

## **OAK AVENUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

### **PART III - SUMMARY** 12CA5

Oak is a small, diverse school within the Los Altos School District. With a dedicated staff and hard working students, our academic success, as measured by the annual STAR test, remains impressive and consistent. Working together with a small team of support staff, English Language Learners and students identified for Special Education services outscore state and local norms and continue to make progress. While these academic measures make Oak's progress easy to assess each year, the strength of our school lies beyond test scores.

In the Los Altos School District, communication and community are both values and assets. At Oak, our Site Council, consisting of staff and parent representatives, creates a family survey to answer the question "How are we doing?" with respect to all the varied aspects of school experience. Overwhelmingly, each year, the respondents concur that the greatest strength of the school is its community. With a custodian who has cared for the school for 20 years to a staff whose average tenure is 9 years, and many of whom live in the community, to supportive families and extended families, Oak School exemplifies what it means to teach the whole child. Our mission statement, academic decisions and traditions illustrate the value that we place in each other.

With input from all stakeholders, our Site Council revitalized our mission statement last year: Oak School develops academic and social skills in our students, striving to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning, personal success and community involvement. This statement describes why we are "Blue Ribbon Worthy": while ongoing academic success is important to us, we set a bar that extends beyond. Personal success means being successful in endeavors inside and out of school, and learning to become involved citizens.

A student's day at Oak begins with a short, community flag salute lead by the principal. Students are welcomed to school, short announcements may be shared, and the tone for a good day is set. From the moment the Pledge of Allegiance ends, students head off to classrooms staffed by teachers who genuinely enjoy each others' company and collaborate regularly, often on their own time. Teachers strive to continually challenge high achievers and meet the needs of others by participating in district-sponsored and other special training opportunities. Best practices are shared at regular staff meetings. Academic learning is our focus: through the Child Study Team process, teachers and parents work with Support Staff to identify student learning needs and develop plans to best support needs of individual students. The resource team creates a schedule of support designed to minimize interruption to a student's day and to maximize support for teachers and students. Busy, academic days also include enriching, educational experiences planned by teachers and/or supported by our PTA. Students meet with 'buddy classes' and complete projects together; participate in art and/or garden lessons hosted by volunteer parent docents; and learn music and technology from programs and teachers supported by the district's education foundation.

Together with a cohesive, progressive PTA, Oak staff offer a variety of social learning enrichment for students. Students take advantage of leadership opportunities with Project Cornerstone, our life skills and anti-bullying program and "FLOW": Future Leaders of Our World. Oak School adopted the Project Cornerstone program as a result of parent surveys reflecting a lack of student comfort on the playground. After two years of implementing a school-wide shared book program and learning a language with which we can all communicate, students and parents both note the positive difference on the playground. Students choosing to participate in FLOW activities attend teacher-sponsored lunchtime club meetings to design everything from small to school-wide service learning projects that benefit our local community and far, far beyond. Recent projects include supporting the "family giving tree" to adopt local families and make their Christmas wishes come true and supporting a Free the Children initiative to adopt a community in Sierra Leone, Africa, and supply the funds to build a school. After meeting their impressive goal in one year, students returned the next year determined to earn funds to fill the school with all the necessary school supplies that the children would need.

Oak's parents are a valued part of our community as well; nearly 400 are members of the school PTA. The Oak PTA supports and enriches our school with academic and social events: Our annual Fall Walk-athon brings out nearly the entire student body to stretch their legs while raising funds to support our ongoing technology and fine arts' program initiatives, among others. PTA understands the value of and supports staff collaboration throughout the year. Teachers working together leads to fun, educational days at school and away. For example, 1st grade studies wind in a day of small-group experiments in our multi purpose room; 4th graders experience a Mission Day complete with making bricks, building missions and "branding cattle". All grade levels travel locally to connect with the rich resources around us, from NASA to nature. Our inclusive, active community, rigorous academics and care for individual student success make us a Blue Ribbon worthy school.

## **PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS** 12CA5

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

A. The California State Board of Education uses five performance levels for reporting individual student performance with respect to demonstrating knowledge of grade level content standards: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. At Oak School, we maintain high expectations that all students will achieve at the proficient and advanced levels of our assessment, the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR). We have a process in place to provide interventions to address students not achieving at those levels. As our data shows, over the past five years 89% of our students or more are scoring proficient and above.

At the beginning of the school year, target students are identified for additional support. The resource specialist meets with the principal and other members of the resource team to analyze student performance indicators from previous years and determine next steps. Classroom teachers from the current and previous years articulate teaching and learning strategies that are successful for individual students. Students who are not proficient, who did not achieve a year's worth of growth or who have Individual Education Plans may be recommended for a Child Study Team meeting to bring parents and specialized staff to the table together. Our goal is to work together to determine next steps necessary to identify the cause of a student's struggle and/or begin to eliminate other possibilities. The student may then receive additional support in a small group setting in his identified areas of need. He may review classroom curriculum in a different environment or practice a discrete skill with a focused lesson from an alternate curriculum.

Because the majority of our population consistently score proficient or advanced, we also have systems in place to challenge those students to continue to grow and excel. Success is measured through other performance indicators in the classroom (i.e. teacher-created assessments, public speaking) and in the school (citizenship, student leadership). This year's Site Council is working on defining what success means for an Oak student.

B. Looking at Oak's performance data over the last five years, what is striking is the students' and teachers' consistency over time. As mentioned, Oak has high success rates and students are consistent in performance across subjects, grade levels, and even subgroups. Additionally, many of Oak's subgroup populations are so small that they are statistically insignificant. These include low socio-economic students, English Language Learning students, and Special Education students. Any discrepancies in scores for those groups can often be attributed to a single student. Individual student concerns were addressed in answer "A" where our Child Study Team identifies concerns and provides student-specific interventions.

In analyzing our Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) scores in more depth, there is very little variance among subgroups, grade levels and subjects. We are fortunate not to have any significant achievement gaps between the scores of all students and the test scores of subgroups. In 2011, students with disabilities at Oak scored slightly below students with disabilities district wide in both English and Mathematics, but still scored significantly better than students with disabilities at the County and State

level. Sixty-four percent of students with disabilities scored Advanced or Proficient in both English and Mathematics, compared to 34% at the county level and 25% at the state level. In order to continually improve the student achievement of students with disabilities, we investigate each child individually to ensure that we have created the individualized education program to best meet their unique learning needs.

We are particularly proud of the gains we have seen in our students' writing achievement as measured by the state writing assessment over time, which is directly correlated to district-wide writing professional development. Our success is largely due to the development of common writing instruction language and strategies across all grade levels. In 2006, 7% of our Grade 4 students scored Advanced and by 2011, the number of students scoring advanced increased to 49%. We continue to track the performance of Oak students when they transition to Junior High and the increase in writing performance continues. In our most recent data, 71% of all seventh grade students scored Advanced on the writing assessment, 27% of all 7th grade students scored Proficient, and only 2% of students scored below proficiency level. This is phenomenal as 98% of our seventh grade students are achieving at grade level proficiency or above in the area of writing. These significant gains highlight the importance and power of teacher professional development.

Oak's Academic Performance Index (API) reveals an additional data set that points to the consistent strong achievement of this school community. While there have been a few dips and gains over the years, the trend is a positive increase. Looking back over eleven years of data, the API has increased twenty points, from 963 in 2000 to 983 in 2011. This steady increase over time highlights our commitment to consistently question current practices, investigate new instructional strategies and invest in professional development to improve the learning experiences for all students attending Oak School. We have reached the top of the standard as defined by the State of California, but are not complacent and are constantly learning how to most effectively meet all student needs.

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

Continuous improvement is our goal, since we are fortunate to have consistently high performing students and highly qualified teachers. Students are assessed frequently: we have taken advantage of innovative technologies that provide immediate student feedback and data that we can use to inform instruction. Each school year begins with an analysis of the previous year's STAR data. Teachers set individual and grade level goals based on this data, and they provide input to the school's Site Council for goals in our Single Plan of Student Achievement. Each year subgroups are identified for whom we set goals and allocate resources. To complete our Single Plan, we utilize local data in addition to STAR to identify social and academic goals for all students.

In language arts, we use a variety of local assessments to inform our instruction. Writing samples at all grades are given at the beginning of each trimester to drive instruction. Teachers recently adopted the use of "painted rubrics" where a genre-specific rubric is used repeatedly over the course of instruction using different color highlighters to illuminate student growth and continued struggle. In the primary grades, teachers use the Directed Reading Assessment to assess student reading fluency and comprehension. Students whose skills are deficient are given the DIBELS assessment to help teachers group students with similar ability and identify areas of focus for small group, remedial instruction. Oak's resource staff work closely with teachers to provide support to students formally identified through the Child Study Team process as well as those who do not officially qualify but will benefit from additional support. This year in the upper grades, teachers identified assessments from Houghton Mifflin that provide the most useful data to have the greatest impact on instruction. Students take these assessments throughout the year.

Teachers conducted a similar process with the Scott Foresman EnVision Math program. They determined that students take an initial math inventory, periodic "topic tests" and benchmark tests each trimester. In addition, we use two very exciting tools for math: the Data Management Module ("DMM") supported by the Santa Clara County Office of Education and Khan Academy. The DMM is a web-based tool that

allows teachers and administrators to sift through and analyze student data very quickly. Subtest performance is easily analyzed and the data used for student grouping for instruction, if appropriate. Local assessments can be uploaded into the system, and student performance on regular benchmark tests has been tracked and compared to STAR performance for the past few years. This month, we purchased a scanner for our school to be able to maximize utilization and store more local assessments. DMM is a great tool for communicating with parents, as well. One of the reporting functions provides a great summary of a unique student's performance that can be shared at a child study team meeting or parent/teacher conference.

Khan Academy is another exciting tool that is new to Oak this year. Students in 5th and 6th grade have accounts on this online site that allows students to work through math modules and get individualized support at their own pace. Teachers in our district worked closely with Sal Khan to fine tune his "knowledge map" in which students work at their own pace reviewing concepts beginning with basic addition. As a student shows proficiency on a topic, s/he is able to move on to increasingly complex, related topics. When a student is struggling, s/he has access to "hints" from the system and narrated videos that provide instruction on the computational process. Teachers are students' coaches; parents can be added as well. The Khan Academy curriculum DOES NOT replace teacher instruction in the classroom but supports students receiving individualized instruction that meets their learning needs.

Dashboard tools allow teachers to monitor student work and progress AS IT HAPPENS, so in addition to the immediate feedback the system provides students, the system also provides teachers with instant data on student work and progress towards individual goals enabling them to efficiently group students by ability, mitigate learning issues and effectively target their instruction to meet student needs. Lastly, I would like to highlight a communication tool used solely in 6th grade: the PowerSchool Student Information System's "Parent Portal." Oak teachers were first to pilot the portal which opens their grade books to parents and students from home. With unique log-ins, students and parents can monitor up-to-date progress. This gradebook transparency decreases parent concerns and subsequent emails about progress reports and report cards. Missing and late assignments are easily visible: Students learn how assignment grades affect overall grades and are encouraged to become accountable for their school work. Families are one step better prepared for our middle schools where the same system is in place. At all grades, we remain in close contact with parents regarding their children's progress and evaluate our tools regularly to see that they are as efficient and effective as possible.

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

Sharing successes and best practices within our school district and beyond is a goal in our Los Altos 3-year Educational Blueprint. Within the district, we are promoting communication with an online living, growing "LASD Learning Community" on Ning. All district staff have been invited to join and interact in this online space. Active discussion groups include "Common Core Standards" and "Khan Academy Implementation." To reach beyond our district, this year we have begun a new practice in Los Altos to highlight the innovative work we are doing by holding "Innovation in Education" Events. This year we have held three events focused on blended learning with Khan Academy. Our intent in hosting these events is to make what we are learning public and share innovative instructional strategies that have the potential to transform education beyond LASD. The reception from other educators has been incredible. We have been able to share our work with over 40 school districts around the world and have a waiting list of districts and organizations wanting to learn firsthand about the innovative work in which the teachers at Oak and in LASD are engaged.

Information in our district is also shared through regular district inservice. Teacher-leaders are called upon often to assist in the planning and implementation of staff release days. Topics generally include sharing of best practices and learning new curriculum. Oak teachers represent their grade levels on a variety of committees. Current committees include the District Writing Committee, Response to Intervention Committee, District Technology Advisory Group and Curriculum Council. At Oak, for the past two years we have been focusing on learning student grouping and differentiation

strategies using the models of Doug Fisher's Gradual Release of Responsibility and Spencer Kagan's Cooperative Learning. Staff members share the privilege, opportunity and responsibility of attending trainings sponsored by the district or supported by Oak's PTA and bring their essential learnings back to the staff at staff meetings. This fall, we shared our success in implementation with the district's trustees. In addition, the principal shared the rationale for using Kagan's strategies to invigorate instruction and encourage student-centered learning experiences with district administrators. The entire elementary staff was able to experience Kagan's Cooperative Learning training on January 18 of this year.

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

Oak is a small, community school with a wonderful history of connectedness and community support. While shrinking federal and state dollars have tightened our belts, together with our community we have evaluated what is critical in our students' educations and allocated resources accordingly. Student success is at the heart of every decision: when a student feels welcome and connected to others on campus, the foundation for academic success is laid.

School and community partnerships help us achieve this goal. With our local high school steps away, we find opportunities to bring the communities together. The marching band comes to impress us with their field show performance once a year. The chorus teacher runs a highly popular extracurricular 2nd-6th grade chorus that meets before school! And just this year, we've established a high school buddy program. High school leadership students come to lunch recess once a month to join in students' playground games. They are inclusive of all students and positive role models.

In addition to the rigorous curriculum we teach, Oak's teachers are passionate about bringing the world to Oak School. We connected with the Free the Children Organization two years ago and Oak students were motivated to make a difference in the world and do something to positively affect the livelihood of children elsewhere. Students dug in their pockets and organized events to raise the necessary funds to build a school in Sierra Leone. The following year they returned and raised the funds to purchase school supplies for every student in that school. From this experience, the Future Leaders of our World, or "FLOW," club hosted by three teachers was born. Students of all ages opt-in to community service projects. Selected projects include donating to the local Christmas Family Giving Tree, filling backpacks with school supplies for local students, supporting the local humane society, and conducting a food drive. Parent support begins before the school year begins. PTA hosts a Back to School welcome event where class lists are posted, newcomers are welcomed, and of course, volunteers are solicited. Living in Silicon Valley, our parents are connected to amazing resources through their places of work. To excite student interest for our annual science fair this year, parents at Google were able to bring Google's self-driving car to Oak. Students were able to see and touch the "science" as well as ask questions of Google's engineers and scientists. Another example is the launch of our Living Classroom Curriculum: a parent's passion and grant-writing skills brought several gardens to Oak's campus. Now curriculum has been aligned with state standards at all grade levels to teach lessons in both our native and edible gardens. Parent docents lead students in open-air, hands-on lessons together with classroom teachers.

## **PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION** 12CA5

### **1. Curriculum:**

All of the instructional materials we use to support core curriculum are State-approved and aligned with standards. In language arts and reading, we utilize Houghton Mifflin Medallions, K-5 and Prentice Hall in Grade 6. The faculty feels that these program provide a strong foundation for ELA instruction and then supplement the core curriculum with grade level appropriate novels. Where appropriate, teachers invite authors to visit and/or involve students in an author study. Teachers offer a balanced reading program that includes strategies of direct instruction, phonics, guided reading groups, literature groups, and writing. At each grade level, The Write Tools and Step up to Writing programs are used to provide common vocabulary and writing instruction for all students. Teachers also use writing prompts of various genres in cross curricular areas that address the language arts standards.

In mathematics, teachers make use of direct and small group instruction as well as manipulative hands-on experiences for concrete skill attainment. In Grades K-5, teachers are using both the enVision and Investigations components of the Scott Foresman program. Beginning in Grade 6, the McDougal Littell textbook is used and continues at the Junior High. In grades, K-5 teachers differentiate in math using small group instruction, but beginning in Grade 6 we regroup students to provide the opportunity to take an accelerated Pre-Algebra course. This year we incorporated the use of Khan Academy which allows students to work at their own pace and receive daily instruction tailored to their specific learning needs. Our FOSS science adoption focuses on critical thinking skills and the inquiry method of learning. Students are taught through a series of hands-on experiences and learning labs. Teachers are able to further enhance science instruction through our Living Classroom/Garden Program. Gardens have been created on campus to support instruction for each grade level. As teachers work with students in the garden, they have the support of Garden Docents. Our garden docents help to prepare and maintain the gardens. To further support the inquiry method in science, all students are encouraged to participate in the annual science fair.

In Social Studies, our Grade 6 teachers begin to utilize the “History Alive” curriculum, which is based on experiential learning. Teachers enhance and support the state standards by creating simulations and scheduling special learning opportunities such as “Walk Through the American Revolution.” In this simulation, students are assigned a historical character prior to the simulation and must learn about this character. On the day of the walk through, students come dressed as their character and role-play many historical events.

Teachers have the capability of enhancing every subject area with components of technology. In our district we have a continuum of technological skills for kindergarten through eighth grade that ensures all students are taught the necessary skills to use technology as a tool throughout their school career. Our school is equipped with an up-to-date computer lab, supported by a part-time lab assistant, primarily utilized by primary grade teachers. Students are exposed to a variety of subject-matter-related websites and keyboarding, and utilize presentation software like PowerPoint and Keynote. In grades 4-6, teachers share a laptop cart at each grade level. Students continue word processing, become proficient with presentation applications like iMovie, perform appropriate web searches, utilize web tools and sites, and are learning to use Google apps, particularly in grade 6. Students and teachers enjoy the collaborative nature of the software, allowing for easy commenting, group projects and grading capabilities. As described elsewhere in this application, 5th and 6th grade students access Khan Academy regularly to support their understanding of our math curriculum.

In our primary grades, PE, health and nutrition are integrated into the teacher’s core program. Teachers teach students the relevant PE standards with the support of the SPARK PE curriculum. They often work in teams and students rotate through standards-oriented stations. Upper grade PE (Grades 4-6) is taught by a credentialed PE teacher for 60 minutes a week. In addition, students enjoy participating in the annual 50-year tradition of our district-wide “Junior Olympics,” complete with opening ceremonies and medals for top performers. Health and nutrition are integral components of our science program, and taught by classroom teachers.

We are fortunate to provide our students with a rich fine arts curriculum. All students are taught art via our Art Docent Program. This program utilizes trained parent and community volunteers to teach grade level art lessons. Each grade level has a series of art lessons, where students receive instruction utilizing watercolors, pastels, clay and other art media. Students in grades K-3 participate in a Starting Arts rotational program that exposes students to vocal music, drama and dance. Beginning in fourth grade, formal music instruction begins with classroom vocal music and recorder. In grades 5 and 6, students have the option to begin playing an instrument. Instrumental instruction is then offered twice per week, one small group, instrument-specific lesson and one larger group lesson either in the band or the orchestra. Students who elect not to play an instrument continue with vocal music twice a week. All students are involved in a minimum of two concerts per year where they showcase what they have learned.

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

All curriculum is rigorously explored through our district Curriculum Council during an adoption cycle. In the last adoption, teachers selected the Houghton Mifflin Medallions English Language Arts Curriculum for students in grades K-5; Grade 6 teachers selected Prentice Hall books and readers. Both of these reading series provide interesting stories, relevant practice materials, and useful assessment data to start students on the path of strong ability and a love of reading. These state adopted materials also include rich vocabulary instruction, spelling and grammar. However, in addition to the basic curriculum provided, teachers at different grade levels supplement with literature novels to further enhance the program. Beginning in kindergarten, our reading program is balanced with whole language, phonics and decoding and advances to comprehension and application.

In the lower grades, students are flexibly grouped as their reading skills develop. Students receive targeted reading support at their instructional level on a daily basis. They also participate in shared reading and guided reading, and take home leveled books on a weekly basis to share with their parents. Literacy-promoting activities are embedded in other content areas. Online tools such as “Razz Kids” may be implemented to increase student motivation and provide reading practice in a different venue. Struggling students may receive additional small group help in the resource room in the afternoons or read with a volunteer retiree from the “Avenidas” or “Partners for New Generations” organizations. In the middle and upper grades, students read a variety of novels that complement the language arts basal program and often also enhance understanding of social studies themes and standards. Students take regular benchmark tests, the results of which help teachers divide the class for small group instruction. Additionally, students may participate in small-group literature circles. Oak students enjoy regular visits to a well-stocked library with a very knowledgeable librarian. The library is open to students at lunch recess for reading and quiet chatting with friends, and it is nearly always full, rain or shine.

## **3. Mathematics:**

Our goal in mathematics is to provide all students with the opportunity to gain mastery of concepts. This means they must be able to apply the knowledge they have learned in real world contexts. Many of our teachers use a pretest to determine student strengths prior to beginning a unit of instruction. The data from the pretests help teachers determine the appropriate pacing, topics that require the most instruction and how to best group students to meet their needs. While we strive for mastery of topics we also recognize that there must be a built in review component to ensure students are maintaining learned skills and knowledge. Teachers incorporate a daily spiral review to support previous learnings and a “Problem of the Day” to extend students' critical thinking and application of mathematical concepts. All of our students have access to math manipulatives which are regularly included as a part of the lessons and opportunities to collaborate with classmates on math games and challenges. We have begun to focus more on the why behind math, encouraging students to explain their thinking and explain, either spoken or written, their mathematical thinking. It is not enough for students to “have the right answer;” we want students to understand how they got to that answer and why the process is just as important as the final product.

Beginning in Grade 6, we have a leveled math program and have an additional teacher on campus to teach an advanced pre-algebra class. Over the years, we have developed a strong criteria for placement of students to ensure the math placements are appropriate. Leveling math at Grade 6 allows us to provide a more challenging curriculum to those students that are excelling, but also helps to lower class sizes for the accelerated Grade 6 and grade-level classes. The smaller class sizes in grade level math allow teachers to spend more individual time with students to ensure they have a strong math foundation prior to leaving the elementary school setting. When students are struggling with math concepts, we utilize instructional aides to further lower class size and increase the amount of small group instruction time provided by the teachers.

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

Oak’s mission statement expresses our desire for students to become lifelong learners and find their

passions. A curricular area where we support students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge is in science, with the exciting FOSS program. While the implementation of FOSS requires training, time and dedication from the teachers to set up labs and ensure all components and specimens are on hand, our fifth grade STAR science scores and student attitudes about science speak to our success. In addition to the science that happens within the classroom, all grades' science curriculum is enriched by the Living Classroom docent program. Standards-based science lessons, that often integrate with social studies as well, take students out of the classroom to one of the gardens on campus. Second graders recall their experience of taking "wheat to pretzel" for the duration of their elementary career.

Beginning in kindergarten, students are invited to do the work of scientists: use their senses, make observations, develop hypotheses and test them. Students learn the scientific process and work collaboratively with peers. When students work in groups, individuals are responsible for different jobs within an investigation. Throughout a student's tenure at Oak, he or she is encouraged to participate in the annual science fair. Students work alone, in pairs, or in groups of three and historically more than 100 projects are entered. All sixth grade students participate as part of the curriculum, and it will be exciting to see what they produce for this year's fair. Science-minded parent volunteers work with teachers to drum up support each winter, and bring exciting experiment ideas to share at recess and lunch times. Sometimes they bring science trivia questions and answers to morning flag salute. This year, in an effort to encourage even more participation in the science fair, parents partnered with local businesses. Google scientists brought their self-driving car to the Oak playground for students to see, touch, and ask questions about. Parent mentors with scientific careers offered early morning brainstorming and check-in sessions. It is difficult for students not to love science with this level of dedication and support from the school and surrounding community.

## **5. Instructional Methods:**

As previously stated, honing strategies for differentiating instruction for students is a focus at Oak School. Not only are teachers working on refining instructional strategies in the classroom, they are working to establish goal-setting cycles with individual students to help them understand their own learning goals. Prior to accessing school resources such as the learning center, student learning is differentiated in the classroom. Depending on the subject matter, the differentiation looks different. However, teachers often use flexible grouping to provide students with the appropriate level of peer, adult, or teacher support. In the primary grades, this often takes place during our language arts block.

Our Scott Foresman math program allows teachers to easily differentiate appropriate classwork and homework. Teachers utilize online or paper "quick checks" to assess student understanding of a given topic. The results of the quick check determine whether a student completes remedial, practice, or enrichment level homework. In the upper grades, Khan Academy is used to further support or extend student learning in math.

When classroom tactics are depleted, students move into the realm of our resource program, often with a Child Study Team meeting first. Together with parents, the team determines what supports and accommodations can be put in place to support a student. When appropriate, small group instruction and/or replacement curriculum may be considered. Sometimes additional support is placed in the regular education classroom with one of our aides to reduce student time out of class. We often use this strategy to support English Language Learners.

Technology is embedded in many aspects of a student's day. Upper grades have access to laptop carts which they use to access Khan Academy online, create collaborative documents and presentations using Google's tools, and prepare products to share using tools like iMovie, PowerPoint, and Microsoft Word. In primary classrooms, teachers are more likely to be utilizing document cameras and LCD projectors to make lessons collaborative. Some classrooms are fortunate to have FM Audio Systems; we hope to expand into all. Teachers get sick less often and students are apt to be more engaged because they are better able to hear teacher instruction and questions from their peers when using the system. When



students give oral presentations, every word can be heard clearly. Every seat in the classroom is “close to the teacher.”

## **6. Professional Development:**

All professional development offerings are based on state standards, board and administrative goals and teacher/staff survey of needs. In-service days meet district and school needs. Mentoring, coaching, new teachers enjoy support providers and supervision from the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program who offer individualized staff assistance. Self-assessment, grade-level meetings, individual goal-setting, faculty meetings, book clubs and review of student work also provide feedback related to professional needs and collaboration. To facilitate district-wide communication and collaboration and move us into the 21st century, we’ve established a new online social-networking tool open only to Los Altos School District staff members called a “Ning”. Our Ning allows and encourages staff to share resources and best practices as well as discuss specific, current challenges together. Site level staff development has focused on productive group work strategies and 21st century learning skills. This school year, all will continue to be focused on professional development around Kagan’s Cooperative Learning skills, as they are applied to the state standards taught in any subject area. We are laying the groundwork for thinking differently about teaching and learning in order to prepare for the implementation of the Common Core Standards in 2014.

LASD provides a new teacher mentor and a mini-mentor program for teachers new to the district or grade level, as well as grade-level specific content overviews. Retired teachers work as consultants in ongoing mentoring, coaching and staff development roles. Teachers are provided opportunities to attend seminars and conferences and collaborate with colleagues on implementation of best practices.

Teachers meet bi-weekly in grade levels for curricular planning and coordination and to identify and address individual student needs and interventions. Collaboration meetings vary to include grade level team members, the Resource Specialist, Psychologist, and Speech Therapists.

The impact of teacher learning on students is very positive. Classrooms are interactive learning spaces where students interact and create products together. At all grade levels, students are involved in formal and informal personal goal-setting throughout the school year. They enjoy and are accountable for their learning.

## **7. School Leadership:**

Oak’s leadership philosophy is one of inclusion and collaboration. The principal is a visible presence in classrooms and on the playground every day. With a tremendous teaching staff, students are our priority. Each year the Site Council, with equal parts staff and parent representatives, solicits parent opinion through our annual parent survey. In this way we gather information from parents regarding what we do well, where we can improve, and also gauge student comfort, enjoyment and success at school.

Teachers and administration meet on a variety of site and district committees to affect the policies, programs, relationships and resources at Oak to maintain our welcoming, high achieving school, but the leadership committee that has the most impact on individual student success is our Child Study Team (“CST”). The team consists of the principal, school psychologist, resource specialist, speech therapist, classroom teacher, teacher representatives and of course, a student’s parents. The committee is large and an asset to our school. Teachers are adamant that both an upper and lower grade teacher sit on the team because they add extra dimension to the conversation. Sometimes the teacher taught the child previously and can contribute strategies that worked well in the prior year to the conversation; sometimes the teacher provides perspective about challenges a child may face in the future. In this way, a particular student is known to many teachers and staff on campus, and has a large, friendly support team. Parents may be intimidated at the beginning of a meeting for their child, but by the end they appreciate that we are all around the table for the best interest of their child.

Another team that supports student learning at Oak is our leadership team, consisting of one teacher

representing each grade level. At monthly meetings, policies, programs, and allocation of resources are discussed and then disseminated to grade level partners. This monthly meeting serves to increase efficient communication and subsequently shorten the information-sharing portion of our biweekly whole staff meetings. Staff meeting time is dedicated to discussing issues that affect student learning, listening to guest speakers, or learning from one another. At the beginning of the school year, the CST team shares any pertinent changes in special education law or procedures and reminds teacher what student behaviors or learning difficulties make a child a good referral to the child study team process. Another example: prior to report card conferences this fall, teachers discussed the tools they use to solicit input from parents prior to the conference with each other. We increase consistency at grade levels and allow teachers to understand what was happening at the grade levels directly above and below them.