

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

---

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 10625 Santa Gertrudes Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Whittier State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 90603-2441

County Los Angeles

Telephone (562) 907-6300 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL <https://leffingwell.ewcsd.org/> E-mail sblackwell@ewcsd.org

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Marc Patterson E-mail mpatterson@ewcsd.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name East Whittier City School District Tel. (562) 907-5900

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mr. Armando Urteaga  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

## PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

---

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

**The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.**

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

---

**Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.**

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

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

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

☐ Urban (city or town)  
☒ Suburban  
☐ Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	0
K	73
1	85
2	94
3	102
4	95
5	92
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	541

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4.4 % Asian
  - 1.2 % Black or African American
  - 69.6 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 15.5 % White
  - 9 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 school year: 7%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	21
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	39
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	549
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

Arabic, Mandarin, Filipino, Korean, Spanish, Thai

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 28 %

Total number students who qualify: 152

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 14 %  
Total number of students served 78

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>26</u> Autism	<u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>11</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>22</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>4</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 1 %  
Total number of students served: 4

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 15

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	31
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

12. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	94%	98%	97%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2022.

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

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

Yes X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2017

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

We are committed to knowing our students as unique/special individuals in order to challenge them at current levels and help them reach their potential.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

EWCSO Employee Handbook (see page 18)

<https://4.files.edl.io/f3c5/07/29/22/144008-3233baf5-b18f-4d0e-8f32-557269371ae8.pdf>

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

Students attend Leffingwell based upon their home address. Students that do not reside within the Leffingwell attendance boundary can enroll if they have an approved permit. Permits are approved if spots are available based upon the order received according to school board policy.

## PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

---

Walking onto the Leffingwell campus, Home of the Leopards, a visitor would quickly recognize the Paw Pride that exists within our students and staff. Students are challenged to show their “SPOTS,” and staff work diligently to know each student as unique and special individuals to best support them. Furthermore, our newly modernized campus complete with state of the art classrooms and facilities stand out as it creates a spectacular, engaging 21st century learning environment for students to learn and grow. Construction was completed at the start of 2023 as a result of a successful bond measure passed by our community that values and supports education.

Leffingwell is a child-centered school that prides itself on working closely with families to create an exceptional learning environment for our students. As a result, Leffingwell was named a 2017 National Blue Ribbon School, a California Distinguished School, a California Business for Education Excellence Honor Roll Scholar School, and U.S. News & World Report ranked Leffingwell as one of the best elementary schools in California.

Leffingwell was once a Developmental Center for students with disabilities. However, in 1990 it reopened to include general education students. Leffingwell quickly became a model school for the integration of children with special needs. Leffingwell has a well-established reputation of openness to our community, having an extremely positive staff dedicated to academic success, and as a school that treasures the uniqueness of its diversified student body.

Leffingwell Elementary School is located in Whittier, California within Los Angeles County. Leffingwell is part of the East Whittier City School District, which has ten elementary schools and three middle schools. Presently, Leffingwell is comprised of an Infant-Family Program that services approximately 75 students with various disabilities (birth until 3 years of age), 21 general education classrooms (K-5th), a Learning Center for students with mild to moderate disabilities, and three classrooms for students with moderate to severe disabilities. Leffingwell is a spirited, loving place for children, where every child is respected, loved, and valued. This unique environment creates a one-of-a-kind school where students learn empathy and compassion and are comfortable learning and collaborating with other students that may not look like or act exactly as they do.

Leffingwell is committed to helping each child achieve academic success. Our teachers care deeply about their students, and it shows. Teachers work together to provide engaging and stimulating lessons that bring curriculum and content to life. Teachers provide ongoing, frequent assessments of student learning to provide targeted support as needed. Students that need additional support in reading or math receive small group instruction during the day. Leffingwell has the support of two Intervention Specialists to provide targeted instruction in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. A full-time School Social Worker is on-site to provide social emotional and behavioral instruction and support. After school enrichment classes are available throughout the year to nurture the talents of our leopards. GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) students are challenged both in the classroom through differentiated instruction and through GATE enrichment classes.

Leffingwell utilizes a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program to support a positive school culture. Students at Leffingwell Elementary School are taught to show their “SPOTS.” The acronym SPOTS stands for Show Kindness, Practice Patience, Own Their Actions, Try Their Best, and Speak Respectfully. Along with our PBIS program, we use a House System to split our campus into smaller, multi-grade level groups. The House System creates a camaraderie between students and teachers. It cultivates healthy and friendly competition while promoting acts of kindness and generosity. In addition, it builds school spirit and encourages students to get involved in a positive way.

Staff members work together strategically to create a network of support for our students. On Tuesday afternoons, teachers meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to plan lessons, analyze data, and share best practices. Monthly early release Thursdays also provide time for professional development and a time to focus on District/school goals. Our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and principal work



together to create a culture of continuous improvement. The goal is to get stronger as grade level teams at supporting our students and to develop a consistent filter for students to go through in order to get additional support during the school day.

Receiving the National Blue Ribbon in 2017 brought an immense amount of pride and joy to our Leffingwell community. Parents have repeatedly shared their gratitude for getting to send their children to a school that has been recognized as a national model. Staff members have felt validated that their hard work was acknowledged not just within our community but also at the state and national level. Likewise, realtors and home owners were appreciative of the added value that this recognition brought for our community. As a result, we have had families move into the area to attend our school or secure permits for their children to be able to attend a National Blue Ribbon school.

Leffingwell Paw Pride is alive on our campus and within our community. Our extremely positive, student-centered climate can be felt from the moment you walk onto the campus. We are a cohesive staff that cares deeply about kids and works tirelessly to help each student achieve their potential.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

---

### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The California standards provide the foundation for our core curriculum. Our goal is to provide a balanced, comprehensive, standards-aligned curriculum using research-based instruction with engagement strategies in order to ensure student success. Technology is utilized across the grades/subjects to enhance our core curriculum. Weekly teacher collaboration time is used to plan lessons, analyze assessment results, plan re-teaching/intervention activities, and develop hands-on enriching activities that bring lessons to life.

At Leffingwell our teachers understand that a strong Language Arts foundation is necessary for success in other subject areas. Reading/Language Arts is taught using the McGraw-Hill Wonders Language Arts curriculum. This curriculum gives teachers the resources to provide students with a balanced literacy program that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, spelling, grammar, and writing. The program also contains a wealth of online components that teachers use for skills practice and mapping progress, as well as extra resources tailored to meet the needs of English learners and gifted students. Our teachers utilize Fry sight words to help students master high frequency words, National Vocabulary Lists to increase word recognition and understanding, and Scholastic Reading Inventory and Accelerated Reader to track comprehension levels while ensuring students are selecting books that are both appropriate and challenging.

Writing is emphasized in all grades. Students begin in kindergarten learning to write in a variety of genres (narratives, opinions, informational) with each grade sequentially building/spiraling upon the previous one. Teachers are trained in using Thinking Maps, Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies, and Nancy Fetzer strategies to support writing and the teaching and learning processes. Students learn the analytical technique of Close Reading to facilitate critical thinking and comprehension. Grade level teams work closely together to ensure curriculum is implemented consistently from class to class hence the students learn the foundational skills that are sequentially needed from one grade to the next. In addition, our Instructional Leadership Team provides support to our grade levels and has focused on building teacher efficacy in accountable talk strategies, engagement strategies, and Kagan collaborative structures to encourage student voice and involvement in the learning process. Teachers also participate in Reflective Learning Walks wherefore they are able to see strategies modeled and student learning across the school in order to learn from each other and gain confidence to try new strategies and techniques.

Our extraordinary PTA comes alongside our teachers and helps support literacy skills and encourages a love for reading by providing supplemental resources and incentives for our students. In addition, teachers set individual trimester reading goals for students through our Accelerated Reader program. The principal has a reward party for students that meet their goals with the support of our PTA.

Assessments continually drive instruction as they allow teachers to see which students are getting it and which still need more time or support. Teachers utilize a variety of informal assessments such as exit tickets, frequent checking for understanding, student whiteboards, and common formative assessments to monitor learning and make adjustments as needed. Furthermore, District Common Assessments are administered four times a year and a formal state assessment is given each year around May.

#### **1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

California grade level standards provide the foundation for our Mathematics program. We currently use the Savvas enVision Math curriculum and supplemental resources from Eureka Math. An emphasis is placed on developing mathematical reasoning skills. We want our students to be able to compute with accuracy, but also to understand the how/why behind problems and that there are often multiple ways to arrive at a solution. Our teachers received training in the 8 mathematical practices that proficient students possess. We want our students to be able to reason mathematically and apply mathematics to solve real-world problems.

Concepts strategically build upon each other from grade to grade so that students become proficient in algebraic thinking, numbers/operations in base ten, numbers/operations in fractions, measurement/data, and geometry. Teachers initiate programs with incentives to encourage proficiency in basic math facts as they form the foundation for solving most math problems. Teachers frequently use manipulatives, small group re-teaching, and educational websites to enhance skills and help students master standards.

Many of the engagement and collaborative structures seen during Language Arts lessons would also be seen in Leffingwell classrooms during the Mathematics block. Teachers regularly ask students to explain how they arrived at a solution or to share with a partner the steps they went through in order to solve a problem. These discussions lead to deeper levels of understanding as students have to orally explain their reasoning and can lead to new learning as students see there are often multiple routes to solving math problems.

A typical Math lesson in a Leffingwell classroom consists of modeling the concept that is going to be taught, whole group instruction of the concept, and guided practice of the concept with the teacher followed by gradual release of the students to work on the concept independently. The teacher then walks around to check for understanding and provides individual support as needed. Math games, activities, and online programs are often utilized to continue to provide time to review concepts or enrichment as students master the material. Teachers then pull small groups to provide more intensive support or re-teaching for targeted students.

Assessments are ongoing in Math, and teachers constantly use them to drive instruction based upon how students are grasping the various concepts. Our Math program is divided into units, the units are broken down by topics, and the topics are fragmented into lessons. Assessments take place at each of those levels. Teachers monitor progress everyday by calling on students to share answers, walking around to check for understanding during guided and independent practice, using student whiteboards to show work, and exit tickets to name a few. After topics and units are completed, assessments are given to track student learning and make instructional decisions. District Common Assessments in Math are administered four times a year and a formal state assessment is given each year around May.

### **1c. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) provide the foundation for our Science program. Many of the Science concepts are taught through hands-on units of study to facilitate the retention of ideas and further enrich students' understanding of new skills. Our teachers attended training by West Ed on the new Science standards. Several teachers have served on District-level committees that designed Science units for each grade level to use that target the NGSS and have field tested various Science curriculums as we are close to a new Science textbook adoption.

Each grade level covers Physical Science, Life Science, Earth/Space Science, and Engineering domains. Learning investigation and experimentation skills are key foundational concepts that our teachers seek to instill within our students. Many of our Science lessons are project-based and completed in small groups as our students learn, experiment, and test out the new concepts they are being taught. Our teachers utilize Mystery Science as a supplemental curriculum to bring concepts to life, provide hands-on learning, and a love of Science. Science lessons often build upon skills learned in Language Arts as our students write, discuss, and present their work. Our teachers also have access to a District Science Coach who is available to model lessons and support teachers as they plan instruction. Students participate in Science-based field trips, such as the Discovery Cube, Aquarium of the Pacific, Planetarium, and First Flight Trip at the Honda Center. Construction of a STEM Lab is currently underway and will be launching in the fall of 2023. All students will have access to a large range of manipulatives to promote scientific exploration and curiosity. Teachers will be trained by District STEM teachers and a site lead with strategies and activities to support grade level standards.

Science assessments are done through project-based assignments as students present, discuss, and show their understanding of the various concepts. Additionally, our 5th grade students take a formal state assessment each year around May.

## **1d. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Following the California standards, our History-Social Studies curriculum is published by Harcourt Brace. Along with reading and direct instruction of the various grade level topics, our students also complete projects and participate in living history simulations in order to bring the material to life. For example, our students participate in Farm Day (K), Habitat Day (1st), Community Day (2nd), Ancestor Day (2nd), Patriotic Day (3rd), Square Dancing (4th), Gold Rush Week (4th), and a Living History Colonial Experience (5th). In addition, most of our field trips are planned to complement the Social Studies and Science curriculum. Some recent field trips have been to the Natural History Museum, the Gene Autry Museum, and Early California History at Knott's Berry Farm.

Assessment in Social Studies is often project-based with writing and presentation skills playing an integral part. Students are given opportunities to present their projects to classmates. Across grade levels, students complete a variety of Social Studies projects: California Mission reports, Native American reports, biography reports, state reports, President reports, landform models, and costumes depicting historical figures bring to life the project/presentation. Fourth graders complete California Missions projects and participate in a 4th grade wax museum where they dress up as a famous historical figure and come to life as students/parents visit the wax museum. Fifth graders complete state reports and participate in a state fair where they present about their state to students and parents. Social studies projects also help to strengthen Language Arts skills as writing is used across the curriculum to demonstrate what they have learned as projects are completed.

Moreover, our solid core curriculum combined with visionary teachers dedicated to helping students succeed has led to consistent growth in all academic arenas.

### **1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:**

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

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

### **2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)**

It is our desire to provide a well-balanced, comprehensive education for our students in an engaging and stimulating learning environment.

The arts have always played a big role at Leffingwell. Our teachers consistently integrate art across the curriculum. From art projects that support subject matter objectives to grade level plays/musicals, the arts are used to reinforce student learning at all grade levels. Every Friday at Leffingwell is affectionately referred to as "Fun Friday." During this time, the sound system is brought out to the playground and students enjoy dancing, jump roping, and hula hooping to a variety of songs during recess. Our District started an arts foundation, which helps provide teachers with mini-grants to creatively bring the arts into their classrooms. Each year at Open House we transform our cafeteria into an art gallery and a piece of artwork from every student within the school is on display for our parents and community. In addition, the District hosts an annual art show in collaboration with the Whittier Art Gallery and all our classrooms contribute artwork.

Our District has helped support bringing more visual and performing arts into our classrooms. Multiple times per month a Broad Course of Study (BCOS) team of teachers come and work with our students. The art teachers instruct our students on different art techniques, and students produce artwork based on the

styles of famous artists. The music teachers introduce our students to a variety of musical genres, and they enjoy making melodies and memories together. Our BCOS team will be expanding next year to include violin instruction for our 5th grade students.

## **2b. Physical education/health/nutrition**

At Leffingwell we recognize the importance that physical education plays in developing the overall health and well-being of our students. All grade levels provide a P.E. program for students that includes instruction on playground games, instruction in grade level appropriate skills, and group games that promote teamwork, sportsmanship, and collaboration. Our K-2nd program is led by classroom teachers while our 3rd-5th program is led by P.E. coaches/assistants. The P.E. coaches/assistants and teachers familiarize our students with sports/activities that promote a healthy and active lifestyle. In addition, we recently began utilizing a team of P.E. coaches twice a month to work with one grade level of students at a time. This time engages our students and fosters social emotional learning through fun, physically active games, sports, and enrichment activities while allowing grade level teacher teams time to collaborate and meet with the principal.

An example of a fun school-wide event focused on physical education that we did last year was our All Star Sports Challenge. Every student rotated through eight different sports stations with the support of our PTA and a dedicated group of parents. This year all our students participated in a Fun Run. Both events also helped raise funds for our school while encouraging a healthy lifestyle. Each spring our 5th grade students take the state physical fitness test.

## **2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)**

## **2d. Technology/library/media**

Technology is another crucial component of a successful 21st century school. We have worked hard to get technology into our classrooms with the help of our District and PTA. We currently have 1:1 Chromebooks for every student. Our principal has taken the lead to ensure teachers are well trained and supported along with a teacher that serves as a technology lead. Problems are quickly resolved so that technology can help to support/enhance our already robust curriculum. In addition, all our classrooms were completely modernized to include state of the art technology beginning in the 2022-2023 school year. All classrooms have built in speakers with amplification systems, projectors, document cameras, and large screen tech display boards that work flexibly with teacher laptops.

Our STEM/Tech Lab is currently being completed and will open in the fall of 2023. Classrooms will be able to visit weekly and explore a variety of technology options. The lab will include coding with Ozobots, engineering manipulatives, green screen technology, iPads, and a variety of other STEM gadgets to encourage hands-on exploration.

## **2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share**

The Leffingwell Infant-Family Program is a unique program designed to provide families in our community with very early intervention. This program partners with families on their journey of raising a child with special needs starting at infancy. Our program offers free services to infants/toddlers within the Whittier area from birth to three years of age who qualify based on a diagnosis of a low-incidence disability. Families are referred to our program through the Regional Center. We affectionately refer to these students as our “Little Leopards”.

The Infant-Family Program offers both home and center-based programs. In the home program, teachers work to support parents in the home setting to address their needs. Family coaching is the focus of these sessions. Students 12-36 months attend the center-based program where parents can remain with their child and learn alongside teachers to care for and support their child’s needs.

Teachers also help families access community resources including library events, parent education, Mommy and Me classes, and Early Head Start. Early intervention and partnering with families provide our “Little Leopards” with a strong foundation for success in school and life.

### **3. Academic Supports**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level:**

Leffingwell teachers tailor instruction, intervention, and assessment to address the individual learning needs of every student. Our instruction, intervention, and assessment practices are based on the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model. Our entire staff is dedicated to supporting the needs of all students within a tiered-response approach. The best teaching is first teaching and all teachers strive to meet the needs of all students with intentional, high quality Tier I instruction.

Every teacher is the master of their grade level content. Teachers carefully design Tier I classroom instruction in alignment with the essential standards. Teachers utilize research based instructional practices to implement and differentiate the core curriculum. Within Tier I instruction, teachers provide additional scaffolding and support to those who need it and carefully monitor the progress of students who are not meeting grade level standards. Grade level teams design common formative assessments to provide teachers with ongoing feedback to ensure students are learning and adjust instruction as needed.

To provide Tier II targeted instruction for those students performing below standard, each grade level allocates a 30-minute block of time for small group instruction called Leopard Learning Time. Supported by two Intervention Specialists, all teachers at the grade level, and support staff, Leopard Learning Time provides students who need additional support to achieve standards with interventions tailored to their needs. In the event that students need additional support, Tier III interventions are provided at the same time. The grouping is fluid and students can move flexibly in and out as needed. Most importantly, Tier I time is protected. Leopard Learning Time ensures that students who need it, receive additional support and it is not in place of Tier I instruction.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

Leffingwell provides enriching instruction and learning experiences for students performing above grade level. Teachers at Leffingwell understand that some of our students will achieve mastery of standards at a faster pace than others. Students performing above grade level are challenged within their classrooms through differentiated instruction and within Leopard Learning Time in alignment with the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) initiative. High achieving students can qualify for the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program beginning in 3rd grade.

To differentiate instruction, teachers use research-based strategies and supplemental materials to support students performing above grade level within the core instructional program. GATE and high achieving students are provided with more complex learning tasks to ensure students are engaged and achieve at high levels. Teachers utilize flexible grouping and leveled texts and consider Webb’s Depth of Knowledge when planning for questioning and extension activities to support GATE and high achieving students.

GATE students are provided with additional learning opportunities. A GATE teacher provides mini-courses focused on different topic/subject areas to challenge and expose students to new and enriching content and concepts. Classes include: Brain Power (students learn about the Science of the brain), Be Your Own Boss (students develop a business/business plan), Architecture and Structural Design, and CSI-An Introduction to Forensic Science. GATE students also participate in three District supported GATE Academy days that challenge our students with hands-on engaging lessons.

Leffingwell utilizes a variety of resources and programs to provide enrichment opportunities to address the strengths and talents of GATE and high achieving students.

### **3c. Students with disabilities:**

Leffingwell has a rich history of creating a culture that supports ALL students. With a strong special education program that serves a wide range of learners and a collaborative team of professionals, our students in special education consistently make steady progress on individualized goals and growth on District and state assessments. Special education students at Leffingwell feel included and a sense of belonging.

Leffingwell implements a Learning Center model to service students with mild to moderate disabilities. Our Learning Center staff includes one full-time teacher, one part-time teacher, and three instructional assistants. With smaller staff to student ratios, we are able to provide small group instruction targeted to the individual needs of students and grade level standards. Students in the Learning Center receive instruction within the core curriculum aligned to grade levels standards, but at a different pace while utilizing supplemental curriculum and technology. Learning Center students begin their day in their general education classroom and then visit the Learning Center to receive support in English Language Arts and/or Math.

Students with moderate to severe disabilities receive Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI) in one of our three Special Day Classrooms (SDC). Each classroom has a teacher and instructional assistants to maintain a 3:1 student to staff ratio on average. All of our students in the moderate to severe program also mainstream into general education classrooms for portions of their day and/or participate with their general education peers when appropriate.

Our team of special education teachers collaborate daily to ensure students make progress towards meeting IEP goals. In addition, weekly time is allocated so that special education and general education teachers are able to collaborate. Frequent and consistent communication is crucial to ensure that all accommodations and modifications are in place and effective in all settings.

### **3d. English Language Learners:**

At Leffingwell English Language Learners are provided additional support and meaningful access to grade level standards and content to develop English proficiency. EL students receive designated and integrated English Language instruction aligned with demonstrated English proficiency levels. At Leffingwell it is a goal to have all English Language Learners reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP) by the time they are promoted to middle school.

The California English Language Development standards and the California Common Core State Standards are used to design integrated and designated language instruction for EL students. All Leffingwell teachers have received their Cross-Cultural, Language, and Academic Development (CLAD) certificate and have been specifically trained to support EL students. Within Tier I core instruction, both a content and language objective are written to ensure EL students are considered and instruction is designed with their needs in mind. Teachers use supplemental resources aligned with the core curriculum to provide language support and practice for EL students. Teachers utilize Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies to provide integrated instruction to EL students including frontloading, use of visuals/realia, activating prior knowledge, pairshares, scaffolding, and Thinking Maps.

Leffingwell benefits from the support of an EL lead teacher. The lead teacher provides direct support to all teachers in progress monitoring of EL students, training in how to differentiate instruction for EL students, and planning support for designated English Language Development instruction. Our Parent Liaison works closely with the families of EL students to ensure they have access to school information, resources, and support for their child's language development. A bilingual instructional assistant provides designated instruction for newcomer students in critical English foundational skills and supports students on the road to reclassification.

Leffingwell's consistent reclassification percentages show that our strategic support for English Language Learners is effective.

**3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:**



## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

---

### **1. Engaging Students:**

Leffingwell has made it a priority to create a culture that engages, motivates, and inspires students to work hard and reach for their potential. We have an extremely positive, student-centered climate with a cohesive staff that cares deeply about kids. Teachers are comfortable with a diverse student body and possess strong instructional skills that allow them to meet the individual needs of students. We strive to provide a good mixture of high academic expectations, parent involvement, and fun. We believe that when students are excited to come to school and parents are invested that success tends to follow. It's the "Leffingwell Way!"

This year we launched our PBIS program. Students are taught behavior expectations and there are various supports/interventions/incentives in place to help reinforce appropriate behavior. Students are taught to show their SPOTS, which is an acronym for Show Kindness, Practice Patience, Own Their Actions, Try Their Best, and Speak Respectfully. In addition, we have incorporated the Leffingwell House System. The House System cultivates healthy and friendly competition while promoting acts of kindness and generosity. It builds school spirit and encourages students to get involved in a positive way as they try to earn house points. Our school is divided into three houses with two grade levels per house. Each trimester the coveted House Champion is awarded to the most spirited house.

Leffingwell is known for having many school-wide and grade level activities that reinforce what is learned within classrooms. Students look forward to the many different traditions they get to experience as they move through the grade levels. One activity that contributes to promoting a caring culture is our Big Buddy/Little Buddy program. Each primary class is buddied up with an upper grade class. Big buddies read with little buddies, help with projects, and celebrate class parties together. Little buddies are excited to see their big buddies and always look forward to working with them.

Monday and Friday morning our principal leads an all school assembly on the blacktop. He leads the school in the flag salute, National Anthem, and uses the time to recognize student successes/reinforce student expectations and Leopard Leadership students announce upcoming events.

Each year a new school-wide theme is developed. Teachers incorporate the theme into their classrooms, and it generates excitement as the theme is introduced at our kick-off assembly. Tuesday is college day where students wear college t-shirts and think about what their future might hold if they work hard. Wednesday is "We Care Wednesday" and students wear "Leffingwell SPOTS" t-shirts. Every Friday is a spirit day where students proudly wear their various Leffingwell t-shirts. The top classrooms win double recess and get to fly the spirit flag outside their classrooms the following week. Every Friday is also Fun Friday where we play music at recess and bring out special games for students.

It is no wonder Leffingwell is one of the most sought after schools in the area by parents and homebuyers.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Leffingwell truly is like one big family. In fact, you often hear people refer to our school as their "Leffingwell Family." We pride ourselves on connecting with families and partnering with them to create the best school possible. It is our goal for parents to be informed about what is going on and to get as involved as their schedules allow. One of the things we do for new incoming kindergarten families is plan monthly activities from the time enrollment begins until their first day of school as a Leffingwell Leopard. We want parents to start connecting and students to start making friends in order to feel comfortable and excited before the year even begins. Some of those kindergarten activities for new parents/students include: Meet the Principal, School Tour, Kindergarten Preview Day, invitation to our Open House and Family Fun Night, Lunch at Leffingwell, and a Story Time/Learn the Playground Rules with the Principal.

Throughout the year our many school activities help to create a bond and foster a strong sense of community. There are constantly school-wide and grade level activities going on to enhance the curriculum

and excite/engage students and families in the learning process while building school spirit. From our many curriculum-based grade level events to our family-based PTA events, Leffingwell is a thriving community.

Opportunities for parent involvement are plentiful. Teachers recruit volunteers to help within classrooms, and PTA mobilizes parent teams to plan events. In addition, we seek to keep students/families engaged during vacation through our Summer Reading Challenge and Leffingwell T-Shirt Challenge, where families send pictures wearing Leffingwell t-shirts on fun summer adventures that are posted on our social media. Leffingwell is known for having high parent involvement and a strong parent presence on campus.

Frequent communication keeps our Leffingwell community aware of activities and upcoming functions. We utilize an interactive website, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to push out weekly news. We use ParentSquare to send out all-school messages and emails as needed. We want every parent to always know what is going on and feel proud to send their child to Leffingwell. As a result, families get very connected within our Leffingwell community and often continue to volunteer even after their children have moved on to middle school and beyond.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Our strong history of keeping kids at the center of all we do combined with caring and dedicated teachers with a proven track record at student success has laid the foundation for creating a professional culture at Leffingwell. We have a very positive climate for teachers. Our principal makes it a priority to support teachers and swiftly provide resources that are needed to successfully run their classrooms. Teachers take great pride in working at Leffingwell, form a cohesive team, and teacher turn over is very rare as a result. Many staff members have even sent their own kids to Leffingwell which speaks volumes about the culture. When parents know teachers care about their kids, it builds trust that in time turns to respect and admiration. High levels of trust increase the professionalism as parents look to teachers as the professionals and teachers work hard to support the students entrusted to them.

Another crucial element to a professional culture is maintaining the desire for staff to keep learning and improving. Continual professional development and scheduling time for teachers to collaborate on teaching have become keys to our instructional success. PLCs have become an integral part of what we do. Early release Tuesdays allow time for grade levels to plan, analyze student progress, and have professional discussions. The PLC process has been successful due to its simple and clear focus. The four essential questions of PLCs guide the process for our staff.

Our District and Educational Support Services (ESS) Department have also provided the support and structure needed to maintain a professional culture. Our District sends a BCOS team of teachers or a team of P.E. coaches each week. This frees up time for teachers to meet as a grade level during the day for collaboration with the principal. They have also supported the implementation of an Instructional Leadership Team at Leffingwell. Our ILT members are instructional leaders that help with implementing site goals and supporting other teachers.

One Thursday per month is an early release day for students, which provides additional time for targeted staff development on site and District goals. We have three teacher training days throughout the year, which has provided our staff with high quality professional development and the ability to collaborate with teachers across the District. In addition, we have several highly skilled TOSAs available through our ESS Department (Language Arts, Math, Technology, and Science) that have helped with staff trainings and go into classrooms to co-teach/coach our teachers as they try out new strategies. Our various District departments offer leadership training throughout the year combined with multiple opportunities per month for our principal to collaborate and learn with administrators from other sites.

All these different opportunities for staff development have greatly increased the collective knowledge among staff members, has increased our professionalism, and has inspired us to keep learning and growing. Thus, our students receive the best education possible.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The principal is responsible for the leadership, vision, and direction of our school. However, we utilize a shared leadership model where all stakeholders contribute and work together to create a positive/successful environment. Our principal has an open door and gathers input from teachers, staff, and parents before making decisions. As a result, everyone feels invested and works in unison to help students reach their potential.

Each year begins with a teacher training day where the principal/staff review test results, and the principal sets the vision/instructional goals for the year. In the fall, teachers meet individually with the principal to go over specific teacher goals based on overall school goals.

We have weekly grade level PLC meetings on Tuesdays and collaboration meetings twice per month where the principal is able to meet with each grade level to review upcoming lessons, analyze assessment results, discuss individual student needs, and plan upcoming events. One Thursday per month is an early release day, which allows time for the staff to focus on site and District goals/initiatives. Data reflection meetings are held four times per year for grade level teams to analyze District common assessment results with the principal.

Our School Site Council (SSC) is another team (comprised of the principal, teachers, staff, and parents) that provides leadership. SSC reviews data, updates our school plan/safety plan, and looks for ways to make Leffingwell the best place possible for students. Our 4th/5th grade students are given an opportunity to participate in our Leopard Leadership program. These student leaders organize spirit days, plan charitable activities that foster a sense of community, and lead announcements every Monday and Friday.

Our active PTA meets monthly and works tirelessly throughout the year to provide a variety of essential instructional resources. PTA leaders and the principal develop an annual budget aligned with school goals. Funds are used to support our nightly reading program, buy technology/technology programs, purchase books for classroom libraries, provide support for grade level activities, field trips, assemblies, ensure safety supplies are up-to-date, and provide many other classroom materials/supplies.

It is our principal's top priority to provide students with a safe and effective learning environment at a school they love coming to each day. Our principal ensures that the hard work by students, staff, and parents does not go unnoticed. Students are recognized at awards ceremonies and staff/parents at various luncheons during the year. Our principal models collaborative decision-making and involves stakeholders in decisions. He is highly accessible, approachable, can be found helping out in classrooms, fixing technology problems, interacting with students at recess, greeting students/parents in the morning, and offering words of encouragement throughout the day.

Shared leadership, a clear vision, supportive relationships built on trust, and a strong focus on student success all help make Leffingwell the amazing school it is.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

Culturally responsive teaching requires teachers to instill a sense of acceptance and belonging in order to ensure that all students feel safe, respected, and understood. According to the most recent California Healthy Kids Survey, 91% of our students feel safe while 88% are happy to be at Leffingwell and feel like they are part of the school. The Leffingwell staff is committed to knowing each student as unique and special. When students feel comfortable and safe at school, then they are able to successfully engage in the rigorous learning we desire for them.

The EWCSO counseling staff has been the driving force behind our Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum which includes topics such as conflict resolution, peer relations, managing stress, and organizational skills. The counselors created very engaging digital lessons for teachers to quickly and easily implement. These SEL lessons have led to rich classroom discussions where students are able to learn from each other while also promoting an understanding and appreciation of our differences. Our PBIS program engages students in the expectations of the school while promoting equity among all student groups. Our PBIS team created presentations with mini-lessons for teachers to use with their students as they build the NBRS 2023

foundation for how we want our students to behave and treat each other.

Our teachers regularly look for ways to celebrate and appreciate differences. Our students learn about a variety of holidays and how different cultures celebrate them as they come up throughout the school year. Our primary grades have weekly “Star Students” who are then able to share about their family, culture, and traditions. Second grade students complete an ancestor report and share with their classmates about their lineage and diverse backgrounds. Fourth grade students complete a famous person report and then participate in a wax museum where they bring their person to life. Our wax museum is full of diverse people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures who have made a profound impact on our country and world.

As a school we participate in “The Great Kindness Challenge”, “Start with Hello” week, and every Wednesday is called “We Care Wednesday”. These activities are meant to promote kindness and acceptance towards everyone at Leffingwell. Leopard Leadership, our student leadership program, not only builds school spirit but also oversees multiple activities (coin drive, toy drive, canned food drive) each year that give back to our community and help those less fortunate. Restorative practices are utilized by the principal to support students and promote a caring culture. Having a large special education population has also helped to create a very caring and empathetic culture. Our students look out for each other, and it is very common to see students going out of their way to help one another.

Leffingwell is very diverse on many levels (different ethnicities, different socio-economic levels, different ability levels) yet it is those differences that serve to unify our school and make it a special place for students.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE**

---

Multi-Tiered System of Supports and the implementation of timely, systematic interventions have contributed to excellent student achievement at Leffingwell Elementary School. Dynamic and ongoing collaboration drive the core instructional program and tiered intervention systems. As we continue to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects and impacts of school closure continue to present themselves. The entire staff is committed to the implementation of MTSS to ensure that we respond to all student needs in a timely manner.

MTSS has strengthened Tier I instruction and improved Leffingwell's ability to provide Tier II instruction to those who need it when they need it. Leffingwell has leveraged the Instructional Leadership Team to share in the leadership and the implementation of intentional, consistent collaboration time. During weekly PLCs, teachers collaboratively plan units, ensure essential standards are repeatedly taught, discuss instructional practices and strategies, and analyze student data to determine areas of strength and weakness. PLC time is also devoted to articulation about intervention and student progress and response to tiered instruction provided.

With the support of Leffingwell's two Intervention Specialists, tiered intervention support is provided for students struggling to meet standards. During Leopard Learning Time, a 30-minute small group instruction block, teachers provide Tier II instruction while Intervention Specialists provide Tier II and Tier III support without interfering with core instruction. Our MTSS approach seeks to prevent failure through early intervention, frequent progress monitoring, and increasingly intensive research-based interventions. Students who do not show a response to effective interventions are more likely to be in need of additional services. Teachers at Leffingwell also provide after school interventions to provide wrap-around instruction and support to those who need it most.

MTSS has proven to be highly effective at raising the achievement of all students. This year 100% of students who participated in Leffingwell's intervention program showed growth on pre- and post-assessments in both Language Arts and Math. Furthermore, the academic performance of students within every subgroup has increased every year since Leffingwell implemented MTSS. Leffingwell continues to be one of the highest performing schools in our area. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, student performance has increased in all subject areas and students are outperforming pre-COVID levels. The most recent state tests show that Leffingwell outperformed the state and county average by 28% in Language Arts and by 33% in Math.

Leffingwell's commitment to MTSS and the implementation of systematic and timely interventions have supported increased and excellent student achievement.