

## **ARMA J. SHULL ELEMENTARY**

### **PART III - SUMMARY**

The Superintendent of Bonita Unified School District calls Arma J. Shull Elementary the “Flagship School” of the district. Shull is a very high performing Title 1 school that achieved California Distinguished School status in 2008. The school is repeating the application for a 2012 award. In 2011, Shull students, including all significant subgroups, scored well above federal Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) proficiency level requirements. Additional awards include being named a Scholar School by the California Business for Educational Excellence in 2009 and 2010.

Shull boasts a highly qualified faculty: many members hold advanced degrees, and 98% are qualified to teach English Language Learners. Support staff members include retired teachers as well as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) qualified aides. Our mission statement reads:

Shull staff members believe in the enormous potential of our students. We have established high standards of learning that we expect all students to achieve. It is our job to create an environment in our classrooms that engages students in academic work that results in high levels of achievement. We are confident that with our support, students can master challenging curricula and become thoughtful, caring citizens.

With this mission in mind, Shull staff members are committed to closing all achievement gaps and giving each child critical skills for future success.

The involvement of parents/guardians and community members is critical to Shull’s success. Parent and community volunteers give approximately 7,000 hours of service to Shull classrooms each year and donate funds to support key programs. Shull has the reputation of being family centered and many parents drive from outside school boundaries to bring their children to Shull. Approximately 28% of our students come from outside our attendance area. With this tremendous commitment from families, our Parent Teacher Association and School Site Council can actively support technology, student awards programs, assemblies, and field trips even during challenging economic times.

At Shull School our diverse student body is taught to be respectful of each other. We take pride in educating all cultural groups, the learning disabled, gifted students, speech and language impaired students (2 classes), and English Language Learners. The ethnic backgrounds of our students are as follows:

- 5% Two or More Races
- 2% American Indian, Native Hawaiian, Alaskan Native
- 2.5% African American
- 7% Asian
- 38.5 % White (including many students with Middle Eastern backgrounds)
- 45% Hispanic or Latino

Within this diverse population, 10% of students are English Language Learners and 37% are at-risk socioeconomically. We often see children living with grandparents (without parents) or children living in homes with other families. Shull becomes a home away from home for many of these students. To accommodate their needs, we have an extended day care with homework help. Additionally, we open school early for supervised play and offer after-school programs such as chess, science, etiquette, art, drama, choir and band.

Shull has a rigorous curriculum based on California state standards and the research-based principles of effective schools. Our high expectations and strong use of direct instruction, differentiated curriculum, assessments, data analysis, intervention programs, and shared leadership make students highly

successful.

The school's current focus includes a Reading Project Goal to have 90% of students at grade level in reading by the end of 3rd grade. Our greatest jumps in AYP proficiency rates have occurred because of this "all out" effort to improve students' phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension.

To reach the 90% reading goal, students must have access to a variety of books. Shull's library offers tremendous support for our students. The library has 6,618 Accelerated Reading titles with a collection of over 9,000 books. Our library is open more hours than any other library in the district – including one evening a week, before school, and after school. Shull is also supported by Ted, a Therapy Education Dog. Ted, a large Labrador, provides comfort and companionship at Shull in a way that increases emotional well-being and promotes learning. The "Read to TED" program provides a loving spot for struggling students to regroup, and rewards students who are striving to do their best.

Shull School has reached Blue Ribbon status with our on-going commitment to provide the best educational setting for our students. Beyond the exemplary school statistics, we take encouragement from the numerous positive comments we receive from our parent community each day:

**"Shull is more than a school; it is a community of families and educators, working together to make a difference in the lives of the children in our community. The strong volunteerism at Shull makes it stand out in our district. We are NEVER short of willing volunteers who are eager to step up and help out. The teachers are FANTASTIC and really work together as a TEAM to nurture our children and help them to grow into Fantastic human beings!"**

**Shull Parent**

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

### **1. Assessment Results:**

A. Shull Elementary School participates in the California Accountability Progress Reporting (APR) system. The APR system provides an integrated approach to reporting results for state and federal accountability requirements and includes information about schools and numerically significant subgroups. The California Standards Test (CST) is a key element of California's APR system. CST scores are used to determine the school's Academic Performance Index (API) as well as the federal government's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The API is a single number ranging from 200 to 1000. The target for California schools is an API score of 800 or more. The school-wide API score is a calculated average of students' scores which are converted into points on the API scale. English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics scores are reported by performance levels: Advanced (exceeds state standards), Proficient (meets standards), Basic (approaching state standards), Below Basic (below state standards), and Far Below Basic (significantly below state standards). More information is available at the California Department of Education website <http://cde.ca.gov/>.

Shull Elementary strives to meet and exceed state and federal student proficiency goals set forth for API and AYP proficiency targets. Yearly school plan goals include increasing the number of proficient and advanced students each year in ELA and mathematics. Shull is proud to demonstrate blue ribbon performance each year. School-wide we have increased ELA proficiency from 69% in 2007 to 83% in 2011 and we have increased mathematics proficiency from 83% in 2007 to 89% in 2011.

B. The statistically significant subgroups at Shull are: White, Hispanic, and the Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (SED). Although, not statistically significant, Shull School also tracks two additional

subgroups: English Language Learners (ELL), and Students with Disabilities. Since 2007, Shull's API has grown 38 points from 892 to 930. Additionally, the achievement gaps of significant subgroups have been significantly reduced. In ELA our subgroups have demonstrated the following growth:

- White- 76.2% proficient to 84.6% proficient.
- Hispanic- 49.5% proficient to 78.9% proficient
- SED- 47.9% proficient to 80.2% proficient
- ELL- 17.6% proficient to 66.7% proficient
- Students with Disabilities- 41.0% to 64.5% proficient

In Mathematics, our subgroups have demonstrated the following growth:

- White- 87.6% proficient to 94.0% proficient
- Hispanic- 73.1% proficient to 83.5% proficient
- SED- 70.3% proficient to 81.1% proficient
- ELL- 58.8% proficient to 76.6% proficient
- Students with Disabilities- 69.2% to 80.6% proficient

Significant gains since 2007 can be attributed to an increased use of data and implementation of strong intervention programs. Additional formative and summative assessments were added in ELA and mathematics providing data on student progress toward standards mastery. Implementation of district benchmark assessments in ELA and mathematics were used until 2009 when the teacher-created benchmarks were replaced by Action Learning Systems assessments in mathematics and ELA. These assessments more closely align to the state standards and CST blueprints.

At data and grade level meetings, teachers review assessment results and select students for specific intervention programs. Some intervention programs are used by teachers within the classroom and others are used in pull-out settings. Shull also added two part-time certificated teachers and four tutors to teach intervention programs before, after, and during school. In 2009, a full-time certificated intervention teacher was added to the staff.

A standards-based grade tracking system was put into practice in 2009. This system generated a standards based report card which greatly impacted instruction and learning. Teachers were able to identify specific standards in which students were underperforming. In addition, a management tool, Data Director, was purchased. Teachers were trained in generating and reading reports and analyzing the data. In this analysis, teachers were looking for strength and weakness trends. As the data analysis became more effective, descriptors were provided for students not at benchmark and in need of intensive or strategic interventions. Scores managed in Data Director could also be imported into the grade reporting system.

In the most recent year's data, there are no achievement gaps of more than ten percentage points within our significant subgroups in either ELA or mathematics. However, despite great growth, the additional subgroups that we have targeted, ELL and Students with Disabilities, show achievement gaps with the overall student population. Both groups have gaps of over 10 percentage points in ELA, and ELL students have a gap of 13 percentage points in mathematics.

This year, there has been an implementation of a new data monitoring system, Illuminate Education. The staff has received training in order to generate reports and applicable student data. As Shull Elementary staff has become more proficient at interpreting data, the students are benefitting from the use of more precise intervention programs than ever before. Although we have met our goals by becoming a data-driven school, it has sparked the need to discover even more effective tools as we continue to strive to meet the educational needs of all our students.

In 2007, the combined gap between Hispanic and SED subgroups and the White subgroup in ELA and mathematics was 87 percentage points. By 2011, the gaps were diminished to just 34 points. We consider this to be an extraordinary accomplishment, however we continue to work towards eliminating these gaps altogether.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

Effective assessments and reporting tools are used to facilitate data analysis. Each Fall, beginning of the year assessment data is analyzed, with teachers identifying at-risk students in ELA and mathematics to target with interventions. Through this initial data analysis, low-performing students including those in our targeted subgroups, Hispanic, SED, ELL or Students with Disabilities, are identified for intervention.

Grade level teams meet four times each year at data meetings with the principal, educational specialist teacher and intervention teacher to discuss targeted students' and other at-risk students' progress. Teachers bring student data to weekly Student Study Team (SST meetings). This team may include the principal, educational specialist, classroom teachers, a speech pathologist as well as parents. During both SST and data meetings, data is analyzed at multiple levels including district, site, sub-groups, grade level, teacher and individual student. When appropriate, the effectiveness of intervention is evaluated and the need for future interventions is discussed. During weekly grade level meetings individual student data is discussed leading to modifications in classroom instruction and intervention.

The implementation of a Response to Intervention (RTI) program in 2010 has supported our data-driven school. For the past two years, Shull Elementary School has been using a three tiered RTI program.

Students in RTI levels one and two are given specific grade level interventions. Students identified as at-risk in intervention programs are monitored biweekly utilizing Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next) assessments as the monitoring tool. The data provided from DIBELS Next progress monitoring is critical information for the SST, educational specialist and school psychologist for modifying the program or for initiating full psycho-educational testing.

Several computer-based curricular standards review programs have been put into place during the last three years giving teachers, students and parents further data on students' mastery of standards. Programs include Study Island, Ticket to Read, and Measuring Up's E-Path, which can be viewed by both teachers and parents. Students work through levels of mastery at an individual pace. Data is displayed and success is rewarded with immediate positive feedback. The computer program Rosetta Stone was implemented to support ELL students whose performance was not progressing at desired rates on the CELDT. Data from Rosetta Stone shows the number of minutes of student engagement and how quickly students are progressing towards English mastery.

Students and parents have also benefited from the available data. Shull staff trained students and parents to use and understand student data. Shull Elementary uses the Accelerated Reader (AR) program. Students are taught to interpret Take an Opportunity to Praise a Student (TOPS) reports understanding percent correct, points earned, and progress toward their individual reading goal. Parents can also see the progress students make through the parent portal, Home Connect.

At Back to School and Title 1 Nights, parents are trained to understand data, to monitor missing work, grades and students' progress. In regards to CST data, an overview of the schools' progress is given to

parents by the principal in fall newsletters and in a presentation at the fall Back to School Night. In spring, the principal meets with every student taking the CST, reviewing prior performance and encouraging student motivation. Teachers report that students are encouraged by these meetings.

Throughout the year, parents have access to the Standards Score grade reporting system for students in third through fifth grades with the ability to track progress on standards-based assignments, quizzes, and projects. For younger students, evaluated work is sent home and teachers build strong lines of communication with parents through daily chats, email, newsletters, and classroom folders. All teachers share student progress with parents through report cards and bi-annual parent-teacher conferences. Report cards at all grade levels are standards based, informing parents and students of progress towards mastery of grade level standards. Students under-performing in grade level standards are targeted with a Call to Action or a Title 1 student/parent contract. These contracts between home and school specify strategies to improve skill development.

Shull School's student academic achievement is shared with the community through a variety of forums. Articles highlighting test scores, AYP scores and API progress are reported in local publications such as the San Gabriel Valley Tribune, the San Dimas Community News and the Highlander. The Superintendent's monthly update is shared through the above publications, as well as the District's website. Students' successes are also shared on the Shull website, Shull Facebook page and the school marquee. In addition to the local community, Shull's CST success is shared statewide through the California Reporting System, a 1 to 10 rating scale (10 being the top decile). Shull School has been rated 10/10 which translates to being in the top 10 percent in the statewide rank and in the top 10 percent in the similar schools ranking.

### **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

Shull School's academic successes have been noted and shared in a variety of ways. Shull was identified as a California Distinguished School in 2008. Our 2012 application for California Distinguished School has been accepted and we await visitation and confirmation of this honor. A copy of our 2012 application is available on our school website at <http://sh.bonita.k12.ca.us>. The success of Shull's programs and interventions draw many visitors to its campus. Teachers and administrators from within our district, as well as from neighboring districts, schedule tours to observe practices, teaching strategies and the positive cultural climate at Shull School.

Shull is a leader in sharing within the district. With the implementation of The Reading Project, Shull's principal and teachers have been called upon to provide a great deal of professional development. The principal has presented on reading interventions, reading disabilities, early childhood readiness and brain research for best practices in reading instruction. Teachers have presented on Secret Stories, Project Read, AR best practices and phonemic awareness skills. In addition, two staff members teach at the University of La Verne in the early childhood bachelor's and master's degree programs. Staff members have also presented at local education conferences.

Three local universities regularly place student teachers at Shull School. These credential candidates from Azusa Pacific University, the University of La Verne, and California Polytechnic University, Pomona request placement at Shull because of the school's reputation for exemplary teaching and a supportive environment for new teachers.

Shull staff collaborates with district teachers on successful ideas, practices and strategies for student achievement. The district holds compact day meetings eight times a year to encourage sharing amongst the schools. Topics have included new data programs, data analysis, progress on state standards

mastery, classroom management techniques, writing, use of math manipulatives, math interventions and the use of Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE).

Shull has participated in the creation of training videos for teaching phonemic awareness skills. Additionally, Shull staff members have also contributed to a district bank of lessons supporting methodologies from RISE Educational Services. Shull staff is highly represented in district-wide English Language Arts and Math focus groups and continues to emphasize effective practices and expertise with colleagues and staff.

#### **4. Engaging Families and Communities:**

Shull School engages families and the surrounding community in a variety of ways. A high level of volunteerism is encouraged with over 7,000 hours of service given to classrooms each year. Shull has a reputation of being family centered with nearly 28% of our families residing outside Shull's boundaries.

In order to encourage involvement, many family activities are held: Moms and Muffins, Dads and Donuts, Family Bowling, Library Night, Spring Carnival, Astronomy Night, Build a Book Night and two book fairs.

Many options exist at Shull School for parents to support student success. Parents participate in Parent Teacher Association (PTA,) School Site Council (SSC) and school-wide fund raising events. Volunteers also have the opportunity to work directly with students in classroom small groups, library, computer lab and chaperoning field trips. Parents can also support student success through completing tasks for teachers outside of the classroom.

A school-wide recognition program reinforces positive character trait development such as caring, responsibility and kindness. Students are recognized for attendance, community service, effort and academic achievement. More recently, an accountability program was adopted to reinforce character development and positive behavior. After attending evening training sessions, parents were able to support the program through home participation.

In order to encourage family involvement, families have been trained to interpret and understand student data. Shull uses AR where parents can track their child's progress through the parent portal, Home Connect. Additionally, parents have access to the Standards Score grade reporting system for students in third through fifth grades with the ability to track progress on standards-based assignments, assessments and projects.

Shull Staff realized the need to further educate parents, students and community members on the importance of early reading skills and reading at home. The principal regularly presents current reading research at local preschools, the San Dimas Chamber of Commerce and the yearly San Dimas Family Festival. Teachers educate parents on the five areas of reading instruction and the significance of reading at home at parent nights and parent conferences.

Shull students benefit from family and community involvement. Community and district dignitaries support Shull's goals for student success by participating in school events such as Back to School Night, Walk-a-Thon and being guest readers for Read Across America. Additionally, Shull has a strong relationship with several local university teacher education programs. Teacher candidates are anxious to be placed at Shull where best practices for student success are modeled.

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

### **1. Curriculum:**

The comprehensive California State Content Standards provide the foundation for curriculum and instruction at Shull Elementary School. A strong structured core curriculum, supported by supplementary materials, helps to increase student achievement across all content areas. Staff utilizes best teaching practices to meet the educational needs of each and every student.

Reading and language arts are an emphasis at Shull School. Staff focuses on the California State Content Standards: Reading, Reading Comprehension, Literary Response and Analysis; Writing; Written and Oral Language Conventions, and Listening and Speaking. Houghton Mifflin Reading and Language Arts program is used in grades K-5. The series was adopted in 2003 and due to budgetary cuts, continues to be used along with many supplemental materials.

Response to Intervention (RTI) was implemented to assist classroom teachers in identifying at-risk students in reading and language arts. RTI is an academic intervention method which helps to provide research based instruction for monitoring student progress. In 2010, RTI was piloted at Shull School and due to its success the program has expanded to district-wide use.

Saxon Math is a spiraling, standards-based curriculum used across the grade levels. This program provides the opportunity for students to have hands-on mathematical experiences while moving from concrete to abstract skills. Lessons include direct instruction, guided practice, problem solving, independent practice and intervention, as needed. For differentiation, a variety of supplemental programs are available for students.

Shull's science adoption, Houghton Mifflin Science, incorporates critical thinking, problem solving and hands-on experiments at all grade levels. Life, earth and physical science topics are covered K-5 with an integration of reading, writing and math. Field trips allow additional opportunities for in-depth exploration of grade level standards. An afterschool Mad Science Program is offered biyearly to students who wish to further explore scientific concepts through hands-on activities.

The Scott Foresman Social Studies program is incorporated across all grades and often imbedded in reading instruction. Through direct instruction, technology, hands-on projects and presentations, students identify and analyze historical events and historical figures, as well as the responsibilities of citizenship.

Opportunities to further explore social studies standards are provided through field trips, assemblies, performances and family nights.

The arts are celebrated at Shull School in a variety of ways. Although there is no formal program, the California Standards for Visual and Performing Arts are met through the implementation of teacher created activities and instruction. Students are provided numerous opportunities for creative expression.

Drawing and painting are explored at every grade level. Formal art instruction is available after school for all students. Each year, students create self-portraits in conjunction with our Young Author's Celebration. These portraits are on display for parents and the community during our Open House. Selected self-portraits are displayed at the San Dimas Historical Society.

Participation in the performing arts is accomplished through both informal and formal opportunities. In

the classroom setting, students may participate in choral reading, singing, class plays, poetry reading, playing musical instruments and creative interpretation of content material. Choral and band concerts, as well as dramatic presentations are staged for the enjoyment of students, families and the community.

Physical education, nutrition and health are highly valued at Shull. In addition to meeting the state of California physical education requirements, students participate in the Menendez Foundation Too Good for Drugs program, Jump Rope for Heart, PTA Red Ribbon Week and the school-wide Walk-a-Thon. Fourth and Fifth grades meet regularly in the district mandated physical education program. Shull School piloted a twice weekly healthy salad bar to accompany cafeteria lunch and it has now become a districtwide program with fresh fruits and vegetables being served daily in our cafeteria.

Shull School core curriculum is enhanced through the use of technology. All core curriculum adoptions contain a technology component. All classes have access to our fully equipped computer lab. Children are provided experiences using such programs as Riverdeep's Destination Success, Renaissance Place, Kid Pix, Mavis Beacon Keyboarding, Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. A multitude of web-based applications are also used. Classrooms are equipped with projection, sound and amplification systems as well as classroom computers for student use. More recently, several classrooms have piloted individual student responders by Turning Technologies.

## **2. Reading/English:**

Shull's reading instruction utilizes Houghton Mifflin curriculum supplemented by research-based reading programs. In 2008, school-wide scores on the ELA CST showed that reading scores lagged behind math scores by 19 percentage points. The principal and teachers decided to research the best ways to improve reading skills. Staff members were inspired by the book, *Annual Growth, Catch-Up Growth*, (Fielding, Kerr & Rosier, 2007) to establish a goal of 90% student reading proficiency for students by the end of 3rd grade. This book identified the number of minutes of extra instruction required for at-risk students to reach grade level reading. The pamphlet *Putting Reading First* (National Institute for Reading, 2003) encouraged teachers to focus on skill development in the five areas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development and reading comprehension. Staff evaluated the curriculum and decided to change their core instruction and develop interventions.

To achieve our 90% reading goal, staff put new programs in place. To facilitate stronger phonemic awareness and phonics skills, Shull uses Systematic Instruction in Phonemic Awareness, Phonics and Sight Words (SIPPS), Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, Funnix and Sounds Abound. Small group tutoring programs target at-risk students using SIPPS, DISTAR and Frontline. To increase fluency, Shull uses the Read Naturally program, as well as choral and paired reading strategies. Vocabulary development is supported with an emphasis on Greek and Latin roots; and targeted ELL students are provided vocabulary work through Rosetta Stone. Reading comprehension scores improved after staff members were trained on best practices for AR. To allow students to have more access to books, the library is funded to remain open an extra hour each day. In order to encourage reading at home, parents are educated on the necessity of students reading 30 minutes each night. Data on AR Dashboard indicates that students at Shull read more than students in other schools within our district. Therefore, the students are exposed to more vocabulary and score higher on reading comprehension assessments.

Shull staff use the RTI program to help identify students not making adequate progress. Assessments, such as DIBELS Next, help identify weak reading skills. Based on results, students participate in intervention programs with targeted instruction. Shull utilizes retired teachers and NCLB qualified tutors to teach the intervention programs. All subgroups have benefited from our new programs. For example the ELL students went from 17% proficiency in ELA CST scores in 2007 to 66.7%



proficiency in 2011.

### **3. Mathematics:**

School-wide, Shull students have performed well on mathematics assessments. However, the 2007-2008 state test scores showed that SED and ELL students lagged behind other school subgroups on the state math assessment (75.4% SED and 66.7% ELL proficiency versus 86% proficiency school-wide). Shull staff members researched the best math program to help all students be proficient. One program that stood out was Saxon Math. This program was introduced by the principal due to its success in the private school sector. In 2008, Shull was the only school in the district to adopt this research-based program schoolwide. Saxon Math utilizes spiral curriculum which daily reinforces previously learned math skills.

Immediately, staff saw that students learned concepts more thoroughly. Over the last three years, Shull subgroups' scores have risen to 81% SED proficiency and 76% ELL proficiency, while school-wide scores have risen to 89% proficiency.

Saxon Math covers all of the California State Content Standard Strands: number sense, algebra and functions, measurement and geometry, statistics, data analysis, probability and mathematical reasoning. Saxon Math is a scripted program which utilizes strong academic language. Imbedded in the program are daily fact practice, hands on manipulative lessons, math meetings, mental math, daily spiral review and homework. Standards are taught through step by step direct instruction.

For students who greatly excel or struggle in math, teachers use Renaissance STAR Math, a computer based assessment program, to identify skill strengths and weaknesses. Students who are working well above grade level are then provided independent math lessons. When warranted by assessment results, students are moved up a grade level to work in higher math curriculum. Additionally, some advanced math students in combo classes are encouraged to work above grade level. Students working below grade level are given math make up lessons and skill work review packets to help eliminate gaps in their knowledge. At-risk students receive small group direct instruction, after school tutoring for 3rd, 4th and 5th grades, and additional practice with another Renaissance computer-based program, Math Facts in a Flash.

Lastly, each year, advanced math students in 4th and 5th grade are assessed and placed in cooperative teams to participate in the school, district, and county Math Olympiad competitions. Shull students have participated in the last 3 years and have placed first, second, or third in both 4th and 5th grades every year.

### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Our mission statement claims, "We are confident that with our support, students can master challenging curricula and become thoughtful, caring citizens." Teachers use the California History-Social Science Content Standards to prepare students to be proud, knowledgeable citizens within their families, school, nation, and in the world.

In kindergarten, students learn what it means to be a Shull citizen. In meeting the state standards, teachers reinforce how to follow rules, such as sharing and taking turns. Students are taught to recognize national and state symbols such as the state flag and the Statue of Liberty. Instruction continues in first grade as students are taught about the "Golden Rule." Students culminate the first grade year by participating in a choral performance which highlights being a responsible person. In second grade, students learn about the importance of history, our diverse nation and their own

ancestors. Students celebrate Family Ancestor Night, complete with ancestor story boards and family themed songs.

The California State Standards require third grade teachers to “draw from historical and community resources to organize the sequence of local historical events and describe how each period of settlement left its mark on the land.” Third grade students learn about local settlers, Native American, San Dimas citrus farmers and city landmarks. Third grade ends the year with two weeks of Apple Valley, a simulation of a one-room schoolhouse. Students and teachers wear historical dress and learn the rules and procedures used in schools over a hundred years ago.

Fourth grade students participate in a California Hands on History program that includes three days of camps: Indian Camp, Gold Rush and Rancho Days. At the day camps, students learn about the natural resources, crafts, and tools utilized during those time periods. Students even prepare and eat period food.

Lastly, to master 5th grade history standards, students participate in a mock civil war battle and conclude studies with a Colonial play highlighting major historical events such as the signing of the constitution, the Revolutionary War, and the formation of the thirteen colonies.

Shull’s emphasis on citizenship can be seen at our school-wide Thursday morning flag salute. Students are recognized for acts of kindness and other accomplishments. Grade levels are called upon to lead patriotic songs and students vie to be selected to lead the pledge. Students also recite grade level mottos.

Through this weekly activity, the importance of being thoughtful, caring citizens is reinforced.

## **5. Instructional Methods:**

The Shull Mission statement highlights the belief in the “enormous potential of our students,” and the expectation that all students can achieve. With these in mind, Shull teachers know that strong instructional methods create the best learning environment and promote student proficiency of state standards.

Shull teachers and support staff use instructional methods, such as direct instruction, scaffolding, flexible grouping, and one-on-one re-teaching to provide instruction and differentiation. An important part of direct instruction is “prime time” teaching. To recharge the brain, students are given regular breaks at different intervals, depending on age. Teachers use activities such as Super Brain Yoga or two minutes of stretching to reset students’ brains for new learning.

At Shull, students with disabilities are serviced in three ways: Speech and Language, the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) or the Communicatively Handicapped (CH) classrooms. Speech is provided on a pull-out basis for individual and group work. An Education Specialist provides RSP services by providing small group remediation on core content and ELA and mathematics skill gaps. The CH teachers provide services for PreK-2 students in need of extra support in articulation and language development.

To meet the needs of our ELL population, 98% of Shull teachers are Cross-cultural, Language and Acquisition Development (CLAD) qualified. At-risk ELL students participate in Rosetta Stone two to three times a week for 30-minute sessions. Within the classrooms, students receive additional support through scaffolding of academic vocabulary. Additionally, Shull’s students with a CELDT score of 3 or

below may work with a bilingual instructional aide on a pull-out basis to reinforce academic language.

There are many students at Shull that are reading well above grade level. The students' accelerated growth can be attributed to the use of the AR program. Identified 4th and 5th grades participate in the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program. Once a month, GATE students have either a pull-out program on a higher level academic topic or go on a learning field trip. Lessons are taught and projects are assigned to extend and support higher level thinking skills.

Technology supports the differentiation and supplementation of core instruction. Research-based software is utilized to meet individual student's needs. In order to support students' mastery of standards, software tools are used that can differentiate between levels of mastery. These include Ticket to Read, Destination Success, Study Island, AR, Measuring Up's E-Path and student response systems.

#### **6. Professional Development:**

The backbone of Shull teachers' professional development is three full "student free" days of training time provided by the district each year. Collaboration on new standards-based curriculum adoptions or new research-based programs occurs on these days. In the last three years, the emphasis has been on the Saxon Math adoption, RISE lesson planning, RTI programs, and Step Up to Writing.

When needed, the three days are supplemented with additional pull out training days. For example, each teacher received five full days of training on the Saxon Math adoption. This professional development resulted in better instruction which led to students' increased CST mathematics scores.

One of the most effective professional development training programs has been RISE. Trainers from this program provided professional development on the design and delivery of effective standards-based direct instruction lessons. Based on RISE trainings, teachers modified their daily schedules to accommodate students' optimal learning times. RISE provided a guide for lesson delivery with an emphasis on the "big idea" (standard), modeled steps, gradual release, guided practice and closure. Shull teachers implemented the practices and peer evaluations took place to reinforce each critical component.

Professional Development also occurs on Compact Day Wednesdays. Shull teachers, known district-wide for their strong teaming, use these days to do vertical and horizontal grade level planning, train on interventions, analyze data and hold Student Study Team and other parent meetings.

Staff meetings are another venue for professional development. The principal plans meetings to meet the current needs of the staff. The principal, staff members or outside consultants collaborate with staff on curriculum and school culture topics. These are both areas which are critical to staff members' ability to meet the needs of Shull students.

Another key professional development topic has been RTI for students struggling in reading. Training has been provided to teachers on implementing effective intervention programs in all five skill areas of reading. Training has included the RTI process, AR, DISTAR, SIPPS, Read Naturally, Secret Stories, Funnix and Step Up to Writing. Due to this professional development, teachers have become more effective at core instruction and intervention. This has resulted in increased formative assessment scores in kindergarten and first grades, as well as increased CST ELA performances in second through fifth grades.

## **7. School Leadership:**

The principal leads the school with a belief that all students can be proficient if provided the appropriate instruction, motivation and support. The learning community created by the principal and staff has many leadership positions for teachers, parents, and other staff to collaborate in making decisions on improving student achievement. The following leadership areas have helped shape this culture of support.

Shull curriculum and instruction is supported by a Leadership Team composed of grade level chairpersons, two special education teachers and a technology lead person. The team meets bimonthly or monthly depending on school needs. Agenda items include new programs, data analysis, intervention programs, school culture, budget and instruction. Fine arts, advanced studies and student leadership are supported with coordinator positions. Shull utilizes these coordinators for Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), Student Council, the Young Author's program and Reflections (a PTA sponsored fine arts competition).

Shull staff members utilize the Student Study Team process to support struggling students. The SST is composed of the principal, two teachers, one special education teacher, and a psychologist. The school nurse, health clerk, and tutors provide reports when necessary. Three teams are created which rotate; each team taking three different months of the school year. SST meetings are held each week, during which two student cases are reviewed. Teachers bring student cases to SST meetings to collaborate on student behavior, motivation, intervention and engaging parent support.

Shull teachers are representatives on district level curriculum focus groups. These leaders are responsible for working on district curriculum and assessment projects, providing colleagues with regular updates and presenting staff development. Focus group leaders support district staff development days by giving presentations or hosting discussions.

Another leadership group is the School Site Council, which meets monthly to develop, monitor and revise the Single School Plan for Student Achievement. Members include certificated and classified staff, parents, a GATE parent representative and an ELL parent representative. Agenda items include school safety, facilities, ELL progress, Title 1 program updates, fundraising, GATE program updates, technology and categorical program school budgets.

Through the wide variety of leadership opportunities at Shull, a culture of collaboration supports students' academic achievement. Policies, programs, relationships and resources are continually focused on obtaining school goals. With exemplary leadership at Shull School comes a highly effective school. Staff, students, and families firmly believe that Shull provides an educational setting where students are safe, secure and inspired to be successful.