

Cherryland Elementary School

Student and Parent Handbook

2025-2026 School Year



456 Laurel Ave, Hayward, CA 94541

Phone: 510-723-3810

Fax: 510-781-6128

Home of the College Bound Cougars!

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Cherryland Elementary School
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Administrative Team	
Principal - Heather Thorner	Assistant Principal - Frank Dardon
Office Manager - Maritza Rodriguez	Attendance Clerk - Lisa Gutierrez Attendance Clerk - Gloria Romero
START DATE: August 14, 2025	END DATE: June 5, 2026

Attendance

Schools are required to enforce compulsory attendance law. Pursuant to Education Code § 48200: Each person between the ages of 6 and 18 years not exempted under the provision of this chapter or Chapter 3 (commencing with § 48400) is subject to compulsory full-time education.

Cherryland Elementary School (CES) recognizes that daily participation in classroom activities is key for students to achieve academic success and social growth. Regular attendance prepares students for future success in school and employment.

The teachers and staff at Cherryland work with all students to support them in succeeding. Students and parents must work together and understand they are accountable for regular class attendance and the completion of daily assignments.

Is your child absent?

A parent or guardian must clear all absences with a note or a telephone call to the Attendance Office within 72 hours of the initial absence. Please call, come to the office, or use our QR code or website to clear your absences.

Attendance Clerk	
Lisa Gutierrez	(510) 723-3810 Ext. 64111

Please provide the following information:

1. Student's full name
2. Teacher
3. Date(s) of absence
4. Reason for absence
5. Your name and relationship to the student

When a student has 10 absences in a school year for medical reasons, schools may require that any further absences for illness be verified by a certified health care professional or authorized school personnel such as a school nurse.

Excessive absences will require proof from a doctor saying that the student has a

health problem and should be absent or late so frequently.

Parents or guardians: If you (the parent) are sick, your child still needs to attend school. Your illness does not excuse your child from attending. We all are sick at times so plan ahead for these days. Get a neighbor, relative, or spouse to take your child to school and pick him or her up.

Attendance

School district policy and state law require daily on time school attendance for students between the ages of 6 and 18 or until high school graduation or equivalent.

Students are expected to arrive at school on time. Students who are repeatedly absent or tardy to school will be referred to the school district's Child Welfare and Attendance Office.

For information on student truancy and attendance letters, please read the section "Truancy."

Excused Absences

The ONLY valid excuses for student absences from school are defined by state law as:

- Student illness or quarantine
- Student at medical/dental appt. for him/her (Bring a note from the doctor's office)
- Student at funeral for immediate family (mother, father, sister, brother, grandparents) living in the student's household, so long as the absence is not more than 1 day if the service is conducted in California and not more than 3 days if the service is conducted outside California
- Court appearances (Need documentation showing that the student was required to be present on specific day and time)

All other absences are **UNEXCUSED**.

Late Arrival

Students who are not in class before the 8:15 bell are considered late. They must report to the office. We cannot excuse tardies for oversleeping, car troubles, heavy

traffic, etc.

Early Student Pick-up

If you are picking up your child early from school, the only valid excuses are if your child has a medical or dental appointment. You must bring a note from the doctor's office the following school day. When picking up students, please plan your time to comply with these requirements.

Anyone picking up students must:

- be on the emergency card
- have photo identification
- enter the office and personally sign-out each student

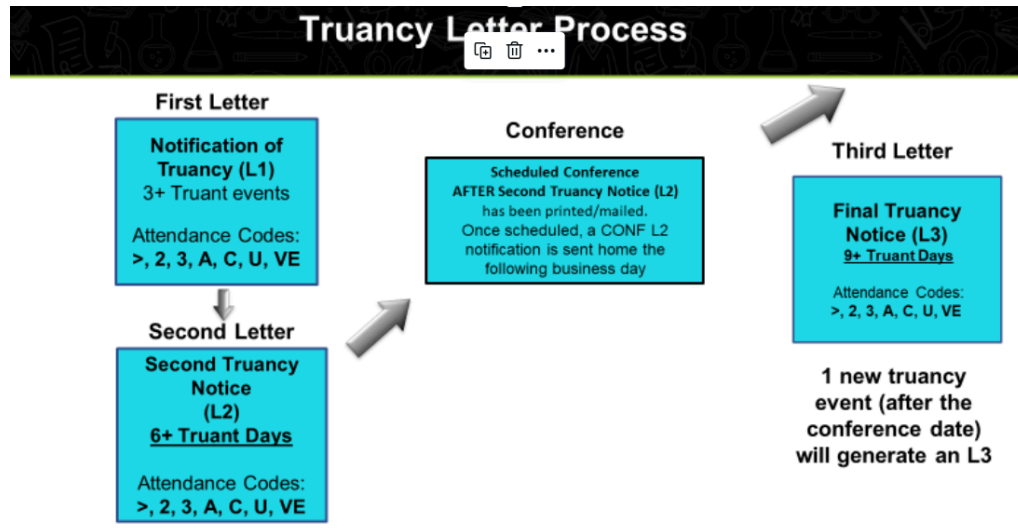
When possible, we take the parent/guardian's word for the student's absence. When absences are too frequent and they interfere with the education of the student, then documentation will be required for further absences.

Exceptions are made on occasion, but these need to be brought to the attention of the principal and authorized by the principal.

Truancy & Attendance Letters

Truancy is a serious offense at Cherryland and will be dealt with through the SARB (School Attendance Review Board) process. Parents may be fined and referred to the District Attorney for serious truancy offenses.

Hayward Unified School District uses an automated program to monitor attendance and notify parents/legal guardians when students are considered truant.



- **First Notification Letter:** To be classified as a truant, a student has had three (3) unexcused absences or three (3) tardies of 30 minutes or more. Education Code Section 48260.5 requires that the parent/guardian be notified by a letter informing them of what can occur if their child is not in school.
- **Second Notification Letter:** Truancy Meeting. If improvements in attendance have not been made, then a 2nd letter will be generated. The 2nd letter will have a time and date that you will need to meet with the Principal or Assistant Principal and Child Welfare and Attendance Outreach Worker to discuss why your student has been absent without valid reasons.
- **School Attendance Review Board (SARB):** If all of the above has failed and your child is still not attending school, then your child will be referred for a School Attendance Review Board (SARB) hearing at Hayward Unified School District.
- **Truancy Court:** Parents or legal guardians may be referred to Alameda County District Attorney's Office if student's attendance does not improve after SARB-hearing. By state law, if a child is truant, a parent or guardian can be held legally responsible.

Short-term Independent Study

All Short-Term Independent Study Requests are subject to Principal approval

Short term Independent Study (STIS) needs to be a minimum of 5 consecutive days.

Short Term Independent Study (STIS) can be a maximum of:

- Grades K-3: One week (5 days)

- Grades 4-6: Two weeks (10 days)

When a family knows in advance that a child will miss more than 5 consecutive days due to bereavement, family responsibilities, or a long-term illness or vacation/travel, parents and guardians have the option of requesting a Voluntary Short Term Independent Study packet to help students keep up with class work and avoid truancy penalties.

- Independent Study is voluntary, it cannot be required.
- To be eligible, a student must have satisfactory academic progress and attendance.

Short Term Independent Study (STIS) may be denied if:

- Student has 5 or more unexcused absence
- At Principal's discretion
- Student has missed more than 10% of school and is Chronically Absent (Federal)

Independent Study may not be approved the first and the last week of school.

Independent Study requests must be made at least 1 week in advance to allow the teacher to prepare a packet.

Students, parent/guardian, teacher and principal all must sign the Independent Study Contract in person in advance for the contract to be valid.

If extra days are requested, then an extension must be completed before the Independent Study is to begin. Hayward District-Student and Family Services must approve all extensions; Principal and Assistant Principal may not authorize extensions.

Independent Study packets are designed by your student's teacher; it may contain reading assignments, worksheets, and/or a writing assignment.

All assigned work will be turned in on the first day of the student's return to school. There is no makeup time allowed. No attendance credit may be given for late or missed assignments.

Failure to complete this contract may result in unexcused absences and may be referred to the Student Attendance Review Board.

Getting To and From School

WALKING:

Students should be safe, stay on sidewalks, and obey crossing guards and traffic signals. Be respectful, responsible and safe in our neighborhood and throw trash in garbage cans.

DRIVING:

We are a large school, and there is a lot of traffic at drop off and pick up times. To ensure everyone's safety, please obey the traffic rules around the school.

- **Drop Off Zone:** The drive through is one-way only. Follow the traffic pattern. Do not leave your car unattended in the drop off zones. Do not drop off your child in the farthest lane from the curb and allow them to enter oncoming traffic. Street and visitor parking are limited. Do not double park or park in front of the neighbors' driveways. **Drivers who violate parking and loading zone rules will be ticketed.**

BIKING:

Students must wear a helmet, obey all traffic rules and walk bikes on campus. Bikes should be locked to the bike rack at all times. Cherryland School and the Hayward Unified School District are not responsible for damaged or stolen bicycles.

SKATEBOARDS, ROLLER BLADES AND SHOES WITH WHEELS:

These vehicles are not allowed at school. Students may arrange with the classroom teacher or the office staff to store these modes of transportation in a safe place during the school day. Cherryland School and the Hayward Unified School District are not responsible for damaged or stolen items.

AFTER SCHOOL:

There is no yard supervision at the end of the school day. Only students who are enrolled in an after school program are permitted to be on campus after 2:45 p.m. Instruct your children to go directly home, to child care, or to their after school programs. If you pick up your child, designate a regular place on campus. Parents need to check in at the office.

Visitors at School

VISITORS:

ALL VISITORS (parents, guardians, relatives, volunteers, child care, etc) must report to the office, sign in, and wear a badge while on campus.

Classroom visits must be arranged prior to the day of the visit so that they coincide with the students' and teacher's schedule and do not interfere with instruction.

- Permission to visit classes will be given only by the Principal, Vice-Principal or their designee. Visitors who do not have this permission will be asked to leave the campus.
- Visitors cannot go directly to classrooms. If you feel you must talk to your child, we will request that he/she come to the office.
- All school and Parent Center volunteers need to sign in at the office before volunteering.

If you are picking up your child for an appointment, you must report to the office and sign them out with a staff member's help.

Forgotten items and/or lunches must be brought to the office and the student will be contacted to come to the office to get the item.

VOLUNTEERS:

We welcome family/community members to volunteer at Cherryland School. Please contact the office for the official volunteer policy. Adults without students at the school may also volunteer after fulfilling the district volunteer packet and process, including fingerprinting and TB test.

- Volunteers must sign in the office before proceeding to the Parent Center or classroom

PARENT CENTER:

Cherryland has a vibrant Parent Center (Room A122) which is a resource for our families. During the day there are classes, meetings and volunteer opportunities. Our Family Engagement Specialist is available from 7:30 am- 4:00 pm or by appointment to facilitate communication between the home and the school.

- Family and Community members of Cherryland students may sign in directly at the Parent Center when attending a meeting or a class.

Meals and Nutrition

There is a strong connection between student nutrition and success at school. All students are expected to eat a healthy lunch during the day.

Breakfast is served from 7:45 – 8:15 a.m.

Please refer to the bell schedule to find when lunch is served for each grade level.

- Applications for free or reduced meals will be sent home on the first day of school. Please apply, even if you don't think you'll qualify or you're unsure if your child will use the program. **The school receives Title I funding based on the number of families who apply and qualify for free and reduced lunch. It is possible to qualify if you work full time or have a two-income family.**
- **Families who received free or reduced meals last year will continue at their 24-25 level of payment only until the end of September; they must file a new application before that time.**
- Menus change each month. You can also go to www.husd.k12.ca.us for the menu.
- If you send food from home, label all boxes and bags with your child's name and room number.
- Please do not send candy, gum, soft drinks and high fat foods. Excessive amounts of these foods will be left in the office until the child goes home.
- No food can be sold at school.
- If your child forgets a lunch, you can deliver it to the school office before 10:30 am for your child to pick up at lunchtime.
- Students are to follow school rules in the cafeteria.

GENERAL CAFETERIA RULES:

- Students will walk in and around the cafeteria.
- Students will sit where assigned and remain seated until dismissed.
- Students will use good table manners: chewing with mouths closed, talking in soft voices.
- Line up at appropriate locations after eating .

- Students will clean up after themselves and others.

Celebrations in Classrooms

Holiday and Birthday Celebrations

Guidelines:

- All snacks, grades TK-6, will be snacks lasting no more than 10 minutes.
- Snacks may be worked into the classroom celebration at the teacher's discretion with a minimum of 24 hours notice.
- Snacks will be worked into the classroom scheduled by the teacher, but will not be offered one hour before or after lunch.
- High-fat and sugary foods will not be allowed. These items will be **returned home** if brought in, (i.e. cookies, cakes, cupcakes, donuts, regular chips, candy, soda, sports drinks, and caffeinated drinks such as Prime).
- **The only beverage allowed with snacks is water.**
- Be mindful of allergies. **NO** peanut products are allowed.
- Due to health regulations, no food will be stored in the classroom and all uneaten opened snacks will be disposed of. Unopened snacks will be returned home.

Listed below are some healthy choices to help guide you when deciding on your child's snack. Acceptable snacks include but may not be limited to:

- Any Fruit or Vegetable - cut into child pieces.
- Pretzels, Chex Mix, Baked chips, Baked Doritos, Goldfish, popcorn without butter.
- Whole grain crackers, Reduced fat Cheez-its, Triscuit crackers, Wheat Thins, Rice Cakes
- Animal Crackers
- Granola bars, cereal bars, or whole grain dry cereal (snack baggie).
- Raisins, dried fruit
- Low fat cheese sticks, low fat yogurt sticks
- Graham Crackers, Teddy Grahams

Alternatives to food to celebrate birthdays:

Gender neutral goody bags which may include: pencils, stickers, etc. Thank you for your cooperation in adhering to this policy as we strive to become a healthier school and bring good nutrition to the forefront.

What to Wear and Bring

BOOKS AND SUPPLIES:

Hayward Unified School District provides all classroom books and supplies; these may be taken home to complete homework, with teacher permission. It is the student's responsibility to return these items to school. Families are encouraged to ensure that students bring only what is appropriate for working and learning at school.

What to Bring	What to Leave at Home
Backpack (extra backpacks are available)	Sports equipment
Homework and books required for homework	Toys, trading cards, games, electronics (Tablets, PSP, iPods, MP3 Players, gaming devices)
Notes/permission slips as appropriate	Candy, gum, soda
School library books	Cash in excess of what is required for lunch or a field trip
Items that relate to school presentations, sharing time, or special events	Purses (must be kept in backpacks)

Cherryland Elementary School Cell Phone and Smart Watch Policy

(In alignment with California's Phone-Free School Act – Assembly Bill 3216)

At Cherryland, we want students to stay focused on learning, enjoy time with friends, and fully participate in school life. To support a positive and distraction-free environment, Cherryland is a **phone- and smart watch-free school during the day**, in accordance with California's **Phone-Free School Act (AB 3216)**.

During the School Day:

- Students should **keep cell phones and smart watches turned off and**

stored in their backpacks during school hours, including recess and lunch.

- Phones and smart watches may only be used **with permission from a teacher or staff member** for a specific reason, such as an emergency or learning activity.
- If families need to reach their child, please call the school office—we'll make sure your message gets to them.

If a Student Uses a Device Without Permission:

1. **First time:** The student will be reminded of the rule and asked to put the device away.
2. **Second time:** The device will be kept in the office until the end of the day.
3. **Third time:** A parent or guardian will need to pick up the device from the office.
4. **Ongoing issues:** The student may lose the privilege of bringing a phone or smart watch to school.

Lost or Damaged Devices:

Please note that Cherryland is **not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged phones, smart watches, or other electronic devices**. Students bring these items at their own risk.

We appreciate everyone's help in keeping our school a fun, focused, and phone-free place for learning. This policy will be reviewed each year and updated as needed by **July 1, 2026**.

DRESS CODE:

- Every Friday is Cherryland Spirit Day. Cherryland shirts and jackets and school colors (red and white) are encouraged.

Please follow the dress code below.

What to Wear	What Not to Wear
Cherryland clothing	Accessories or clothing typically associated with gangs, no bandanas or wearing of all red or all blue.
Comfortable clothing that is	Clothing that is see through in any

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appropriate for work and safe play	way. Clothing that does not cover areas that are considered private. No clothing that shows the midriff. No undergarments showing.
Coats, sweaters, hats, and rainwear that is appropriate to the weather	Symbols that offend or degrade others, are considered "hate speech", profanity or references to drugs or alcohol.
Athletic shoes or other rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes that allow students to fully participate in recess and PE activities, as well as protect feet from injury	No High-heeled shoes or "flip flops," shoes with wheels ("heelies"), cleats

Lost and Found

Each year, our Lost and Found contains hundreds of clothing items in good condition that are not returned to families.

Please mark all outerwear with your child's name on an inside label.

Check the Lost and Found racks outside of the Parent Center as soon as you know that an item is missing. If items are not claimed by the end of each trimester, they may be donated to a nearby shelter or donation facility.

Before and After School Programs

YEP - Youth Enrichment Program:

For more information about YEP, please contact the HUSD Before/After School Programs at:

Email: yep@husd.k12.ca.us

(510) 723-3857 x 34186

(510) 723-3857 x 34188

Health and Safety

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:

- **Every student must have emergency contact information on file with current contact information.** The office will only release children to people whose names are listed as an emergency contact. We must be able to contact you if your child is sick or hurt, or in an emergency situation. In case of a major disaster, your child will be kept on campus and released only to individuals listed as emergency contacts.
- **Update your information in the Parent Portal when completing your Online Annual Update before school starts.**
- **After school begins, you can come to the office if there are changes to your phone numbers, addresses, medical providers, emergency contacts, health issues or child custody alerts.**

HEALTH CONCERNS:

Students need to be healthy and safe in order to succeed at school. Please let our office staff, school nurse, and teachers know about any health issues your child may have. Direct any concerns regarding safety to the administration/office staff.

Children should be kept home if they have any of the following conditions:

- Symptoms of a contagious disease such as chicken pox or flu, pinkeye, COVID, etc.
- A fever (children can return to school when they have not had a fever for 24 hours without medication)
- Diarrhea, vomiting, coughing up mucus

MEDICATIONS DURING SCHOOL HOURS:

- Must be kept in the office in a container with the original pharmacy label on it.
- Must have a doctor's written authorization (forms available in the office).
- Must be administered in the school office by a member of the staff.
- Parents/guardians may administer medications during suitable breaks at school.
- Over-the-counter medications are not allowed at school with students.

WHEELCHAIRS and CRUTCHES:

- Cherryland is ADA compliant. Students may come to school with wheelchairs and crutches if needed. Please arrange a 504 meeting with the nurse, administration, and teacher to develop a plan that will meet your child's needs.
- Medical equipment must be prescribed by a physician prior to use.

TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOLS:

Smoking, vaping, and the use of all tobacco products are strictly prohibited on or near school grounds.

Academics

CALIFORNIA STATE STANDARDS:

Our curriculum is designed to teach the California Common Core State Standards for each grade level. Copies of the standards are discussed at Back To School Night each year. The standards can be accessed at www.cde.gov.

HOMEWORK:

Homework may be given at all grade levels. Every grade level has homework expectations that are outlined at the beginning of the year. Homework will take a variety of forms, depending on the particular grade and unit of study. Homework assignments are made on the basis of individual student needs at the discretion of the teacher. The amount of time required to complete homework will vary depending on the student/grade/assignment. Please contact the teacher if your child is struggling to complete the homework in a reasonable amount of time.

Homework is designed to reinforce and extend skills and concepts taught and practiced in the classroom. It also helps students build study skills and learn responsibility. If no written homework is assigned, we expect that students will read or be read to each night. We recommend that you set a specific time and place for homework each day. Free homework support and tutoring are available on weekdays at the Hayward Public Library.

A general guideline for homework each day:

Kindergarten - 1st grade: 15 - 20 minutes

2nd - 3rd grade: 20 - 30 minutes

4th grade: 30 - 45 minutes

5th - 6th grade: 45 - 60 minutes

REPORT CARDS:

These are distributed three times a year and are based on the state standards. You will have a conference with your child's teacher for the first report card. The last two report cards will be sent home with students.

STUDY SKILLS:

In order to succeed, all children must take their job as students seriously. Parents and guardians can help students understand that a backpack is their portable office. Label your children's backpacks and leave them by the door so that it is not forgotten in the morning. Backpacks should be checked daily, and cleaned out to remove completed work that is sent home and notices from school. Create a special place in the backpack for homework packets and/or assignment calendars. An organized backpack is a key factor that contributes to success in school, at any grade level!

Student Support Services

STUDENT STUDY TEAM (SST):

The school's SST meets as necessary, to develop plans to help students with academic and social needs. Teachers, specialists, administration, and parents/guardians attend the meetings. To request an SST for your child, write a note or email to the teacher or principal. Students at risk of retention and students who are consistently scoring far below basic on state tests will be recommended for an SST by the school staff.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Parents/Guardians of students with identified learning disabilities participate in the annual Individual Education Plan (IEP) process or the 504 Plan process. These students are served through in-class, out-of-class and special class interventions provided by classroom teachers, special education and other support staff, and paraprofessionals. The parent/guardian always has an active roll in the decision and must approve services or specialized accommodations for a student.

- If you suspect that your child may have a disability, the first step is to request a meeting of the Student Study Team through the classroom teacher.
- **Most students who experience academic and/or social difficulties do not have disabilities and typical interventions are usually able to address such difficulties.** All students with academic and/or social difficulties are served through Title I and general education.

COUNSELING:

Alameda County Behavioral Health Services, and East Bay Agency for Children

provide counseling for students who are eligible for services. If you qualify for Medi-Cal and your child is in need of counseling, talk with your child's teacher or the school principal. If you do not qualify for Medi-Cal, your child may be eligible for other counseling services on site as space is available.

NOTE: The counselors have limited space and only work with students who have serious life issues that impact their success at school.

Home-School Partnership

"It takes a whole village to raise a child." ~ African proverb

COMMUNICATION: Two-way communication is critical to student success. Listed below are several ways to find out what is going on at school and to make sure your questions, concerns and ideas are heard.

- The principal and all teachers have 24-hour access through voice mail (510-723-3810) and e-mail. An up-to-date directory list is available in the office and on our school website.
- Back to School Night: Future dates will be announced. You will have the opportunity to see your child's work and visit the classroom. You will also hear from your child's teacher about the goals for this year.
- Report card conferences are held for all students on minimum days in December. Parents and guardians can contact teachers to schedule additional conferences at any time during the school year.
- Monthly Newsletter from the principal will be sent home every month. Check your child's backpack for important information and updates.
- All teachers will keep families informed with regular updates and with individual notes, phone calls or progress reports, as needed.
- Cherryland has a Family Resource Center. The room is staffed by a Family Engagement Specialist.
- Open House: Future dates will be announced, but Open House is usually held in spring. This will be a time to visit your child's classroom to see classroom work and demonstrations. Open House is also a time to visit other classrooms and grade levels in the school.
- Most teachers have a digital communication platform.

FUNDRAISING AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

The PTO sponsors several fund-raising events each year and will send notes home with children to inform you of how to participate. You can also make tax exempt donations of materials or money to the PTO and we will provide you with a receipt.

ATTENTION, VOLUNTEERS! District Volunteer Policy for Student Safety

- Volunteer applications can be found in the office!
- All volunteers must provide proof of TB clearance every four years.
- If you volunteer for a field trip, you must be fingerprinted.

VOLUNTEERS:

Volunteers are always appreciated. Volunteers can:

- support teachers with classroom activities with small groups or individuals
- assist on the yard and in the garden
- supervise field trips
- help with copying and distribution of materials and newsletters
- work on special projects and events
- serve as translators (Spanish, Cantonese, Tagalog, Arabic and many other languages)

ADVISORY AND DECISION-MAKING GROUPS:

Your voice is important to us! We welcome you to attend the following groups: PTO, SSC, SBDM, AASAI, and ELAC. Meetings are scheduled regularly throughout the year. Childcare is provided for toddlers and translation is available.

ENGLISH LEARNER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ELAC):

ELAC is a group for parents and guardians whose primary language is not English. The group meets monthly. Meeting times will be announced through newsletters and parent communications. The meeting is held in Spanish and English. Time is taken to address the specific issues of English Language Learners.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO):

The PTO makes a tremendous contribution to our school. It meets monthly. Here, you can learn more about the school and help plan for special events and school fundraising. PTO evening events for families are also held throughout the year. We are hoping that 100% of our families will join the PTO during our membership drive this fall. Watch for PTO announcements in The Cherryland Newsletter. The meeting is held in Spanish and English.

SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL (SSC):

The School Site Council is a formally elected group with equal numbers of

parents/guardians and staff. The SSC approves the School Plan for Student Achievement and determines priorities for the state and federal budgets related to the plan. The SSC meets monthly after school. Everyone is invited to attend, although only elected SSC members can vote on agenda items. Elections will be held in the fall. The meeting is held in Spanish and English. Meeting times are found in the bulletin board in front of the school.

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT INITIATIVE (AASAI):

AASAI is a Hayward Unified School District (HUSD) initiative that focuses on bringing about equitable, systemic, and transformative change in teaching and learning to more effectively address the academic, social and emotional needs of its African American students and the families and communities that nurture and support them. During the school year, there will be a board whose members are comprised of a: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

TITLE I PARENT MEETINGS:

We have a school-wide Title I program whose focus is to provide services for students who perform below grade level and improve achievement for all students. The advisory committee meets twice per year for parents/guardians who want to know more about Title I requirements, intervention programs, state/local testing, and other topics of interest identified by the group.

NOTE: Title I funding is based on the number of children who qualify for free or reduced lunch. Please be sure to complete an application for this federal program!