

2002-2003 No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon Schools Program Cover Sheet

Name of Principal Ms. Sheri White, Campus Director (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name PINECREST SCHOOL THOUSAND OAKS (As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 449 Wilbur Road (If address is P.O. Box, also include street address) Thousand Oaks City California State 91360-5475 Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

Tel. (805) 497-8533 Fax (805) 494-7104

Website/URL www.pinecrestschools.com/thousandoaks Email todirector@pinecrestschools.com

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date

Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.

Name of Superintendent Mr. Don L. Dye (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name (private) Tel. (818) 986-2470

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date

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

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

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

## **Part II – DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: N/A Elementary schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Middle schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Junior high schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ High schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- Urban or large central city  
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
 Suburban  
 Small city or town in a rural area  
 Rural

4. 15 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
5. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>K</b>	51	37	<b>88</b>	<b>7</b>			
<b>1</b>	28	35	<b>63</b>	<b>8</b>			
<b>2</b>	31	39	<b>70</b>	<b>9</b>			
<b>3</b>	34	38	<b>72</b>	<b>10</b>			
<b>4</b>	31	28	<b>59</b>	<b>11</b>			
<b>5</b>	21	35	<b>56</b>	<b>12</b>			
<b>6</b>	9	13	<b>22</b>	Other			
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL</b>							<b>430</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- 80 % White
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 8 % Asian/Pacific Islander
  - 0 % American Indian/Alaskan Native
  - 9 % Other
  - 100% Total**

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 5 %

(This rate includes the total number of students who transferred to or from different schools between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in the school as of October 1, multiplied by 100.)

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	11
	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	10
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	21
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	430
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	5%
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: -1 %  
1 Total Number Limited English Proficient  
 Number of languages represented: 1  
 Specify languages: Japanese

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %  
0 Total Number Students Who Qualify

If this method is not a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services:   1  %  
  6   Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

<u>  </u> Autism	<u>  </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>  </u> Deafness	<u>  </u> Other Health Impaired
<u>  </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>  1  </u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>  </u> Hearing Impairment	<u>  5  </u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>  </u> Mental Retardation	<u>  </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>  </u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>  </u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

**Number of Staff**

	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>  3  </u>	<u>  </u>
Classroom teachers	<u> 23 </u>	<u>  </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>  4 </u>	<u>  4 </u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>  9 </u>	<u> 14 </u>
Support staff	<u>  7 </u>	<u>  </u>
Total number	<u> 46 </u>	<u> 18 </u>

12. Student-“classroom teacher” ratio:  18.7 

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout and drop-off rates.

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
Daily student attendance	94.4%	93.8%	94.5%	94.1%	93.9%
Daily teacher attendance	98.5%	98.4%	98.5%	98.3%	98.4%
Teacher turnover rate	6%	6%	4%	7%	5%
Student dropout rate	N/A				
Student drop-off rate	N/A				

## **PART III -- SUMMARY**

Provide a brief, coherent narrative snapshot of the school in one page (approximately 475 words). Include at least a summary of the school's mission or vision in the statement and begin the first sentence with the school's name, city, and state.

PINECREST SCHOOL, Thousand Oaks, California, is one of eleven Pinecrest School campuses located in the San Fernando, Santa Clarita, Conejo and Simi Valley areas of Southern California. Edna Mae Dye, an Iowa school teacher who moved to California and saw a need for a more traditional school program, founded the schools in 1951. The combined locations comprise one of the oldest and largest non-sectarian, co-educational private school systems in the state. Pinecrest Schools are members of the National Independent Private School Association (NIPSA).

Pinecrest Thousand Oaks is located on fourteen acres in the heart of Thousand Oaks, a city of approximately 120,000 residents. There is a football/soccer/softball field, an Olympic-size swimming pool, an up-to-date Computer Lab, a fully-equipped Science Lab, and a Library/Media Center. Breakfast and lunch are prepared in our two kitchens and served in the "Pinecone Café" (i.e., the multi-purpose cafeteria).

Pinecrest's academic program includes a required set of courses in Reading, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language, the Arts, Technology, Oceanography – beginning in first grade with a study of Antarctica and the penguins, and continuing in the upper grades with whale-watching trips, tide pool excursions, and in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, a 3-day, 2-night voyage to the coastal islands to study the flora and fauna of the Pacific.

Pinecrest belongs to the San Fernando Valley Private School League and participates in three seasons of interscholastic sports each year, open to students in grades 3 and up. Sports selected by the League include flag football, soccer, softball, baseball, basketball and volleyball. Sports Awards programs at the end of each season recognize the accomplishments of each team and spotlight outstanding athletes.

The elementary years are full of discovery and intellectual transformation. Our students may take advantage of various after-school Discovery Classes offered each year, such as Choral Groups, Band, Piano, Cheerleading, Chess, Dance, Drama, Etiquette, Beginning French, Golf, Karate, and Science. Sixth graders are offered quarterly electives that range from Astronomy to Sailing.

Current enrollment is 430 students in grades Junior Kindergarten through Sixth. Class size is approximately 20 students per class. Our students come, not only from the immediate Thousand Oaks area, but also from the surrounding towns of Agoura Hills, Camarillo, Newbury Park, Westlake Village and the Santa Rosa Valley, and represent a balanced mix of social, economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Our teachers are selected not only for their education and classroom experience, but also for their energy, enthusiasm, and ability to encourage a love of learning.

Admission is by invitation, based on a student's ability and motivation to thrive in our accelerated program. We seek students with a sincere desire to work both within the classroom and the school, as well as those who exhibit good citizenship and a respect for others. Pinecrest does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnic background or national origin.

## **PART IV -- INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

1. All students at Pinecrest School receive timely feedback throughout every learning experience. These formative assessments are regularly applied by all classroom teachers and discussed at weekly team meetings to assist teachers in planning and executing curriculum effectively. It is also the primary tool that is used to differentiate student groups. Teachers send this information home to parents on a weekly basis. Our students take home weekly folders, containing the work of the week as well as tests, quizzes and other formative assessments. It is our school policy that any test scored below a “C” is to be signed by the parent and returned. In this way, we strive to keep parents informed of their student’s level of achievement and to step in for re-teaching and remediation as quickly as possible.

2. Summative tests are applied at fifth and sixth grade level, as mid-term assessments in Math and Writing. The data from these assessments give each student a specific list of skills that have been mastered and those for which proficiency is not yet mastered. Since our school ends at sixth grade, we also use these tests to assist students in attaining maximum proficiency before moving on to Middle School.

Standardized testing is scheduled for all grade levels at the beginning of May. The data from this assessment tool is used to indicate broad areas of strength and weakness in our curriculum. It is discussed at inter-grade level meetings at the end of the school year. This information is useful as a tool to vertically align our curriculum as a school.

3. Describe in one-half page how the school communicates student performance, including assessment data, to parents, students, and the community.

Communication of student performance is accomplished in a multitude of settings. Parents receive written Report Cards at the end of each 10-week grading period, as well as interim written Progress Reports. At the end of the first quarter, parents are invited to an individual conference with the teacher(s) to discuss strengths as well as areas needing reinforcement.

Beginning in first grade, students carry an Assignment Journal in which homework and long-term projects are recorded daily. Parents and teachers communicate back-and-forth in this book as well. Upper-grade teachers record daily grades on the computer in *Jackson Grade-Quick*, and the results are available to both students and parents.

In between the formal grading periods, parents are encouraged to contact teachers and request telephone or in-person meetings, as the need may arise. Teachers also make parents aware of tests with below-average grades, missing assignments, and other areas of concern.

The results of the yearly Stanford Achievement Tests are sent to parents with an explanation of how to interpret the reports. Grade-level scores are reported on our web site and in our school information packets.

4. Describe in one-half page how the school will share its successes with other schools.

The staff at Pinecrest Thousand Oaks prides itself on being a role-model for effective teaching practices, and willingly shares ideas and strategies with one another, and with teachers from other schools. Invitations to attend our monthly staff in-services, which frequently feature presentations from staff members, are routinely extended to teachers at neighborhood schools, and to teachers from the other Pinecrest campuses. We have also produced videos for the local educational cable station, highlighting special events and unique lessons from across the grade levels, including programs such as *Storybook Theater*, *Destination Imagination* and student film festivals. We understand that the offering and receiving of good educational practices benefits all of our children, in both public and private schools, and will continue to share our successes with others in the future.

## **PART V -- CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

1. Describe in one page the school's curriculum, including foreign languages (foreign language instruction is an eligibility requirement for middle, junior high, and high schools), and show how all students are engaged with significant content, based on high standards.

**ENGLISH:** All students participate in Reading, Spelling, Grammar, and Creative Writing on a daily basis. Children in the primary grades (JK-Grade 3) study Phonics as well. Texts used include anthologies of literature, practice workbooks, and supplemental literature texts as well as writing journals. Children in first grade and above also study Dictionary Skills. In fourth grade, children begin a program of Study and Research Skills. All children have the opportunity to develop oral language skills from "Show and Tell" with our youngest students, to Speech and Debate with our fifth and sixth graders.

**MATHEMATICS:** All students participate in the daily study of Mathematics. The texts used are at one grade level higher than the grade level of the student. Within the context of the learning experience, children receive proper opportunities to develop concepts by using manipulative tools. Through daily practice exercises, children develop skills and accuracy in the concepts taught. Problem-solving exercises and development of the vocabulary needed to help unlock the solutions to problems are rigorously applied as a vital part of the Mathematics program.

**SOCIAL STUDIES:** All students participate in the study of their world, its people and communities, its geographical features and physical properties. Students at all grade levels participate in daily or weekly current events, through the study of small news magazines (i.e., Weekly Reader, etc.) or the daily local newspaper. Children in grades three through six use a textbook to target specific areas of study. Students at all grade levels participate in outside field trips that engage them in the study of their community, and fifth graders present projects and speeches for an annual History Fair. As a whole student body, our children join in fund-raising for worthy community causes such as Jump Rope for Heart, supporting the American Heart Association, and St. Jude's Math-a-thon to support cancer research.

**SCIENCE:** All students are engaged in a study of their world through observation and experimentation. Work includes notation and discussion of observations, formulation of hypotheses, testing ideas and making conclusions. Children at all levels are asked to use and expand their knowledge of science phenomena through critical thinking exercises. Third, fourth and sixth grade students create projects for the annual Science Fair.

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE:** All students, Junior Kindergarten and up, study Spanish, taught by native-speaking specialists. The children in primary grades develop oral speaking skills and a broad vocabulary through songs, stories, games and role playing. They develop an oral sense of the syntax of the language. Our students in third through sixth grades transition this skill into the area of reading and writing. Students in sixth grade are given the elective opportunity to study German and French as well.

**ART:** All children receive instruction in the principles and applications of the visual arts and have opportunities to express their emotions and creativity. An Art specialist teaches this program once a week to our Kindergarten children, and bi-weekly to children in grades one through six. Children are encouraged to express themselves through both two- and three-dimensional projects. Additionally, they discuss art history and learn artistic style as they study famous artists.

**MUSIC:** All children meet with our Music specialist once a week. The youngest children participate in singing and rhythm activities. In first grade, music textbooks are added to become acquainted with musical notation. As children advance in this knowledge, they study the great composers and begin a study of theory in fifth and sixth grades.

COMPUTER SCIENCE: All children go to the Computer Lab weekly. A computer specialist instructs our youngest students in the use of the different components of the computer through games and simple projects. As children advance in age and coordination, they learn to use the keyboard and the different word-processing programs. Our fifth grade students develop their own Power Point demonstrations, and our sixth graders learn HTML to create their own web pages.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION and HEALTH: All children have daily physical education taught by our P.E. staff. This program develops small and large muscle strength and coordination through calisthenics, offers the children healthy exercise, and teaches sportsmanship and teamwork through organized games. In weekly Health class, children study the systems of the body and its physical development, as well as nutrition and safety.

2. **(Elementary Schools)** Describe in one-half page the school's reading curriculum, including a description of why the school chose this particular approach to reading.

Beginning with Junior Kindergarten students, the emphasis in our reading instruction is clearly on developing fluency with the alphabet and the alphabetic principal. These children transition, as Kindergarten students, to a daily study of phonics as a primary word attack skill. The children acquire, through the reading of published works and their own writing, a sight word vocabulary. Our school emphasizes small-group instruction, in leveled reading groups, from Junior Kindergarten through first grade, focusing on the development and practice of decoding and other word attack skills.

As our students develop fluency, they are involved more rigorously with comprehension and extension activities. Oral reading develops into a shared way of enjoying literature in class, with an emphasis shifting from decoding to fluency and expression while reading.

Students read from a variety of texts, even at the youngest age. We believe that *balanced literacy* is a sound approach to developing successful readers. So, while our emphasis on phonics is a very present one, it is balanced at the earliest stages of the learning process with the development of context clues, sight word acquisition and other means of unlocking new words. These are invaluable skills that we feel are necessary to the development in our children of a life-long love of reading.

Our instructional reading program is supported and encouraged in our Library as well. All teachers, not just our Librarian, take a daily opportunity to read aloud to their students in class. In the Library, we try to develop literary interests in our students by giving them an even wider exposure to literature and to help them widen their literary horizons.

We believe that reading and writing are closely connected. Our children write daily and often read from their writing. In this way, they develop vocabulary and have a sense of pride and joy in their sharing. We feel that with reading, more is better; so all children practice every day. Whether it is the acquisition of word attack skill through "sound blending" words in a pre-primer or reading an autobiography in fourth grade, Pinecrest children interact with the written word several times a day.

3. Describe in one-half page one other curriculum area of the school's choice and show how it relates to essential skills and knowledge based on the school's mission.

CHARACTER AND VALUES CURRICULUM: Our mission at Pinecrest is to develop, along with academic achievement, the ideals of character and citizenship. We strongly believe that strength in academics combined with the development of character is the foundation of good citizenship. The teachers, coaches, paraprofessionals and administrators at Pinecrest are united in assisting our children to be the best students they can be, to develop a well-rounded sense of worth in themselves and others.

Informally, this is accomplished through daily interaction that stresses good manners, kindness and respect on our playgrounds during playtime and recesses, and during daily P.E. in which children can

practice good sportsmanship and experience teamwork. More formally, in the classroom, children are exposed to several different curricular resources to assist them in attaining the ideals of good citizenship.

All students from Junior Kindergarten through sixth grade, participate in the B.E.S.T. program (Building Esteem in Students Today), published by The Institute for Human Resource Development. In this program, the ideals of good character are featured monthly in each class. These character traits include Courtesy, Responsibility, Caring/Sharing, Goal Setting, Honesty, Health and Prevention, Conflict, Feelings, and Esteem. This program encourages the children to write, read, role play and discuss each of the character traits. At times, when it is appropriate to do so, our children go out into the community in an effort to help others. For example, our Kindergarten and grade two classes visit the local Senior Concerns Day Care Center and present a program of songs and poetry to the seniors. Our children are active in recycling in our community, and they regularly collect non-perishable food items for donation to our local food bank.

In pursuing a rigorous program of character development, we feel that we help to empower all of our children to be strong and reliable in their own selves and to add to their community, their school, within their family unit and in the world around them.

4. Describe in one-half page the different instructional methods the school uses to improve student learning.

Teachers at Pinecrest use a variety of instructional methods to maximize student achievement at all levels. Our youngest students who have the shortest attention spans, have fewer minutes of direct instruction and a more intensive manipulative and practice phase. Direct instruction often includes small group instruction (i.e., reading groups) on a very intensive level with a supervised practice phase included in the instruction. Children at all levels in our school are grouped for ability to maximize differentiation of learning.

All teachers at Pinecrest try to maximize the effectiveness of their instruction by including large amounts of “experiential” time, especially in the areas of math and science. They are careful to include open-ended questioning as part of their lesson strategy and to make sure that supervised practice is part of the learning. Homework is given, at all levels, to ensure proper follow-up and reinforcement of the day’s work. Children in grades one through six receive a Homework Journal in which to record their assignments. This book is signed by the parent and returned to school each day.

All Pinecrest teachers make sure that their students receive regular, on-going evaluation and assessment and that this is communicated to parents. Children are given celebratory and immediate reinforcement. They receive as many opportunities for re-teaching and reassessment as needed. We are fortunate, at our school, to have a Resource Teacher who is able to work with small groups of students or individuals, in order to help teachers accomplish this task.

Teachers give all students opportunities for non-linguistic representation of knowledge, through pictographs and physical model-making at the earliest ages, to graphic organization for older students. Cooperative grouping is another instructional tool used by teachers at appropriate age levels.

Teachers begin to use summarization at the second grade level. This is an instructional tool that is used throughout our school from that age level on. It is developed into note taking starting at the fourth grade level.

All teachers take every opportunity to present materials in ways that address all learning modalities. We are careful to be sensitive to any visual or auditory needs. Teachers organize their classrooms carefully to meet children’s needs, and are flexible in modifying the learning environment and the methods of instruction to suit the learning needs of the children.

5. Describe in one-half page the school's professional development program and its impact on improving student achievement.

The goal of staff development at Pinecrest School is to give our faculty the teaching skills and learning tools to bring out the best in every student. There are three main strategies we implement:

*Weekly Grade-level Team Meetings.* At these meetings, teachers plan and discuss their curricular goals for the following week, targeting concerns with specific students as well as standards for the class to meet as a whole. At this time, we also discuss program strengths and areas we wish to improve. Stanford Achievement Test scores from the previous year, as well as on-going assessments, are used to keep students on target. Teachers are also encouraged to offer assistance and suggestions, and to share resources, with the other team members. The more experienced teachers thus act as mentors to their younger colleagues, thereby improving the instruction delivered to all of our students.

*In-Service Workshops* offered by outside agencies. Every teacher receives a yearly fund to attend at least one off-campus workshop in an area they feel will help in their own professional growth, and approved by the administration. Opportunities for extending skills in teaching methods, understanding student learning styles, and strategies for reaching every student, are posted for teachers to select from. Teachers adapt the information derived from these in-services to the needs of their own students.

*Monthly Staff Meetings* provide time for the information from the outside workshops to be shared with the rest of the faculty. Teachers who attend off-campus workshops present the information to their colleagues at the monthly meetings, and share their own experience in implementing changes in their own teaching style. In this way, everyone on staff is able to benefit from the latest research in the field.

Administrators also take part in regular professional development, in order to support effective, observable teacher practices and focus on improved student outcomes.



**STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TEST: 9<sup>th</sup> Ed., 1995**

<i>Kindergarten Percentiles</i>			
	May, 2002	May, 2001	May, 2000
Total Reading	92	87	95
Total Math	76	76	91
Number of Students Tested	72	58	81
Percent of Students Tested	100	100	100

<i>First Grade Percentiles</i>			
	May, 2002	May, 2001	May, 2000
Total Reading	91	94	90
Total Math	90	94	91
Number of Students Tested	72	58	81
Percent of Students Tested	100	100	100

<i>Second Grade Percentiles</i>			
	May, 2002	May, 2001	May, 2000
Total Reading	86	78	81
Total Math	87	77	85
Number of Students Tested	80	57	57
Percent of Students Tested	100	100	100

<i>Third Grade Percentiles</i>			
	May, 2002	May, 2001	May, 2000
Total Reading	76	82	84
Total Math	85	90	91
Number of Students Tested	60	54	64
Percent of Students Tested	100	100	100

**STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TEST: 9<sup>th</sup> Ed., 1995**

<i>Fourth Grade Percentiles</i>			
	May, 2002	May, 2001	May, 2000
Total Reading	82	86	83
Total Math	87	89	86
Number of Students Tested	57	62	65
Percent of Students Tested	100	100	100

<i>Fifth Grade Percentiles</i>			
	May, 2002	May, 2001	May, 2000
Total Reading	87	87	85
Total Math	89	89	89
Number of Students Tested	63	52	56
Percent of Students Tested	100	100	100

<i>Sixth Grade Percentiles</i>			
	May, 2002	May, 2001	May, 2000
Total Reading	89	91	90
Total Math	92	94	91
Number of Students Tested	36	45	55
Percent of Students Tested	100	100	100