

PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Report
to the
Community
2007-2008*



**Palo Verde
Elementary
School**

**School Description
& Mission Statement**

School Description: Palo Verde Elementary School has 370 students, kindergarten through fifth grade, from an area formerly served by five elementary schools. The school neighborhood is bounded by Highway 101 on the east, Middlefield Road on the west, Oregon Expressway on the north, and Charleston Road on the south. Approximately 8% of our students come from other areas in Palo Alto and 7% from outside the district, including voluntary transfers from Ravenswood School District.

The ethnic composition of the school is 6% African-American, 27% Asian, 45% Caucasian, 2% Filipino, 8% Hispanic, 2% Pacific Islander, and 10% other. The area encompasses a social, economic, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity that is valued by the school community. Twenty-five different languages are spoken in students' homes. (The most common foreign languages are Russian, Korean, Japanese, and Spanish.) Eight percent of the students are classified as Limited-English proficient.

Over half of Palo Verde parents are engaged in professional, technical or managerial employment, and the balance are engaged in trades and services. Although the majority of families are homeowners, a sizable number of students live in rental properties, including apartments.

Palo Verde has a positive and supportive learning environment with clear and consistent standards for behavior. Through the cooperative learning environment, the school helps students develop leadership responsibilities, problem solving, and teamwork skills necessary to be successful and productive members of the larger community.

Palo Verde maintains a staggered schedule for small group literacy instruction in grades 1-3, four days each week.

Class size reduction has been implemented in kindergarten, first, second and third grades with a maximum class size of 20 per room. Fourth and fifth grades average 22 students per classroom. Average daily attendance exceeds 95%.

Mission Statement: We believe that mastering academic skills, engaging in cooperative problem-solving, enjoying and participating in the arts, applying human relations skills, and increasing physical skills, strength, and endurance in a safe, supportive environment are vital to the full development of each child.

Palo Verde staff, parents, and students are working together to develop minds, build skills, enrich experiences, increase strength, solve problems, expand horizons, and encourage caring, responsible relationships.

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

At Palo Verde, we feel that parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Parents volunteer thousands of hours per year at the school. We encourage parents to become involved at school in whatever way is best for them: assisting in classrooms, the library, the garden, fundraising, technology, and providing assistance to teachers. Many provide enrichment activities through sharing aspects of their culture or professional expertise. Parents plan and carry out a host of school activities such as the Science Fair, Book Fairs, Noon Art, Harvest Fair, Pancake Breakfast, International Fair, and annual ice skating party.

Many parents belong to the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which coordinates volunteer activities benefiting schoolchildren under the guidelines of the National, State, and Local PTA. The PTA also produces and distributes our school newsletter, the VOICE. Parents also serve on various district and community committees. Six parents are members of our school Site Council, an elected group that helps develop the school plan and yearly goals.

Palo Verde students benefit from a schoolwide learning environment characterized by safe conditions; positive, enjoyable relationships; and engaging, productive activities. This beneficial environment reflects faculty/staff and parent-participation dynamics which are exceptionally caring and collaborative, with a focus on learning and growth for all children. We communicate and work together through classroom and school newsletters, committees, and various meetings.

Contact Christine McGranahan, School Secretary, at 650-856-1672.

School Safety Plan

Palo Verde School rules are based on respect for ourselves and others, personal safety, and responsible behavior. Specific guidelines are provided to students during the first week of school and in the Palo Verde Handbook. The playground is supervised for 15 minutes before school by staff. Teachers provide supervision during recess, and four noon supervisors provide supervision over the lunch hour.

The PTA Traffic Safety Officer is also responsible for providing safety information to parents and students. Third grade children also participate in a bicycle safety program presented annually by the Palo Alto Fire Department.

Earthquake preparedness is a priority at Palo Verde. We have a comprehensive disaster plan and the PTA stores emergency equipment and supplies on campus. Regular earthquake and fire drills are held, and First Aid and CPR training are provided for the staff.

Palo Verde Elementary School

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Principal Eric Goddard
School Secretary Christine McGranahan
Typist Clerk Joan Jennings
Custodian Moises Aguilar
Allan Pascual

Certificated Staff

K Andy Blumberg
K Gwen Harper-Metoyer
K Carol (Takako) Witt
1 Hsia (Lynn) Lin
Kathleen Rice
1 Judy Lloyd
1 Jocelyn Mason
2 Keri Garcia
2 April McCandless
Janet Rose
2 Ashley Scotena
3 Sheri Cundall
3 Lisa Swagerty
3 Trebor Winslow
4 Sana Naqvi
4 Kristin Page
4 Paula Watson
Yasmin Shirole
5 Jennifer Aza
5 David Hoshizaki
5 Jim Meininger

Support Staff

Speech/Language Sabrina Cheng
Resource Specialist Sue Ann McBride
Psychologist Jan Sloan
Reading Specialist/ELD Natalie Bivas
Library Media Teacher Pat Hanley

Site Council Co-Chairs

Sheri Cundall / Joanna Schloss

PTA President

Kristin Foss

School Programs & Practices That Promote a Positive Learning Environment

- Reading Specialist instructs first-graders identified as needing assistance individually and in small groups in the Reading Recovery Program.
- Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) provides a variety of challenging approaches, resources and special projects within the classroom.
- Classroom instructional aides and volunteers provide additional tutoring and instruction under staff supervision in all curriculum areas.
- Math Intervention instructor works with students who are experiencing grade level challenges in mastering Math facts.

English Language Development Program

ELD provides English language tutoring for students whose home language is other than English. A 35% ELD teacher provides a pullout program.

Student Study Team

A SST team of faculty, parents, the principal, and specialists work together to discuss instructional strategies for referred children.

Special Education

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) team assesses and recommends placement for children in the Speech-Language program or Resource program.

Resource Specialists (80% time) provides instruction and assistance to students identified as needing special education services.

School Instruction & Leadership

The Palo Verde faculty includes 21 classroom teachers, including three pairs of teachers who job-share; an 80% resource specialist for identified special education students; a 35% English Language Development teacher; 80% librarian, 50% reading specialist, school psychologist, and language/speech specialist. Instructional aides assist in all classrooms. District Physical Education and Music instructors meet with students on a weekly basis.

Palo Verde teachers are leaders in districtwide curriculum development and staff development efforts. The staff has a wide range of teaching experience. Twelve staff members hold masters degrees.

Palo Verde students benefit from instruction and curriculum which is based on our growing knowledge of children's development, the processes of thinking and learning, and our awareness of the skills and concepts students will need to be successful in the 21st century. Through the use of directed teaching, inquiry, small group and individual instruction and collaborative group learning, students are able to develop creative and critical thinking and problem solving skills. A variety of instructional strategies, settings, materials and resources are used to enhance the curriculum to provide an outstanding instructional program in which all students have the opportunity to experience success. Students are officially identified at the beginning of 4th grade for the GATE program (Gifted and Talented Education); however, funds

are used to provide additional enrichment experiences at every grade level.

Language Arts – Integrates the instruction of reading, writing, phonics, and spelling. Students receive direct instruction in developing strategies that result in higher level critical thinking skills and successful comprehension of quality literature. Palo Verde's outstanding Literacy Team involves all faculty members in addressing the specific needs of children and in continuously improving children's literacy development. We have continued to focus on developing effective reading strategies, and expanding our WEB (Wonderful Exciting Books) Room resources. The Palo Verde Library is an integral part of the school and includes a large collection of children's literature from around the world.

History/Social Science – Focuses on the chronological study of history as a "story well told." Field trips, primary source documents, biographies, artifacts, and children's literature make history come alive for children. Palo Verde students also develop the skills and concepts needed to understand and use geography as a window to our world.

Math – Teachers provide students with mathematically powerful learning experiences involving investigations, projects, and meaningful applications of math in everyday situations. Students in grades 1-5 are also learning to communicate, in writing, the math concepts they are

developing. Palo Verde teachers also ensure that students internalize math facts and basic math operations. Basic Math Facts Benchmark tests are administered three times during the year.

Science – Students are provided with in-depth, hands-on experiences in order to develop a strong conceptual understanding of how the world around them works. Palo Verde kindergarten teachers utilize the LifeLab curriculum, using the kindergarten garden. Palo Verde is also involved in the BASEE (Bay Area Schools for Excellence in Education) Science Program. A School Site Science plan is being developed by staff to reflect the project goals of improving the quality of science teaching and learning.

A Science Fair is held every year. Two hundred thirty students across the grade levels participate and choose a project from five different types of scientific investigations. Science workshops are held, parent scientists visit classrooms, and students present their projects to the classmates.

Music/Fine Arts – The district's SPECTRA Art program includes directed lessons, based on the principles of art and the work of masters, which encourage children to learn new techniques and experiment with a variety of art materials. Noon art activities are conducted every other Thursday by a parent volunteer. Vocal and instrumental music, taught by district specialists, is conducted weekly. Students have opportunities to participate in plays and musical productions directed by both parents and teachers.

Physical Education – The Palo Verde program was adopted in 1992-93 to ensure a well-articulated program of developmentally enabling experiences for all Palo Verde students. District physical education specialists also provide weekly lessons.

Technology – Palo Verde is committed to the effective use of technology to enhance learning experiences and opportunities across the curriculum. Thanks to parent volunteers, Palo Verde now has a Web page (www.palo-verde.pausd.org). The Palo Verde PULSE is a parent information newsletter sent electronically every week. It includes school and community events. Palo Verde is also adding new computers to the school and upgrading existing technology on an on-going basis.

