

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

Official School Name: Willie and Coy Payne Junior High School

District Name: Chandler Unified School District

Level (circle all grades that apply): 7 & 8

Previous A+ School of Excellence™? No

Name of **Principal**: Paul Bollard

School Mailing Address, City & Zip: 7655 S. Higley Rd., Queen Creek, AZ 85142

Primary Phone: (480) 244-2400 Principal Phone ext.: 2408

Principal Email Address: Bollard.Paul@cusd80.com

Name of **Superintendent**: Dr. Camille Casteel

District Mailing Address, City & Zip: 1525 W. Frye Rd., Chandler, AZ 85224

Primary Phone: (480) 812-7000 Superintendent Phone ext.: 7600

Superintendent Email Address: Casteel.Camille@cusd80.com

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

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

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

From 6155 E. Indian School Rd, head east on E. Indian School Rd. toward N. 62nd Pl. Turn right onto N. 64th St. Turn left onto E. McDowell Rd. Turn right to merge onto AZ-101 Loop S. Take the exit on the left onto AZ-202 Loop E. Take exit 42 for Val Vista Dr. Turn right onto S. Val Vista Dr. Turn left onto E. Queen Creek Rd. Turn right onto S. Higley Rd. Your destination, 7655 S Higley Rd, Queen Creek, AZ 85142, will be on the left.

Calendar Information:

Best days of week, and times, to observe: No preference

Time school buses begin arriving in the morning: 8:45

Time classes begin: 9:06

Time classes dismiss: 3:57

Spring Break Dates: March 11-25, 2013

Early release, overnight or all-day field trips or other out-of-the-ordinary activities planned that might interfere with a site visit for the period February 4 – April 19, 2013; (indicate grade level(s) affected; February 5th, parent conferences, all grades; March 1st, NAEP, 4th grade; March 11-25, Spring Break, all grades; April 15th-19th, AIMS, all grades.

SIGNATURES:

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

Paul Bolland
Principal's signature

Date January 17, 2013

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

Thomas Custod
Superintendent's signature

Date January 17, 2013

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

Annette Auxier
School Board Member's signature

Date January 17, 2013

Printed name of School Board Member: Annette Auxier

SUBMIT APPLICATION TO:

**Arizona Educational Foundation
6155 E. Indian School Rd., Suite #106
Scottsdale, AZ 85251**

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

Preparation of A+ School of Excellence Application

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

Name (list primary author(s) first)	Position/Title
Fred DePrez, Jr.	Teacher/ Team Leader
Paul Bollard	Principal
Jayson Phillips	Vice Principal
Connie Rice	Counselor
Carrie Shropshire	Counselor
Terri Larson	Teacher/ Department Chair
David Giaramita	Teacher/ Department Chair
Ryan Kussy	Teacher/ Dept. Co-Chair/ Team Lead
Eric Nedow	Teacher/ Advisor PLTW/ Lego Robotics
Brad Eyanson	Teacher/ Department Chair
Stephanie Merrill	Media Specialist/ Team Leader
Kim Johnson	Special Education/ SPED Team Leader
Douglas Mitchell	Teacher/ IT Specialist
Chad Faria	Teacher/ Team Leader
Cindy Bartlett	Teacher/ Team Leader
Rhea Steyer	Teacher/ Team Leader
Whitney Tarbutton	Teacher/ Team Leader
Sean Murphy	CATS Teacher/ CATS Team Leader
Henry Saylor-Sheetz	Teacher/ Team Leader
Jacki O’Roark	Teacher/ Team Leader
Loren Marson	Teacher/ Team Leader
Katrina Toth	Teacher/ Team Leader
Jan Schmidgall	Teacher/ Department Co-Chair
Dianne Penner	Teacher
Jacob Ricks	Student Body President
Kimball Ricks	Student Body Vice President
Abbey Lukac	Student Body Secretary
Madison Clark	Student Body Treasurer
Madison Croxton	Student Body Historian
Tatiana Apodaca	8 th Grade President
Kross Warr	7 th Grade President
Natalia Ramos	7 th Grade Vice President
Melanie Hatch	Parent/ Community Member
Susie Flynn	Parent/ Community Member

Name (list primary author(s) first)

Position/Title

Tonya Parham	Parent/ Community Member
Darlene Healy	Parent/ Community Member
Jill Lukac	Parent/ Community Member
Tracy Maluski	Parent/ Community Member
Danielle Davis	Parent/ Community Member
Polly Sorenson	Parent/ Community Member
Melva Brethauer	Administrative Assistant
Rose Indovino	Registrar
Mary K. Smith	Services Clerk
Ann Marie Schnieder	Attendance Clerk

PART I: DISTRICT AND SCHOOL INFORMATION

DISTRICT INFORMATION

- Total number of students (pre K-12) enrolled in this district: **37,000**
- Number of schools in the district:
 - 29** Elementary schools
 - 0** Middle schools
 - 7** Junior high schools
 - 5** High schools

41 TOTAL

SCHOOL INFORMATION

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
 - Urban or large central city
 - Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
- 2 Number of years the principal has been in his/her position at this school.
4 If less than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
- Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school building:

Pre-K: 0	5 th : 0	9 th : 0
1 st : 0	6 th : 0	10 th : 0
2 nd : 0	7 th : 695	11 th : 0
3 rd : 0	8 th : 691	12 th : 0
4 th : 0		

TOTAL: 1386

- Racial/ethnic composition of students in the school:

0.94% (13) American Indian or Alaska Native
5.63% (78) Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
5.5.1% (76) Black or African American
13.71% (190) Hispanic or Latino
73.59% (1020) White
0.65% (9) Other; specify: **Multi-Racial**

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: **3.75%**

(This rate was calculated 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: **2**

As a % of total student population: **0.15%**

a. Total Number of languages represented: **1**

b. Specify languages: **Spanish**

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

Total number: **226**

As a % of total student population: **16.31**

10. Students receiving special education services:

Total number: **138**

As a % of total student population: **16.31%**

74 Specific Learning Disability

54 DD/Health Impaired/Autistic

10 Other Severe (specify): Emotionally Disabled

Payne Jr. High is not the district site for any specific special education magnet program.

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

Number of Staff	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	2	0
Classroom teachers	57	1
Specials: Therapists	0	4
Resource teachers/specialists	7	0
Other	3	0
Paraprofessionals	8	0
Other Support staff	21	2
Total:	98	7

There have been no significant changes in the data reported in items 1-11 that have occurred during the past five years.

PART II – SCHOOL SUMMARY

Payne Junior High School's rigorous academics, superior extracurricular activities, outstanding staff, and commitment to community values make it one of the finest in the Chandler Unified School District. That fact is reflected in the Arizona Department of Education's current rating of Payne as a grade "A" school, in addition to designating Payne an "Excelling School" for five consecutive years. While Payne's facilities are not notably different than many other schools', its unique location immediately sets it apart. Nestled at the foot of the gorgeous San Tan Regional Mountain Range, Payne serves an area that continues to develop rapidly. Payne invests itself in that growth by prioritizing community involvement in traditions such as Payne's annual carnival, family nights for incoming seventh graders, and an annual ceremony where community members present special awards.

Within Payne's culture of achievement, teachers demonstrate a life-long commitment to learning and regularly win recognition for their work. They have received awards such as the ASU College of Education Mary Lou Fulton Outstanding Student and Student Council Advisor of the Year, numerous grants from organizations including the Chandler Education Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, invitations to special programs such as the Honeywell/ NASA Space Camp and the Horace Mann Lincoln Fellowship program, and have had various texts and research articles published. For Payne's staff, however, the greatest reward has been found in student achievement.

Payne prides itself in attaining some of the highest AIMS scores in the district and state. In addition, seven students earned perfect scores on the ACT's Explore Test over the past two years. Payne student athletes have won nearly 30 conference titles since opening in 2005, numerous Special Olympics medals, and boast special titles such as the Herkie Team Award for cheerleading. In fact, students have won significant accolades through a variety of extracurricular activities, including Most Spirited Junior High in Chandler, special recognition in 4H competitions, a Knowledge Bowl state title, the Most Innovative Structure Award at the Future City Competition, Coolest Model Award at the Aerospace Challenge, and an "Excelling" rating for the school's jazz band. Individually students have also won numerous awards, including 19 Hispanic Mother Daughter Awards, the Sunwise Prevention Poster contest, the Grand Canyon State Games writing contest, and 26 state science fair awards in the past year alone. Beyond awards, Payne's civic-minded students have logged hundreds of hours of community service and raised large amounts of money for charity through various donation drives, including more than \$22,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society over the past five years.

Together, all stakeholders at Payne strive to meet extremely high standards on and off campus through academic and extracurricular achievement, as well as civic contribution and citizenship. Payne students and staff approach their diverse surroundings with open arms and bring an unmatched value to the many communities, programs, and activities in which they participate. More importantly, Payne continuously seeks out ways to grow and succeed.

PART III – CLEAR FOCUSED MISSION

Payne's Mission Statement is

- to provide students innovative opportunities for educational excellence in a safe, supportive, and rigorous environment.

Payne's three-fold Vision Statement is to ensure

- our students will achieve academic success and social growth through the use of 21st century skills needed for a more efficient future in an ever broadening global economy;
- our staff will cultivate a culture of excellence that promotes creative and critical thinking through professional collaboration and continual education;
- our community will assist in the advancement of education by recognizing student success and providing educational experiences for all students.

Payne Junior High School's Mission and Vision Statements were developed collaboratively by all stakeholders through several meetings including leadership, staff, students and parents to ensure a clearly articulated and commonly understood philosophy. They have been patterned after the Mission and Vision set forth by the Chandler Unified School District, highlighting Payne's commitment to and recognition of the school's role as a member of a larger community.

Payne's Mission and Vision Statements reflect the underlying philosophy that a successful learning environment is student-centered, invests all stakeholders, and is adaptive to a changing and increasingly dynamic global community. Payne has set a variety of goals and has created programs designed to reflect and address that belief. Payne has enthusiastically adopted Chandler Unified School District's Journey 2020 initiative, and is creating innovative ways to ensure that evidence of academic excellence and success continues for many years to come. Furthermore, students are prepared to perform at a high level not only through rigorous classroom instruction, but through academic programs designed to meet the diverse needs and skills of the student body. Since 2006, Payne has offered four sections of AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), a highly successful program that provides support for college-bound students to achieve their dreams of higher education. In addition, approximately 220 students per year enroll in Gateway to Technology, a specialized course through Project Lead the Way. This program, supported by Intel, prepares students to be innovative leaders in the fields of science, technology, mathematics, and engineering (STEM). Many students also broaden their academic spectrum by taking honors or CATS (Chandler Academically Talented Students) courses or classes in music, art, life skills, Spanish, athletics, and computers. Payne's leadership has additionally provided a systemic process for collecting and analyzing student achievement data. The collaborative programs ensure clear articulation of specific learning goals, application of best practices, and efforts predicated on data-driven results. As such, the Mission and Vision Statements are not dusty relics tucked away in the darkest recesses of the school's collective conscious, but are the guiding principles that inform the actions of all stakeholders.

PART IV – EFFECTIVE SCHOOL EVIDENCE DOCUMENTATION

A. Strong Instructional Leadership

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

Payne Jr. High has a strong network of leadership which is tasked by Principal Paul Bollard with setting and communicating coherent standards and expectations of effective professional practice. The administration focuses all stakeholders towards those goals through a collaborative process of reflecting upon data and practice. Through this carefully and clearly structured framework, instructional leadership is developed over the course of the school year as a dynamic process in which all staff members are invested in their roles not only as teachers, but also as active learners. In so doing, the instructional community moves beyond the all too common problem of educational islands, on which independent practitioners apply loosely connected strategies and methods. Rather, Payne's staff is inherently connected into a single body of professional practice based upon a common understanding of goals and purpose, data-based reviews of progress, and collaborative revisions of the school's efforts towards communicating and achieving its goals. In short, Payne's administration has placed itself as the foundation, rather than the focus, of the school's vision of creating a community of life long learners. As such, all members of Payne's professional community are inherently invested in the development, execution, and review of the school's efforts towards creating a culture of excellence.

Payne's leadership roles are structured bureaucratically from the principal, vice principal, dean, and counselors, to department chairs and teacher leaders. Each leadership role is designed to ensure shared responsibility for the common purpose of creating an environment of success. Department chairs are selected by the administration to provide curriculum support, demonstrate good practice, and in-depth knowledge of the subject area. They have also taken the lead in learning about and implementing Common Core Standards. This role requires not only articulation with the administration and department members, but with the district, state, and greater professional community. In addition to departmental leadership, Payne utilizes team teaching, grouping core subject area teachers to oversee a specific group of roughly 120 students, and a variety of committees which range in purpose from providing support for special education to strengthening bonds within the school. Membership in these smaller focus groups further invests each staff member into the school's vision and practices, and each is guided by a teacher leader. Team leaders are selected through vote of team members. Their role is to provide support to other teachers by communicating school goals and processes, then providing aid in the implementation of those practices. Committee leaders are selected by the administration, though teachers typically volunteer for the roles. Their function is to promote a specific element of the school's vision. Through these structures communication is streamlined and dynamic, allowing for an easy flow of information between all stakeholders while ensuring shared responsibility for school success as an inherent element of Payne's culture.

In a school as large as Payne it would be easy for mind and body to become separated, with each appendage pulling in different directions towards accomplishment of its isolated function.

Through the school's systems of divided but shared responsibilities, however, Payne's leadership is able to ensure policies, programs, relations, and resources focus on promoting teaching and learning to meet student needs as a single functional organism. Each structural division meets regularly and acts as its own professional learning community (PLC) where the broader mission is developed and applied through the unique lens of the specific group. Math education, for example, is informed by the department chair who can clearly and specifically articulate the school's vision and practice through the context of her specific expertise and broader understanding of district and national practice. In turn, the math department as a PLC can discuss implementation and work through problems of practice. The chair is thereby invested with specific and relevant information to connect and develop practices across the curriculum at monthly meetings between departments and administration. The same processes are duplicated between teams and committees, building an intricate web of communication which serves to move Payne's professional body towards intelligent and coordinated action.

Inherent within this schema is the constant identification of areas in which professional development is required and ensuring it is obtained. A recent example of the efficiency within this system came through Payne's annual identification of a Problem of Practice—the specific and concrete educational goal decided upon by Payne's stakeholders through the guidance of the administration. Once the goal was articulated and each department and team began work on its implementation, it became apparent that common strategies were needed; in this case they were strategies which promote 21st Century skills such as critical thinking common to AVID programs. Administration then provided training to all staff members in the implementation of those strategies—first universally with the whole staff, then again within each discipline. In so doing, it became clear that some instructors needed greater support, which was provided through modeling by master teachers. Additionally, several teachers were sent to regional AVID training to gain a greater understanding and mastery, which could then be shared with the broader community. The process focused the staff and the school's programs and resources towards a specific, concrete, and measurable goal designed to meet student needs.

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

Data Wise is a school committee at the forefront of continued evaluation and planning to ensure Payne is always moving forward towards greater student achievement and academic excellence. At the beginning of each school year, the special committee, chaired by Vice Principal Jayson Philips, presents the staff with data on student achievement from the previous school year, specifically focused on data from Arizona's Instruments to Measure Standards. The staff reviews the data and identifies a specific area of concern, or Learner Centered Problem (LCP). Once identified, the staff collaborates to identify potential gaps in programs and methodology called a Problem of Practice (PoP). The LCP and PoP then informs all policies and programs towards a common cross-curricular goal for improvement. This collaborative effort ensures all stakeholders are inherently invested in the development and implementation of the school's Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan is then implemented through a continuous process of application and assessment. Once the PoP is articulated, each department begins the process of implementing solutions within the specific discipline. Baselines of student achievement are established through

school-wide data collection before the strategies are introduced, and reviewed periodically throughout the year as they are applied. Short term formative assessments are discussed within teams, allowing for small scale adjustments and student-centered adaptations. Those experiences are then related through departmental meetings which combine the “realities on the ground” towards a more meaningful and adaptive implementation of the identified strategies towards the articulated objective. Summative assessments are then used to track development and establish a broader picture of academic improvement across curriculums. The process culminates in the yearly review of AIMS data, whereby student progress can be seen as year-over-year improvement and reassessed in terms of LCP and PoP.

Professional development, feedback, and support are intrinsically imbued within this process. As policies and practices are discussed throughout the community, professional development is provided to ensure instructors are knowledgeable and comfortable within their implementation. Support is provided by the administration, department chairs, and teacher leaders to ensure that the plan and practices are coherent and accessible. Teachers are given the opportunity to observe master teachers, discuss their own experiences within and without their disciplines, and provided with specific, immediate feedback regarding their own progress through a computerized system. Further, input through the computer-based tool is provided not only by administrators and teacher leaders, but by peers. Combined, the efforts create a non-threatening, collaborative community which further involves stakeholders in the Strategic Plan as a communal effort.

The paradigm invests all parties in a dynamic system of data-based assessment and school-wide collaboration in developing, implementing, and critically reviewing the school’s Strategic Plan. It frames school improvement as a continuous, communal effort towards meeting the challenges of academic success in the 21st century, rather than as a distant dictate imposed upon the staff.

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

At Payne, all stakeholders are invested in discussing, planning, and implementing school policies through participation in a variety of smaller but interconnected groups. The school’s leadership provides a variety of forums for discussion and collaboration between stakeholders. Decisions of critical importance are then approached democratically, allowing each group to voice its specific interests to create a consensus for actionable improvement.

The most illustrative and relevant example, due to its scope, is seen through the implementation of Payne’s Strategic Plan. At a staff meeting, Data Wise provided the staff with AIMS data. As a professional community, student comprehension was identified as a specific area for improvement. Panther Prep, a special committee tasked with developing student academic skills, created an assessment to more clearly identify and articulate an area of student need. The test was given to all students. Teachers then met in cross-curricular teams to discuss and analyze the data, to arrive at a specific learning target. Those discussions led to the identification of the specific Learner Centered Problem; in this case, there was an expressed deficit in the student’s ability to draw and make inferences and conclusions.

Through conversations between instructors, their students and parents, then between members of cross-curricular teams and within departments, and finally between teacher leaders and administration, a Problem of Practice was identified. In this case, it was the need for a common cross-curricular tool for students to make inferences and draw conclusions. As the Strategic Plan was implemented, all stakeholders had the opportunity to voice their experiences ensuring the decisions made within the Strategic Plan were crafted by the larger community. The specific tools were then adapted and honed based on that input, within the structure created by the administration. By providing specific forums for discourse and development, all stakeholders were and are intrinsically a part of planning and developing the school's Strategic Plan in a manner that allows their voice to be heard as part of a choir rather than cacophony of competing views and interests. As such, stakeholders' individual interests have become inseparable from the school's Mission.

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

Payne has integrated technology into all parts of its day-to-do functions. The school utilizes computer-based planning calendar, email, and regularly updated websites to communicate with staff, parents, and the community. Teachers post assignments and necessary resources on individual websites which average hundreds of daily visits by students and parents. Teams use websites to convey goals, policies and school information. The school uses its website to create an easy portal for parents and students to access the sites, as well as distribute newsletters and other pertinent information. This web-based system further allows for a user-friendly experience through an option to register for automatic updates.

Payne teachers utilize AMI, an online data warehouse provided by Chandler Unified School District, which allows teachers to access and analyze past AIMS scores for all students. The data is reviewed by instructors individually and more globally in department meetings. The program provides one portal for continuous assessment of school progress and student success. Additionally, Payne uses an online framework for teacher assessment called iObservation, a program developed by educational leader Dr. Robert Marzano. The system allows teachers immediate access to feedback from administrators, teacher leaders and peers. It also provides a clearly articulated structure for discourse between instructors and leadership. Taken as a whole, these programs provide for clear communication and efficient development through greater accessibility to data and a refined articulation of goals and common vernacular. They underlie Payne's efforts to integrate available technologies not just to improve programmatic communication and functionality, but to set the collection, evaluation, and interpretation of data as the basis for decision-making through intelligent, collaborative discourse.

B. School Organization and Culture

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

One of the greatest challenges of developing a cohesive culture of success within a large school is the communication of the school's Mission and values. Payne has developed a number of

systems to ensure all stakeholders are incorporated within its community in a manner that reflects positivity through action and recognition. At the foundation of those efforts, Payne employs a strategy which groups a math, language arts, social studies, science, and resource teacher into a “team” with an average of 120 students. This structure fosters a “school within a school” atmosphere which opens a less intimidating pathway towards student involvement and success, while streamlining communication of the school’s Mission, values, and programs.

Teams help invest students in the school by creating unique avenues for identity and collaboration within the greater community. Students adopt team names, colors, and mottos designed to emphasize the school’s values and beliefs. Students wear customized shirts weekly, and regularly participate in friendly competitions across teams, promoting pride and communal achievement. The system increases student buy-in within the community while fostering a spirit of collaborative effort and problem solving. Further, teaming promotes direct communication of school Mission and values through more intimate student relationships with peers and staff. Individual achievement is recognized regularly within teams through small celebrations of progress, publishing student work, and recognition over the school’s announcements and at assemblies. Teachers also make a unique effort to recognize individual achievement and positive behaviors by sending students personalized post cards, called Good News Cards, each month.

More broadly, Payne has developed a regular set of practices which serve to build positive relations among students, staff, parents, and the community. Payne hosts an annual Welcome Day, Curriculum Night, and Carnival to create and foster an inclusive atmosphere while building awareness of investment in the school’s Mission and values. Payne also hosts a quarterly celebration for a pair of students from each team, chosen for their exemplary citizenship and academic leadership. The students are recognized for their achievements in front of their peers, parents, and the school’s staff. There is special recognition of students who make honor roll, as well as a special luncheon for students who make the Principal’s List for high academic achievement. Extracurricular success is also recognized through quarterly assemblies and performances. High participation in all of these events reflects the investment of all stakeholders in the creation and nurture of the pervasively positive climate at Payne.

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

Payne has taken many innovative steps towards creating a positive and safe learning environment for all students and adults. The community embraces the fact that simply identifying and eliminating problematic behavior does not create a positive atmosphere, just one that is not bad. Payne’s efforts to transcend those trappings have been towards emphasizing expectations of respect, involvement, and positive behavior rather than merely outlining inappropriate behaviors and potential consequences. As such, students are engaged in a variety of collaborative activities with adults that focus the communal mentality on developing and sustaining a safe and orderly environment.

One of the most illustrative programs of Payne’s commitment to creating such an environment is through a program called the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Based on the program developed by Dr. Dan Olweus, currently through Clemson University, the program allows

students and teachers to explore and discuss various forms of bullying and appropriate solutions for preventing and dealing with such behaviors. Through these twice monthly, school-wide conversations, students and adults develop a vision of what Payne's community should look like, while investing all members in the responsibility to create it. Moreover, the program creates a safe and cooperative forum for discussing issues related to social, cultural, and human diversity, which are often glossed over due to the difficulty in discussing them. The discussions, activities, and role-playing allow students to practice and understand their individual responsibilities, while recognizing the necessity of such self-direction in creating a larger safe and orderly environment.

Another such program is based on the Pillars of Character. Each month, Payne focuses its community on one of the traits inherent to a functional society that is respectful of, and responsive to, shared, democratic values. The trait is posted in classrooms and discussed over announcements. Teachers do a variety of activities to emphasize the trait and open dialogue about what the characteristic looks like and why it is important to the school's climate. While the trait of *trustworthiness* is focused on, for example, language arts teachers might select reading pieces which open discussion about trust, while social studies teachers discuss the concept as it applies to their lessons. Each trait is color coded, and connected to a special recognition program called Panther Paws. Students observed doing something demonstrative of the month's character trait are given a Panther Paw, which allows them to enter an expedited lunch line. The process increases awareness while creating a culture that looks to emphasize desired behaviors, rather than simply focusing on the negative.

The effectiveness of these programs is highlighted by the lack of discipline issues, high involvement rates, and general pride and respect exhibited by Payne students. For example, participation in social events such as school dances has been so high that the administration has had to change the location to facilitate the number of students seeking involvement. Similarly, interest in becoming involved in the school has manifested in such high participation rates for athletics that tryouts regularly include nearly 25% of the total student population. Though small examples, they are nonetheless exemplary of a school culture that strives to create a community built on respect and participation.

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

As noted, Payne has a variety of programs built with the intention of investing all stakeholders in the creation and maintenance of a positive and safe environment in which cooperation, founded on mutual trust and respect, is inherent. Within Payne's culture, students are encouraged to build sustainable, caring relationships with peers and adults. This is most evident through Payne's teaming paradigm. The transition between schools is often overwhelming for students for myriad reasons; the social adjustment and development of healthy, inclusive relationships is particularly difficult for junior high students. Teaming allows students to begin to build those relationships within a smaller group of peers and adults. Through greater and more intimate knowledge of the students within the teams, adults aid students in navigating those relationships while encouraging positive and mature social growth. Through this process, students grow in a framework that promotes long lasting, meaningful relationships between peers and adults. Moreover, it vests

students in the parallel growth and success of their peers through the development of a shared identity built through shared experiences.

Despite the best efforts of any community, however, there is always a risk of individuals feeling isolated from the group and its successes. Payne has a number of tools it applies, both proactive and reactive, to mitigate that problem. Students struggling to grasp a piece of the school's academic success are invited to tutoring sessions and paired with peer partners. The school's AVID program invites non-AVID students to special meetings to share strategies for organization and personal responsibility. Teachers and administrators also meet with struggling students through a mentorship program that aids students in developing schemes for goal setting and monitoring individual successes. Panther Prep goes further in providing students with keys to academic success and inclusion prior to issues arising. Socially and physically, students are taught to navigate the pain of negative interactions through Olweus. The program not only empowers students with personal tools to deal with frustration, anger, teasing and bullying, but invests them with the skills to identify and assist other students in the community experiencing negativity or isolation. Further, Payne sponsors a variety of clubs and athletics which allow students pathways towards involvement. One such club, specifically focused on building the larger community, is called Panther Pals. The club pairs special needs students with other students on campus. The club allows the kids to participate in organized social events and builds bonds between students who might not otherwise interact. Through this vast interconnected network of programs, Payne ensures all students have a path towards involvement, with adults deeply invested in guiding them to and along those pathways.

At the foundation of all Payne's efforts to create a healthy and safe learning environment is the engagement of all stakeholders in making a positive impact. The administrators and counselors are assigned specific classes which they work with through seventh and eighth grade. In so doing, the administrators build a more intimate relationship with, and knowledge of, their students. The counselors maintain an "open-door" policy which allows students to come in and discuss any problems or concerns they may have. Paraprofessionals are assigned to teams, and work closely with classroom teachers to ensure all students are supported, not just those with documented needs. The school's security guard is visible daily in the halls and at sporting events, and frequently stops into classrooms to observe. The custodial staff is involved in school functions and invests so much effort into the campus that they have been recognized with awards by the staff and in the district.

All stakeholders' efforts underlie the greater spirit of Payne's community by distinguishing them from stereotyped roles. The administrators and counselors are not isolated from students' daily lives, exacting discipline from behind closed doors and without context. Paraprofessionals are not present to do mandated fly-bys of "special" students. The security guard is not tasked merely with identifying and apprehending miscreants. Rather, all stakeholders' actions reveal engagement in Payne's atmosphere of cooperatively attained success through shared responsibility and action.

C. Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

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

At Payne, essential knowledge is carefully defined and sequenced so all students have ample opportunity to learn. The curriculum is built on the Common Core Standards, which has informed the development, implementation, monitoring, and improvement of all academic programs. Globally, Payne works departmentally to refine Chandler Unified School District sequencing blueprints through departmental meetings where content goals are discussed and organized to better meet the needs of the school's population. Through these meetings, best practices can be matched to the specific content targeted by the objective. A variety of formative and summative tools and procedures are in place to monitor implementation, including regular checks for understanding using a school-wide four-point rubric, departmental tests, and district benchmarks. The resulting data is then used to revise and further improve instruction to meet the needs of students. Specifically, Panther Prep and Data Wise are integral to the school's commitment to monitoring and evaluating learning for continuous improvement.

Inherent within Payne's implementation of Common Core Standards is staff development and in-service programs at both school-wide and departmental levels. Teachers have responded to this new training by assessing gaps and identifying needs for improvement in the classroom. Another aspect of professional development is provided through observations and evaluation by administrators and colleagues. Such data is almost immediately available to teachers through the online teacher assessment tool, iObservation. This data includes observation of student's skills and activities as they pertain to the specific learning goals and teaching methods within the different content areas. As such, the tool goes beyond traditional teacher observation by promoting expedient discussion of the delivery of academic content, while measuring and monitoring all student populations' opportunity to learn in near real-time. Collectively, these procedures help articulate and define not just curriculum, but discussion and understanding of best teaching practices based on current research.

Through these formal processes, where data regarding curriculum and implementation are continuously collected and evaluated, school leadership ensures clear articulation of standards through authentic teacher collaboration across and within grade levels without burdening instructional time.

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

Payne's science department covers a variety of general topics including science inquiry, genetics, chemistry, physics, and health with a special emphasis on science literacy goals as articulated through Common Core Standards. The science department strives to incorporate the school's Mission to provide students innovative opportunities for educational excellence in a safe, supportive, and rigorous environment. That effort is exemplified through the utilization of hands-on and project based learning activities, such as labs and research projects, which engage students in the processes of scientific inquiry and critical thinking. All students at Payne participate in presenting their work through science fair projects. The projects are assessed through comprehensive rubrics, and are frequently selected to compete in district, regional and

state competitions. In fact, in the past year alone, Payne students have won more than 25 awards at the state science fair, including the United States Navy/Marine Corps naval Science Award and the Southwest Association for Education in Biomedical Research award.

The science department employs a variety of strategies to help students achieve academic success and social growth. Payne utilizes fieldtrips and presentations to create authentic learning opportunities and show students how science is part of everyday life. This reinforces content that is later assessed on formative and summative quizzes and tests, which is then used to inform instruction and practice. Inherent within the science curriculum's successful implementation has been the incorporation of 21st century skills to pave a way towards academic success and participation in an ever broadening global economy. Students incorporate critical thinking, systems thinking, and problem solving through the scientific method and drawing conclusions from labs and experiments. Learners utilize interpersonal skills and collaboration through group work designed to enhance teamwork and communication. Students are also regularly given opportunities to incorporate technology into their learning.

The science department actively cultivates a culture of excellence through professional collaboration and continual education. In addition to regular departmental meetings where goals and desired learning outcomes are discussed, the science department has reached across curriculums to incorporate reading, writing, and mathematics skills and literacy within a scientific context. Instructors have taken their roles as active learners seriously by participating in a variety of continuing education programs. Payne science teachers have been selected for special training including the GK-12 program with Arizona State University and the National Science Foundation, and the Honeywell / NASA Space Camp program.

The science department also reaches out to the community to assist in advancing authentic educational opportunities through a variety of extra-curricular clubs and programs, such as science club, engineering club, and the NASA project/competition. Each includes an opportunity for students to hear guest speakers and conduct inquiry into real world problems. A clear example of this effort comes through Gateway to Technology (GTT), a special course through Project Lead the Way (PLTW) sponsored by Intel. It addresses the interests and energy of middle school students, while incorporating national standards in math, science and technology. GTT is activity oriented to show students how technology is used in engineering to solve everyday problems. The instructional units excite and motivate students to use 21st Century skills and teach them to be creative and innovative, while gaining the experience they need to develop, produce and use products and services. The course prepares students to be the most innovative and productive leaders in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) by making meaningful, pioneering contributions to the world. PLTW partners with middle schools and high schools to provide a rigorous, relevant STEM education that encourages the development of problem-solving skills, critical thinking, creative and innovative reasoning, and a love for learning. The PLTW STEM education courses give students a brighter future by providing them with a foundation and proven path to college and career success in STEM-related fields. STEM education is at the heart of today's high-tech, high-skill global economy. By utilizing community support through its myriad clubs and courses, Payne's science department ensures students have educational opportunities that will help make them productive in a global economy.

As a whole, the science department has developed a curriculum designed to go beyond the state standards. It is exemplary of the work all curricular areas place on meeting student needs while establishing high, clearly articulated standards and ensuring pathways to positive, measurable outcomes. The department has set the school's Mission and Vision statement as its guiding principle by investing all stakeholders in fostering ingenuity, creativity, and innovation within all students.

Another exemplar of Payne's unique programs, Arizona Project WET Water Investigations Program, was introduced in 2011 and 2012 by Language Arts teacher Rhea Steyer and the "Green Extreme" team. The Water Investigations Program (WIP) is a new Arizona Project WET (APW) program focused on middle school students. Research shows the middle school years encompass a critical time for preparing students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in college, career and life. This new program focuses on building key 21st Century Skills such as critical thinking and problem solving through relevant, project based learning and student driven inquiry. It also accomplishes STEM subject integration and highlights 21st Century communication and collaboration, widely identified as driving forces in preparing student for viability in an ever broadening global economy.

The WIP covers three thematic units over the course of a school year. The Water Use Inquiry first engages students in water audits of their school and homes. They learn good scientific practice and fundamental inquiry questioning skills. The second thematic unit, the Water Resources & Supply Inquiry, focuses on building connections between urban water use and water in Arizona's riparian areas, providing students with a critical look at the interconnection of all water resources and water uses. Students develop the context needed to investigate water in the region. The WIP concludes with the Riparian Inquiry that culminates in a field study to a Nature Conservancy Preserve or local riparian area. Here teams of students are challenged to design and conduct investigations of their own testable questions. Students experience firsthand the value of water in this arid region.

At the end of the school year, all students have an opportunity to present their research findings to their peers. This unique experience allows students to share the significance of their work and develop their science communication and literacy skills while fostering excitement about higher education opportunities. Ultimately, the students demonstrate their understanding of cross-curricular learning goals. The program is indicative of Payne's best by tying Common Core Standards to the school's Vision Statement, making students, staff and community integral partners in learning. The students discover the connection between water use and the environment through this yearlong journey focused on water, while measuring the real-world impact of their project in more than 200,000 gallons of water saved.

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

Payne provides a variety of programs and support to ensure all learners, including those with unique needs, are provided with equal access to challenging content and authentic opportunities to learn. Within teams, the teachers, specialists, and paraprofessionals collaborate to provide

differentiated instruction. Across all programs, summative and formative data is used to monitor and ensure student success.

Payne's gifted program, CATS, is a self-contained program designed to encourage advanced learning. In order to meet the needs of CATS students, all core subject concepts are taught at an accelerated level and pace. The program is also broadly based, providing students opportunities to develop socially and cognitively. Inherent within the CATS program are extended opportunities for critical and creative thinking, flexible grouping, and advanced activities that allow children to learn in the company of intellectual peers. Additionally, Payne offers two sections of AVID, a national program with proven results that provides support for college-bound students. There are also two sections which enroll students in Gateway to Technology, a specialized course through Project Lead the Way. This program, supported by Intel, prepares students to be innovative leaders in the fields of science, technology, mathematics, and engineering (STEM).

Each team has at least one section for honors English and honors math. Students are identified and placed in the classes through teacher recommendations, parent input, student interest, classroom performance, test scores, and AIMS scores. Incoming sixth grade students are generally assigned to honors classes based on AIMS scores; additionally, teachers are encouraged to identify new students who would be better situated in honors or gifted programs.

Each team also has a designated special education teacher to help monitor and instruct students with learning disabilities or special needs. The specialists are integral to the teaming system, providing critical support to students, supervision and guidance for paraprofessionals, and critical collaboration with core subject teachers to ensure every student's access to curriculum. Students struggling to achieve success are referred to Teaching Assistance Teams (TATs) to identify and implement possible accommodations for differentiated instruction based upon best practices. TATs may also recommend students for testing to identify discrepancies between aptitude and achievement.

To ensure the least restrictive environment for all students, ELL students are mainstreamed with support. Children with specific educational needs as identified through 504 Plans or IEP documentation, or by METs, may be placed in special classes for math and reading without being removed from their teams. Achievement is carefully monitored through computer based testing, allowing specialists to continuously tailor instruction and set goals aimed at helping students meet grade-level curricular expectations and successfully transition to their next level of schooling. Students with significant learning disabilities as identified through IEPs are placed in a self-contained class for their core academics without being isolated from the larger community. The students participate in all electives and school activities, as well as a club called Panther Pals where the students with and without special needs engage in numerous social activities.

D. Active Teaching and Learning

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

instructional strategies and behaviors; reflection on teaching; and collegiality and professionalism.

Payne utilizes a mentoring program to ensure novice teachers are paired with experienced instructors as they endeavor to master the craft of teaching. The program allows for discussions of, and training on, best professional practices ranging from planning, instruction, and assessment to classroom management and communication with parents and colleagues. Moreover, mentoring allows both participants the time to reflect upon and discuss their experiences while evaluating the effectiveness of specific methods and strategies within Payne's unique student population. Special to the program is the inclusion of experienced teachers new to Chandler Unified School District. This allows for a dynamic paradigm in which school practices are taught to those new to the community while creating a forum for fresh insights and perspectives to be presented. The school is organized to ensure adequate resources by providing time for mentors and new teachers to meet while investing in specific training for mentors and novices, both individually and collectively. Through these efforts, Payne not only sets a foundation for professional collegiality, but establishes a collaborative model for teaching and continuing development.

At Payne, all teachers are invested in supporting high expectations for student learning. Several programs are in place to ensure that core literacy skills and critical thinking are an integral part of instruction. At the forefront, Panther Prep provides teachers with lessons and methods for addressing those skills while opening a school-wide dialogue regarding content, goals, and practice. Data Wise further invests instructors by aiding in the collection of meaningful data as well as the tools for understanding and adapting methods according to measurable results. Data is used to break down assignments to check for mastery of student learning. It is also used to see where extra instruction is needed. Through Data Wise, the school collects and analyzes short-term, medium-term and long-term data that is within departments and across grades and disciplines. Additional strategies used across grades and subjects are cross-curricular planning, emphasis on depth of knowledge, and professional evaluations provided through instructional rounds and observations. The collection and use of data as the center-piece of all programs and instruction at Payne helps assure student's have a deep understanding of content and context rather than simple exposure.

Teacher efforts extend beyond the classroom to special programs before, during, and after school. Staff members model and enforce high expectations while monitoring students outside the classroom and while coaching, tutoring, and serving as Club Advisors. Many staff voluntarily attend activities outside of their required duties.

In totality, these systems foster a professionalism built upon collaboration through continued evaluation and growth, both as individual teachers and as a member of the broader learning community.

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

Teachers at PJHS meet as grade levels as well as departments to develop instructional units and lesson plans across grades and levels. The decisions made at these meetings are guided by the data collected through Panther Prep and Data Wise. This collaborative system allows for data-based discussions concerning best practice, prior learning, and current levels. Teachers are thus able to reduce duplication and ensure consistency with Common Core Standards while pooling their collective expertise to ensure high student engagement.

Teachers communicate learning goals to students by posting them in their classroom and adapting a common rubric used in all Payne classes to the specific content of the lesson or unit. The rubric allows students to measure and track their learning and establishes learning as a dynamic process of inquiry and acquisition. Additionally, teachers introduce and end each lesson or unit by allowing students to reflect and identify the importance of their learning while making connections with what they have learned within and across disciplines. Payne's teachers also assure students' deep understanding by teaching to various learning styles (verbal, visual, kinesthetic, etc.), using assessment data, re-teaching as needed, cross-curricular teaching, hands-on lessons, implementing best research based practices, and by monitoring students' self reflection and evaluations. Teachers provide tutoring, use their assessment data to drive instruction, and follow diverse methods including AVID models to aid student growth and learning. These practices help set high, clear expectations as instructors model expected behaviors, cooperative learning, and measurable achievement.

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

Predicated upon 21st Century and literacy skills, Payne's teachers provide a variety of hands-on and investigative activities, including independent and collaborative group projects, which allow students to apply critical thinking to real life situations. As noted, all science students participate in a science fair that requires them to pose a question from observations and use scientific inquiry to answer their question through collecting and analyzing data to draw a conclusion. Students also complete hands-on lab activities in their integrated science classes. For example, the Deadliest Catch Lab, completed in seventh grade science, allows students to create boats out of various materials that could sustain (weights) simulating storms/waves. During the unit on environmental science, students participate in learning about alternative energy and create their own prototypes to solving the fossil fuel crises. In math classes, students complete data analysis projects, which include data collection, making graphs and comparing data. Students look at proportional relationships with unit rates, similar figures, and finding the better buy to become better consumers.

In social studies, students use primary source documents and current pieces of media to make meaningful connections between historical themes and their own lives. Those connections are developed collaboratively through experiential models such as role playing and Socratic chairs. For example, eighth grade gifted students are assigned a court case where they are given the role of either prosecutor or defense attorney and must research facts, find evidence, develop arguments, create a presentation, and orally argue their case to the class. The project ties together all standards and demands creativity and originality as well as higher level critical thinking skills that demonstrate logical and complex problem solving abilities and thoughtful evaluation.

In English classes, students read and compare a variety of texts to make meaningful connections. For example, all seventh grade students read *The Outsiders* and related non-fiction and poetry. Through guided discussion and projects, students move beyond simple comprehension by connecting themes within the fiction to real world situations and personal experiences. Students have applied their learning regarding functional texts and technological resources to create and complete charitable drives, such as a recent campaign to write letters to, and raise money for, American soldiers stationed abroad.

CATS students competed in two separate problem-based learning events: Future City and the Aerospace Challenge. In these competitions, students work in small groups to create a plan for problems that may occur in the future. From their plan, they build models and must be able to explain their plan to a group of judges. The projects culminated in awards for both contests in 2011.

Payne furthers those learning opportunities through volunteerism and charitable contributions. The school has raised awareness and funds for charitable organizations, including more than \$22,000 for the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society. Students and staff have participated in the Relay for Life event, and regularly conduct school-wide drives for canned goods, toys, and toiletries. Sports teams have also raised funds to purchase turkeys for the district-wide Turkey Drive at Thanksgiving. The National Junior Honor Society and Student Council organize and execute many of the school's drives and volunteer time in the community. The various efforts help create global citizens, build real world experiences and achievements, and provide meaningful connections to the community.

Payne also offers opportunities to make connections with future professional opportunities. The AVID program allows students to meet and talk with individuals in different career paths that they might be interested in. These volunteers come into the classroom to get students interested in various professional fields. The AVID students also take field trips to local universities and businesses to get real world experiences. Individual classroom teachers also invite guest speakers from various fields to speak, exposing students to many of the vocational options available to them. In the engineering classes, called GK-12, a local engineering graduate student comes to the classroom and helps to promote engineering while guiding teachers with inquiry-based lesson throughout the entire year.

The vast majority of students feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment after each of these projects and confidence in their ability to think critically and communicate those thoughts. They leave the projects with respect for the power of language and its ability to influence others while affecting real world outcomes. Moreover, within each project the students are inherently invested in making decisions regarding their use of class time and resources, planning specific learning experiences, and evaluating success. They build real associations between their learning and the broader world which yield a foundation for future academic and career decisions.

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

A variety of every day resources are available to teachers and students for instruction, gathering information, and collaborating. They include emails, staff meetings, department meetings, websites, constant communication between teachers, students and parents, the Instructional Resource Center (IRC), the library, computer labs, and classroom work stations. All contribute to classroom instruction in myriad ways. Access to technology enhances student experience through multimedia lessons and the opportunity to create projects which encourage the development of 21st century skills and communication. Professional development and financial support are provided by the administration to ensure optimal use of these tools. The resources also foster greater collaboration between teachers and administration which ensures continuous refinement and clarification of educational goals, while allowing the opportunity to share experiences and problems of implementation. The discussions allow for suggestions and incorporation of new approaches based on real data and best practice.

Equitable access to the library and other media resources is ensured through careful organization and scheduling. Teachers can schedule time through a spreadsheet available online. Priority is managed through cross-curricular collaboration by which departments eliminate potential conflicts by identifying specific times of the school year for computer-based projects. Students have daily access to the library for book check out, and can reserve resources in person or on a computerized system.

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

As with library and media resources, equitable access to technology is ensured by providing classes with several resources. Specific technology available to teachers in all classrooms include document cameras and projectors, access to DVD/VCR players, high-speed internet, personalized websites, and access to Easiteach 'chalkboards' that allow them to move about the room while teaching. Computer labs can be scheduled through a spreadsheet available online, where again, priority is managed through cross-curricular collaboration by which departments eliminate potential conflicts by identifying specific times of the school year for computer-based projects. Apart from departmental reservations, individual classes and students have access to three computer labs and 12 individual workstations in the library by request and availability.

Access to technology supports and enhances teaching and learning throughout the curriculum. Teachers are able to create multi-media lessons which engage students and broaden students' depth of understanding. Teachers receive training regarding technological resources in the classroom at staff and departmental meetings, as well as district and outside training opportunities. Instructors also receive individual support as needed from administrators and teacher leaders. Students use technology to complete projects and create presentations that further deepen their content knowledge while investing them with real world skills necessary for their future academic and professional success. Students receive training in each class from their core teachers as the technology is introduced, as well as the opportunity to take elective classes dedicated to understanding the use of technology.

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

The school provides a variety of outlets to support teachers through new experiences while addressing their professional needs. In addition to mentoring, department chairs, team leaders, and administrators are available to assist teachers facing challenges in their current assignments or undertaking significant changes in their responsibilities. Assistance may come through informal discussion and suggestions, to formal professional development opportunities made available through the administration. A recent example of such support was the availability of AVID training for all non-AVID teachers. The area of need was identified and funded by the administration after several instructors expressed a lack of familiarity with methods common to AVID, which the school had elected to use as part of its Panther Prep literacy instruction. Similarly, through discussions at the district level, administration identified an inquiry based instructional method called *modeling* that had been used to great affect in high school science classes as part of their transition to Common Core Standards; however, junior high science teachers were largely unfamiliar with the strategy and eager for tools by which the new standards could be addressed. Following further discussion within the department, school leadership has invested in professional development for science teachers to learn the strategy and its effective implementation within the curriculum. Payne's dedication to providing ongoing professional development has improved teaching and learning by tying those opportunities directly to the school initiatives selected by the staff and informed by data and research based instructional methods. This global approach does more than allow for a dynamic community in which teachers can share expertise and reflect on practice; it strengthens school culture by creating a cooperative environment in which professional support to foster student achievement is central.

Payne recognizes the accomplishments of its staff towards those ends in a variety of ways. Staff members are nominated twice a year for the district's Triple A Award. Staff members are also recognized at staff meetings and school assemblies for their achievements. The school's website and newsletter has a special sections dedicated to the awards and accomplishments of all stakeholders. Less formally, Payne has an active committee that organizes social events for the staff to build and strengthen their bonds outside the school setting.

E. Student Focus and Support

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

Payne serves 1386 seventh and eighth grade students. The population includes 74.02% white students, 5.89% Asian, 5.51% percent Black, and 0.98% percent American Indian. 9.89% of the student population receives special education services. 2% of the student population is on a 504 plan. At Payne Junior High, two students are English Language Learners and two others are in a two-year monitoring process before being considered proficient in English.

Academics are assessed using standardized and non-standardized assessments. Annually, students are given the AIMS test, which is a state-wide standardized test that determines how well students have learned the grade-level academic standards. Data from the AIMS test is used to determine which academic areas need additional focus. In addition to the AIMS test, eighth grade students are given the Explore test, which is a precursor to the ACT test given to high

school students. This test is a national norm-referenced test that compares Payne eighth graders with eighth graders from across the United States. Not only does this test assess academic skills, it also includes a career interest inventory that gauges student goals for the future.

Another way student future goals are assessed is through the Kuder Career Assessment that Payne school counselors use to help students begin working on their Education and Career Action Plans (ECAP). Information is gathered regarding students' unique skills and abilities and career categories are described so students can begin researching career options that fit their abilities and future goals.

A variety of methods are used to identify students who may have special needs. Students with above average performance in classes and on tests are challenged through placement in honors classes and the AVID and CATS programs. When a student is struggling academically or behaviorally, teachers can receive consultative support through the TAT. If interventions are not successful, the TAT can refer the student for special education evaluation. Using existing data, student observation data, and cognitive and academic testing, the multidisciplinary education team (MET), led by the school psychologist, determines whether the student qualifies for special education services. Those students may receive services due to specific learning disabilities, other health impairments, autism, mild to moderate mental retardation, and emotional disabilities. Some students also receive related services in speech, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. Most of the students with special education services receive their education in the general education setting with additional support provided through a strategies/study skills class and additional educator support in the classroom. Students with mild to moderate mental retardation receive basic skills instruction in a self-contained classroom and are included in the general education environment as much as they are able.

Students with slipping and/or failing grades are assigned an adult mentor to provide them with additional support and accountability. The mentors consist of members of the administration, school counselors, and special education service coordinators. Additional parent contact is made, private tutoring sessions are scheduled, and organizational supports are provided. Tutoring is provided to students free-of-charge before school by schedule and after school by appointment. Since the student population is placed into academic teams that consist of a language arts teacher, a math teacher, a social studies teacher, and a science teacher, students are able to receive tutoring throughout the week from their teachers. The teachers are able to meet regularly to discuss how students are doing and where additional support is needed. The team concept promotes collaboration among the teachers, which contributes to increased student accountability and support.

In addition to academic supports, Payne provides students with opportunities to build interpersonal skills and physical fitness. Each quarter, sports teams are formed and Payne students compete with other junior high schools in Chandler Unified School District and neighboring districts. The program supports the academic culture by motivating students to keep their grades up via the "no pass, no play" policy. Students with an interest in music take part in band, orchestra, or choir as an elective. The participants have opportunities to demonstrate their work through assemblies and after school concerts and competitions.

Other clubs available to students are Student Council, the National Junior Honor Society, the science club, and Panther Pals. Student Council is a way for students to take part in the student government and bolster school spirit. Students help plan fun lunch-time and after school activities for students and facilitate service projects to benefit the community and promote a spirit of giving. The National Junior Honor Society is for students with stellar grades and a desire to take part in leadership and service opportunities. The science club provides students with opportunities to do hands-on science activities and go in more depth on science topics. Panther Pals is a club to help bring unity between students with special needs and general education students. The students with special needs feel more accepted on the Payne campus and feel special to have friends who will spend time with them and look out for them. General education students learn to appreciate the differences all students have.

Payne utilizes team teaching to ease the transition between grade levels. Further, new students are provided with a student tour guide to show them around the campus. Teachers are encouraged to wear their badges at all times so students can always find a person to help them find their way. The office staff welcomes all new parents and students with friendliness and helpfulness. The entire student body is also invited to an orientation called Panther Day before the school year starts. This allows all students to tour the campus, talk with teachers, and meet their peers. Doing so has an established track record of minimizing student anxiety while investing students in the school's culture of success before the first bell rings in the new school year.

The Payne campus has automatic handicap-assessable doors in every building. Ramps are available for any area that is not single level. The sidewalks are carefully maintained and the desert landscape provides clear visibility and few barriers for students. For students with visual impairments, the document cameras easily provide students with magnification. Large print textbooks can be ordered through the district warehouse. Amplification equipment is available for students with hearing impairments. Students with learning disabilities have a variety of assistive technologies available, including text-to-speech and speech-to-text software, Alphasmart word processors, and laptops. Special educators and paraprofessionals provide additional supports in the general education on each team. In addition, a strategies class provides students in need with re-teaching and previewing of key concepts as well as organizational supports.

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

Payne provides a variety of nonacademic services to support students. Payne encourages students to utilize positive character traits at all times. As such, a different character trait is emphasized monthly through the Character Counts program. Special recognition, called Panther Paws, is given out to reward students who demonstrate those traits.

Counseling is available to students to help them cope with school or home difficulties. The counselors act as mediators for students who are having trouble getting along with peers, and utilize individualized contracts to promote peace and respect at school. If a student appears to need more extensive help than can be provided at school, counselors have a wealth of resources

available to share with parents and students. Families facing financial hardships are eligible to receive free and reduced lunch. As part of the Chandler Unified School District, Payne is able to refer students to the Chandler CARE Center, a school-based, community-linked program that provides free medical, dental, counseling, and social services. There is no cost to patients or clients because local professionals and service organizations donate their time and work.

The health assistant is always available to provide students with first aid and supervision of regular medication usage. Vaccines are periodically available on-site as a convenience for parents. Vision and hearing screenings are provided annually for new students, special education students, and as needed for general education students.

Additionally, Payne seeks to proactively minimize the impact of potentially negative factors on school climate and student achievement. At the forefront of those efforts is ensuring the campus is a place where students feel welcome from the first day.

To cut down on disciplinary issues, all teachers have rules and procedures that are practiced and reviewed often. Teachers begin reviewing and enforcing rules on the first day of school, when students are given an organizational agenda that includes a handbook with the district and school's rules. Students and parents are required to read and sign off on an agreement ensuring that they are aware of the expectations at Payne. Additionally, teachers spend time each day for the first two weeks of school reviewing the handbook in class. Doing so ensures questions are clarified and students are fully aware of school procedures, expectations, and consequences. Students who make poor behavioral choices go through the steps in the school-wide behavior plan which consists of verbal warnings, a time-out to fill out a reflection form, parent contact, and a referral to an administrator. The in-school suspension room is used when students need consequences for repeated poor choices. Off-campus suspension is reserved for students who engage in serious misbehavior, including physical altercations, theft, and possession of a controlled substance. For students with behaviors so severe that Payne cannot constructively meet their needs, Chandler Unified School District provides enrollment in an alternative school where students learn to manage their behaviors while receiving full access to the curriculum.

Chronic absenteeism is discouraged by teachers making each day important for student success, while ensuring students know they are legitimately missed when they are gone. While students are provided the opportunity to make-up work from when absent, the policy is strict enough that students do not wish to get too far behind. Teachers also contact parents to emphasize the importance of attendance before students begin to fall behind through absenteeism. The administration reinforces the instructor's message through parental communication, and in the most extreme cases, truancy referrals to the appropriate authorities.

F. Parent and Community Involvement

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

As in all schools, families, partnerships and the community play an important role in supporting student learning at Payne. Generally, the school has set frequent and meaningful communication between stakeholders to invest all parties in creating a safe, nurturing, positive climate to

facilitate the school's Mission and Vision as its central goal. Specifically, Payne seeks to: ensure two-way communication with parents to enhance their role in their children's education and promote authentic family involvement; recruit volunteers and train them for meaningful support of the school's Mission and Vision; build the school's role within the community through student service and recruitment of meaningful partnerships for student learning.

Payne uses several methods to develop and strengthen parent's roles as a stakeholder in the education of their students. The school, all clubs, teams, and individual teachers all keep regularly updated websites to provide easy access to important information regarding learning goals, school activities, and special notices. Teachers regularly contact parents via email and by phone, and the school sets aside specific dates for conferences and open-houses. Incoming students and their parents have the opportunity to meet with counselors prior to coming to Payne, and a special orientation day for incoming families is held prior to the year beginning. Parents are invited to a variety of activities at the school that range from opportunities for students to showcase their work—such as the science fair and concerts—to social activities designed to strengthen bonds and promote involvement—such as the school's spring carnival and team days. Parents also have access to their student's grades through an online system called Infinite Campus. The program allows parents to monitor their child's progress and encourage an active dialogue regarding curriculum and instruction. These methods help ensure meaningful collaboration between parents, students, and staff. Further, it provides parents with a mechanism for authentic involvement by making them partners in the school's Mission and Vision.

Payne primarily recruits and trains volunteers through the Payne Booster Club. Boosters help to fund school programs, organize and run school events, and support teams and teachers with a variety of needs. Outside of Boosters, volunteers are recruited by teachers and parents to aid in extracurricular activities, such as sports coaching. Volunteer coaches are trained via an online module produced by the district. Additionally, teachers and teams recruit volunteers to assist in the classroom and with team events. These volunteers are trained by the teachers as related to the specific role the volunteer will play. All volunteers are active partners in discussing, defining and executing the school's goals within their specific area of volunteerism.

Payne understands that a dynamic partnership with the community necessitates a two-way commitment. Students at Payne design and conduct numerous drives and fundraisers throughout the year. In so doing, the school has built meaningful relationships with organizations such as the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and ForgottenSoldiers.Org. Payne also actively seeks partners within the community who can contribute to student learning and help collaborate on instruction and strategic planning. A few specific examples of such collaborations are the science department's partnerships with Intel and engineering students as part of its STEM instruction, and the Water Investigation Project's partnerships with the University of Arizona. More recently, a parent who is also an engineer collaborated with the science department to introduce a program in which students learn about robotics. The VEX/Lego Robotics Challenge program was partially funded through a grant from Microchip, and additional funding was provided for the first-year program by Intel. The continuation of these relationships year after year provides evidence of the strength of these collaborations. Similarly, student awards at competitions connected to the programs, tens of thousands of dollars in donations raised, and more than

200,000 gallons of water saved provide evidence of the positive outcomes these relationships create.

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

In addition to the partnerships discussed in the previous section, Payne actively seeks out resources in the community to extend learning opportunities for all stakeholders. Throughout the year, docents, authors, and artists are invited to the school to give presentations and conduct lessons. Teachers partner with community colleges and universities, both as students in professional development programs and as mentors for student teachers and interns. Businesses within the community are invited to campus to give presentations, such as Honeywell's FMA Live interactive science demonstration. Individual teams schedule field trips to local museums, theaters, universities, and civic events to enhance learning through real life experiences.

Through resources provided by the district, Payne is able to refer students for health and social services to families in need through the Chandler CARE Center. The community-linked program provides free medical, dental, counseling, and social services at no cost to patients or clients. Payne also provides students in need with hearing and vision screenings.

An exemplar of a successful partnership within the community is found in Gateway to Technology, a specialized course through Project Lead the Way. This program, supported by Intel, prepares students to be innovative leaders in the fields of science, technology, mathematics, and engineering (STEM). The program has strengthened Payne's role within the community by attracting families interested in the program to enroll their children in the school. Student learning is enhanced and improved through the opportunity to participate in a program designed by experts in the field and based on real world ideas and problems. Evidence of student success can be found in students winning the Most Innovative Structure Award at the Future City Competition and the Coolest Model Award at the Aerospace Challenge. While there are many other examples of such successful partnerships at Payne, Project Lead the Way is a clear example of the school's use of community resources to extend learning opportunities as a respected and valued partner.

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

Payne values the diverse influence of families from all walks of life. Translators are available to communicate with parents and families that do not speak English. Teachers make specific efforts to communicate with families lacking computer access via written correspondence, telephone, and meetings. Counselors and administrators regularly communicate with families facing challenges and hardships, then invest all stakeholders in developing solutions to meet their unique needs. A specific recent example of Payne's actions to support minority families was the effort by school counselors to encourage families to participate in the Hispanic Mother Daughter Program through Arizona State University. Their efforts yielded 19 families being awarded admittance to the program. Further evidence of successful outreach is found in volunteer rates

among parents from and sports/club participation among students that is comparable across demographics, regardless of background.

G. Indicators of Success

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

Payne's overall approach to assessment is predicated upon using data to drive instruction. Central to the school's strategy is the Data Wise and Panther Prep programs. Data Wise begins by collecting and disaggregating AIMS data. Those data are distributed to department chairs and evaluated at curriculum meetings. Departmentally and across grade levels, scores are evaluated for areas of strengths of weaknesses. Areas of poor performance are noted, plans for improvement are discussed, and strategies for improvement are developed. Globally, the entire staff chooses a specific area of focus that impacts all disciplines, referred to as a Learner Centered Problem (LCP). Once the LCP is identified, all stakeholders discuss common practices to identify potential weaknesses in instruction, or a Problem of Practice (PoP). Based on the PoP identified, curriculum leaders present a variety of potential tools and research based strategies. The staff then selects a universal strategy to address the PoP, which is applied across curriculums and grade levels. Prior to implementation, the administration provides training to ensure the selected practice is meaningfully applied.

The Panther Prep team then creates a series of lessons and assessments based on the LCP. An initial test is given to establish a baseline for student performance. The initial data is discussed in departmental and team meetings to further articulate and clarify the LCP and how the selected instructional strategy will be applied. In so doing, the staff has the opportunity not only to clarify and collaborate, but also to ensure uniformity across disciplines and levels. Throughout the school year, lessons and assessments are collected during a specially designated Panther Prep period conducted every two weeks. Data is continuously discussed and evaluated throughout the period to ensure alignment exists between the intended outcomes and student performance. In cases where there is no or limited improvement, the staff again reflects and discusses possible PoP. The administration may provide further opportunities for professional development or the staff may select a new PoP depending on analysis of Panther Prep data, formative data and teacher reflections, and consensus reached through collaboration between stakeholders. Throughout this process, Data Wise helps the staff collect and interpret data, sets dates for review of benchmarks and summative assessments. The cycle repeats as new AIMS scores become available, at which time the staff may decide on anew LCP or continue work on the previous one.

This process serves several functions. First, it helps ensure a clearly articulated Strategic Plan for improvement within the framework of the school's Mission and Vision Statements. Second, it places data-driven, research based instruction at the heart of curriculum planning and day-to-day teaching while establishing a plan for pre-assessment, formative, and summative data to be collected. Third, it assures timely and ongoing information for teachers and other decision makers to ensure alignment between learning goals and individual student achievement. Further,

the process invests all stakeholders in identifying potential problems of practice and developing meaningful strategies to achieve the desired, clearly-articulated learning outcome. In so doing, the administration is able to identify areas of need to provide meaningful professional development. Finally, the process models to teachers how data can be collected and analyzed for each objective taught in the classroom.

Individual teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments in their classrooms to ensure student learning. Common to all classes at Payne is a four-point rubric which students use to evaluate their learning. The rubric is based on determining the depth of knowledge for a given objective, and may be tailored to better fit the specific learning goals identified. The tool allows for better monitoring of student growth by allowing teachers to quickly gauge student understanding and providing students with a tool for assessing and tracking their own learning. The tool can be combined with other common methods of formative assessment to check for accuracy and help students to make accurate judgments of their progress. Doing so allows teachers to adapt the pace of lessons and identify the need for re-teaching or differentiated instruction. Summative assessments are used at the conclusion of each unit to further ensure mastery of targeted content.

Though rare, alternative assessments may be used for students with special needs as identified through 504 plans and IEPs. The most common modifications are for additional time, oral and/or small group testing, or a reduced number of questions. Teams and specialists discuss and craft these assessments carefully to ensure equal access to content and appropriately high expectations.

Currently, the predominate issue in Payne's school-wide approach to assessment lies not in the collection of data, but in its accurate analysis. As articulated above, there is a collaborative effort to identify a causal PoP once the LCP is identified. Though identification of the PoP is collaborative and based on a wealth of qualitative and quantitative data, the targeted PoP may still be described as a very well-educated guess. Fortunately, Payne's approach ensures continuous monitoring, reflection, analysis, and collaboration. While no plan can assure that the adoptive strategies will be 100% effective, the school's plan does hold promise that ineffective strategies or misidentified PoPs are quickly discovered and amended.

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

Specify which groups, if any, are excluded from a test, the reasons for the exclusion, as well as the number and percentage of students excluded. Describe how excluded students are assessed.

No students are excluded from testing at Payne.

Payne's AIMS test scores have shown consistent year-over-year improvement in seventh grade reading and eighth grade science. Eighth grade reading scores have also trended higher than scores from five years ago. These positive outcomes are attributable to the review of test data to inform meaningful curriculum design. Over the past two years, for example, there has been a cross-curricular focus on literacy skills such as drawing conclusions and making inferences. Those skills were identified as areas of need by the staff after evaluating test data from previous

years. Panther Prep has developed a series of lessons and practices to improve those skills, while Data Wise continues to collect and help the staff analyze data and develop a strategic plan for improvement.

AIMS writing scores have shown a decline in the last two years at both seventh and eighth grade. It is difficult to articulate a specific reason for the drop in scores as there has been a lack of clarity regarding both the application of the scoring rubric and what can be extrapolated from those data. There has also been a slight decline in AIMS math scores over the past three years across grades. Again, specific reasons have been the topic of much discussion departmentally and across the district, however, it is notable that the test itself was revamped during that period and scores across the state saw a significant decline. It is also worth noting that Payne students continued to score several percentage points above the mean during this period, maintaining its relative position as high performing school during the statewide dip in math scores.

The adoption of Common Core Standards could impact test scores as the AIMS was written to the old state standards. While it is unusual for students to be tested on a different set of standards than those expected to be taught in the classroom, teachers at Payne plan to continue to incorporate the few items covered under the old standards until the new Common Core exam is prepared in 2014. That effort should close any potential gaps and mitigate any unexpected drops in test scores.

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

Several sources of data for the past five years serve as quantitative indicators of improved school climate and engagement. Payne has been recognized by the Arizona Department of Education as an Arizona Learns Excelling School for the past five years, and currently has the label of “A.” The school’s culture of academics is further indicated by myriad awards earned in the state science fair, and wins in competitions such as the Future City Competition, Grand Canyon State Games, and Aerospace Competition. The school has collected nearly 30 conference sports titles, including the unprecedented accomplishment of competing for East Valley Conference championships in every winter sport—eventually winning four of the five meetings. The school has also won accolades for cheer, student council, band, 4H, and Knowledge Bowl. Payne has also been recognized for its efforts towards maintaining its environment through the district’s Clean Campus Award. These various accolades are demonstrative of the high level of engagement among students and staff at Payne.

Payne’s commitment to a safe campus and positive school climate are found in the implementation of the Olweus Anti-Bullying Program and Character Counts. Evidence of programmatic success can lie in some of the lowest referral rates in the district. That commitment extends beyond the campus, as demonstrated in regular, student-led charity drives which have raised tens of thousands of dollars over the past five years. High participation in school spirit days and after school events provides further evidence of engagement.

Payne collects a variety of formative and summative data to analyze and judge the effectiveness of instruction, as well. Summative data is collected through a variety of sources, including AIMS

test, ACT Explore test, district and school benchmarks or unit tests, attendance data, and grade distribution reports. Those data are discussed and analyzed across grades and curriculums to find trends, including potential deficits. As noted Data Wise is at the fore front of this process by helping staff to interpret data and develop meaningful action plans and strategies. New data is then used to determine the effectiveness of instruction and inform new strategies for continued growth. Data-driven instruction extends to daily use of formative assessment tools. One of the most important of these comes through student self-assessment. Students use a rubric created by the instructor to evaluate their learning. They can track these results over the course of the lesson or unit to demonstrate improvement. Further, instructors can use those data to inform the pace and scope of lessons, as well as identify areas in need of re-teaching or greater exposition. Payne’s commitment to continuous student growth and adequate yearly progress places data at the forefront of regular conversations across the school, driving instruction and strategies. At the same time, frequent monitoring ensures “real-time” data to guide and improve instructional quality while establishing an equal opportunity to learn for all students.

G4. Data Collection

Criteria	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Average daily student attendance rate*	96.00%	95.60%	96.00%	96.30%	96.00%
Average daily teacher attendance rate	94.63	96.82	95.37	96.41	96.40
Teacher turnover rate	15%	12%	29%	16%	22%
Promotion rate	99.0%	98.69%	99.82%	99.72%	99.91%

***as reported to the Arizona Department of Education**

H. Challenges

Payne faces many of the same challenges confronted by schools across the district and state. The growth of the area surrounding Payne creates pressures on available resources and facilities. Further, it ensures a continuously changing demographic with new needs and demands. Shifting and uncertain funding in the face of such growth strains long-term fiscal planning, which impacts hiring, implementation of new programs, and acquisition of new resources. Those constraints are compounded by competition inherent within a system that promotes open-enrollment and a vibrant charter system untethered by many of the statutory restraints placed on traditional public schools. The adoption of a new set of standards also presents a unique set of challenges. As teachers and staff work to adapt and create curriculum, they may feel stresses on time and resources, as well as a need for additional training. Similarly, students may feel anxiety as they are encouraged to view familiar disciplines from a new perspective.

Payne has relied upon a strong community of support to help the school through these challenges. Through all the uncertainties, stakeholders have learned to become adaptive and the

school has become efficient at prioritizing short and long-term needs. Payne's system of professional development and collaboration further allows stakeholders a forum for discussion and reflection, which promotes the creation of meaningful solutions. Competition has forced all stakeholders to think beyond the school's walls, which has led to innovations in communication and programs that may not have been conceived in a closed system. The school continues to seek opportunities for training and development regarding the new standards, and department chairs have made strategies for successful implementation the foundation of their meetings. Administrators also intend to collect more participation data and surveys to track and monitor the school's environment for a positive climate and continued investiture in the Mission and Vision from all members of Payne's community. In short—though the future of every school is clouded by myriad unknowns—strong leadership, clear organizational structure, and interwoven networks of support have continuously lit a bright path forward for all stakeholders at Payne Junior High School.