

PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Report  
to the  
Community  
2007-2008*



**Walter Hays  
Elementary  
School**

**School Description  
& Mission Statement**

**School Description**

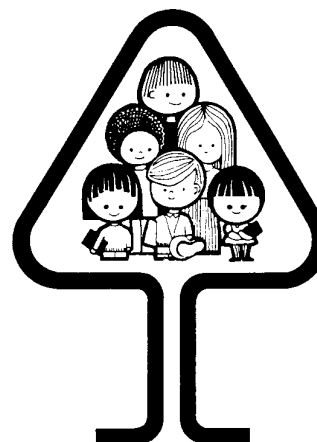
Walter Hays School has 511 K-5 students; 264 are male and 247 are female. We serve families from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. The ethnic/racial makeup of the student body is 3% African-American, 5% Hispanic, 17% Asian, 62% Caucasian, and 13% other. There are 18 students who are receiving ELL services. Attendance rates are high. Class size is twenty or fewer students in grades K-3, and 22 students in grades 4-5.

**Mission Statement**

Walter Hays 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.

**Opportunities for Parental  
Involvement**

There are many opportunities for parents to get involved at Walter Hays Elementary School. Parents volunteer in the classrooms, assist in the library, help on the playground, drive on field trips, and serve in many volunteer roles through the Walter Hays PTA and Site Council. For more information on parent involvement opportunities, contact Walter Hays school secretary Ruta Henard at (650) 322-5956.



*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/>.*

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

Walter Hays students participate in a school-wide character education program. The following character traits are discussed during the school year: self-discipline, perseverance, empathy, acceptance, respect, honesty, and responsibility. In addition, Walter Hays has introduced an emotional intelligence curriculum designed to promote resiliency, motivation, creativity, positive interpersonal development, and emotional growth. Students are also taught to use conflict resolution techniques to solve problems both on the playground and in the classroom. Yard duty supervisors and teachers are trained in these strategies.

There are many school activities that encourage student leadership and cooperation. These include Leadership Now, cross-age tutoring, and the mainstreaming of special day students. We also encourage children to work effectively with others. Many classroom activities support the development of the students' abilities to work together.

In addition, several annual events support the development of the Walter Hays culture. The kindergarten holds a Harvest Feast in November. The third graders work with senior citizens in the "Roots and Shoots" program at the Gamble Gardens. The fourth and fifth graders use dramatic play to bring historical events alive, such as the Gold Rush and Revolutionary War.

A buddy program matches older students with younger students. These students develop a one-to-one peer relationship with their buddies through activities, such as joint art projects, writing and reading together. These classes work together frequently, and strong bonds develop between children in the school who would otherwise not be in contact with each other.

Parent and community involvement in the Walter Hays program is especially noteworthy. This support is an invaluable and integral part of the school's rich and varied program. Teachers communicate regularly with parents through formal and informal conferences, phone calls, and e-mail.

Each teacher is provided with an aide who helps enhance the instructional program. We have a rich learning environment which includes programs such as Perceptual Motor, a science program with the Palo Alto Junior Museum (a collaborative effort between museum staff and Walter Hays teachers) and the Spectra Art program.

### *Walter Hays Elementary School*

1525 Middlefield Road  
Palo Alto, CA 94301  
(650) 322-5956 FAX: (650) 329-8713  
www.hays.pausd.org

Principal ..... Carol Piraino X129  
School Secretary ..... Ruta Henard X128  
Typist Clerk ..... Brown, Gaynor X127  
Custodians ..... Al Flores X130  
Keith Godfrey X130

#### **Certificated Staff**

K ..... Diana Argenti X121  
K ..... Abby Bradski X120  
K ..... Edie Chong X123  
K ..... Candy Takahashi X122  
1 ..... Tara Hunt X118  
1 ..... Ann Kitajima X117  
1 ..... Lucretia Lee X116  
1 ..... Michelle Robell X119  
2 ..... Joyce deRussy X102  
2 ..... Jennifer Arnout X101  
2 ..... Alison Bolos X103  
2 ..... Michele Ketcham X104  
2/3 Special Education ..... RaNae Voskuhl X110  
3 ..... Diana Baker X111  
3 ..... Helen Carnes X109  
3 ..... Adriene Farrales X112  
3 ..... Chris Grierson X103  
3 ..... Kevin Rouse X108  
4 ..... Catherine Chowenhill X107  
4 ..... Holly Harrison X106  
4 ..... Barbara Lindsay X115  
4 ..... Ann Kwolek O'Neill X105  
4/5 Special Education ..... Rachael Shepherd X114  
5 ..... Heidi Kerscher X126  
5 ..... Shauna Mantovani X124  
5 ..... Anna Schwarzfeld X125  
5 ..... Smita Kolhatkar X113

#### **Support Staff**

Resource Spec..... Laveena Gole X135  
Marci Ariagno X135  
Speech/Language ..... Joleen Higgin X134  
Psychologist ..... Stephanie Sheridan X136  
Library Media Teacher ..... Gale Heringer-Brock X143  
English Lang. Dev. .... Annette Isaacson X134

#### **Site Council Chair**

Gina Maya  
Diana Baker

#### **PTA President**

Kathleen Hughes  
Debbie Staiger

# School Instruction & Leadership

## School Instruction

At Walter Hays School, students are academically stimulated and challenged. The richly varied educational program prepares students to meet the state and district curricular standards and to become successful, contributing members of their communities. In addition, Walter Hays students are supported in a warm, caring environment where character development and interpersonal skills are highly valued.

The staff provides thoughtful, well-prepared lessons that integrate all areas of the core curriculum, including reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. The literature based reading program exposes children to many wonderful novels. In addition to these novels, the Junior Great Books series is used throughout the school. Students participate in literature circles where they work on skill development while discussing universal themes and responding to inferential questions.

The writing program is based on development and refinement of the six traits of writing: ideas, word choice, voice, sentence fluency, organization, and conventions. Students write across all of the curricular areas and in multiple genres.

Students extend their knowledge through experiences in art, music, health, and physical education. Other enrichment opportunities include: special assemblies, field trips, and our schoolwide Ocean Week. These programs provide a base for the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Technology is also a priority at Walter Hays. Computers, video and digital cameras, and DVD players are part of the school library multimedia center. In addition, all of the classrooms have computers, Internet connections and connections to our school server. Teaching stations made up of video players, printers, banks of computers, cable and telecommunication access exist in each classroom. We have digital still and video cameras which we use to record and preserve student presentations, special events, and field trips. We have also installed wireless base stations throughout our school to allow for mobility and Internet access throughout the school.

Walter Hays provides support services for students who are in need of additional assistance in order to benefit from instruction. A variety of programs are offered for students with identified special needs:

- A resource program for all students with mild learning disabilities; primary and intermediate Special Day Classes for students with more significant disabilities, many of whom are mainstreamed into regular classes for certain subjects when appropriate
- A language/speech program
- English Learners Program: a tutorial program for students with limited English skills
- Special arrangements for students with health concerns
- A Gifted and Talented Education program (GATE) integrated into the regular classroom to challenge all students
- A tutorial program for students who need individual or small group help

Teachers and aides also modify the educational program to suit individual needs. The school's Student Study Team (SST) meets with every teacher at the beginning and mid way through the school year to complete the Kid-by-Kid process. During these meetings the team discusses the academic, social and emotional needs of every student in the school. The team offers suggestions and resources to the classroom teacher. The Student Study Team is made up of the school's resource specialist, language/speech specialist, psychologist, principal, and the student's classroom teacher. The SST also provides students and their families with links to available community services in the areas of mental health, medical care, additional testing, and tutoring.

## Leadership

The principal of the school, Carol Piraino, has been the principal since 1999. She worked previously as a Vice Principal and a teacher for ten years prior to coming to Walter Hays Elementary School. Ms. Piraino has worked hard to involve the parents, staff, and students in the leadership of the school. She welcomes suggestions and feedback from all members of the Walter Hays community.

Ms. Piraino meets regularly with Hays parent leaders and involves parents and staff in developing the school budget and annual goals. In addition, Ms. Piraino has developed school committees to address several areas of the school program including character education, staff development, school safety, and identifying and assisting students with special needs.

## School Safety Plan

The Walter Hays School Safety Plan was reviewed and updated by the Walter Hays School Site Council in March 2007. The staff reviews elements of the plan regularly at staff meetings. The entire plan was last reviewed by staff in August 2007.

The School Safety Plan includes procedures for various emergencies such as fires and earthquakes. In addition, the School Safety Plan describes specific goals designed to improve the school climate, physical and social environments, and personal experiences of students and staff.

All of the students at Walter Hays are studying character education traits such as self-discipline, responsibility,

caring, empathy, and cooperation. Classroom activities are designed to reinforce positive character development. In addition, there are opportunities for students to be involved in school service and leadership such as Student Council, Leadership Now, Kindergarten Lunch Buddies, and class buddies.

Teachers have been trained in emotional intelligence and teach children to learn personal responsibility and positive social skills. In addition, teachers are trained in identifying and helping students who need help getting along with others and solving conflicts in the classroom and on the playground.

### *Safe School Goals for the 2007-2008 School Year*

#### **Social Climate Goals:**

- Provide students with opportunities to learn and practice positive social behaviors.
- Provide opportunities for students to be active participants and leaders in the school.
- Encourage students to communicate concerns and become proactive problem solvers

#### **Physical Environment Goals:**

- Maintain a safe and functional school environment at all times.
- Protect the school from outsiders on campus.
- Maintain emergency provisions and follow emergency procedures when necessary.
- Suggest and support alternative routes to and from school to alleviate parking lot congestion.
- Improve parking lot safety.