

MILLIKIN BASICS+ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PART III - SUMMARY 12CA7

"Blue Ribbon" perfectly characterizes the exceptional educational program offered at Millikin Basics+ Elementary School. Everything about our school speaks to excellence from the beautifully groomed rose garden gallery and surrounding serene campus to the nurturing, dedicated staff, hard working students, and involved parents. In combination, these vital elements create a unique and exciting learning environment where all students can be successful regardless of race, economic status, gender, or ability. Millikin Basics+ Elementary School is a very special place for children to grow and learn.

One of 16 elementary schools within the Santa Clara Unified School District (SCUSD) in Santa Clara, California, Millikin Basics+ Elementary is an alternative K-5 school open to all children who live within the district. It is located in a middle class residential neighborhood and serves the entire range of district students, families from all socio-economic levels and cultural backgrounds. Our mission is to provide a safe, caring, challenging, standards-based academic environment in which all students can develop the abilities, skills, and confidence to be successful learners, problem solvers, and productive citizens.

Millikin's vision was first articulated by the parents and teachers who collaboratively defined this alternative school in 1977. Our vision is based on the premise that all students can learn and achieve at grade level. It defines school expectations at the highest levels for all members of the school community: for student academic effort and progress, behavior and responsibility; for staff commitment in supporting and meeting the needs of all students; and for parent support of their child's educational experience. Clarity and consistency of this vision are fundamental strengths of the Millikin program. Understanding of and commitment to this vision are translated to each succeeding group of parents as they enter our school community.

The primary emphasis of the Basics+ program is the mastery of basic academic skills and establishment of good study habits. The program places high value on teaching academic skills at grade level in a self-contained classroom. Direct instruction is used in a traditional whole group setting. Instruction is sequenced to progress from basic skills knowledge to content and application with higher level thinking skills incorporated into all areas of the curriculum. Teachers are committed to maintaining quality time on task, and high expectations are reflected in daily class and homework assignments. Classroom interruptions are kept to a minimum in order to support maximum learning time.

Millikin Basics+ has consistently ranked at the top of our district's elementary schools and among the top 1% of elementary schools in the state. Millikin has received the prestigious "California Distinguished School Award" twice and since 2005, has been twice ranked as the number one school in the state of California based on the California Standards Test scores (CST). Currently, Millikin Basics+ has earned an Academic Performance Index of 997 out of a possible 1000 on the CST.

Millikin Basics+ maintains a safe and caring learning environment. Expectations for behavior and respect for others are at the highest level and are matched by student behavior. On-site discipline is clear, firm, and consistent and always applied with a counseling approach intended to teach rather than punish. A School Safety Plan is in place and emergency drills are practiced regularly. Social and emotional growth for each child is considered equally important as concentration on academic success. A variety of schoolwide programs such as "Healthy Play" and "Character Education Through Literature" are in place to develop these important skills.

Family involvement and support of the school is a crucial part of the Millikin program. Each Millikin family signs a Parent/Student/Teacher Agreement guaranteeing commitment to their child's educational program. Families volunteer at least 10 hours per child, per year, in support of the school programs and agree to take no more than five unexcused absences each year.

Millikin's lottery system for enrolling students draws a diverse group of families from all over the school

district. Our strong PTA organization works with the staff to provide many social and educational opportunities such as the Harvest Festival, Walkathon, and Boxcar Movie Night in order to bring families together and create a sense of community. Additionally, the PTA guides our annual charitable efforts such as "Adopt A Family" and raises funds for school programs to benefit all students.

Millikin Basics+ has a long history of success and receives high praise from parents and students during and after their Millikin experience. Due to its popularity, the school has a waiting list for admission to kindergarten that far exceeds the number of slots available. In response to parent requests for more open slots, last year the SCUSD School Board approved a plan for Millikin expansion that will increase each grade by one class each year.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS 12CA7

1. Assessment Results:

A. Performance levels documented here for analysis originate from Millikin's participation in California's *Standardized Testing and Reporting* (STAR) program with administration of the *California Standards Test* (CST) in May of each school year, 2007-2011. Reading and math scores for grades 3-5 are presented in table form in Part VII. Also included here, in narrative, are results from the *California Achievement Test, Sixth Edition* (CAT-6) administered to third graders for the years 2007 and 2008. The CAT-6 was no longer administered after 2008.

California's Academic Performance Index (API) score measures schools' progress toward state goals by analyzing factors such as socioeconomic level, ethnicity, mobility, percent of English Learner students and percent of credentialed teachers. Schools can be ranked with scores from 200-1000.

With a current API score of 997, Millikin consistently performs in the top 1% of all public schools in the state of California on the *California Standards Test* (CST). In the spring of 2005 and 2010, our school ranked as the number one school in the state based on CST results. Additionally, in accordance with NCLB, Millikin Basics+ consistently meets all Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) targets in all subject areas for all subgroups. Performance on the CAT-6 for third graders also measured at the Advanced level, ranging from 85-94 percentile in 2007 and from 82-93 percentile in 2008.

The CST is designed to be an end-of-grade assessment for the state adopted content standards. It contains tests for language arts and math for grades 2-5, writing for 4th grade, and science for 5th grade. California defines five separate performance levels for these tests: *Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Below Basic and Far Below Basic*. Students are considered to be achieving at the desired performance level when they test *At or Above Proficient* on the CST exams. Millikin Basics+ strives for *Advanced* scores in all areas. On the CAT-6, students were expected to perform at advanced levels (80-99%) on all reading, language, mathematics, and spelling tests.

B. Millikin School consistently performs well above the state levels in English language arts, mathematics, writing, and science. Looking at the last five years of CST data for English language arts, the percent of students in grades 3-5 scoring *At or Above Proficient* has averaged 95% for third grade, 98% for fourth grade, and 97% at fifth grade, approximately 42% above the state levels. The percent of Millikin students scoring *Advanced* averaged 65% for third, 91% for fourth, and 79% for fifth grade, again, well above the state levels.

In math, the percent of students in grades 3-5 scoring *At or Above Proficient* has averaged 98% for third grade, 98% for fourth grade, and 97% at fifth grade, approximately 40% above state levels. The percent of students scoring at the *Advanced* level averaged 89% for third grade, 89% for fourth, and 78% for fifth, also well above the state levels for math.

Proficient or Advanced performance in science for fifth grade averaged 98%, approximately 44% above the state level. STAR Writing administered at fourth grade measured at 88% *Proficient or Above* on

average from 2007-2011, with no STAR Writing administered in 2010 due to state budget cuts.

Performance trends are consistently high in all subject areas. As a high performing school, it is statistically harder to score higher each year, however, each year, we do establish goals for our students to score higher within the *Proficient and Advanced* Scale Score ranges. So, for instance, if a student scored 450 in the *Advanced* Scale Score range of 402-600, we would analyze the sub-tests to determine what skills that student needs to develop in order to score higher within that range the next year. It is important to note that these scores are used as one indicator, one reference point, for determining what a student knows and still needs to learn, with the objective being learning, not getting high test scores. Teachers concentrate on teaching the required state content standards, not sample test items. The STAR CST is directly aligned to assess knowledge of the state content standards and that is what we teach each day, therefore, our students tend to do very well.

We credit our school's consistent high scores to the "Back to Basics" traditional style of teaching, a rigorous standards-based curriculum, a plentiful supply of high quality state adopted instructional materials, high expectations for academic performance, attendance, and behavior, "Highly Qualified" teachers who maximize instructional time, dedicated support staff, motivated and hard working students, strong support services for students, and involved parents who greatly prize a quality education for their children. Millikin teachers use research-based best practices in their daily instruction and share successful strategies with each other on a consistent basis. They collaborate in over-under grade level groups in order to provide a smooth progression of curriculum from one grade to the next so that students do not experience gaps in their education. Middle school principals and teachers confirm that Millikin students who enter their schools at sixth grade indeed have a firm educational foundation with no gaps in their learning.

All student subgroups consistently meet their Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) targets and score well above state levels for those subgroups. Looking at the most recent data, the 2011 CST, a few students (4 to 5) in the Hispanic, Socio-Economically Disadvantaged, and English Learner subgroups scored 15-20% below all other students in reading and 20-30% below all other students in math. These are considered our "Target Students" and interventions are designed and implemented especially for them. Our school holds weekly Student Success Team Meetings where teachers, support staff, and parents develop goals and strategies to help these students be successful. Interventions include classroom modifications such as using graphic organizers, 1:1 teacher help, "Buddy" partnering, tutoring, Homework Club, counseling, special education services, and parent home support. Teachers place additional emphasis on building academic vocabulary, reading comprehension strategies, English language skills, and basic math concepts for these "Target Students."

2. Using Assessment Results:

Millikin Basics+ uses a multiple-measures, standards-based approach to monitor student achievement, including teacher-designed measures, district-designed performance-based assessments, and state mandated assessments.

The teachers at Millikin utilize a wide variety of assessment strategies in various settings to monitor the ongoing progress of students on a daily basis. Teachers check for understanding throughout each lesson using prompting and questioning, they observe students' work and students working, grade completed work, and administer teacher-made tests and curricular tests to assess progress. Group work, lab work, and other activity-based efforts are assessed using clearly defined outcomes. Group efforts are assessed on students' collective ability to produce established outcomes.

Long range projects provide significant and varied assessment opportunities. Models of missions, small scale state floats, creative writing, dramatic presentations, charts, graphs, story boards, and other visual representations provide information on student progress and understanding. Peer review of writing assignments is common in upper grades. Teachers and students maintain evidence folders for language

arts, and math. These evidence folders contain baseline samples and samples of progress over time. They are reviewed by the teacher periodically to determine class progress and curricular effectiveness as well as at conference time with parents to analyze individual student work. These evidence folders travel with the students to middle school, providing essential student information to the staff there.

Teachers administer district assessments several times a year including individualized literacy assessments (Fountas and Pinnell), performance based writing, and performance based math assessments. State mandated testing includes the STAR CST, Presidential Physical Fitness Testing (at fifth grade), and CELDT (for determining English Language Learners).

Local data is sent to the district office Assessment/Evaluation Department for analysis. A wide variety of printed and electronic reports are provided to Millikin including both disaggregated and group information. All data is accessible online for principals and teachers. Curriculum liaisons and district specialists help with performance data analysis. Customized workshops and data reports are requested as needed for our staff, parents, and the community.

Each fall, and periodically throughout the year, the Millikin staff completes a comprehensive analysis of all assessment data. Teachers carefully study results including the reading, writing, math, and science strands on the CST, performance based math and writing samples and classroom progress reports. Strengths and weaknesses are identified for each grade level with trends noted and annual standards-based goals set in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. School-wide goals are established by the Millikin staff in collaboration with the School Site Council. The School Site Council, comprised of staff and parents, meets once a month to review the school-wide goals and revise them as needed.

Individual STAR CST results are mailed to parents at the beginning of each school year. Teachers and parents together analyze individual student strengths and weaknesses and set goals in all academic areas. Students identified as struggling, "Target Students," receive classroom modifications and support services as needed to assist them. The school principal meets with the teachers each trimester to review the progress of "Target Students." A strong Student Success Team (SST) is in place which provides a collaborative forum for teachers and parents to address the needs of "Target Students." Students may be referred for special education services if appropriate. In that case, assessment is completed and a formal I.E.P. is held with teachers, parents, and special education staff to discuss how to best meet the student's needs.

Millikin teachers regularly communicate verbally and in writing with parents and students regarding student progress. The "Wednesday Folder" sent home each week from the teachers (containing student work and teacher announcements) and the online "Millikin Newsletter" from the principal and PTA (reporting school-wide news), provide effective school to home links through which parents receive information. Teachers meet informally with each parent early in the school year to discuss student progress. Formal parent-teacher conferences are held at least once each year to communicate to parents the status of their child's academic and social growth. More parent-teacher conferences are scheduled as needed throughout the year. Upper grade students complete a self assessment of their progress in academia and behavior and confer with the teacher to discuss it. These discussions highlight areas of strength and strategies for improvement.

Each fall, at "Back to School Night," teachers meet with families and communicate goals and objectives for the year as well as assessment procedures and results. In January, three Visitation/Orientation sessions are held for prospective parents where school academic achievement is highlighted. In the spring, an "Open House" event is held which showcases student work. In addition, two important school documents, the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) and the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) are disseminated to the parent community. These publications describe student performance data as well as school goals and are shared with the parents and community each year.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Millikin Basics+ Elementary welcomes visitors. Visitations are carefully scheduled so that disruptions to instructional time are minimized. A comprehensive school video is also an available option to visitors. Teachers, principals, district personnel, school board members, parents, political leaders, and community members from our own district as well as from other school districts across California have visited our school to learn about our extremely successful time-proven Basics+ program.

Starting at the grass roots level, wherever they go, the Millikin teachers are proactive in sharing Millikin's best practices. They serve on district, city and state organizations where they speak about Millikin's philosophy and successful strategies used. Millikin teachers have served on various district curriculum committees (i.e. curriculum implementation planning, textbook adoptions) and have shared ideas for academic and behavioral success at those meetings. Teacher participation in district events, such as the "Young Authors' Faire," "Music Festival," and "Science Fair," in city events/activities, such as the "Triton Art Fair," "Relay for Life," and "Silicon Valley Symphony," and in state organizations, such as the California Teacher Association, California Reading Association, and California Science Teachers Association, have presented endless opportunities to share student work and successes. One Millikin teacher leader presented the topic "Keeping Score," (integrating music into the curriculum) at the Asilomar Reading Conference in California in 2009. Another Millikin teacher was a leader in developing the hands-on district science program for Santa Clara USD and designed/organized the very first District Science Fair.

Millikin's principal regularly shares ideas and practices with colleagues at the monthly district principal meetings. She hosted a "Mardi Gras" luncheon for all district principals and central office staff at which she and her teachers spoke about Millikin's philosophy and best practices. The principal also regularly serves on district committees, events, and functions where ideas are shared. She is a member of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), the Association for California School Administrators (ACSA), and the Association for Curriculum and Development (ASCD) to which she contributes ideas for successful schools. Recently, the principal was interviewed by the local television channel, KNBC, and the local radio station, KLIV, and was able to share information about practices that make Millikin so successful with other schools and districts. Additionally, the principal was interviewed by the local Santa Clara Weekly newspaper several times highlighting Millikin's ranking as the "Number One School in California" and describing fun family school events such as the "Drive-In Boxcar Movie Night," and the "Bake-Off Contest." Each of these interviews provided a great opportunity to showcase what is working well at Millikin Basics+ and to share elements that make our school successful.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

An "Open Door Policy" for parents and community members is key. Parents and community members know that they can communicate any concerns or suggestions to the principal and they will be heard. Open and honest communication is very much encouraged from all stakeholders. The principal and staff strongly communicate to parents and community members that we are a team and are most effective if we partner together to provide the best possible education for the Millikin students.

Interaction and shared commitment between families and school are a Millikin tradition. Parent involvement is a school cornerstone. The PTA boasts 100% membership. Members plan, implement, and evaluate an enormous range of programs and activities: parent education, orientation, social functions, fundraising, organizing volunteers for computer and science labs, library, office, classes, and more. Parent support for parents in need is outstanding. Some examples are: car pools, childcare at night activities, language support for minority families, and support for economically needy families.

The connection between Millikin and the community is clear and strong. Local police and firefighters make safety and informational presentations. The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program is sponsored for our fifth graders by the Santa Clara Police Department. Community leaders, such as the Mayor of Santa Clara or Lion's Club President, talk to classes and judge campus competitions. Annual

charitable campaigns are highly successful and include a holiday drive in which each class adopts a family and students earn money to donate. Millikin students have responded to local, national, and international disasters with generosity and compassion. Several years in a row, Millikin students have been involved with "Blue Star Moms" writing letters and raising donations for U.S. soldiers fighting abroad. Residents in the school neighborhood volunteer support at school. Students communicate through letters with other students in surrounding communities and with government officials.

Active partnerships bring students into contact with adult mentors, models, and motivators. These include Lion's Club (donates dictionaries), Kiwanis (donations), Kaiser Permanente (Health Assemblies), Chili's (Lunch With the Principal), Triton Art Museum (art classes, art faire), Intel, Hewlett Packard, Lockheed, National Semi-Conductor, Google, Apple (donations), American Heart Association (Jump Rope For Heart Event), city library (tours, book talks), and the Peterson Nature Center (tours, science studies).

The positive impact on students from exposure to the community appears in three areas: Social Responsibility - students' interest in and excitement for helping others. Our students have been recognized by charitable organizations for their effort in this area. Civic awareness - students' interest in and understanding of community and national issues. Politicians and community leaders are always impressed with the depth and seriousness of our students' questions and discussions. Career awareness - students' comments and writings indicate career interests and understanding. Parents note students' keen interest in the career information and role models students experience at school.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION 12CA7

1. Curriculum:

All students at Millikin Basics+ Elementary participate in and benefit from a balanced, comprehensive standards-based curriculum. Students are held accountable for grade level curriculum based on mastery of the California Content Standards and are provided with a comprehensive core curriculum of stateapproved standards-aligned textbooks.

Language Arts and ELD: Houghton Mifflin *Reading California Anthologies and Leveled Readers* (2003); Pearson *Language Central ELD* (2008).

Millikin's language arts curriculum incorporates skill building and frequent practice for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teachers present a progression of basic decoding/word attack skills needed to learn to read, comprehension skills needed to read to learn, and balance those skills with exposure to a variety of literature that creates interest and a love of reading. Similarly, the basic components for writing are taught with opportunities to write in all genres balanced with an appreciation for good writing. Listening and speaking opportunities occur daily through literature discussions, book reports, subject matter reports, and dramatizations. Teachers use *Language Central ELD* to further support language acquisition and content knowledge.

Mathematics: Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley *en Vision MATH California* (2009).

In mathematics, the primary program used is *enVision Math*. Students are instructed through direct whole group instruction emphasizing a program that is rich in application and problem solving. Teachers focus on conceptual development, critical thinking, and basic skills. Students receive a balanced program of skills covering number sense, measurement and geometry, algebraic functions, statistics, and data analysis. Each strand involves hands-on problem solving activities and practice of basic skills.

Science: Delta Education, Inc.'s *Full Option Science System* (FOSS), (2007).

The FOSS science curriculum is organized into three strands or units: Life, Earth, and Physical Science. Each strand consists of hands-on problem solving investigations supported by text materials that teach the state science standards and link these scientific concepts to all other curricular areas. The FOSS program is supported by Millikin's dynamic science lab which students at each grade level visit regularly to conduct their experiments and investigations.

History/Social Science: Scott Foresman *History Social Science for California* (2006).

The history/social science curriculum at Millikin is closely linked with geography and told as a story over time. Units of study progress from learning about local communities in the primary grades to studying about the development of the states and the organization of government in the upper grades. The adopted Scott Foresman textbook for K-5 is augmented by local history curriculum resources.

Visual Performing Arts: SRA/McGraw-Hill *Art Connections* (1998); McGraw-Hill *Share the Music* (1998).

The standards for visual and performing arts are met through classroom art and music lessons taught by the teachers as well as through before-school choir, and after-school drama club. Art, music, and drama are integrated with all other subject areas, state reports include dioramas and mission reports are represented by models. Millikin's Talent Show, School Play, and Multicultural Fair are held annually which showcase music, dance, artwork, and dramatic presentations.

Health: SCUSD, *Growing Healthy* (2003).

Physical Education: Santa Clara County Office of Education SPARK (1995).

The health, science, and physical education curriculum areas are closely integrated at Millikin. The California Physical Education Framework and Presidential Fitness guidelines are interwoven with the adopted health curriculum standards. All students participate in a well-defined program of activities to enhance strength, flexibility, coordination, healthy living and wellness, team responsibility, respect for others, cooperation, and leadership.

Technology: SCUSD Technology Plan

Millikin Basics+ follows the comprehensive technology plan developed by the Santa Clara Unified School District. Standards are set forth for each grade level from learning keyboarding skills in the primary grades to word processing and using research skills in the upper grades. All students, K-5, visit the computer lab each week where they practice these skills and prepare reports for their classes. Teachers work closely with the computer lab aide to integrate technology with each area of the curriculum.

2. Reading/English:

Millikin's comprehensive language arts curriculum reflects the research and published works of approximately 100 notable authors in the field including Janet Allen, *Inside Words: Tools for Teaching Academic Vocabulary Grades 4-12*; Donald Bear, *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction*; Lucy Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Reading*; and *The Art of Teaching Writing*; Marie Clay, *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, 2nd Edition*; and *Reading Recovery*; Patricia Cunningham, *Phonics We Use*; Fountas and Pinnell, *Guided Reading*; Marcia Freeman, *Building a Writing Community and Writer's Workshop*; Keene and Zimmerman, *Mosaic of Thought: The Power of Comprehension Strategy Instruction, 2nd Edition*; Katie Wood Ray, *Wondrous Words*; and Rebecca Sitton, *Sitton Spelling* among many others including the authors of the core Houghton Mifflin *Reading California* series.

A great deal of thought and planning has gone into developing this high quality balanced language arts program for all Millikin students K-5. The program includes read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, word study, letter/sound correspondence, and writing with listening and speaking skills incorporated throughout. The primary grades focus on implicit and direct phonics instruction and decoding strategies to ensure a strong foundation of effective reading strategies. Primary teachers effectively integrate phonemic awareness, phonics, reading strategies, comprehension, high frequency words, grammar, writing, spelling, vocabulary, listening and speaking into the classroom on a daily basis. In upper grades, the focus shifts away from "Learning to Read" to "Reading to Learn." Students are challenged to apply higher order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation to effectively interact with increasingly challenging fiction and non-fiction selections. Students in all grade levels utilize critical and creative thinking skills, and actively question and discuss reading materials in the

classroom.

Per Millikin's unique alternative philosophy, reading instruction is initially delivered in a traditional, whole group direct instruction style. The method of delivering instruction is primarily verbal with visual and kinesthetic experiences added depending on the age and learning styles of the students. Students who need further direction or re-teaching receive 1:1 or small group assistance from the teacher following the whole group lesson. Our first grade teachers are trained in First Readers and Writers (FRW) which is designed to provide intensive guided reading sessions for students who need additional assistance in reading. Students who struggle with the curriculum may also be supported through a "Take Home Reading Program," a reading intervention specialist (RIS), partner "Buddies," modifications to class work and homework, tutoring, pre-loading and review techniques for parents to use with their children, and after school "Homework Club." Teachers meet with parents at regular Student Success Team (SST) meetings to plan interventions for struggling, or "Target" students. English language learners are supported through specialized curriculum taught by the general education teachers including *Pearson Language Central ELD* and *Santillana*. Counseling and special education services are available for students as needed. Students may be referred for special education assessment at SST meetings or at parent-teacher conferences.

At Millikin, a school-wide emphasis on reading is evident in our daily Sustained Silent Reading sessions, through "Reading Counts," an electronic bookshelf program, our vital school library, and the nearby city library. Book talks are regularly given by our library aide, the city librarians, and visiting authors. Teachers and the principal are guest readers at annual book fairs. Numerous literacy events are held throughout the year such as Book Fairs, Young Writers' Fair, Reading Afternoon, Science Fair, Bake-Off Contest, and the annual school play.

3. Mathematics:

In Mathematics, the district and state approved program is Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley, *EnVision Math California* (2009). This program gives students multiple opportunities to practice skills in number sense, measurement and geometry, algebraic functions, statistics and data analysis. Students are instructed through direct whole group, small group, partner, and lab style settings emphasizing a program that is rich in application and problem solving. Hands-on activities support reading selections and illustrations provided in the textbooks. Students are encouraged to think "out of the box" and apply multiple ways of solving problems. Teachers focus their instruction on conceptual development and critical thinking skills with a strong emphasis on practicing basic skills. Math facts are quickly memorized through regular timed drills in the classroom and reinforced at home by the parents. Curriculum embedded assessments are administered in grades K-5. Students in grades 2-5 also participate in the Mathematics Assessment Collaborative (MAC) which provides real life problems for students to solve in a performance based format. Homework is assigned four nights each week with high levels of accountability for all students. Interventions for struggling students are provided through the use of computer software programs, 1:1 teacher assistance, "Homework Club," tutoring, and parental assistance at home using teacher generated math packets. SST meetings are held with parents to brainstorm interventions for "Target" students and special education services are available for students if needed.

For students needing more challenging work in math, enrichment clubs such as "Math Olympiad" and "Chess Club" are available. School-wide events such as the "Family Math Night," "Science Fair," and "Bake-off Contest" embrace students' interest in math.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Millikin has a long established tradition that recognizes the importance of science and makes it a focus area school-wide. Science is integrated across the subject areas in an established continuum of study from grade level to grade level. The primary source for instruction in science at Millikin is the district and state adopted *Full Option Science System (FOSS)* program which is comprised of three strands: Life, Earth and Physical Science. This is a dynamic, interactive program which provides hands-on lab and journaling

activities to support textbook readings and discussion. The adoption of FOSS has enabled greater continuity and consistency of teaching and learning across the grade levels.

Use of the scientific method is taught through lecture-discussion in the classrooms paired with demonstrations and hands-on activities in the science lab. Our science lab is well equipped and staffed with a specialized science aide who is employed one day a week to teach directly or to assist teachers. In the primary grades, parent volunteers are used to enable students to work in smaller groups in order to increase their exposure to various scientific apparatus and process skills. Scientific notebooks are introduced in the early grades so that after six years of practice using them, students are well prepared for middle school science. There is a continuum of both science process skills and note-taking (journaling) skills that is applied consistently throughout all grade levels. Student note-taking involves taking class and field notes, recording data, and graphing or charting results. These notebooks are referred to throughout the year to reinforce the science concepts taught. They are an invaluable resource in accessing this spiral curriculum.

Science is regularly integrated with other subject areas. The use of real-life graphing and statistics connects science with math just as the use of procedural directions in lab reports connects science and functional writing in language arts. Non-fiction reading of science notebooks and trade books increases comprehension skills. Informational writing and science connect through the generation of animal reports in first grade, reports about plants in third grade, and space tourist brochures in fifth grade.

Students' scientific knowledge is showcased each year at our Science Fair. This will be the 18th year for this popular and important school event. All grade levels, K-5, are encouraged to participate each year as scientific skills progress from kindergarten to fifth grade in a spiral learning configuration. Observation skills, vocabulary development, the inquiry process, and journaling begin as early as kindergarten and build each year, culminating with individual projects at fifth grade. It is compulsory for the 4th and 5th graders to participate in the Science Fair each year in order to meet the required state standards. Many of our students participate in and receive high honors at the annual District Science Fair.

Field trips at all grade levels are often science based and correspond with the science standards for each grade level. Millikin makes good use of our campus "Life-Lab" style garden, and visits diverse settings such as "Hidden Villa" (organic farm), the local parks, the "Discovery Center," the San Francisco Zoo, the planetarium, and the "Nature Center" located at a nearby district middle school.

5. Instructional Methods:

The academic success and social-emotional well being of our students are of primary importance at Millikin. The strength of our philosophy and teaching practices have had great results over the years. Our students consistently score in the top one percent of all schools in the state of California on the STAR CST and behavior referrals are rare. Students are respectful, responsible, joyful, and kind to others. This is not by accident; these are important traits that are taught and reinforced each day by all staff and fully supported by parents on the home front.

In order to accomplish and maintain such high levels of academic and behavioral performance, students require complex and diverse approaches. Teachers have been trained to understand and teach to a variety of learning styles and use a variety of methods and resources to support all children. Instruction is presented in a way that all student learning modalities are accommodated: visual, verbal, and kinesthetic. Teachers recognize and acknowledge students' abilities and successes based on Gardner's seven types of intelligences.

As an alternative school, Millikin has a unique style of teaching. Millikin teachers use a traditional style of whole group, teacher-directed instruction for teaching most subjects supported by additional 1:1 individual teacher time, partner work ("Buddies"), small group, and cross-age tutoring. Much thought and planning goes into how to teach in this traditional style while supporting the individual learning needs

of the students. Modifications and accommodations are made where appropriate to meet the needs of the students. For instance, prompting icons may be used, instructions may be highlighted, assignments may be shortened, alternative assignments may be given, and more time may be given to complete assignments. Many students with special needs do very well at Millikin because the program is so structured, consistent, and predictable. Daily schedules, lesson plans, and teacher instructions are clear and consistent from lesson to lesson and from day to day. Students know what is expected of them and rise to the occasion.

Learning time is maximized as disruptions are minimized. This is a school-wide focus, to protect instructional time so that there is enough time to cover all of the rigorous content standards. Strict procedures and routines are in place that help students transition quickly from one activity to another. For instance, when the bell rings, signaling the end of recess, students quietly line up, walk into the classrooms, sit down, get out their books, and look at the teacher. There is no talking, no getting up to sharpen a pencil, no requests to go to the bathroom, etc. during this time. Instructional time is sacred and protected. Attendance is strictly enforced with no more than five unexcused absences allowed each year.

At Millikin, all students have access to the same curriculum within the classroom setting. Additionally, teachers use adopted ELD curriculum and materials (Language Central, Santillana) to support English language learners within the classroom. Academic vocabulary and reading comprehension strategies are emphasized for ELL students. Special education services (RSP, Speech and Language) and counseling are provided on campus for students who need them. Expectations are the same for all students, however, teachers meet the specific needs of special needs or at-risk, "Target" students in a variety of ways: through individual attention and support, by extending and modifying assignments, through grouping or collaborative strategies, and by working with parents and other support staff. Millikin's strong Student Success Team (SST), comprised of teachers and parents, meets regularly to provide direction, support, and referral.

Various software programs are available in our computer lab for use with students who struggle academically. These programs are designed to review and reinforce concepts using a motivational fun approach. Additionally, students who have difficulty completing assignments in handwriting may use keyboarding as an alternative.

The entire school community plays a key role in supporting student success. Parent volunteers work with students in the computer lab and science lab throughout the day, often extending the hours these facilities are available for students. Parents guide their children each night to complete homework assignments and make sure that their children are well rested and nourished in preparation for each school day. Parents support one another in the community via carpools and homework support hotlines to ensure that their children are on time and successful at school.

6. Professional Development:

Teacher professionalism is marked by the same principle that drives Millikin, a profound commitment to provide the best educational experience for all children. Our staff recognizes that an important part of being a professional is continuing to learn one's craft. Teachers at Millikin are continuously encouraged to pursue new information and training in order to do the best job they can for their students. Much of the training that teachers have received in the last four to five years has revolved around the curriculum adoptions. Over the last four years, there have been four adoptions in a row: history, science, math, and language arts. These important adoptions contain research based methodology and materials that teach the state content standards in a meaningful way. The district has provided initial staff development and follow-up training sessions in order for the teachers to completely understand and utilize the materials. Time is set aside each week for grade level collaboration to further study the curriculum, analyze student work, and plan effective lessons. Teacher curriculum leaders share information ("noticings" and best practices) on a regular basis at staff meetings.

The Santa Clara Unified School District has been very proactive and forward thinking when it comes to researching best practices for teaching the content areas, especially for reading and math. All staff development is developed around analyzing student data as it is related to the content standards and determining what support students need. Over the last five years, Millikin teachers have participated in staff development opportunities such as: *Readers' and Writers' Workshop*, *Reading Recovery*, *Guided Reading*, *First Reading and Writing*, *Sitton Spelling*, *Reading Comprehension Toolkits*, *ELD Training (Language Central)*, *MAC Scoring (performance based math)*, *Hands-On Equations*, *FOSS (science)*, *Autism and Spectrum Training*, *Students With Disabilities Training*, *SPARK P.E.*, and *Healthy Play*, just to name a few.

Additionally, special effort is made to support and encourage teachers to follow personal strengths and interests and to share their expertise and acquisitions. Teachers have attended conferences and workshops that they personally connect to such as the *Asilomar Reading Conference*, *CUE Conference*, *CSTA Conference*, *Keeping Score (integrating music into content areas)*, and *GLAD (English Language Development)*. These experiences further enrich the teaching community here at Millikin and enhance student learning.

7. School Leadership:

The Millikin Basics+ staff is a learning community of leaders, many of whom have worked together for years in this specialized program. Collegial relationships and professional longevity at Millikin are created through a strong belief in the Basics+ philosophy and an unfailing dedication to its mission. The principal and teachers work together collaboratively and cohesively in all areas to best meet the needs of all students at Millikin. Achieving excellence is always the goal. The principal involves the teachers in decision making at all levels and values their input. Staff meetings include student performance analysis, goal setting, policy discussions for discipline, budgetary considerations, curriculum decisions, school event planning, etc. The teachers always take an active part in these important discussions and decisions. Two teachers each year serve as "Teachers In Charge" to assist the principal with her duties when she must be off campus. These teachers are extremely competent and so vital to the smooth running of the school. They fearlessly handle whatever problems may arise, document all proceedings and communicate with the principal in a timely fashion.

Having taught in the elementary classroom for 13 years, the principal closely identifies with her teachers on staff. An understanding and appreciation for what they are doing is reflected in her daily practice. It is not uncommon to see the principal relieving a teacher on yard duty, subbing for teachers when an emergency or special need arises, finding funds for an effective learning tool, researching a requested teaching strategy, or planning a celebratory event to recognize the staff. Mutual respect and admiration exists between the entire staff and principal.

Experts in their field, the teachers serve as curriculum liaisons (between the school and district) and frequently share research and implementation information with the rest of the staff. Grade level or "overunder grade level" planning is held each week. Teachers analyze student work, their anecdotal recordings, and test data to determine next steps for instruction. "Target students" are identified based on this ongoing analysis and interventions are put into place to meet their individual needs. The principal meets with each teacher three times a year to review the progress of each "Target student." Staff development opportunities for the teachers may result from these sessions. Teachers also participate as leaders with the principal on the Student Success Team (SST). SST meetings are held each week with parents of children who are struggling in some way. Performance levels and behaviors are discussed at these meetings and interventions are recommended. Parents participate as partners with the teachers and principal in developing a plan for their child's success.

The support staff is extremely competent and highly valued by all teachers, principal, and parents. The entire support staff - secretary, attendance clerk, custodian, cafeteria clerk, health clerk, science lab aide, computer lab aide, library aide, and yard duty personnel - all lead with excellence each day in their

respective jobs. Each and every day, they work hard to provide a safe, clean, efficient, and nurturing learning environment so that students can do their best. As school leaders and role models, they guide, direct, and counsel students each day with a loving hand.

Parents are highly valued at Millikin and are included in the leadership responsibilities for many aspects of the school. The parent-staff relationship is extremely strong with all working together to provide the best possible learning environment for the students. As examples, our PTA has recently purchased document cameras for all teachers and each year organizes extremely successful events such as the Book Fair, Harvest Festival, Silent Auction, Walk-a-thon, Boxcar Movie Night, Family Game Night, Play Day, and Family to Family Giving Program. The parents are very much respected and asked to be leaders here at Millikin whether serving on the School Site Council, volunteering in the science or computer labs, partnering with the teachers, or participating in PTA special events.