



**California Department of Education
2016 California Gold Ribbon Schools Program
Elementary School Application: Part A**



37 682 6070841
County-District-School (CDS) Code – 14 digits

San Diego
County Name

Poway Unified School District
District Name

Los Peñasquitos Elementary
School Name *(If your school is selected for honors, this school name will be engraved on the award plaque.)*

<u>14125 Cuca Street</u>	<u>San Diego</u>	<u>92129</u>
Mailing Address	City	Zip Code

<u>(858) 672-3600</u>	<u>3205</u>	<u>(858) 672-4390</u>
Area Code and Phone Number	Ext.	Area Code and Fax Number

dmclaughlin@powayusd.com
Principal's E-mail Address



I certify that I have reviewed the information contained in this application and, to the best of my knowledge, it is complete and accurate. I further certify that:

- The Office for Civil Rights does not have any outstanding findings of civil rights statute violations by the school or district that may affect the school;*
- There are no pending lawsuits by the Department of Justice against the district alleging that the school, or the district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clauses; and*
- The school or district is addressing or has addressed any identified areas of noncompliance under federal or state laws and regulations.*

Deanne McLaughlin
Principal's Name

Principal's Signature Date

John P. Collins, Ed.D
District Superintendent's Name

Superintendent's Signature Date

School Information

1. Current school enrollment: 555
2. Which category best describes where your school is located?
 Urban Suburban Rural
3. Does your school receive Title I funding? Yes No
 If yes, indicate type of services: School-wide Targeted Assistance
4. What is your school calendar? Traditional Year-round Modified
5. Is your school a charter school? Yes No
6. Number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Full-time Staff	Part-time Staff
Administrators	<u>1</u>	<u> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>20</u>	<u>5</u>
Counselors	<u>1</u>	<u> </u>
Credentialed librarians	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Nurses	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Psychologists	<u> </u>	<u>1</u>
Technology/media specialists or technicians	<u> </u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u> </u>	<u>15</u>
Campus resource officers	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Other staff (<i>specify</i>) <u>Intervention Specialist, Speech, Student Services, Data Assistant, Health Technician, Administrative Assistant, Custodian, Office Assistant, Music Teacher</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>
Total staff	<u>27</u>	<u>30</u>

Directions to Your School

If your school is selected as a statewide nominee, the site visit team members will need directions to your school.

San Diego

County

Poway Unified School District

District

Los Peñasquitos Elementary School

School

14125 Cuca Street

Street Address

San Diego

City

92129

Zip Code

Deanne McLaughlin

Principal

858-672-3600

(Area Code) Phone Number

3205

Ext.

San Diego International Airport, 3665 North Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101

Name and Location of the Nearest Airport

I-5

Major Freeway Access

Provide detailed travel directions indicating the surface streets that lead to your school. Please do not submit directions or a map generated by an Internet Web site.

Exit the airport following the signs for Harbor Drive/Downtown San Diego.

Proceed south on Harbor Drive to Grape Street.

Turn left on Grape Street and proceed up the hill to the entrance to I-5 South.

Stay in the right lane and take I-5 S to first exit for CA-163 North towards Escondido.

Proceed on CA-163 N until it merges with I-15 North.

Take I-15 N to EXIT 21 Carmel Mountain Road (about 9 miles).

Turn left on Carmel Mountain Road and follow to Cuca Street (3rd traffic light).

Turn right on Cuca Street and proceed up the hill.

The entrance to Los Peñasquitos and parking will be on the left.

School Overview

Today Los Peñasquitos Elementary School, located twenty-five miles from downtown San Diego, is a high performing school by California Department of Education standards; however that was not always the case. Years ago the staff began a revolution that would catapult this Title I school to become a model for schools across the country. The mission and vision which only lived on a plaque on the wall were replaced with a statement that lives in the hearts of every staff member, student, and parent.

The staff came together and made radical changes to the work conducted at this school with a pledge that grounded their work. ***We are committed to creating a school that knows no limits to the academic success of each student.*** This pledge guides the work at Los Peñasquitos to embrace practices that result in academic achievement for all students.

Los Peñasquitos serves 555 students in grades transitional kindergarten through fifth grade. Los Peñasquitos is located directly across the street from the largest subsidized housing complex in Northern San Diego County. Our students speak 38 different languages and 29% are English Language Learners. 45% of our students are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Our students have experienced social distractions which can make learning a challenge. These demographics signal that our job is critical and it is a philosophy that is embraced by the entire staff.

Six exceptional systems were created with staff involvement, drawing on the outstanding resources within the school and endorsed by all staff members. The system and process designed are always with the students in mind, not the needs of adult staff members. The fundamental beliefs start with a Culture of Universal Achievement where, every staff member firmly believes that every student is capable of academic proficiency and there are no excuses for poor effort on the part of staff or students. The systems continue through to providing intervention in a very individualized manner maximizing student achievement for all students. The Six Exceptional Systems of Los Peñasquitos are endorsed by each staff member and implemented in a laser like fashion based upon data and collaboration.

To assist in breaking the generational poverty so prevalent in our community, our school has become the model for college readiness on the elementary school level. Each classroom has an official relationship with a college and teachers share lessons with students about that college. Age appropriate college vocabulary is included throughout the lessons taught in our classrooms. Students know what year they will graduate along with a cheer adopted for their college. In addition to the powerful collegiate symbolism, students are taught excellent foundational skills of setting goals, working toward both short term and long-term goals.

As the flagship of the No Excuses Campuses across the country, the future is very different for the hundreds of students coming from diverse backgrounds. "Los Pen" is a sanctuary of academic excellence, a school that is not satisfied with the status quo and where complacency does not exist.



California Department of Education
 2016 California Gold Ribbon Schools Program
 Elementary School Application: Part B



Los Peñasquitos Elementary

Model Program/Practice Summary

1. Name of Model Program/Practice:

No Excuses University

2. How long has this Model Program/Practice been in place?

- Less than 2 years 2-4 years 5-8 years 8+ years

3. What is the Target Area? (*Choose at least one area.*)

Target Areas:

- Career Technical Education
- Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Prevention
- Civic Education Awareness
- Closing the Achievement Gap
- Education Supports
- Nutrition and Physical Activity/Education
- Parent and Community Involvement
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- Use of Technology
- Visual and Performing Arts

4. What are the target populations? (*Check all that apply.*)

Race/Ethnicity Subgroups:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Filipino
- Hispanic or Latino

(Continued on next page)

Los Peñasquitos Elementary

- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or More Races

Other Student Groups:

- Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
- English Learners
- Students with Disabilities
- At-Risk Students (Academic, Social, Emotional, Behavioral, or Health)
- Other (*specify*) All Students

5. What strategies are used to implement the Model Program/Practice? (*Check all that apply.*)

Strategies:

- School Climate
- Small Learning Communities
- Parent Involvement
- Data-Driven Decision Making
- Health Support
- Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support
- Professional Development
- Other (*specify*)

6. How is your Model Program/Practice referenced in your district's LCAP? [Refer to the State Priorities listed in Education Code (ED) sections 52060 and 52066. Charter schools must address priorities in EC Section 5206(d).]

Note: When completing the Model Program/Practice Narrative, your response needs to provide clarifying explanation on **how your implementation** of the Model Program/Practice **at your school site is distinguished** from the district's model.

No Excuses University at Los Peñasquitos mirrors several components of our district LCAP goals. The shared goals discuss supporting staff and students in the implementation of California standards based curriculum toward college and career readiness for all students. Both systems discuss a highly collaborative environment involving staff, students, and community to support and increase student achievement. These initiatives are distinguished at Los Peñasquitos as our staff has endorsed and signed off on their commitment to implementation of the No Excuses University model. The staff then works collaboratively to maintain and sustain the detailed high level of implementation of the initiatives.

Model Program/Practice Narrative

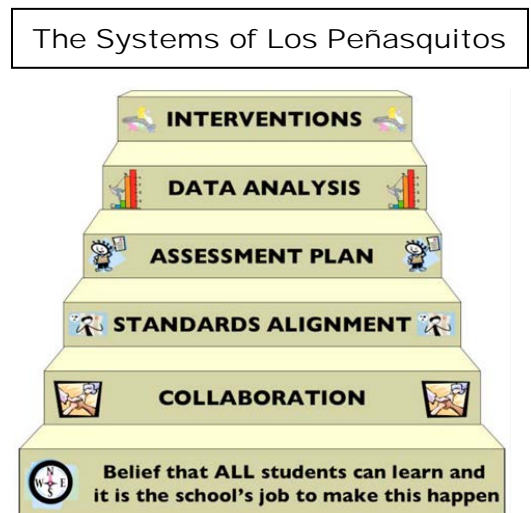
Model Program/Practice Name: *No Excuses University*

1. Description of the Model

Several years ago, the staff of Los Peñasquitos Elementary began a learning revolution, which continues to spread across America today. Los Peñasquitos Elementary School was like many elementary schools across the country, a happy place with a hard-working staff. However, our low-income students struggled to achieve academic success. At the time, Los Peñasquitos was the lowest performing elementary school in the Poway Unified School District and it had been for many years. The overall feeling in the district and among the staff was that the students of Los Pen had many excuses for their poor performance. There were 38 languages spoken at Los Pen and a large part of the student population came from a federally subsidized housing complex located across the street. Many children came from homes where parents had little interest in their education, neglect was frequent, and two parent families were rare. The students were easy to love but tough to teach. Two days before the students walked through the gates that year, the staff began what is now called a revolution. A declaration that the former thoughts, excuses, and strategies were a thing of the past and henceforward a new mindset, mission, and expectation for staff, students, and community was implemented. Together the staff made the bold decision to defy conventional thinking, roll up their sleeves, and begin an exhilarating and sometimes exhausting journey that began with this declaration.

Every student without excuse and without exception will be proficient in language arts, reading, and math (and it is our job to make that happen).

Today Los Peñasquitos is no longer at the bottom of the district, and the future is now very different for disadvantaged children who call Los Peñasquitos home. While the demographics have not changed, our children now perform among the top ten percent of students throughout California. The need identified by the staff was to find a way for all students to succeed no matter what challenges they bring to our classrooms and to work together as a staff to create and use resources that will help all of our students achieve academic success. Toward this end, the staff began to research successful schools with similar demographics. As this research evolved, six exceptional systems emerged which stand as the framework of the **No Excuses University** initiative today. The systems at Los Peñasquitos are called exceptional because they are created by entire staff, written within a document defining what and when events will happen, and how teachers are involved in each phase of implementation. The exceptional systems were created in order and placed in a stair-step model, where each one naturally leads to the next.



2. Implementation & Monitoring of the Model

Culture of Universal Achievement:

Teachers and administrators must join together in believing that all children can be successful and that the collective efforts of the school must achieve that reality. Energy that was previously expended by arguing and making excuses was rerouted to neutralize many of the challenges students bring to school. This is a difficult but key component of a culture of universal achievement, where staff members hold each other accountable for action and statements. The staff of Los Pen accepted the responsibility to learn how to neutralize challenges and seize control of student learning. Common challenges such as students arriving to school hungry and not ready to learn were met with a breakfast program to provide breakfast to those students before school starts. Students who are left alone before or after school, as parents work two and possibly three jobs, were enrolled in before or after school care specifically designed for academics such as homework help or morning computer lab. These are two of many examples of the positive culture of all students achieving at Los Peñasquitos.

Students must be involved in the process of learning. Learning cannot be a focus “done to” students, they must be active participants in their learning understanding where they are and where they need to go. The community is also an active partner through an effort called the community collaborative. It is within this cooperative that the local police, town council, large retail, faith based organizations, and apartment managers meet monthly to support the students of Los Peñasquitos. Student achievement is the number one and most important constant conversation.

Staff Collaboration:

With the Culture of Universal Achievement firmly in place, staff must effectively collaborate and look at the learning needs of each individual student. When a specific need is identified, staff looks intently to recognize what successful colleagues are doing to get results. Then they collaboratively create and endorse their own unique, formal, and written plan.

Daily staff collaboration is somewhat informal and addresses the plethora of day-to-day issues that arise, however, the focus must always be solution based. Weekly grade level collaboration is regularly scheduled for the school’s time-banking day and that time is held sacred by staff members. The agenda is specific to strategies to ensure the academic achievement of every student. The staff understands that their time is too precious to use these meetings for anything other than the urgent issue of student achievement. Monthly collaboration is an opportunity for the staff as a whole to engage in staff development and have conversations that involve colleagues from other grade levels. These opportunities are extremely important for ensuring consistent practice and belief among the entire staff.

All collaborations follow agreed upon norms, which dictate practices to arrive on time, stay on topic, reduce outside distractions, participate fully, and end the meeting on time. An action plan is developed specifying the next action to take, and who is responsible within an identified time line. The Los Pen staff works well together in part because they openly communicate with each other about common expectations. They hold each other accountable for these expectations; sometimes having those difficult open conversations. These conversations help to build professional relationships among staff, which leads to productive action where staff members work together more successfully on behalf of our students.

Standards Alignment:

At Los Pen teachers realize that the school instructional day is relatively short and the content students need to master is quite extensive. There is no time for skills and concepts outside of the state mandated standards. It is also important to recognize that district adopted text books may or may not have all of the needed standards. There is also a common understanding that teaching a standard and student mastery of a standard BOTH need to take place. The staff also realizes that students come to each grade level at different places in standard mastery. While some students need more intensified individual instruction, others may have already mastered the skills and concepts and their academic needs are different from their peers. Both students in this scenario have their needs met through the **No Excuses University** System. It is not uncommon for students to move to other classrooms to have their individual learning needs met. One example of this is the primary grade “walk to reading” model. Children receive core instruction in the whole class setting and then individualized learning specific to their needs in a time specified for homogenous grouping.

Assessment:

The staff at Los Pen recognizes that summative state assessments are part of the education process and a way of life for schools and students; however, this data will not assist in the daily instruction of their students. While these assessments can monitor programs and report on the students at large, assessments must be formative for staff to modify lessons and arrange appropriate academic interventions. In addition to classroom assessments, the Los Pen staff conducts three trimester assessment periods. All teachers administer these assessments at an agreed upon timeframe and in a standardized fashion. The resulting data is collected in an easy manner and able to be manipulated to assist in discussion.

Students are a key part of the assessment process. We help students understand why assessments are important and then engage them in the process. Assessments are one of the major motivators that focus students’ daily efforts and as a result, their academic performance improves significantly.

Data Analysis:

Teachers at Los Pen know that assessment results belong to the students (not the teachers) and reflect where they are in their learning. We implement a process called articulation where the entire grade level, intervention specialist, counselor, ELL teacher, and principal get together and review the data results after each assessment period. We look at each student individually to determine next steps. This is the start of a discussion that will also continue during collaboration. Individual classes also take the data and create classroom goals focused on the collective needs of all students at that time. Students also create and focus on individual goals concentrating on their area of most need. They create an action plan and timeline in which to complete their goal. Their individual goals are written and reviewed with their teacher, parent, and principal. All parties sign off to help students achieve their goal.

Intervention:

Many of our students need both academic and social interventions to achieve academic success and it is our responsibility to provide those opportunities for our students. As previously mentioned, the demographics and challenges our students bring to our classrooms might signal obstacles to their learning. It is imperative that the social and emotional needs of our students are met to allow them to access the learning environment we have created at Los

Peñasquitos. Toward that end through Title I funding, we provide several critical programs. A counselor is on the full time staff to proactively assist students with social and emotional needs. Class lessons are implemented throughout the year to teach social skills. In addition to providing support to the students of Los Pen, our counselor provides resources to parents to assist students in their learning. Los Peñasquitos Parent University classes are offered monthly.

Academic interventions include before and after school educational interventions, before school computer intervention, and focused ELL support; all of which extend the school day for our most fragile students. Grade level and classroom innovative interventions are also implemented to meet the needs of our students.

3. Results of the Model/Pupil Outcomes

As a result of the **No Excuses University** initiative, the API of Los Peñasquitos has risen over 100 points in the past ten years and stands at 937. Our SBAC baseline scores demonstrate strong results, surpassing state and county percentages. The percentage of all students who met or exceeded ELA and Math standards were 79% and 68% respectively. While all students are our target, the Low SES subgroup, our largest student group, also demonstrated impressive proficiency with 66% meeting or exceeding standards in ELA.

The incredible transformation of Los Peñasquitos Elementary School has served as a model and inspired schools across the country. With Los Peñasquitos as the flagship, today there are over 230 No Excuses University Schools in a collaborative network that is growing almost daily, now spanning across 17 states. Leaders of the No Excuses University Network hold conferences across the country throughout the year. Conference participants hear directly from Los Peñasquitos staff in addition to other personnel in the network.

Los Peñasquitos Elementary is featured in, *What Ever it Takes*, by Richard DuFour, renowned educational researcher. There are also four other books written about the work at Los Peñasquitos; *Turnaround Schools*, King & Lopez, *No Excuses University*, Lopez, *Differentiated Parent Support*, Hjalmarson, and *It All Started Here*, McLaughlin. Los Peñasquitos has won many awards including the National Blue Ribbon School. Eight out of the past nine years, Los Peñasquitos received a California Department of Education rank of 10-10. Los Peñasquitos landed in the number 1 position (among similar schools), seven of those nine years.

In an essay, a former student describes her experience at Los Peñasquitos: *“Without the support and foundation in the importance of a college education from Los Peñasquitos Elementary School, I would have never grown to be as happy and successful as I am today. My teachers guided me to make the most of the opportunities presented to me, despite the obstacles in my upbringing.”*

The goal of Los Peñasquitos is that all students will be proficient or advanced and while we have made great strides toward that goal, we are not there yet which is why staff members analyze and revise the staff endorsement document yearly. The endorsement is a reference used daily when decisions are made to ensure a clear connection to our goal of all students achieving. This document drives our mission and keeps us all on the same page. When assessment results are analyzed, we are constantly working to revise and perfect the **No Excuses University** initiative until we achieve our goal.