

Evidence Based Research in the Chula Vista (CA) Elementary School District on the Effectiveness of the *Benchmark Advance* and *Benchmark Adelante* Comprehensive Literacy Programs

October 2016

The U.S. Department of Education on Efficacy Research

The U.S. Department of Education has stated that all schools should use instructional programs that have been proven effective in the classroom by “**evidence based research.**” To that end, Benchmark Education Company has taken part in an independent research study and product installation during the 2015–16 school year in the Chula Vista (CA) Elementary School District.

Chula Vista ESD/Benchmark Education Co. Research Study

During the 2015–16 school year, the Chula Vista ESD partnered with Benchmark Education Company to introduce the ***Benchmark Advance*** and ***Benchmark Adelante*** comprehensive English and Spanish literacy programs with long-term, onsite Professional Development into one of the district’s large elementary schools with the goal of improving classroom literacy instruction and accelerating student achievement in literacy and English language development.

The study was conducted in the Chula Vista ESD by Main Street Academix, an independent, higher-ed-based research company. Main Street Academix designed the study, oversaw pretests and posttests, made Fidelity of Implementation visits/interviews, and compiled and analyzed the results.

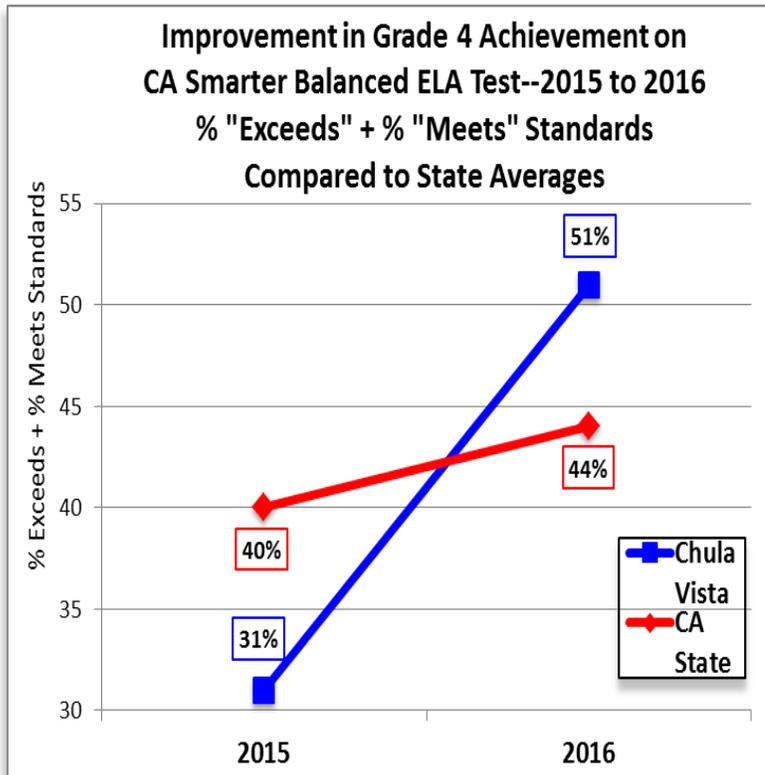
Goals of This Evidence Based Research Report

This 2016 report will reference the literacy and ELD achievements resulting from the use of *Benchmark Advance* and *Benchmark Adelante* with long-term Professional Development in Grades 4 and 5 at a large elementary school with a demographically diversified student population. The report will cite new evidence of impressive and accelerated gains in English/Language Arts, English Language Development, and Lexile reading levels in these two grades on both state and standardized assessments. Student outcomes will also be compared with statewide and national outcomes for the same groups or subgroups of students within Grades 4 and 5.

Assessments in the Study

Achieve 3000 LevelSet™ Lexile® assessment
CAASPP Smarter Balanced ELA assessment

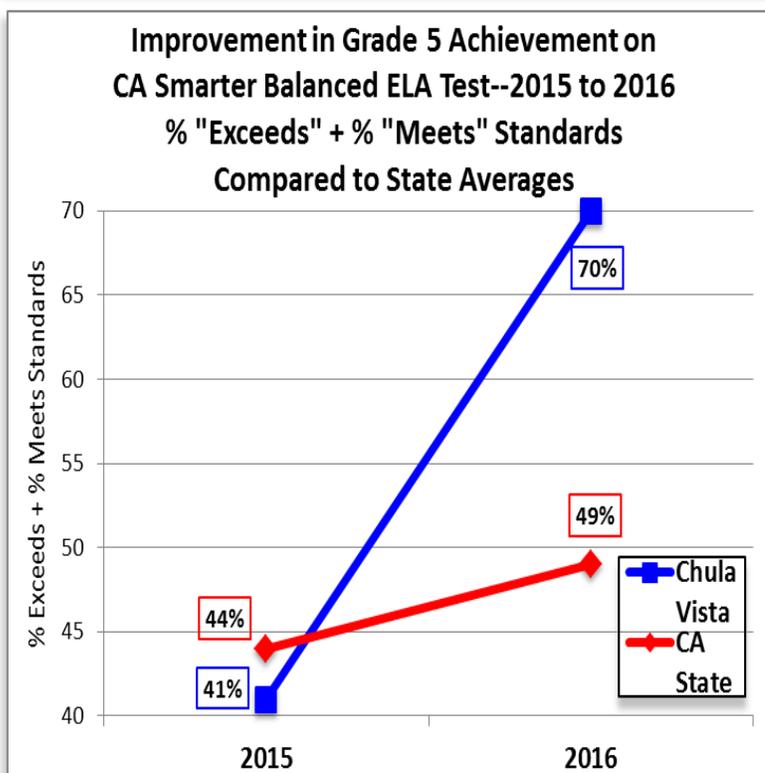
HIGHLIGHTS — *BENCHMARK ADVANCE* Evidence Based Research



51% of Chula Vista Grade 4 students achieved levels of "Exceeds" or "Meets" Standards on the 2016 CA State ELA test after using Benchmark Advance and Adelante for a year with Long-Term Professional Development.

These students scored **20 points higher than the school's Grade 4 students in 2015** using other literacy programs (51% to 31%).

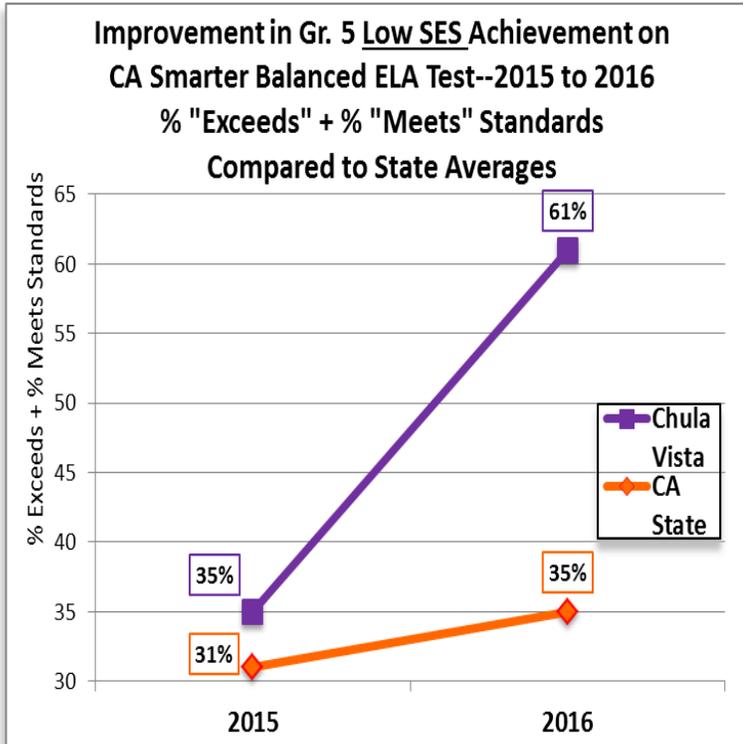
This improvement accelerated the Chula Vista students from trailing the statewide Grade 4 Smarter Balanced average by 9 percentage points in 2015 (31% to 40%) to **outpacing the State by 7 points in 2016** (51% to 44%).



70% of the school's 5th graders exceeded or met standards after using Benchmark Advance and Adelante, up from 41% the prior year.

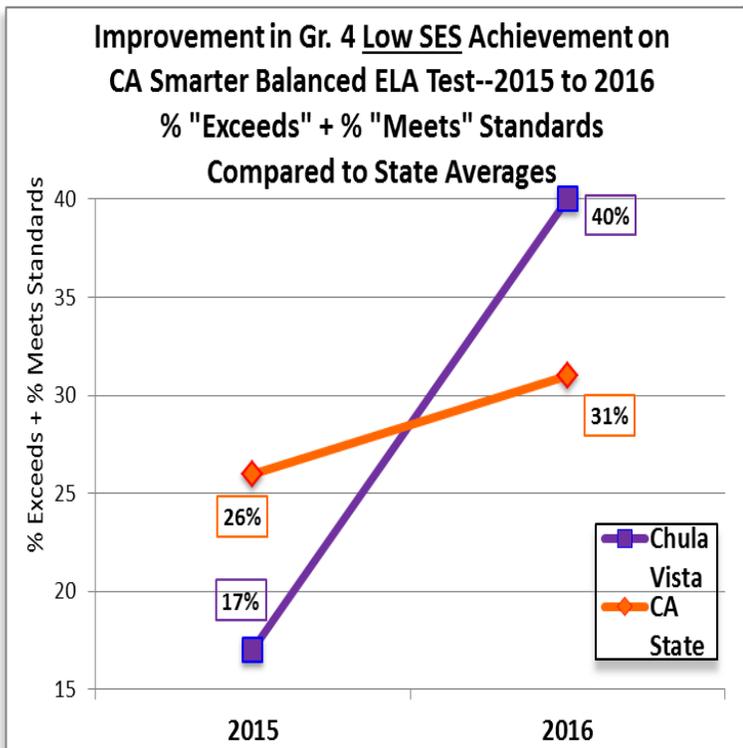
As a result, Chula Vista 5th graders finished an impressive **21 percentage points higher (70% to 49%) than their statewide peers** whom they trailed by 3 points the previous year (41% to 44%).

HIGHLIGHTS — *BENCHMARK ADVANCE* Evidence Based Research



40% of Low SES students exceeded or met standards on the Grade 4 CA State ELA test after using Benchmark Advance/Adelante compared to only 17% the prior year using other literacy programs.

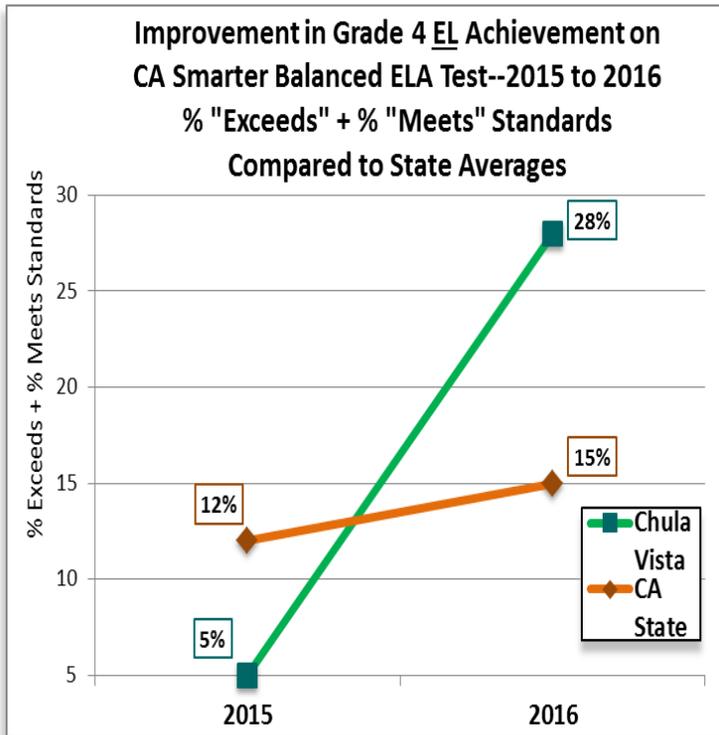
This brought these 4th graders up from 9 percentage points below (17% to 26%) to **9 points above their Low SES peers statewide** (40% to 31%).



61% of Gr. 5 Low SES students exceeded or met standards on the CA State ELA test after using Benchmark Advance/Adelante compared to only 35% the previous year using other literacy programs.

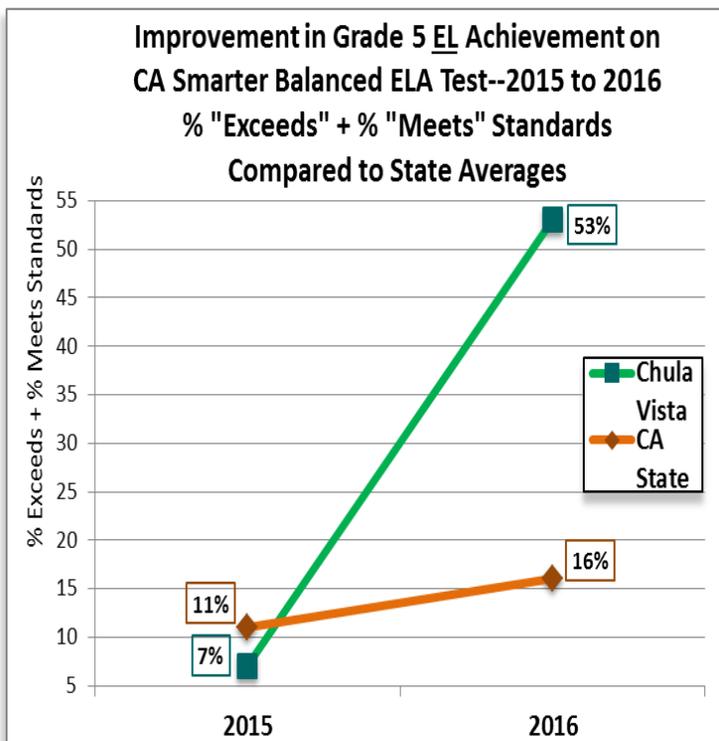
This 26-point gain by Chula Vista's Low SES students (35% to 61%) **dwarfed the 4-point statewide gain** by Low SES students in Grade 5 (31% to 35%).

HIGHLIGHTS — *BENCHMARK ADVANCE* Evidence Based Research



28% of Gr. 4 ELs exceeded or met standards on the 2016 CA State ELA test after using Benchmark Advance/Adelante for one year compared to **only 5% in 2015** using other literacy programs.

This **23-point jump in literacy** brought Chula Vista 4th grade ELs up from trailing their statewide peers by 7 percentage points in 2015 (5% to 12%) to **surpassing the State score by 13 points in 2016** (28% to 15%).

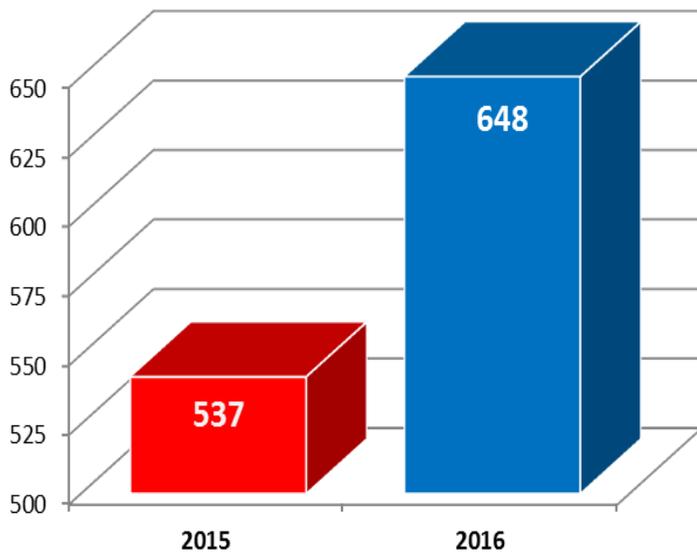


An impressive 53% of Grade 5 ELs in Chula Vista exceeded or met standards on the 2016 CA State ELA test after using Benchmark Advance and Adelante compared to **only 7% of Grade 5 ELs in 2015** using other literacy programs, a **quantum 46-point increase**.

This accelerated increase by Chula Vista ELs in 2016 lifted their average literacy level to **37 points above the statewide average** for Grade 5 ELs (53% to 16%).

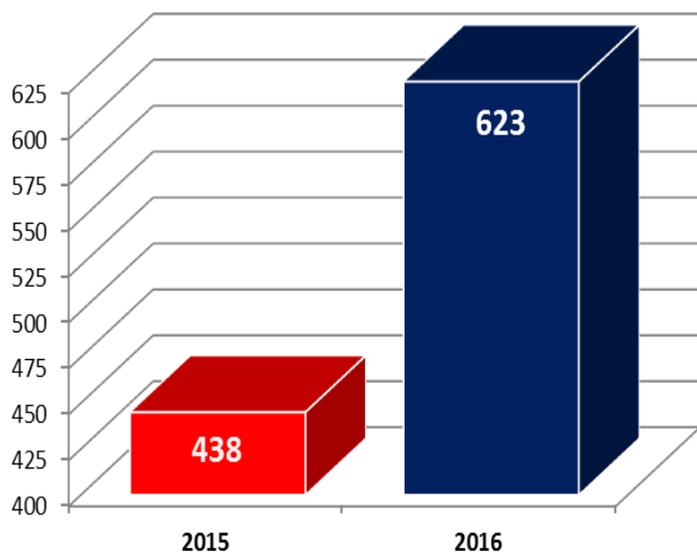
HIGHLIGHTS — *BENCHMARK ADVANCE* Evidence Based Research

**Change in Grade 4 Lexile Levels
All Students -- 2015 to 2016**



Grade 4 students achieved Lexile nonfiction reading level increases averaging 111 points after using Benchmark Advance/Adelante in 2016 compared to the school's 4th graders using other literacy materials in 2015 (648 to 537).

**Change in Grade 4 Lexile Levels
Low SES Students -- 2015 to 2016**

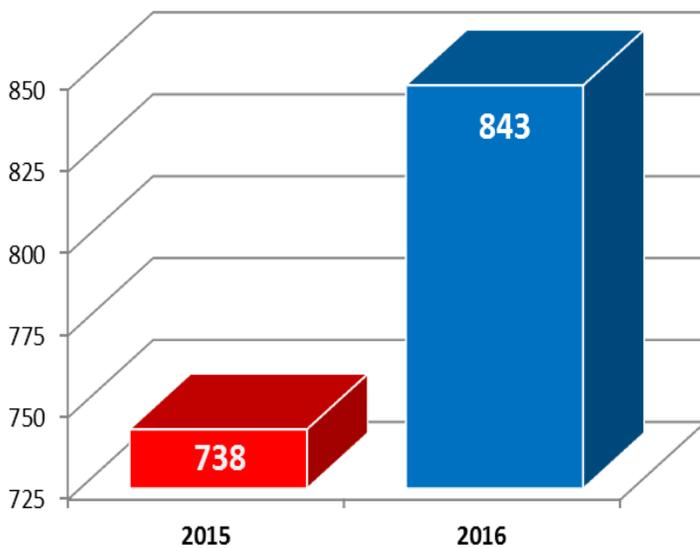


Low SES students in Grade 4 achieved a nonfiction reading level 185 Lexiles higher than their Grade 4 peers the previous year (623 to 438) after using Benchmark Advance/Adelante accompanied by Long-Term Professional Development.

By year's end, these Low SES students **almost entirely closed the 100-point Lexile gap that existed in 2015** between Chula Vista's Low SES and average Grade 4 students: a gap of 438 to 537 in 2015 diminished to 623 to 648 in 2016.

HIGHLIGHTS — BENCHMARK ADVANCE Evidence Based Research

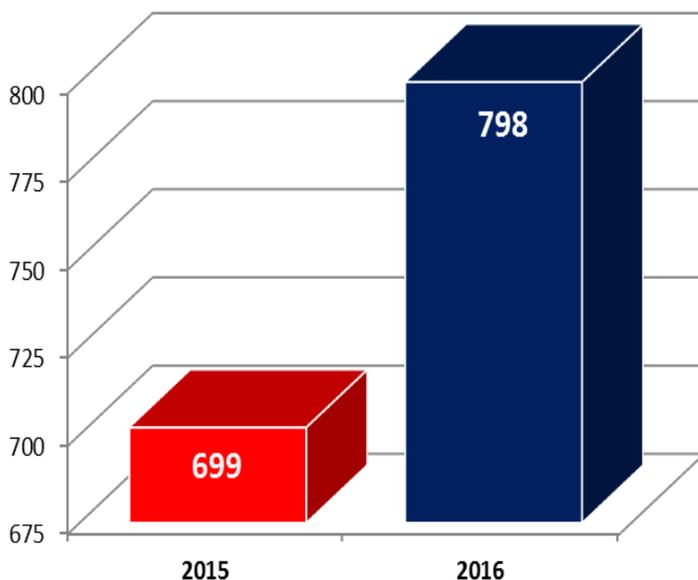
**Change in Grade 5 Lexile Levels
All Students -- 2015 to 2016**



Grade 5 students achieved Lexile nonfiction reading level increases averaging 105 points after using Benchmark Advance/Adelante in 2016 compared to the school's 5th graders using other literacy materials in 2015 (843 to 738).

This jump in nonfiction reading achievement to Lexile level 843 moved the school's Grade 5 students up into the target range of **"on track for college and career readiness"** according to MetaMetrics, the developer of the Lexile® Framework for Reading.

**Change in Grade 5 Lexile Levels
Low SES Students -- 2015 to 2016**



Low SES students in Grade 5 successfully read nonfiction at a level 99 Lexile points higher than the previous year's Low SES students using other literacy materials (798 to 699 points).

This greatly improved Lexile level meant that **the percentage of Low SES students "on track for college and career readiness" doubled** from 24% in 2015 to 48% in 2016.



What the Teachers had to say:

"I love the **Benchmark Advance** instruction—and the students are really responding. Initially, it was very difficult to get started—my classroom was very challenging at the beginning of the year. Our average reading level was around 2.5 in a 4th grade classroom. We were able to really find our groove during the school year and embraced the small group rotations. I have students who came in at 1.5 and are now reading at a 4.0 or more. To see the scores really improve has been dramatic! I would love to continue with **Benchmark Advance.**"

Grade 4 Teacher

"I think it's great for the kids for close reading. It's a great resource for being able to get text structures and informational readings on certain topics they need to have."

Grade 4 Teacher

"We used Reader's Theater as a station pretty consistently. Parent volunteers helped and they got very excited incorporating it in the lessons. The kids really liked the Reader's Theater. It truly helps students who are struggling because they get to own the role of a character. I really liked that."

Grade 4 Teacher

"At the beginning of the year we all wondered how we were going to get through everything, but as the PD trainers came and listened to us, they told us to take it at our own pace and take the things that we thought our students needed and work on those.

I have been using the Spanish component a lot. I love it because it provides the word study in Spanish that I didn't have before for the students. Last year I was just searching online for activities and lessons to teach, but now I have it all in **Benchmark Adelante** and I wouldn't want to go back to searching....Every time I'm using it more and more, I'm liking it more and more!"

Grade 4 Dual Language Teachers

"For me, the **Benchmark Advance** program was really helpful. This was my first year teaching and it was very helpful to have all the materials provided with the standards we were focusing on. At the beginning, I felt overwhelmed with so much to do, but as time progressed and having the Professional Development, we learned that we could take out whatever we didn't need and use what we needed. The structure of how the program is designed was most helpful."

Grade 5 Teacher

"I think the one thing the students really enjoy is being able to write in their book—they're able to annotate in the margins....For the small groups I like having the books that are on their level. I find it's really helpful for my high-level students too because they feel challenged—there's something that they can work on, and they feel excited and important."

Grade 5 Teacher

"The major components I like are these booklets. They are challenging and interesting. The biggie is that the students can underline, annotate—it's consumable.

I also now have a beautiful library of books for small group instruction. I have students who are at a 1st grade level to a student who's at a 6th grade level all in one class. They love those books as well. Another thing about the books is they can go onto the computer and listen to it being read, and not just for lower level readers. Everybody enjoys it. I do like that."

Grade 5 Teacher

What the Principal had to say:

“My favorite things from **Benchmark Advance/Adelante** are the rich content and the high-interest, complex text that the programs contain. The teacher has a lot of leeway in how they teach their classroom.

At first I heard comments from our teachers, “They can’t do this,” and “They can’t read this,” but then I heard, “You have to come see them read this!” There was a lot of growth, and I would say across the board. Even our naysayers ended up saying, “Oh yeah, I can do this and the kids can do this.”

I’m constantly reminding my teachers that they are professionals in the classroom, so yes, we use the best programs we can, and I think that’s where **Benchmark Education** has helped us. Benchmark has given us high-quality, high-interest, and engaging materials that teachers can do amazing things with. Teachers can bounce all over the world with the materials. They don’t have to spend time researching material and calibrating it with the grade level or interest level of the class because it’s all there for them. They just have to use it. The material is great!”

Principal
Valley Vista Elementary
Chula Vista ESD