

**ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS**

**School and District's Certifications**

The signatures of the school principal and district superintendent (or equivalents) on the next page certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of their knowledge. *In no case is a private school required to make any certification with regard to the public school district in which it is located.*

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades early learning to 12.
2. The school has been evaluated and selected from among schools within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
3. Neither the nominated public school nor its public school district is refusing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district wide compliance review. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is not subject to the jurisdiction of OCR. The nominated DoDEA schools, however, are subject to and in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements to comply with Federal civil rights laws.
4. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the public school district concluding that the nominated public school or the public school 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 to remedy the violation.
5. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
6. 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 public school or public school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or public school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.
7. The school meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

**U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools**

Public  Charter  Title I  Magnet  Private  Independent  Rural

Name of Principal: **Ms. Sarah Betz**

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

Official School Name: **Creston Elementary School**

(As it should appear on an award)

Official School Name Mailing Address: **5105 O'Donovan Road, Creston, CA 93432**

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

County: **San Luis Obispo** State School Code Number \*: **40 68700 6042915**

Telephone: **805-238-4771** Fax: **805-238-4185**

Web site/URL: [www.atasusd.org](http://www.atasusd.org) & <https://sites.google.com/atasusd.org/creston/home>

E-mail: [sarahbetz@atasusd.org](mailto:sarahbetz@atasusd.org)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.



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

Date: 1/27/20



Name of Superintendent: **Mr. Tom Butler**

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in official records)

District Name: **Atascadero Unified School District**

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Date: 1/27/2020

(Superintendent's Signature)

**Nominating Authority's Certifications**

The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority's knowledge.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades Pre-K-12.
2. The school is one of those overseen by the Nominating Authority which is highest achieving in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
3. The school meets all applicable federal civil rights and federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency: **California Department of Education**

Name of Nominating Authority: **State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond**

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.

Date: February 10, 2020

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

**SUBMISSION**

The nomination package, including the signed certifications, narrative summary, documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars, and photos should be submitted online according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509

Expiration Date: March 31, 2021

**Public Burden Statement**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1860-0509. Note: Please do not return the completed ED-Green Ribbon Schools application to this address.



# *Creston Elementary School*

California Disadvantaged School Nominee to  
U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools



Prepared By:  
California Department of Education  
School Facilities and Transportation Services Division  
[Green Ribbon Schools Award Program](#)  
February 2020

## PART II – SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

### Creston Elementary School, Creston, Calif.

#### *School grounds provide engaging learning environments*

Creston Elementary's team of highly qualified professionals is committed to providing students with meaningful opportunities to learn about their world. Creating change that can be seen daily is at the forefront of Creston's approach and dedication to environmental stewardship. From the introduction of rain barrels and native plants to creating environmentally-conscientious facilities, Creston has created a learning environment that exceeds traditional classroom learning.

Creston Elementary created their own Energy Conservation Plan to manage and reduce energy consumption. Their plan follows the practices of the Atascadero Unified School District's (AUSD) Resource Management Guide and serves as a guiding document for monitoring current energy conservation practices. Energy use at Creston is controlled by a programmable energy management system. Components of California's *Blueprint for Environmental Literacy* are also used as guiding principles for energy reduction. Staff use these documents to guide and support Creston's goal of providing continual and long-term environmental education—grounded in sustainability—to every one of their students.

In 2019, Creston upgraded school buildings by adding high-efficiency technologies and energy-reducing components including low emissivity roofing, increased insulation, low E glass, and updating lighting fixtures to LED. The school installed environmentally-friendly Marmoleum on uncarpeted areas, and low-flow toilet valves and sink fixtures in restrooms.

The Creston campus utilizes the natural land to enhance learning and their sustainability efforts. The campus has very few paved areas, less than 20 percent. Approximately 65 percent of the remaining surfaces support a green model, including native plants, gardens, grass, trees for shade, and a path for exercise. In 2019, Creston made another environmental stride forward by reducing the heat island effect by re-asphalting all remaining paved areas with materials containing heat sink colors.

The site's landscaping is water efficient and uses native trees, plants, and shrubs. When two large trees had to be removed due to potential hazards, Creston staff asked AUSD's grounds department to chip the tree into mulch to use around the site. Rainwater is harvested with five rain barrels around the school that students use to water the garden and planter beds.

Creston students lead three waste audits each year, using waste collected over a two-day period. The waste is then sorted and weighed to determine Creston's waste creation. The school has removed waste bins from classrooms; only recycle bins are available for student and staff use in the classrooms. Staff work closely with the district's Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation (MOT) hub to further Creston's recycling and waste management practices.

Efforts to educate students, families, and staff about the importance of finding ways to reduce fuel consumption and air pollution are an essential component of reaching Creston's goals. To that end, Creston installed three Carpool Parking signs and no-idling signs. The school added a section to the Student Handbook on the rules, expectations, and reason for carpooling and no-idling at school. Some school bus routes have been modified to be driven by smaller vans that are more fuel-efficient

and decrease air pollution.

Students and staff use resources in the school, district, community, and state to expand the site's ability to support students and inspire others. Over the past three years, Creston partnered with the San Luis Obispo Council of Government (SLOCOG) to provide students with Bike Rodeo events. Bike Rodeos give students the opportunity to improve their bike riding skills, as well as enhance their understanding of bike and pedestrian safety. In 2019, Creston was a recipient of a Safe Routes to School scholarship that enabled the school to provide students with incentives on days they walked or rode to school.

Creston staff ensure that healthy food choices, movement, and physical education play a vital role in their program. Staff regularly exceed the required hours for physical education, and movement breaks are provided throughout the day. Staff also prefer to demonstrate the reason behind policies, including showing students the amount of sugar that would be consumed if they celebrated every holiday, special activity, or birthday with sugary treats.

All Creston students participate in the SunWise program to learn sun-safe behaviors, and the school has implemented resources from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, including "Reimagine Recess" and "15 Minutes to Healthier Habits." Throughout the day, students participate in brain breaks in the classroom using Go Noodle, Jack Hartman, and other types of developmentally appropriate exercise videos.

Creston implements the "Caring School Community" curriculum, a nationally recognized, evidence-based curriculum that provides students with tools to create healthy relationships with peers and develop essential social skills. The program improves students' emotional connectedness to school by utilizing a "buddies" program, home-school connection, and a school-wide component that teaches students respect and ownership for their actions and behavior.

A changed way of seeing the world and living in it exists in the minds of Creston's students and staff. A no-waste ideology pervades the culture at Creston and is the basis for much of their learning. Staff and students engage in conversations about how sustainability affects the culture of learning and thinking at Creston. As a result, many curriculum resources have transitioned from paper-pencil to online, reducing the need for paper.

Students and staff use the school's natural landscape, which is abundant in natural life, animals, and trees, for its ecological resources to implement California's Next Generation Science Standards. Students receive direct instruction around grade-level specific standards in science, mathematics, and English Language Arts aligned to outdoor education. The school garden, rain collection barrels, and a collection of new programs and resources provide the Creston community the opportunity to create and sustain the quality of their environment.

Creston's partnership with Cuesta College's Sustainability Resource Center has enlisted resources from the local community college to provide students with instruction using hands-on kits from the National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project. Classroom teachers are able to supplement their science instruction using the NEED kits free-of-charge to provide instruction in renewable energy through the lens of hands-on projects that incorporate math, engineering, reading, and writing.

Creston utilizes approximately ninety percent of its school grounds as learning areas for students, including many gardens. The school began planting fruit-bearing trees throughout the site in 2019, with students providing input for their location. The main garden is home to a chicken coop, above-ground food beds, two greenhouses, two compost bins, and an outdoor classroom. Creston's smaller garden—aptly named “Kindergarden”—is intended for use by Creston's Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten students. A Music Garden is comprised of three donated pianos, two donated organs, and a plethora of musical instruments for students to explore. A Sensory Garden is comprised of a sensory path; sound tube; plants for touching, smelling, and eating; and a giant standing xylophone. It also features recycled materials and provides students a calm place for learning and meditating. Creston's garden projects provide opportunities for students to foster an interest in the process of being conscientious about their environment and the world around them.

Creston uses the Living Schoolyard Activity Guide from Green Schoolyards America to inform instruction, with each grade level using lessons twice weekly throughout the month of May, California's Living Schoolyard Month. These activities cover a range of topics, from social-emotional well-being to watershed stewardship. This year, students will incorporate a science fair and display projects accomplished throughout the school year.

Creston Elementary is creating a lasting difference for the world, growing students who think about their resource use, not just while at school, but when they are at home, in the community, or out in the world.

## PART III – DOCUMENTATION OF STATE EVALUATION OF SCHOOL NOMINEE

### Pillar I: Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs

#### Element IA: Energy

- Creston Elementary implements their own Energy Conservation Plan, following practices in the AUSD Resource Management Guide, serving as a guide for monitoring current energy conservation practices. Guidelines include behavior modification, such as turning off lights when rooms are unoccupied and shutting off equipment when not in use.
- In the 2019-20 school year, Creston Elementary used the EcoVox management system software to track overall usage and efficiency. The school receives data from the software that identifies usage trends, opportunities for improvement, and tracking year over year usage and performance.
- Creston Elementary used the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator, with data collected by EcoVox, to determine a 4% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions between 2015 and 2018.
- Since modernized in 2019, Creston now has high-efficiency technologies and energy-reducing components throughout buildings. The school replaced all outdated interior lighting fixtures with LED. A high SEER HVAC equipment processor provides temperature ranges set between seventy and seventy-eight degrees. The facilities heating and cooling system automatically turns on and off, and programmers shut off the HVAC system on non-use days. Other essential elements of the site include features such as low emissivity roofing, increased R-value in the buildings' envelope, and low E glass, to reduce Creston's energy use.

- With recent modernization in 2019, Creston has efficient and up-to-date buildings that meet current state and federal requirements. The modernization meets the California High Performance Incentive Grant requirements and exceeded Title 24 standards by at least 20%. Contractors and subcontractors were careful to minimize construction debris, maximize construction recycling, implement appropriate stormwater handling measures, utilize efficient lighting, install High SEER HVAC equipment, increase the insulation of the entire building envelope, enhance daylighting, and provide increased natural ventilation. The installation of new carpet tiles allows for easy replacement of individual tiles, rather than replacing entire carpeted areas. Areas not carpeted use an environmentally-friendly floor covering called Marmoleum. The installation of low-flow toilet valves (2.4 gallons per flush) and low-flow sink fixtures occurred during modernization. Currently, Creston is working with organizations to provide the installation of a photovoltaic system. Once installed, approximately 100% of Creston Elementary School's electricity will come from the on-site photovoltaic system.
- Creston Elementary has participated in a few energy programs. With the backing of AUSD, beginning in 2019, Creston Elementary School began to participate in the PG&E Savings by Design (SBD) Program. SBD offers a variety of resources and incentives to the district and school site. SBD helps Creston with building and design to exceed California's Title 24 energy-efficiency standards. Representatives from the Savings by Design Program analyze Creston's energy processes and provide resources to continue the development of high standards for achieving efficiency goals and processes.
- Beginning in 2016, Creston Elementary School enlisted Cuesta College's Sustainability Resource Center. Twice monthly, they provide lessons using hands-on kits from the National Energy Education Development Project (NEED).
- Creston has a resurfaced asphalt to reduce the heat island effect, with the help of grant funding provided by Safe Routes to School. During this process, the District worked with vendors who use materials containing heat sink colors, creating a reduction in the impact on the environment because of the product's green design.
- The campus has very few paved areas, less than 20%. Approximately 65% of the remaining surfaces support a green model including: native plants, gardens, grass, trees for shade, and a path for exercise. Creston's campus utilizes the natural land to enhance learning and their sustainability efforts.

### Element IB: Water and Grounds

- Water reduction is a top priority for staff and students. Creston removed two hazardous large trees because of safety hazards to people and facilities. Working with AUSD's grounds department, the tree company that removed the trees chipped the stump and limbs of the tree, leaving the site with mulch. Creston staff and students used this mulch throughout the site. All gardens, planters, and native plant areas have mulch. Recycled mulch covers the garden grounds and all planter beds to improve water efficiency.
- Creston students water the garden and planter beds using captured rainwater. The district implements the use of smart controllers (e.g., Cal Sense) for outdoor water use, which has leak detection and mitigation capabilities by way of flow meters and master valves. Smart controllers use data from local weather stations to derive evapotranspiration rates on-site, to irrigate when needed and adjust their program times automatically as appropriate for the weather conditions and plant

types. Additionally, Cal Sense sends a notification to AUSD's maintenance department when errors in the irrigation system occur, reducing the amount of water wasted.

- Landscape water conservation plays a large part in Creston's water efficiency. In AUSD, 90-95% of the water used relates to irrigating turf and planted areas on Creston's school and district properties. On the school's 6-acre parcel, school buildings make up approximately one-third of the landscape. Since only a portion of the campus is buildings, much of the campus' landscape is native trees, plants, and shrubs.
- The school began planting fruit-bearing trees throughout the site in 2019, with students providing input for their location. Creston Elementary School utilizes approximately ninety percent of its school grounds as learning areas for students in kindergarten through fifth grade to use in their educational development.
- Through programs like One Cool Earth and Learning Among the Oaks, students learn about drip irrigation, native plants, home water use audits, watersheds, and stormwater management.
- Creston Elementary School aims to add drought-tolerant landscaping with native plants. The school has two gardens, which students use to grow a variety of fruits and vegetables; two greenhouses; and two vermicomposting centers that help the gardens flourish while keeping lunch waste out of the landfill. To meet the watering needs of the gardens, students use water collection basins; fallen trees create mulch for the outdoor learning atmosphere.

#### Element IC: Waste

- Each trimester, students perform a waste audit. Students and staff gather waste materials at Creston Elementary School for two days. Students and staff sort, weigh, and evaluate Creston's consumption. The waste audits led the students to develop the Green Team, with the guidance of One Cool Earth. Fourth and fifth-grade student volunteers are in charge of liquid sorting, composting, and recycling by using appropriate collection bins. Representatives from One Cool Earth initially worked with staff and students to teach them the process of performing a Waste Audit. Currently, staff and students perform three waste audits annually.
- Creston Elementary staff works closely with the district's Maintenance Operations and Transportation (MOT) hub for Creston's recycling and waste management needs. Creston has removed waste bins from classrooms, and only recycle bins are available for student and staff use in the classrooms. The district has "self-recycled" since 1999. The district is proactive in the use of public auctions to sell off unwanted items. This process has diverted district surplus out of the waste stream and into the secondary market.
- AUSD provides comprehensive training to grounds and custodial staff to handle any chemicals or hazardous material. In addition, many hazardous materials are stored offsite at the district's MOT hub where they handle proper storage and disposal. Materials not stored off-site are kept out of the reach of students and are recycled with appropriate vendors. For example, depleted batteries are stored in a container in the office until returned to the Cuesta Sustainability Resource Center for proper recycling.
- The AUSD standard allows for the purchasing of microfiber cleaning cloths to clean all parts of the school campus. The custodial staff adds to Creston's efforts by reducing the utilization of cleaners, instead using microfiber cloths and mop heads as is appropriate on all indoor surface areas. Greenworks Multi-Surface Cleaner, which is recognized by the US EPA's Design for the Environment program, is used by trained staff in classrooms.

## Element ID: Alternative Transportation

- Creston Elementary is focused on educating students, families, and staff about the importance of reducing fuel consumption and air pollution. To that end, Creston installed three carpool parking and no-idling signs. The school added a section to the Student Handbook on the rules, expectations, and reasoning for carpooling and no-idling at Creston Elementary School.
- Atascadero Unified School District (AUSD) bus drivers and employees follow the no-idling policy when picking up or dropping off students. The main entrance to the school campus is a gate that is approximately 30 feet from the office door. All other entries are, at minimum, 50 feet from where pick-up and drop-off occurs.
- Though Creston is a smaller campus, ample storage space to provide those who choose to use human-powered modes of transportation to school is available.
- Though Creston Elementary has few sidewalks in the surrounding area and many families live more than a mile away from the school, students participate in Walk and Roll Wednesdays monthly. Through Creston's partnership with Safe Routes to School, students participate in International Walk to School Day and Bike to School Days throughout the school year. Creston's partnership with Safe Routes to School and Rideshare has resulted in multiple opportunities for students to learn about the importance of healthy and safe transportation as a way to reduce pollution, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and other pollutants in the environment. Programs such as Walk and Roll Wednesday and Walk to School Day make bicycling and walking to school more appealing and encourage active and healthy behaviors. In 2017, Creston held three "bike or walk to school" days, with all reaching at least 10% participation. During the 2018 school year, monthly Walk and Roll Wednesdays occur. So far, Creston has had 45% participation at these events.
- For the past three years, Creston has partnered with the San Luis Obispo Council of Government (SLOCOG) to provide students with Bike Rodeos. Bike Rodeos allow students to learn to improve their bike riding skills, as well as enhance their understanding of bike and pedestrian safety. Bike Rodeos include a bike safety training day and an assessment component for all students. Students in kindergarten through fifth grade are required to pass an assessment before participating in the Bike Rodeo. During Bike Rodeos, 100% of students joined either as riders or as pedestrians on the Bike Rodeo course.
- At the end of 2017, Rideshare approved a grant to provide Creston a painted bike track during the summer of 2019. This bike track offers students the opportunity to practice safe bike riding habits under the supervision of staff five days a week. In 2019, Creston was a recipient of a Safe Routes to School scholarship, awarding the site \$800 to provide students with incentives on days they walked or rode to school.
- Regular maintenance of the District's transportation fleet ensures that efficient vehicles are on the road. Additionally, approximately nine fleet vehicles were replaced between 2015 and 2019 to ensure a more efficient fleet of vehicles.
- When buses are needed to transport students, the staff works to fill all the seats. Creston achieves this by partnering with Carrisa Plains Elementary School to reach the maximum capacity for buses, with each bus seating 54 people, two per seat, or 84 people with three per seat. Some school bus routes have been modified to be driven by smaller vans that are more fuel-efficient and decrease air pollution.

## Pillar II: Improve the Health and Wellness of Students and Staff

### Element IIA: Environmental Health

- The district-wide goal is to implement Integrated Pest Management (IPM) by focusing on long-term prevention or suppression of pests through accurate pest identification, frequent monitoring for pest presence, applying appropriate action, and making the habitat less conducive to pests using sanitary, mechanical, and physical controls. For instance, the school only carries waste in proper storage devices, immediately tends to leaks and cracks, installs barriers and traps, and manages the resources that draw pests to the site. Only after other options are proven ineffective, may staff choose to use other pesticides, following the AUSD's policies and procedures in doing so. All IPM-trained personnel using pesticides have completed their annual yearly training and have registered for a pesticide application through the AUSD's website.
- Creston Elementary School prohibits smoking on campus. There are signs posted in multiple locations throughout the site, including near all main entrances, notifying visitors of the policy. This information can also be found on Creston's website and in the Student Handbook.
- Animals on campus are limited to service animals or animals that pose no allergen risk to students.
- Staff limits the time spent outdoors when the air quality is poor due to excessive smog or smoke.
- Cleaners are sprayed directly on microfiber cloths reducing the number of airborne chemicals. Additionally, horsehair vacuum attachments remove dirt in hard-to-reach locations to reduce asthma triggers; classroom vacuuming occurs twice a week.
- To ensure Creston Elementary School is safe from lead contamination, all preparations for painting projects are certified to comply with Cal-OSHA lead-removal guidelines. The trained staff ensures that Creston is a safe school by implementing safeguards and procedures to prevent exposure to lead contaminants. Additionally, all new products installed on-site comply with current lead standards.
- Clean drinking water at Creston is provided by a CIRCA well installed in 2000. The well was deepened to 200+/1 feet in 2017 because of falling water tables. The water pumped from this aquifer is held in storage at a maximum of 30,000 gallons and is chlorinated via a 700-gallon potable water chlorination tank. There is water piped through the site plumbing. Because Creston Elementary School is considered a "small water purveyor," the site is required to have their water tested monthly for Coliform and e-coli, and annually for various chemicals.
- Creston follows recycling protocol when bulbs need to be removed and replaced. Creston only purchases mercury-free batteries. Old cells are kept out of the reach of students and removed from battery-operated equipment when they are not in use. There is a battery recycling storage container in the school's office, and the staff regularly recycles batteries. Creston's thermostats do not contain mercury, nor do thermometers for fever identification and educational purposes.
- AUSD provides a preventative maintenance schedule to team members, who replace filters and complete general inspections of systems twice per year. EcoVox, an organization that monitors Creston's HVAC system and energy use, provides monthly service and immediately reports any malfunctions with Creston's units.

- The district's asbestos management plan (posted on the district's website) includes inspections done biannually by AUSD and triennially by the district's insurance carrier. Indoor environmental quality is evaluated and maintained with district inspections. The SISC Safety document is used for inspections one or two times per year. Quarterly, Creston uses the EPA's online Indoor Air Quality Problem solving toolkit for annual facility inspections, as required by the Williams Act (the results of which are posted on the District's School Accountability Report Card, and has utilized the EPA's IAQ reference guide to ensure practices around mold, radon, and asthma, and AUSD's integrated pest management prevents widespread illnesses from occurring. AUSD provides, with the support of the District Safety Committee, in-house safety inspections and an annual "Thumbs-Up/Thumbs-Down" safety review performed by site custodial staff. Each school has four inspections performed each year. Repair work, outside of the preventative maintenance program, is enabled through a computer-based facility management work order system.
- The AUSD has disposed of wooden play structures and replaced them with the International Play Equipment Manufacturers Association-approved models.
- Chemicals are used only for cleaning purposes, not for educational purposes, and only by trained staff. All art supplies are non-toxic. Staff cleans hard surfaces using Clorox Greenworks Multi-Surface cleaner (which the EPA has recognized for safer chemistry). Simple Green (which is non-toxic and biodegradable) is used to clean other spaces. Since the completion of Creston's modernization project, Creston has begun using a Kaivac touchless sanitation system to clean restrooms, which sprays disinfectant, rinses with water, and reclaims the wastewater.
- The school implements a greener cleaning custodial program, with staff making choices that mitigate exposure to toxins. All custodial staff and classroom staff ensure doors remain open for 1.5 hours after cleaning with chemicals. Cleaning occurs in the evening so fumes can dissipate safely. Custodians clean with environmentally responsible cleaners such as Lemon-Quat, an EPA-registered disinfectant for floors.
- Creston Elementary controls and manages exposure to chemicals. The school's highly qualified custodial staff are trained and adhere to the guidelines for using, storing, and disposing of chemicals to protect students, faculty, and the environment. Global Harmonization System - Safety Data Sheets (GHS-SDS) for all hazardous substances are available on-site. Closets and spaces with chemicals have signage and locks.
- The district's painter is trained to test painted surfaces for lead-based paint using a flow-chart through SIPE before re-painting surfaces. Hazardous material management includes the following: fluorescent tubes that contain Mercury are boxed and sent to appropriate recycling vendors. If a small oil or fuel spill occurs, trained operation staff cleans minor needs; AUSD's operations team assigns large spills to HazMat vendors. Building paints are stored, cleaned, and disposed of at the MOT site.
- Creston Elementary School has newly remodeled classrooms and building spaces, some featuring Fabricmate wall surfacing material. Most classrooms also have quiet HVAC systems and new tile carpeting to create a high-noise-reduction coefficient. Lighting is High efficiency (T-5) fluorescent lights or LED lighting, for use when needed. All buildings have ample daylighting to minimize the need to use electrical lighting.
- The role humidity plays in all buildings was factored in during the planning of modernization for Creston Elementary School. Direct Expansion air conditioning provides enough drying to reduce high humidity levels in Creston's buildings and classrooms.
- Creston Elementary School campus sits on a six-acre parcel; school buildings make up less than

one-third of the landscape. When planning for construction occurred, the ability of students and staff members to view the natural landscape was considered. Native trees, animals, plants, gardens, and shrubs can be seen by students from the classrooms and other buildings throughout the campus. The modernization performed in 2019 featured alignment with the District Resource Management guide and are equal to the projects done at many other sites around the district.

- The implementation of a school garden, rain collection barrels, and a variety of new programs and resources provides students, staff, and stakeholders with the opportunity to create and sustain the quality of their outdoor environment.
- Creston has many gardens. The main garden is home to a chicken coop, above-ground food beds, two greenhouses, two compost bins, and an outdoor classroom. Creston's smaller garden—aptly named “Kindergarden”—is intended for Creston's Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten students to utilize. Creston is home to a Music Garden comprised of three donated pianos, two donated organs, and a plethora of musical instruments for students to utilize. Creston Elementary School also has a sensory garden comprised of a sensory path, sound tube, plants for touching, smelling and eating, and a giant standing xylophone.

### Element IIB: Nutrition and Fitness

- Creston's current gardens offer a wealth of produce and fresh chicken eggs for students. The food forest has an abundance of edible plants, fruits, and vegetables available to students, staff members, and the community. AUSD and Creston Elementary are collaborating with RobinSong Farms to provide a farm on-site at Creston to add raised-bed vegetables and fruits not already grown on-site, which staff will provide in the cafeteria for students to eat during lunch and recess. The goal is to increase the amount of fresh produce that is locally grown and to give students the experience of understanding the process for how to grow fruits and vegetables for consumption.
- Creston Elementary has a healthy birthday-snack policy, as celebrations have moved away from high-sugar and high-fat foods and toward fruits and vegetable snacks, or non-food items, for such occasions. Treats that do not comply with this policy are turned away at the office. Students, staff members, and families have embraced the healthier eating habits. Many festivities have become STEAM-based activities or art-infused programs, and because the school has moved away from the traditional individually packaged snacks, there has been a reduction in waste accumulated. The PTA embraces the non-junk-food ideology, in particular, when preparing for Creston's Harvest Festival and other special events.
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation is an excellent resource that is used to develop schoolwide goals and expectations. Creston has promoted and supported programs such as “Reimagine Recess” and utilized resources such as “15 Minutes to Healthier Habits.” Creston's Transitional Kindergarten (TK)-5<sup>th</sup> grade students are given the opportunity to participate in a six-week program sponsored by Lighthouse Afterschool, wherein students are provided specialized time with a representative from One Cool Earth to learn more about gardening and healthy cooking.
- Since 2018, 100% of Creston's TK-5<sup>th</sup> grade student population has participated in the SunWise program. In doing so, students can now understand their role in protecting their skin through sun-safe behaviors. The site administrator has provided oversized umbrellas for staff members to use outdoors to encourage sun protection.
- Fourth and fifth-grade students have participated in the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau's “Agriculture Adventure,” where students have learned where their food grows. Stations included

demonstrations for how to milk a cow, how butter is churned and prepared without preservatives and other harmful fillers, how dogs work on a ranch, how sheep make wool, and how fibers are used to make clothing. Students also discover how vegetables grow from vegetable transplants to a mature product, and plant their own transplant so they can take their own Romaine lettuce home and grow it themselves. Students also plant their own fertilizer trial, applying various rates to plants to see the results.

- Creston Elementary partners with outdoor organizations such as Rancho El Chorro, which offers field studies that incorporate amazing hands-on experiences for Creston students in a natural setting. All programs are aligned to the California Next Generation Science Standards, California Common Core State Standards, and English Language Development Standards. Their kindergarten programs include a station called “Under the Student,” where students learn what ocean animals need to live and grow. They also participate in a class called “The World Around Me,” illustrating the natural resources humans need to live and grow. Creston’s first graders participate in learning regarding plants and animal parts that allow for organisms to survive and thrive in their environment, as well as learning about how animals use their senses to help them survive and thrive in nature. Creston’s second grade students learn about the diversity of life in different habitats, and students observe different patterns found in nature. They also learn about cycles in nature and the human influences of those cycles. Third grade students learn how animal groups obtain food, defend themselves, and cope with changes.
- P.E. instruction occurs outside 95% of the time and includes walking on the 1/8th-mile track and riding on the painted bike track. P.E. instruction occurs inside when the weather does not permit students to be outside. Occasionally, yoga instruction is held inside using Creston’s state-of-the-art sound system and projection screen. Teachers practice this activity inside because of the staff’s ability to stream yoga using online resources. Throughout the day, students participate in brain breaks in the classroom using Go Noodle, Jack Hartman, and other types of developmentally appropriate exercise videos. Students get moving and dancing during recess and lunch when Creston’s staff projects music out onto the playground. Additionally, the fourth- and fifth-grade students participate in California’s Physical Education assessment, where staff measure height and weight, and documents performance towards P.E. standards. Outside of the school day, 30% of the student population participates in the local Hares and Hounds 5k run.
- Creston addresses the eight components of the Coordinated School Health approach throughout the year. Students in the fifth grade have health instruction and participate in maturation education. Staff provides students with opportunities to understand the necessity of a safe school environment. Presenters discuss self-esteem and character education through an anti-bullying message.
- Creston Elementary partners with many businesses to provide students with ongoing health and safety education. For example, a local Atascadero dentist, Pure Pediatric Dentistry, provides students with education on the health benefits of proper dental hygiene. Integrated Waste Management Authority provides classroom presentations as well as tours of the local recycling center. Creston partners with local fire and law enforcement to ensure 100% of TK-5<sup>th</sup> grade students have an understanding of how to be safe in an emergency, and ways that first responders can help students, schools, and communities. Rideshare has provided grant funds to promote healthy behaviors for students, including the creation of the bike track. Creston has also built partnerships with nonprofit organizations such as the Dairy Council, which provides free nutrition

education programs to Creston students and adults. Woods Humane Society brings in dogs to teach students how to be safe with pets and animals.

- Creston Elementary School follows a Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) model, a multi-tiered system of support to improve the social, emotional, and behavior support for all TK-5<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- All TK-5 students have access to a site-assigned psychologist, and counselors. Students' social, emotional, and physical well-being is a high priority, with access to a health clerk and a district nurse available five days a week. Students have access to counselors through the district's partnership with The Community Counseling Center of Paso Robles (CCC), which provides students with resources to improve their emotional, social, and behavioral needs. Students, parents, or staff can request these services at any time throughout the year. Instructional Assistants also run social groups daily, where students can practice social-norm scenarios, and gain skills to improve and increase their social skills. If the need for mental health resources goes beyond the school day, Creston has partnered with The Link of Atascadero to connect families with resources to improve mental health such as counselors, psychologists, and social services.
- The school continues its use of the "Caring School Community" curriculum, a nationally recognized, evidence-based curriculum that provides students with tools to create healthy relationships with peers and develop essential social skills. The program improves students' emotional connectedness to school by utilizing a "buddies" program, home-school connection, and a school-wide component that teaches students respect and ownership for their actions and behavior. Presenters and motivational speakers discuss self-esteem and character education through the anti-bullying message.
- AUSD's technology department monitors online activity and communicates with the school when "cyberbullying" comments are occurring. Their filter has allowed for cyberbullying to be identified and stopped entirely during the 2017 school year at Creston. Teachers, students, and families have been referred to the resources at [Stopbullying.gov](http://Stopbullying.gov).
- Creston Elementary School has a Wellness Committee representative that meets with the District Wellness Committee quarterly and then shares the information received with parents and staff.
- Staff wellness is encouraged regularly with discussions regarding the importance of taking care of oneself while balancing a career with a healthy lifestyle. Using the Midweek Memo, a staff online communication resource, the staff stays up-to-date regarding ongoing and new ways they can increase their overall wellness week-to-week and year-round. Upwards of 90% of Creston's staff members work out at least three days per week, many working out together. The principal incorporates brain and exercise breaks into all professional development meetings. Creston's site wellness representative maintains a Wellness Board in the staff lounge, where recipes, self-care tips, and local fitness opportunities are shared. Yearly, all staff participates in safety training, and the safety committee is responsible for Creston's Comprehensive School Safety Plan. There is dedicated time during the school year to promote team building and discuss ways in which staff members take care of their own personal mental and physical health.

## Pillar III: Provide Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

### Element IIIA: Interdisciplinary Learning

- Creston's teachers have dedicated themselves to enhancing their practices through Professional Development (PD). Teachers have attended PD on the use of an online curriculum called Mystery Science, which is aligned to the California Next Generation Science Standards (CA NGSS) and focuses on inquiry-based activities. Additionally, all teachers participated in PD by the Cuesta Sustainability Resource Center to learn how to implement the National Energy Education Development Project (NEED) kits.
- Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, Creston's administration added questions to the interview process to ensure new staff's values and vision align with those of the site. Since Creston staff started implementing the CA NGSS, the site wants to ensure that all future employees integrate environmental education instruction into their classrooms.
- Beginning in 2018, through the collaborative efforts of Creston's Sustainability Committee, the staff and students have created a formal written document that communicates Creston's learning outcomes for all TK-5 students. Creston staff used components of California's *Blueprint for Environmental Literacy* as one of its guiding documents. In conjunction with this document, Creston utilizes AUSD's Resource Management Plan, which includes attainable goals to guide practices and inform decisions. Creston's vision for new and ongoing practices and policies guide students toward being citizenship ready, preparing them to think about their bearing on the world around them.
- Creston Elementary School provides all students with garden education, outdoor education, and time to be on the Green Team. Creston implemented the use of California's Environmental Principles and Concepts in 2015, teaching K-5 students through the lens of environmental sustainability based on five guiding principles: people depend on natural systems; people influence natural systems; natural systems proceed through cycles that humans depend upon, benefit from and can alter; there are no permanent or impermeable boundaries that prevent matter from flowing between systems, and decisions affecting resources and natural systems are complex and involve many factors.
- Many of Creston's academic programs cover environmental and sustainability education. Creston's English Language Arts program focuses on CA NGSS to bridge ELA and real-world application thinking. Creston's Zearn math curriculum poses questions for students to think critically about and solve problems related to sustainability and the environment.
- TK-5 students use hands-on NEED energy science kits, provided free of charge by the Cuesta Sustainability Resource Center. NEED focuses on the science of energy, renewable and non-renewable energy sources, and electricity, with many hands-on experiments. NEED kits also offer the opportunity to take the lessons outside into the garden where classroom learning can be applied to explore math, graphing, career pathways, and art.
- Each trimester, students perform a waste audit wherein waste materials used at Creston are gathered for two days. Students and staff then sort, weigh, and discuss the implications of the amount of waste created by students and staff. These essential conversations allowed students to form ideas about habits and behaviors to reduce their environmental impact. From these conversations, and with the partnership with local non-profit One Cool Earth, Creston formed the

Green Team, in which students monitor and sort compost, recycle, and landfill items using the appropriate collection bins. Utilizing a vermicomposting system, which includes using worms to break down uneaten fruits and vegetables, students from the Green Team turn potential lunchtime waste into soil amendment for the school garden.

- All students receive instructional time in the garden taught by the teachers or One Cool Earth's Garden Education Mentor. They learn general maintenance that teaches life science lessons through planting seeds, harvesting, collecting seeds, and composting. After garden education sessions, each classroom has a discussion regarding what they learned that day and what they can do at home or in their daily lives to foster deep connections to their new learning.
- Creston's garden projects, food garden, sensory garden, and music garden provide opportunities for students to gaining an interest in the process of being conscientious about their environment and the world around them. The sensory garden provides students a calm place for learning and meditating. Recycled or recyclable materials created the foundation for the sensory garden; students have gained access to another way a "garden" helps them to stay healthy and thrive.
- As a facility that has a commercial-grade on-site kitchen, Creston provides students with multiple opportunities to create items for consumption from scratch, interacting with the process of cooking and baking from start to finish while gaining an understanding of how and where their food grows. Entrees, salads, and snacks are all made with TK-5<sup>th</sup> grade students using fresh eggs, fruits, and vegetables from the garden.
- Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, a student-led low-cost farmers market was created. At the market, students sell eggs, vegetables, and fruits, and other items from the garden.
- Students visit the monarch butterfly park in Pismo Beach to learn about changing landscapes and devise ways to implement environmentally-conscious practices. Fourth and fifth grade students participated in "The Great AGventure" field trip, where they interacted at six agriculturally themed stations: farm animals, seeds and plants, fertilizer, meteorology, harvesting and farm machinery, and environmental stewardship. Creston also utilizes Rancho El Chorro Outdoor Schools for both their Traveling Naturalist program and their outdoor school component. Rancho El Chorro's instructional program is student-centered, hands-on, and engaged all of Creston's TK-5<sup>th</sup> grade students with nature.

### Element IIIB: STEM Content, Knowledge, and Skills

- Creston Elementary School uses Mystery Science's online curriculum for students in Kindergarten through fifth grade. This program helps students explore questions like how one could survive a landslide, how a car could run without gas, and what would happen if there was no electricity. Through hands-on activities, students focus on engineering, testing hypotheses, and using results to develop their ideas.
- NEED kits address curriculum and instruction in the areas of magnetism, soil composition, climate, wind energy, solar energy, and hydropower through the lens of hands-on projects that incorporate math, engineering, reading, and writing. Additionally, this curriculum provides students with conversations regarding employment opportunities available in numerous fields.
- Through field trips and non-profit partnerships, students meet and learn from professionals who are employed at parks, farms, aquariums, outdoor school, and in the environmental outreach of the non-profit organizations. Organizations such as One Cool Earth, Integrated Waste

Management, San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, Woods Humane Society, San Luis Obispo's Integrated Waste Management Authority, San Luis Obispo County Sheriff Department, and CAL FIRE, and Cuesta Sustainability Resource Center expose students to an assortment of career opportunities. Addressing job options alongside learning is a significant component of the AUSD Graduate Profile, guiding students into becoming career- and college-ready individuals who can contribute to society.

### Element IIIC: Civic Knowledge and Skills

- TK-5<sup>th</sup> grade students participate in a curriculum called Caring Schools Community. This curriculum teaches all students a culture of kindness and respect, where all students are treated warmly in a safe and supportive environment.
- Creston's community engagement projects include a student-run, low-cost, school-based farmers market. During this time, they sell or donate food from the gardens and give away clothing collected from other schools within the district and from their families. Each month, there is an opportunity for TK-5<sup>th</sup> grade students to volunteer at the school during Gardens Work Day, where they volunteer their time by raking, shoveling, and cleaning up their school garden.
- Creston's Sustainability Committee, staff members, and students dedicate their time to completing projects suggested by the EPA website. Students and faculty members use the EPA's list of suggestions regarding service projects that they would like to attempt, such as learning what groups in Creston's area are implementing watershed protection projects or using the EPA's Service-Learning: Education Beyond the Classroom for ideas on additional activities for students in all grades.
- At Creston Elementary, students use outdoor learning areas a minimum of twice per week. Creston Elementary has created a space that students use as a cross-curricular science observation zone for students to connect their learning and real-life application. The location of Creston Elementary School is a resource in and of itself for students, as the site provides an abundance of ecological resources and lends itself to the implementation and expansion of the CA NGSS.
- Field trips to a multitude of locations help to sustain Creston's goals occur yearly. Creston's fourth and fifth-grade students participate in "The Great AGventure" field trip, and all students participated in the San Simeon Elephant Seal Rookery trip.
- Each May, beginning with the 2018-19 school year, Creston uses the Living Schoolyard Activity guide to inform instruction. Each grade (TK-5<sup>th</sup>) level uses lessons twice weekly throughout May. These activities cover a range of topics, from social-emotional well-being to watershed stewardship. This year, students will incorporate a science fair and display projects accomplished throughout the school year.
- Creston's garden projects enhance students in tying together curricular concepts as well as gaining an interest in the process of being conscientious about their environment and the world around them. Creston's student-led Green Team takes care of two vermicomposting centers to provide the gardens with "worm tea" and help the garden flourish while also keeping lunch waste out of the trash. Creston Elementary School has approximately ninety percent of its school grounds as learning areas for students in kindergarten through fifth grade to use in their educational development.
- Creston builds partnerships with upwards of ten different organizations to bolster their efforts.

For example, through the partnership with Safe Routes to School, staff and students communicate regularly with families and the community regarding the importance of walking and biking, ensuring more and more students and families consider the use of alternative modes of transportation. Creston's partnership with Safe Routes to School and Rideshare has resulted in multiple opportunities for students to learn about the importance of transportation to reduce pollution, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and other pollutants in the environment. Programs such as Walk and Roll Wednesday and Walk to School Day make bicycling and walking to school more appealing and encourage active and healthy behaviors in elementary-aged students.

- At Creston and within AUSD, students and staff collaborate between sites to increase sustainability efforts and expand all implementation practices. Procedures and practices have been shared openly with the hopes of building up students, staff members, and communities. The relationships built between the district's schools have allowed for the implementation of practices.
- AUSD's Maintenance and Operations department augments Creston's efforts to interweave sustainability efforts. The staff works to fill all seats on buses, which is achieved by partnering with Carrisa Plains Elementary School to reach the capacity of buses; each bus seats 54 people with two per seat, or 84 people with three per seat. As these two sites are small (Creston has 52 students and Carrisa Plains has 14), this is done intentionally to reduce the impact of transporting using more than one bus.
- The AUSD promotes growth in all three pillars, from facilities to foodservice and everywhere in between. By proximity within the county, there are multiple possibilities for networking with both Lucia Mar Unified School District and San Luis Obispo Coast Unified School District. Often, there are collaborative efforts between districts, be it supporting school greening efforts or discussing practices and policies surrounding curriculum and the health and wellness of staff and students.
- Creston Elementary partners with businesses to provide students with ongoing health and safety education. For example, a local Atascadero Dentist, Pure Pediatric Dentistry, provides students with education on the health benefits of proper dental hygiene. Waste Management Authority provides classroom presentations as well as tours of the local recycling center. Creston partners with local fire and law enforcement ensuring all students can execute safety procedures in an emergency.
- Creston has partnerships with nonprofit organizations such as the Dairy Council, which provides free nutrition education programs to Creston students and adults through teachers and health professionals. The Woods Humane Society brings in dogs to teach students how to be safe with pets and animals. Each Humane Education Course includes a canine ambassador or kitten ambassadors, hands-on activities, language arts or math components, and suggestions for classroom extensions. One Cool Earth, a local nonprofit, strengthens the garden, composting, waste, and food forest programs. Additionally, the San Francisco Academy of Sciences offers teachers and students virtual tours for classes that cannot take field trips.
- Creston Elementary School looks for innovative ways of being an environmentally mindful school that implements global sustainability practices. Creston's efforts toward integrating programs to enhance the educational program outside of traditional classrooms have remained steady over the past four years. Creston continuously looks for outside organizations and entities to enrich the progress of the school, students, and staff. Creston partners with other schools within the Atascadero Unified School District as well as with other components of the district.