperanza's PTO** to engage parents in decision making and planning regarding all aspects of the school and to support staff and students in accomplishing our school's mission. Parents value Dr. Greene's collaborative approach to leadership. *"Thank you again for being such a visionary and great leader, we as parents are lucky to have you at Esperanza. Keep up the good work!"* (Leah Derewicz, Parent) Within the framework of a larger leadership team, including the principal, assistant principal, teacher leaders and parent volunteers, every aspect of Esperanza's daily operations and school improvement is an encouraged, collaborative effort.

F4. How does school leadership model the use of 21st century tools and applications in the roles of principal, manager, teacher leaders and staff leaders?

Technology is an integral tool used for communication, instructional practices, safety/security purposes, and to improve efficiency and effectiveness of programs. (D5, D6) This is modeled daily by school leadership, teacher leaders, and all staff. Student data is easily assessable through Schoolnet, Genesis gives staff immediate access to important student information, including enrollment history, emergency numbers, and discipline occurrences. Staff utilizes our school's network drive to save and access shared documents and files that were historically distributed in hardcopy form. This information is readily available for all staff.

Technology is used in many forms to communicate with staff, parents and community. Dr. Greene's weekly Shark Scoop (staff newsletter) and monthly Shark Bytes (school newsletter), contain pertinent information regarding school events, activities, and areas of focus. Regular emails from PTO, Dr. Greene, and the school are sent via each teacher's email distribution group. (Hard copies are available for families without internet access.) Emails include reminders about upcoming activities, school and PTO newsletters, etc. Parents of intermediate students also have access to student progress through the parent portal component of Genesis. All parents can access Genesis to update their profile. KSD and Esperanza's PTO are on Facebook, providing an interactive communication tool for sharing and receiving information. Web-based videos by Dr. Schauer communicate important district issues, training webinars on the budget process. Governing Board Meetings are on YouTube.

Administrators and teacher leaders use technology **for professional development**, as a vehicle for presenting information, i.e. Thinking Maps software, Excel, PowerPoint, electronic portfolios, or to provide training on technology tools such as Schoolnet or Fluency Tutor. Teachers using Smart Math participated in a webinar. Each year, mandatory modules on critical professional responsibilities, procedures, and legal requirements are completed electronically.

Esperanza's **school website** is used as one of the main vehicles for communicating to both current as well as prospective parents about all aspects of our school. Our website provides links to current Shark Bytes and PTO newsletters, as well archived versions. We also post our school calendar, staff directory and contact information. Schoolwires is planned at every Kyrene school, which will improve our connection with the community.

Technology has always played an integral role in our data analysis, but with Schoolnet, data is easily accessible. (B2, D3)) Teachers create assessments aligned to curricular standards, and reports to drive their instruction. These reports can be analyzed by item or standard, enabling individuals or teams of teachers to make instructional decisions about their students. Teachers are able to quickly identify areas for re-teaching and effectively implement whole and small group instruction designed to meet students' needs. Teachers also add their own data to Schoolnet to create reports and track student progress over time. Schoolnet is used for district assessment administration, providing immediate feedback on students' performance.

F5. How is a long-range Strategic Plan developed and how does it drive and target school improvement efforts?

Esperanza's mission is to **provide a positive and engaging learning environment that promotes student achievement and inspires success in every student**. Current Site Council members and other staff worked collaboratively to revise our school's mission. It became evident that our previous mission statement did not emphasize student achievement, and no longer reflected our current school culture and focus. (G1) We wanted a mission statement directly aligned to KSD's Blueprint for Education. The Blueprint clearly identifies Kyrene's Vision, Mission, and Goals. The Blueprint guides our work as do our mission and core values. We are continually examining our school's overall strengths and areas for growth. Our commitment to continuous improvement contributed to **an "Excelling" school label for the past 7 years and as an "A" school as determined by ADE**. These outstanding distinctions are the result of our collaborative approach to analyzing data, identifying students' needs, and implementing high-quality core instruction and interventions to help all students achieve success. Esperanza's 2010 – 2011 AIMS data reflects the greatest gains in achievement across all 19 Kyrene schools.

G. School, Family, and Community Partnerships

G1. What community collaborative alliances and partnerships are in place at your school? How do these relationships result in the school being a respected and valued partner?

Recent work with Site Council and development of our new mission and core values reflects our school's commitment to school and community partnerships. Site Council members worked collaboratively to identify **key words** within our mission statement. We asked, "***What's missing, if anything, in our mission statement?***" We looked at **core values** identified by our 2006 Site Council. We wanted a mission statement to align with KSD's Vision and Mission, and incorporated concepts of "*academic excellence*" and "*success for all students.*"

Site Council drafted a mission statement with five corresponding core values: Diversity; Respect; Equity and Excellence; Safe, Collaborating, and Nurturing Environment; and Integrity. Staff feedback was solicited on Site Council's draft, mission statement and core values. Based on feedback received, collaboration was identified as a separate core value. (Part II)

Throughout this application, are **numerous examples of school, parent, and community partnership**. JA Biztown and Esperanza College best exemplify the power of collaborative partners impacting lives of students. **BizTown** provides 5th graders the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills to real-life experiences. (D4) Students' day at BizTown would not be possible without collaborative work of parents, community, and teachers. Parent volunteers conduct job interviews, provide cash donations, and work side-by-side with students at BizTown.

During the last week of school, students in grades 1 – 5 participate in **Esperanza College**, which consists of specifically designed classes for primary (1st – 2nd) and intermediate (3rd – 5th) grade students. Classes provide fun, hands-on-learning activities keeping students' actively engaged. Rotating to each of five classes throughout the day, students build relationships

with students and teachers. In its first year, delays in construction caused an extension of Esperanza's school year through June. Esperanza College was created to minimize behavior disruptions and provide exciting learning opportunities for an extended year.

Several weeks before Esperanza College begins, students receive a course catalogue describing different offerings. During **registration**, staff and **parent volunteers** help students select and schedule classes. With course offerings such as, "*Chocolate is my Life*" and "*Card Sharks*" this is not an easy task! Esperanza College could not happen without parent support and donations of time and money. It is often cited as one of the things most enjoyed at Esperanza!
G2. How does your school involve all families in their children's education and student support programs?

Esperanza **involves and supports families** in education of their children in many ways. School and classroom newsletters, school, teacher and PTO generated emails, inform parents about curricular targets taught and upcoming events and activities. Math Parent Nights, Family Math Game Night, Milk and Cookies Night, Kindergarten Experience, and parent-teacher conferences involve parents in their child's learning. (A1, B2 and F2)

Volunteers are recognized as an integral part of our school. From verbal expressions of appreciation to our annual **Volunteer Tea**, we let them know how much we value and appreciate their support. (A1, G1) Strategies used to solicit help of parent volunteers include emails with electronic sign-up capabilities, flyers, marquee, newsletters, and sign-up sheets at events. A **personal invitation and/or request for help** extended from an administrator, teacher, support staff, or parent leader to a potential volunteer, is our most effective way to recruit volunteers. By building trusting relationships, and matching potential volunteers' skills and interests with specific tasks/roles, they are more likely to say "yes" when asked to help. Once recruited, we retain our volunteers by providing training and support, recognizing and appreciating their contributions. We have several volunteers who initially volunteered while their child (or grandchild) attended our school, but continue after their child moves to middle school.

Esperanza takes great care in helping families feel connected to our school community. (A3) From the moment they arrive to our school, they are treated in a warm and welcoming way. Connections are created, such as finding a peer buddy or "Shark Chum" for a new student or special needs child, or finding another student or parent who can converse with a monolingual ELL student. (B3) Administrators and teachers have an open door policy, always willing to meet with parents to address an issue and/or include them as a vital member of our school community. One of our resource instructional assistants is fluent in Spanish. She became an official "interpreter" so that she could help parents of a boy with autism have a better understanding of the IEP process and work together to help him meet identified goals.

G3. How does your school welcome and respect families from all walks of life, solicit and value their input, and find multiple ways to invite and involve them in school initiatives to build a shared commitment to student success?

Diversity is one of our six core values. (Part II) During school tours, administrators, establish a relationship with new families and **ascertain specific interests** they may have in terms of **school/community involvement** as well as **any concerns or specific educational, social, or medical needs**. Administrators guide our families to school, district, or community contacts, resources and programs. These include connecting new parents with members of our PTO, Site Council, or KFRC for resources and support.

Multiple forms of communication are in place to **inform and solicit parent input**, including school and teacher newsletters (hard copies provided for families without internet

access), marquee, flyers and other promotional materials, emails, our annual Parent Satisfaction Survey and PTO survey. (F4; H1) Newsletters and Listserve communication are used regularly to solicit parent input and encourage involvement at special events and activities. **Free child care is provided** at PTO general meetings, parent informational meetings, and parent-teacher conferences to support families. Parent input regarding meeting times for PTO meetings, Curriculum Night, and other similar events has been solicited in an effort to increase attendance.

Esperanza events are **well attended by all segments of our population**. (A1) In May of 2010, a parent and community outreach program, funded by the **Refugee Children's Grant**, provided **15 hours of parent outreach and educational activities** for identified refugee students and their families. Members of our Refugee Committee researched local summer activities and support programs, created an informational newsletter, and assembled a packet of learning materials. At a parent meeting, this information distributed about summer activities sponsored by local parks, pools, libraries, movie theaters, and local stores.

G4. How are educational resources in the school and the community used to extend learning opportunities for students, teachers, and families?

Through District and community partnerships, Esperanza hosts a multitude of **after school childcare and other programs** that **extend learning opportunities** for students. These include KSD Youth Enrichment classes, GOTR, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, PAC and Kid's Club. (B2). Classrooms, computer lab, multipurpose room, playground and fields are utilized every day after school. This spring we will be partnering with **KSD and the Phoenix Zoo** to offer "**Project Zoo Lab**," an after school program of behind-the-scenes Zoo activities via a live zoo internet channel and classroom follow-up activities. Our **media center** is frequently used for **informational parent meetings**, i.e., GOTR and PTO General Meetings. During PTO meetings, experts from our community, including police, city and state government, local businesses and community-based programs speak on topics of interest, such as Internet Safety, Wellness, and School Finance. Our media center and classrooms are used for evening **district-sponsored PD opportunities for teachers and other staff**.

In general, we do not provide direct health and social services beyond the school day. However, last year during epidemic rates of the flu, **we hosted a shot clinic** via a partnership with **KSD and a local health care provider**. Administration, teachers, and other staff work collaboratively to identify students' health and social services needs, and make appropriate referrals. Our Health Assistant, administration, KFRC and other community-based programs provide families needing assistance with social, emotional, medical and health related issues.

H. Indicators of Success

H1. Describe your school's balanced assessment system and approach that includes high quality summative, benchmark and formative classroom assessments used to improve teaching and learning.

Esperanza teachers use both formative and summative assessments as well as progress monitoring and classroom based assessments to improve instruction and guarantee students' continuous growth. All students are individually assessed three times per year in reading using DIBELS Next to measure overall reading health and progress. (B2) District created core curriculum benchmark (SIP) assessments in reading (grades 2-5), writing (K-5), and math (K-5) are used by teachers to inform instruction.

Summative assessments include District-level and State assessments. District developed assessments are: Math Support System - End of Grade (MSS-EOG) and Communication Arts Support System - End of Grade (CASS-EOG). MSS is a criterion referenced multiple-choice test

specifically designed each year to assess 1st and 2nd grade students on Kyrene math curriculum. CASS-EOG is a criterion referenced multiple-choice test designed to assess students on Kyrene communication arts curriculum. **State level summative assessments include:** AIMS Math and Reading (gr. 3, 4, and 5); AIMS Writing (gr. 5); AIMS Science (gr. 4); and the Stanford 10 (gr.2). The AIMS and Stanford 10 assess student mastery of the AZ standards. Administrators and teachers **analyze summative data to refine teaching practices** of curricular standards. (F5)

Schoolnet provides teachers with immediate access to each student's assessment profile. (D3) Teachers use multiple sources of data to identify students needing additional support in reading or math. (B1) Students continually showing lack of progress are identified as **KSIT** students. Specific interventions are implemented and student progress toward identified goals is closely monitored. (B1) If students do not show adequate progress over time, additional interventions are implemented and/or the team may hold a RED meeting to determine if additional testing and evaluation for Special Education is warranted. (B2, D2)

H2. What evidence do you regularly collect and analyze to judge the effectiveness of your school?

Esperanza collects multiple sources of behavior, academic, and survey data to analyze effectiveness of all aspects of our school. Data sources include formative and summative assessments, student behavioral/discipline data, Gallup Student Poll, Teacher Interest Survey, Principal Feedback Survey, Parent Satisfaction Survey, SAI, and Gallup Employee Survey.

Formative and summative assessments are used to inform instruction and evaluate students' **mastery of curricular standards.** (F2) **DIBELS Next** is administered three times a year to all K-5 students to determine students' progress on core literacy skills and identify specific skills not yet mastered. Data chats and team planning, core instructional opportunities and interventions are designed to help students achieve mastery on deficit skills. (B2, D2)

Teachers collect and analyze behavior data on targeted goal behaviors of a student's individual behavior support plan. This data is used by the teacher (and KSIT) to determine effectiveness of the plan and/or if additional behavior support is warranted. Student discipline data is collected via Genesis. PBIS committee members and administrators analyze school data regularly determining SHARK matrix effectiveness, making modifications as needed. (A3)

Every spring, Dr. Greene distributes a **Teacher and Staff Interest Survey** to solicit input from staff members **regarding their interest in various employment/positions** opportunities for the following school year. Staffing decisions are made based on District allocations, needs of the school, teacher qualifications and skills, with consideration of staff input. The Teacher Interest Survey solicits feedback regarding newly added or modified aspects of our school, i.e. master schedule, IFGs, and inclusion practices. To tap into interests and ideas of our teachers, last year's survey also included the following: *"What ideas do you have for Esperanza in regard to 'innovative programming?' What role would you like to have to bring your idea to life?"*

Each year, Dr. Greene solicits staff input via the **Principal Feedback Survey.** This KSD web-based survey measures principal effectiveness based on six administrator quality standards. Responses can range from "strongly agree to strongly disagree" along with comments. Dr. Greene uses survey data to identify areas of strength and areas for growth. Analysis of the Principal Feedback Survey results indicates continued growth in targeted areas.

Each year, Esperanza parents complete a **Parent Satisfaction Survey.** Responses can range from "strongly agree to strongly disagree." Survey items are designed to gather data on parents' satisfaction regarding various school components, including quality instruction, challenging curriculum, school safety, administrator responsiveness, and climate.

Esperanza students traditionally take a Student Survey to evaluate their experience of school, including: sense of safety, respect by teachers, and whether or not they feel they have improved their academic skills. For the past few years, 5th grade students have participated in the **Gallup Student Poll**, a survey, consisting of 20 questions designed to measure their sense of hope, engagement, and wellbeing. Gallup research suggests that these measures are correlated to higher academic achievement and lower incidents of health problems. The 2011 Gallup Student Poll indicated: 61% of our students are hopeful, 83% are engaged; and 73% are thriving. These scores reflect an increase of all three measures as compared to last year's results. Top 20 Teacher training was implemented this year to increase staff engagement and ultimately student engagement. (C1) This year, an additional survey was collaboratively created by **Dr. Greene and Esperanza's Student Superintendent Advisory Council (SSAC) representative**. The survey asked 3rd – 5th grade students to respond to the following: 1. Esperanza has a good lunch program (53% of students agreed/strongly); 2) My teacher helps me when I don't understand (94% agreed/strongly agreed); and 3) I have not been bullied at school (64% agreed/strongly agreed). The results from this last question are contrary to other data suggesting students feel safe at school. Dr. Greene, the SSAC representative, and the PBIS committee will work collaboratively to address this issue.

Last year, Kyrene schools, participated in **Gallup's Employee Engagement Q12 Survey**. This 12-item survey is used to measure whether employees are engaged, not engaged, or actively disengaged. Gallup research suggests actively engaged employees are more productive; increases in teacher engagement are positively correlated to student achievement. Esperanza's "Grand Mean" engagement score was the 6th highest among all 19 elementary schools, and Esperanza's mean scores on 10 of 12 indexes were higher than Kyrene's overall mean scores. Based on survey results, Team Leaders worked collaboratively with staff to develop an Impact Plan to address our identified area of growth.

As stated in **C1**, results from Learning Forward's **SAI** is used to examine quality and effectiveness of our school's professional development and identify future PD based on staff needs. In the past three years, SAI survey results show an increase on all of these measures.

Teachers use a **variety of alternative assessments** in order to gain more knowledge about students, plan for instruction, and encourage creative thinking and a love of learning. Authentic based assessments include: portfolios; performance assessments, i.e. interviews, observations, performance tasks and oral presentations. Teachers use rubrics, checklists, developmental continuum scales, and observations records.

All students, within identified grade levels, participate in the above mentioned formative and summative assessments. The only exception is special education students who meet the eligibility for the Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards Alternate (AIMS A). The AIMS A measures what students know and are able to do in the content areas of mathematics, reading, and science as presented in the Arizona Alternate Academic Standards.

For five years, the Equity Team (now called, *Learning Team*) participated in several book studies on this topic. As a team, we attended several trainings on equity and achievement, including a keynote presentation by Glenn Singleton (Closing the Gap), Bonnie Davis' (Culturally Responsive Teaching), and an off-site retreat based on articles from *Everyday Antiracism* (Pollock). Equity Team members shared knowledge and skills with staff and led our "**Sweet Strategies**" campaign.(A2) Monthly, Equity Team members wrote a culturally responsive strategy on cards, attached a hard candy, and placed them in staff mailboxes. "Sweet Strategies" were presented at staff meetings explaining how the strategy was used in classrooms.

Esperanza teachers believe all students can achieve at high levels, reflected in our core value of Equity and Excellence. Our ultimate goal is to close the achievement gap and eliminate disproportionality in student performance. Data does not reveal a predictive pattern in terms of disproportionality, which indicates progress toward our goal to eliminate the achievement gap. Historically, our Black, Native American, and Hispanic students were outperformed by our Asian and White students. On the 5th grade Math AIMS in 2011, a greater percentage of Hispanics scored in the Exceeds range compared to their White peers.

H3. What are the data for the past five years that serve as quantitative indicators of improved school climate and engagement?

Scores on Parent Satisfaction Survey, Principal Feedback Survey, Gallup Engagement Survey, and SAI, indicate an **increase in employee engagement and parent satisfaction.** (H2) Low teacher turnover rates indicate improved school climate and engagement. (H4) (Teacher turnover in recent years is due to Reduction in Force (RIF), and retirement.) A recent statement by an Esperanza teacher supports this assertion, “*Cheryl’s work in meeting the needs of staff, parents, and students has contributed to improved school climate and engagement.*” A positive school climate, of highly engaged staff and students, represents Dr. Greene’s highest priority.

H4. Data Collection

Criteria	2010 - 2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Average daily student attendance rate*	96.02%	95.33%	96.54%	96.47%	96.68%
Average daily teacher attendance rate	96.06%	95.70%	95.97%	96.72%	98.78%
Teacher turnover rate**	0.00%	11.76%	7.50	4.76%	7.32%
Promotion rate	99.9%	99.9%	100%	99.4%	98.97%
Graduation Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*as reported to the ADE; **Teacher turnover is a function of normal attrition and RIF

I. Challenges

II. Reflecting on the last five years, what major challenges have been addressed? How have they been resolved? What subsequent changes have contributed most to the overall success of the school?

Decreases in Federal, State and local funding, coupled with a downturned economy, have significantly impacted our school community. Expectations for **student outcomes continue to rise** while **school budget and staffing allocations are drastically decreasing.** Decreased funds have resulted in RIFs, larger class sizes, reductions in resources and support, and salary freezes. These factors weigh heavily on staff and considerably impact overall morale; sustaining a positive school culture of highly engaged staff is increasingly more challenging.

The **economic recession** has created a new **set of challenges for students and families.** During the 2006-2007 school-year 18.41% of our students were on FRL, as compared to our current rate of 30.32%. Fall 2011 discipline data indicate an increase in office referrals, possibly due to more clearly defined and consistent reporting. Mobility rates have ranged from a high of 19.23% in 2007-2008, to a low in 2009- 2010 of 16.15%. Mobility rate in 2010-2011 was 18.40%, a higher than average mobility rate for KSD. Records indicate referrals have increased this year due to an increase in reporting. We will continue to monitor discipline data and implement positive supports. (A3) Open enrollment (out of KSD and Esperanza boundaries) represents approximately 1/3 of our students. Ethnic/racial diversity has changed incrementally in five years, but when compared to demographics from 10 years ago, change is more dramatic

(72% of students were white in 2001-2002, compared to 58% in 2011 -2012). Total enrollment has declined in 10 years, while population has become more diverse.

As student population changes, so do social, emotional, and academic needs. These changes coupled with dramatic decreases in funding and available resources, represent our biggest challenges in the last five years. We successfully approached these challenges in a number of ways. We focused on **DuFour's four Critical Questions**, and worked collaboratively as **PLCs** to maximize time, talents, and resources to best meet needs of students. (C1, C2) **Corresponding changes in infrastructure** to our master schedule, including the addition of IFGs and Sacred Wednesdays, inclusive practices, and RtI model for academic and behavioral support (KSIT and PBIS), have contributed to providing a positive learning environment that is responsive to the needs of all students. **PD topics** such as culturally responsive teaching, Common Core Standards, technology programs and software, data analysis, best practices in reading and math, etc., helped teachers acquire new skills and refine instructional delivery and assessment practices to meet diverse needs of students. (C, D, E).

Top 20 Teacher training gave staff tools for responding to internal and external stressors, and strategies for **developing potential of students and colleagues.** (C1) Implementation of Success Club provides an avenue for students to learn new ways of responding appropriately, while building a positive relationship with a caring and supportive adult. (A3) In response to a decrease in our school substitute budget, Dr. Greene and staff designed a **"Sub Plan,"** which includes innovative strategies for reducing our substitute budget, such as requesting district-level staff for support and certified pre-planned absences (at zero cost to our school). Since implementation, sub expenditures decreased by half in the fall of 2011.

12. What are the major educational challenges the school must face over the next five years, and how does the school plan to address them? Outline how you will develop an agenda for action based on relevant information and data.

Over the next five years, one of our major educational challenges is **successfully meeting students' and families' ever-changing social, emotional, and academic needs** while facing continued **budgetary cuts in funding, staffing, and resources.** Full implementation of **AZ 2010 Standards** and successfully raising the cognitive demand of instruction to meet the increased rigor of these new standards, represent our greatest challenge of all. **Program and staff reductions will significantly impact our ability to meet these new challenges.** Changes in staffing and delivery model for services currently provided by our math and literacy coaches are expected for the next school year. Our ability to conduct quality PD in reading and math, coordinate K3 Literacy and Math Interventions and instructional assistants, facilitate meaningful data chats, and provide co-teaching/mentoring opportunities will be greatly diminished.

Esperanza will continue to implement a comprehensive set of strategies to meet the needs of students and address the growing demands placed on educators. Our mission, core values, and four Critical Questions will continue to guide our work and serve as our anchor amidst a rapidly changing world. We will continue to analyze data to inform instruction, monitor student progress, and continually examine our ability to meet desired goals. Working collaboratively as a PLC, we will support students within a systematic set of tightly interwoven programs and interventions to ensure academic success. We will use ADE's new accountability system to identify our **"Target 25"**(students with the lowest growth on AIMS) and work together to move all students forward.