

PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Report  
to the  
Community  
2007-2008*



**El Carmelo  
Elementary  
School**

**School Description  
& Mission Statement**

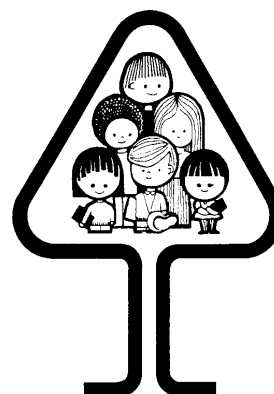
**School Description**

El Carmelo Elementary School, one of twelve elementary schools in the Palo Alto Unified School District, embodies a diverse group of students with varied needs and backgrounds. Currently the school serves 369 students kindergarten through fifth grade. The school serves families from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school neighborhood encompasses a social, economic, cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity, which is valued by the school community. The ethnic/racial makeup of the student body is 25% Asian, 16% Hispanic, 2% African-American, 39% white, and 18% Multiple or No Response. The school neighborhood boundaries are Oregon Expressway, Alma Street, portions of Ross Road and Middlefield Avenue, and parts of the area between Loma Verde and East Meadow.

The school motto "Plant the Seeds and Watch Them Grow" exemplifies the educational philosophy that directs El Carmelo's child-centered environment. El Carmelo staff members implement a balanced educational program that encourages children to grow as individuals and enables them to assume responsibility for their role individually and within a group. The children, teachers, support staff, parents, and the community all contribute to our mission of educating the whole child.

**Mission Statement**

El Carmelo students will develop self-respect, value learning, and cultivate an understanding of others through a school experience which fosters high expectations for academic, social, and emotional development in a global community.



*Student demographics, testing and accountability data, class size, staffing and financial information are available in the state-mandated School Accountability Report Cards. These may be found on the PAUSD Web site: <http://www.pausd.org/community/about/sar.shtml> or obtained at your school. Similar information, current and historical, about individual schools and school districts is also available on the California Department of Education Web site: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/>.*

## Opportunities for Parental Involvement

Parents and community volunteers are valued partners in the educational mission at El Carmelo. All are highly encouraged to become involved in their child's education. Parents and community volunteers spend many hours supporting classroom instruction and schoolwide activities. They volunteer in classrooms, provide student and sometimes teacher support, drive on field trips, provide and over-see noontime activities, plan and participate on schoolwide workdays (site improvement), support teacher-directed enrichment activities, plan and teach the bicycle safety program, and many other activities.

Both the PTA and the School Site Council involve parents in a team effort and create a "strong sense of community." The PTA raises funds that help augment classroom materials, support student activities, and help fund a part-time reading specialist. Annual PTA sponsored activities and programs include the Welcome Back Picnic, Pancake Breakfast, Spaghetti Dinner, Spring Auction, International Dinner, Staff Appreciation Luncheon, Math Lab, Schoolwide Assemblies, Book Faires, and others. Parents elected to the School Site Council participate in and contribute to the development and approval of the annual school plan, the yearly site goals and the School Improvement Program budget.

For information on opportunities for parent involvement at El Carmelo, please contact the office staff, Jennifer Fernandez and Ginny Nagao, at (650)856-0960.

## School Programs & Practices That Promote a Positive Learning Environment

The learning environment at El Carmelo reflects a purposeful, child-centered philosophy. The work of teaching and learning is guided and facilitated by classroom teachers with the support and collaboration of parents. Personal contacts, phone and e-mail messages, and school and classroom newsletters provide mechanisms for on-going communication between school and home. Other means of communicating between school and home include use of communitywide electronic updates via eNews, as well as *The Carmeleter*, our PTA sponsored and produced bi-monthly community newsletter.

Teachers work together in grade level and cluster groups to share materials and information, to design cooperative teaching efforts and, in general, to enhance the effectiveness of our work. In addition to individual and independent activities, students are often engaged in various kinds of group activities, both within and between classes. Cross-grade "buddy" programs provide opportunities for younger and older students to work together on projects and in a variety of subject area activities.

After-school activities are an integral part of students' school experiences. These activities include, but are not limited to chess, foreign languages (Spanish and French), science, art, music, sports activities, homework support, literacy and math support, and others.

## El Carmelo Elementary School

3024 Bryant Street  
Palo Alto, CA 94306  
(650) 856-0960 FAX: (650) 856-4817  
www.el-carmelo.pausd.org

Principal ..... Lupe García  
School Secretary ..... Jennifer Fernandez  
Typist Clerk ..... Ginny Nagao  
Custodians ..... De Dean  
Rickey Moore

### Certificated Staff

K ..... Serena Chandley  
Susie Davidson  
K ..... Denise Dauler  
K ..... Melanie LaSelle  
1 ..... Michelle Wilk  
1 ..... Diane McCoy  
1 ..... Sandra Perry  
2 ..... Robin Dosskey  
2 ..... Karen Lemoine  
2 ..... Christina Nosek  
3 ..... Alice Anne Chandler / Sue Chakos  
3 ..... Gina Chung  
3 ..... John Walton  
4 ..... Kevin Danie  
4 ..... Robert Siu  
4 ..... Janeen Swan / Leah Rich  
5 ..... Kathy Chin  
5 ..... Nan Knoblauch  
5 ..... Gaelyn Mason

### Support Staff

Resource Specialist ..... Debbie Hilleary  
Speech/Language ..... Grace Lee  
Psychologist ..... Margaret Sachs  
Library Media Teacher ..... Leslie Bell  
English Language Dev. .... Annette Isaacson

### Site Council Co-Chairs

Barbara Yates-Sonner, Parent  
John Walton, Teacher

### PTA President

Eric Schuur

## School Safety Plan

The School Safety Plan is reviewed yearly by the School Safety Committee, which is comprised of representatives from the School Site Council, the PTA and the Principal. The School Site Council reviewed the School Safety Committee's recommendations and approved the revised plan at the June 2005 meeting. The focus for 2006-2007 School Safety Plan was in four areas: (1) Refine and evaluate the School Safety Plan procedures for parent pick-up of students during an earthquake or crisis situation. (2) Review the pedestrian/car traffic flow and fence/gates around the school in order to develop a safer travel climate around the school. (3) Continue to focus on developing leadership and cooperative learning skills among all El Carmelo students. (4) Continue to try to increase positive interaction between students, as well as staff. In 2006-2007 El Carmelo had no suspensions and zero expulsions.

The school rules at El Carmelo are simple. They are:

- Be safe – don't do anything to hurt yourself or others.
- Be responsible – control your actions.

- Be respectful of people, the environment, and the property of others.

These rules form the basis for standards of behavior in both classrooms and on the playground. Teachers, often with the involvement of students, develop and manage rules specific to their classroom that will work best for their instructional programs. Teachers supervise the playground before school and during morning recess periods. Paid noontime supervisors monitor the playground during the lunch period. An extensive bicycle safety program is part of the school safety program. This program is made possible by the joint efforts of the school, the PTA, and the Palo Alto Fire Department.

Key elements of El Carmelo's School Safety Plan address emergency/disaster procedures, discipline-related Palo Alto Unified School District policies, and applicable education codes. Such information is available for review at the El Carmelo School Office at 3024 Bryant, Palo Alto, California 94306. Parents may contact us at (650)856-0960.

## School Instruction & Leadership

The El Carmelo school staff is composed of highly qualified, talented, dedicated, and caring individuals. The instructional staff consists of 18 regular classroom teachers in grades Kindergarten through grade five, one full-time special education resource specialist, one part-time reading specialist, two part-time psychologists, a part-time speech/language specialist, a 0.8 part-time library media teacher, and a 0.4 part-time English Language Development teacher. Instructional aides provide 1.1 hours a day of classroom assistance for every classroom teacher. Adding to this instructional mix are several special teachers who provide quality music, art, and PE experiences for our students. The office staff and the custodial staff also contribute in many ways to the strong, student-centered program at El Carmelo School. In addition to their classroom responsibilities, teachers at El Carmelo are active participants in and assume leadership roles on a variety of districtwide committees. These include district curriculum committees, the district's professional organization, the Gifted and Talented Program, and others. Teachers actively participate in on-site committees related to school and student related matters on as-needed basis. The staff at El Carmelo reflects a healthy balance of new and

experienced teachers. Teachers work collaboratively with the Principal to assess, plan, and develop strong educational programs for the classrooms and the school as a whole. Grade level, literacy, and whole staff meetings provide the backdrop for this collaboration to occur.

The Principal, Lupe García, has served at El Carmelo since 2001. He has 34 years of experience in the Palo Alto Unified School District at various educational levels, including elementary, middle and high school. He actively involves members of the school community in the decision-making process through the School Site Council, PTA, and staff leadership.

### Instructional Program

The instructional program at El Carmelo is based on:

- Current knowledge of children's growth and development;
- Processes of learning and thinking; and
- Knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to be a successful citizen of the 21st century.

The instructional program is characterized by a variety of groupings and instructional strategies that directly engage students in learning activities.

Improvement of curriculum and instruction is an ongoing process in the Palo Alto schools. State Frameworks, along with other quality curriculum documents, are used as guides in refining standards and expectations in the various curricular areas. Formal and informal testing is conducted and the assessment results analyzed and used as we examine our curriculum and instructional practices, as well as student needs. El Carmelo staff are active in the various district and site-level curriculum and assessment committees.

Students participate in literature-based Language Arts and Social Studies programs focusing on the writing process and critical thinking, balanced with instruction in phonics and grammar. "Pathways to Literacy" guides the instructional program in every grade with a specific goal that all children will read at grade level or above by the end of third grade. Our writing program uses the "six traits writing strategies" to develop writing skills from kindergarten through fifth grade. Teachers and students keep a variety of journals and portfolios of work in progress. The Library Media Center is an integral part of the Language Arts Program at El Carmelo.

The Mathematics program at El Carmelo reflects the balance suggested in the California Mathematics Framework. Teachers provide activities and experiences that help students build mathematical skills and

understandings. Activities specific to the teaching of math facts and computation are important components of the program, as are opportunities for students to apply these skills in problem solving situations. During the school year our students have age-appropriate experiences in various strands of mathematics such as number, patterns and functions, logic, algebra, geometry, measurement, and probability.

The Science program at El Carmelo is reflective of the district efforts to establish activity-based programs, which focus on teaching significant science concepts. Students at all grade levels have an array of hands-on experiences in natural, physical, and earth sciences.

Technology is also part of the instructional program. All classrooms are networked for e-mail and the Internet. Use of technology in the classroom is a "work in progress." As a school, we continue to look for ways to upgrade and train staff in its use in the classroom, for instructional and personal productivity.

Experiences in art, music, health, and physical education round out every child's educational program. SPECTRA Art teachers provide basic art instruction in some classes and the PTA funds additional art for those classes not receiving district funded art instruction. District music instruction is complemented by opportunities to perform in various holiday and theatrical productions.

## *Meeting the Special Needs of Students*

### **Schoolwide Intervention Programs:**

- *Reading:* A reading specialist works with students and teachers K-5 to strengthen reading skills and instruction. We also offer a districtwide Literacy Academy Program, focused on reading comprehension.
- *Math:* Math instructional aides work with students to learn and master their basic math facts. Additionally, we offer a districtwide Math Academy Program, focused on developing math skills and understanding of math concepts. A math specialist provides enrichment opportunities for some students performing at a high level.
- *GATE:* The district consultant for Gifted and Talented Education and the district math and science mentor teachers assist teachers, parents, and children in designing independent and small-group projects for more able youngsters in the classroom setting. Parents also work with small groups of students, grades 2-5. Increasing capacity to meet the range of student needs in our classrooms is a continuing school goal.

### **English Language Development Program:**

- Our English Language Development (ELD) teacher provides intensive English language instruction to students who are limited- or non-English speaking. Non-English speaking students also receive some tutorial support in their native language while they are making the transition to English.

### **Student Study Team:**

- Classroom teachers, parents, assisted by the Principal, the Psychologist, the Resource Specialist, and the Speech and Language teacher work as a team to discuss strategies and interventions for students who have identified needs.

### **Special Education:**

- The Resource Specialist, Speech and Language Specialist, the Psychologist and the Principal work with parents and teachers in developing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students who have been assessed and recommended for placement in Special Education Program.