

## **J. HALEY DURHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

### **PART III - SUMMARY** 12CA34

J. Haley Durham Elementary School has a very diverse population of students with 35% Asian, 35% Hispanic, 17% White, 10% African American, 2% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian or Alaska Native. Out of the 398 students, 33% are English Learners. With 48% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students, Durham Elementary receives Title I funding.

While having the distinguished history of being a National Blue Ribbon School in 1994, Durham, unfortunately, went into Program Improvement (PI) Year 1 in 2009. With focused effort, the school met all Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets for the succeeding two years in 2010 and 2011 and exited Program Improvement in 2011 despite the increased targets set by federal expectations under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Durham Elementary is currently considered by California as one of its High Performing Schools with an Academic Performance Index (API) score of 854 (800 is the minimal requirement to be designated as a High Performing School in CA).

In October 2011, Durham became eligible for the CA Distinguished School Award for its remarkable progress and passed the site validation visit in February 2012 with flying colors. It is the only school in Fremont Unified School District that successfully met all state and federal accountability targets with a dramatic 119 API point increase in just two years. Durham gained 64 points in 2010 and 55 points in 2011, far exceeding the targets of 5 and 1 respectively. Gains were seen in student performance school wide as well as in every subgroup, in every grade level, and in every performance band. In fact, 24% scored Advanced in both Language Arts and Mathematics in 2011 compared to only 12% in 2010. More importantly, parents, students, and staff felt a renewed strength and pride in these milestones that extended into improved discipline, increased leadership, and overall positive culture of the school.

We envision Durham Elementary as a safe, nurturing, and rigorous educational environment where lifelong learning, social responsibility, and diversity are valued. We are committed to the success of every child. As a community, we work collaboratively to create a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment and encourage students to develop and actualize their potential. By providing a standards based, engaging, and challenging curriculum, we aim to prepare students to move up through each grade level and flourish in junior high school. To adapt and meet the challenges of a diverse and rapidly changing world, Durham staff fosters a passion for learning that broadens students' abilities and cultivates academic and social skills that empower students to become responsible leaders.

Durham constantly strives to improve student achievement. In fact, we are very proud to be a model school, well known for our ability to accelerate the academic performance of students while providing a nurturing environment for learning. Our highly trained teachers are skilled at setting rigorous academic goals for students and are fully committed to working with them to reach those goals. At Durham Elementary, the Cycle of Inquiry is implemented on a daily basis. This process allows staff to examine data and create strategic plans with systematic structures for monitoring successes and challenges, thereby ensuring continuous improvement. Teachers collaborate weekly, either as a whole staff or as grade level teams, to learn and share new ideas and instructional strategies designed to help close the achievement gap. Lessons are adjusted to meet the needs of all students as well as significant subgroups. These activities are all designed to promote students' mastery of the California Standards at every grade level through improving daily instruction and interventions before, during, and after school.

The School Site Council oversees all work plans, providing essential guidance in all areas of our work. Durham parents attend several Family Nights per year to gain knowledge and skills on how to help their children at home in reading, math, and character development. Communication with parents via our parent bulletin is done every other week in both English and Spanish. Language translators are available for all Family Nights and parent conferences. Parents are invited to monthly school wide assemblies to honor students who model the Eight Great Traits or show progress in academic achievement. Parent volunteers earn "Durham Dollars" which children later redeem for prizes at the end of the month.

Durham school is committed to building a strong, positive, and productive learning environment for all students. Students pledge daily to create peace at home, at school, and in the community each day. Character Education lessons are integrated in every English Language Arts unit. Personal standards of good behavior are rewarded as students exhibit these individually and in teams. School wide assemblies emphasize pride in being a Durham Eagle as adults and students cheer in unison: "We are the Durham Eagles! We only do our best... nothing less!"

## **PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS** 12CA34

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

As a California public school, Durham participates in the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. Elementary students take the California Standards Tests (CSTs) which are criterion-referenced tests that assess the California content standards in English Language Arts (Gr. 2-6), Mathematics (Gr. 2-6), and Science (Gr. 5). Students who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and meet the criteria for an alternate assessment take the California Modified Assessment (CMA) in lieu of the CST. Spanish speaking students who have been in the country for less than 12 months take additional Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) which are criterion-referenced tests aligned to the California content standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics.

There are five possible levels of achievement: Far Below Basic, Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. At Durham Elementary, to be considered proficient, students must perform at Proficient or Advanced levels in both English Language Arts and Math. This expectation is made very clear to all students as they take Benchmark Tests frequently to measure their progress toward these expectations. As teachers set their class goals in performance, students are also expected to set personal goals to reach for at certain checkpoints in the year. Academic chats between teachers and students assist in identifying specific skill gaps and successful strategies to implement. School wide assemblies focus on excellence and showing improvement. Students know that their individual growth contributes to the progress and success of the whole school. Accountability is shared by all stakeholders: parents, teachers, and students.

Durham Elementary is a leader in improving all areas of student learning as evident in the dramatic gains in student performance. In 2007, only 43% of all students were proficient in English Language Arts. Five years later in 2011, 69% reached proficiency, a huge 26% increase. Mathematics had an even larger increase of 30% more students scoring proficient, from 45% in 2007 to 75% in 2011. Analysis of grade level data also shows remarkable growth at every grade and every subgroup of students as well. These results prove that our certificated staff excels in setting high expectations for students and providing differentiated supports which enabled students to reach the targets set for them.

Worthy of note is the 30% average gain made by each of our three target subgroups (AYP numerically significant) from 2007 to 2011 in English Language Arts: Socio-economic/Disadvantaged from 27% to 60% (33% increase), Hispanic/Latino from 23% to 58% (35% increase), and English Learners from 34% to 63% (29% increase). In Mathematics, the same 30% average gain in five years is also evident: Socioeconomic/Disadvantaged from 28% to 66% (38% increase), Hispanic/Latino from 30% to 65% (35% increase), and English Learners from 43% to 73% (30% increase).

Additionally, although our African American subgroup is insignificant in terms of AYP numbers, this group also showed large increases in the number of students reaching proficiency from 2007 to 2011. In English Language Arts, there was a 26% increase (from 38% to 64% proficient) and in Mathematics, the gains were 37% more (from 35% to 72% proficient).

The success of Durham Elementary is due to the strong commitment of staff in implementing research based practices in school improvement. The school leadership team is made up of the principal and grade level teacher representatives who receive support and coaching from District Office staff and outside consultants. The school plan focuses on in depth professional development in curriculum and cycles of inquiry calendared throughout the year. Structures created ensure cooperative professional learning

communities with an overall positive energy. Materials, including technology, were purchased to help provide powerful interventions at each level.

Durham has the reputation not only for excelling in raising performance, but also for narrowing the achievement gap for significant subgroups. These dramatic gains in school wide performance resulted in narrowing the gap in both English Language Arts and Mathematics between all students and two subgroups, the Socio-economic/Disadvantaged and the English Learners, to less than 10%.

Unfortunately, although the gap between all students and the Hispanic/Latino group decreased by 9% in English Language Arts, there still is a 10% gap between all students and Hispanics/Latino in English Language Arts and Mathematics. We are working hard this school year in strengthening our differentiated instruction and providing more focused interventions before, during, and after school. Teachers have identified focal students and focus strategies as students are regrouped during the day. Several new early intervention programs are also in place: Summer Kindergarten Readiness Program for students who have limited skills and preschool experience; Staggered Classes in Kindergarten which reduces class size to half; and an After School Kindergarten Intervention with additional learning time for lower performing Kindergarten students. A second computer lab was created and five computers were installed in every classroom so that students will have easy access to research proven educational software. We also began the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) which offers nine consecutive weekly classes in both English and Spanish to parents with an emphasis on learning skills to support and assist their children to become ready for college.

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

Data driven Cycles of Inquiry at Durham Elementary occur at every level: school wide, target subgroups, grade level teams, classroom, intervention groups, and individual students. In August, professional development begins with an analysis of the previous year's summative CST and district assessment data. Program strengths and weaknesses are also analyzed to drive the work for the year. It must be noted that due to the average 35% mobility rate of students, Durham staff recognizes that the true measure of what students can or cannot do will be determined by data gathered in the first trimester with the actual students who are at Durham in the new school year. By the end of September, classroom teachers give diagnostic tests to students to identify those who will receive Title I services. In October, English Learners (ELs) take the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) which is scored locally by teachers and District staff. These initial data are used by teachers to regroup students during the English Language Development (ELD) and English Language Arts (ELA) Block where ELs receive their differentiated ELD instruction and English Only students receive differentiated ELA strategic support.

Classroom teachers analyze several levels of data on a regular basis with numerous charts and graphs posted on classroom walls. More formally, every 6-8 weeks, formative data from ELA Reading Lions and Everyday Math unit assessments are studied using the OARS data software. Teachers are scheduled for half day release 3-5 times a year for in depth data analysis and planning as grade level teams. Sharing of best practices in differentiation and intervention occur regularly during teacher meetings. The results determine the regrouping of students during ELD/ELA Block as well as referrals made to before/after school intervention classes given by certificated teachers. School wide interventions offered include additional computer lab hours using ST Math software, Read Naturally fluency, and other phonics software. Title I Specialists and Instructional Para Professionals are also hired to provide interventions and/or lower class size.

Durham uses the Student Study Team (SST) process systematically to focus on individual students who need intensive interventions academically or socio-emotionally. Teachers who make referrals to the SST are released during the day to attend these meetings with the principal, Title I Specialists, parents, counselor, and/or Special Education staff. The team creates an intervention plan for the student which will be revisited through a follow up meeting in 6-8 weeks. Referrals to the counselor and to special interventions may occur at these meetings. All interventions are tried before any psycho educational

assessments are made for placement in Special Education.

The first semester focuses on mastering basic fluency in reading and math as well as on performance rubrics measured by the regular 6-8 week formative unit assessments. By mid-January, Curriculum Associates CA Mastery, a summative benchmark test is given both in ELA and Math to start a Cycle of Inquiry (COI) on focused standards. This test is given again in early March and finally at the end of April. Results are analyzed thoroughly by teachers to identify focal standards to aim for. They then plan lessons using backward mapping strategies. Adjustments are made during regular and strategic instruction aiming for each student to master at least 70% of grade level standards by the beginning of May.

The principal monitors the number of students per class who reach mastery at every point of these cycles. Next, she guides staff in identifying standards that require quick fixes, standards for spiral re-teaching, and more challenging standards that need longer in depth lessons. Training and sharing of best practices in focal standards occur during teacher meetings. Furthermore, teachers use benchmark data to have personal academic chats with students who then begin their own Cycles of Inquiry on specific standards to master.

Formal reports of statewide standardized tests are mailed home by the District Office. Parents are informed of school wide student progress through our Back to School Night at the beginning of the year. Updates are given through parent bulletins posted on our website and sent home every other week in English and Spanish. Progress reports are sent home by teachers in the middle of every trimester followed by standards based report cards at the end of every trimester. On a weekly basis, student work is sent home in the Eagle Folder for parent review. In addition to the annual teacher parent conferences at the end of the first trimester, additional parent conferences occur for students needing extra support. Honor Roll assemblies provide students with recognition for excellent academic performance.

Parent groups are also informed regularly on progress of students. Our School Site Council (SSC) oversees the school wide Cycle of Inquiry whereas our Title I parents and English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) review the performance of Title I and EL students respectively.

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

The Durham Elementary leadership team shares our successful strategies with other Title I schools in Fremont Unified School District regularly. As part of the Focused Intervention for Title I (FIT) network of schools, our leadership team attends two to three FIT Network Days a year. During these days, best practices are shared among the five Title I schools in Fremont. Individual members of our team have also been invited to go to other non-FIT schools in the district to share our school wide strategies. Many schools are eager to follow the way we use results from Curriculum Associates CA Mastery assessments and create interventions on focus standards.

Likewise, our principal has many opportunities to present our strategies with other schools. She attends monthly All Principals meetings at the District Office where she shares the successes we've had in our effort to improve student achievement. Some principals gave us praises for our PeaceBuilder program which emphasizes the Forty Developmental Assets and focuses on building a positive learning environment. Due to our success in exiting Program Improvement (PI), our principal has led strategic meetings assisting other principals of PI schools in creating systems and structures to ensure accelerated student performance. Our school work plan was used as a model for these schools, guiding them in creating their own school plans based on the nine Essential Program Components outlined by the State of California. More recently, our principal was chosen to be part of Fremont's District Leadership Committee to help create the District's Local Education Agency (LEA) Plan as well as to assist in creating a Leadership Matrix for training and evaluating administrators.

Durham also sends representatives to various District committees, e.g. Title I Coaches, Assessment Committee, Technology Committee, GATE Committee, Math Cadre, and Special Education Job Alike

groups. Our teachers are well known to be a source of best practices especially in the use of our OARS data software and ST Math interventions.

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

Parents have several opportunities to be involved in school. We begin the year with Back to School Night in September. The principal gives the overall picture of student achievement and the plan for the school year. In the classrooms, parents listen to the teacher's presentation of the curriculum and expectations for the year. Two full days are set for parent teacher conferences at the end of the first trimester. Additional conferences are scheduled as needed. Communication between parents and teachers occurs regularly through phone calls, e-mail, and notes sent home. Student work, assessment results, progress reports, and report cards update parents on student performance.

Many activities are scheduled throughout the year to help parents learn the strategies teachers use in the classroom which can continue at home. Parent Nights have various themes such as Orientation for New Families, Reading Fluency and Comprehension, Math Games, Art Enrichment, PeaceBuilder, Anti Bullying, State Assessments, and Open House.

In the area of governance, all are invited to join the School Site Council (SSC) which meets monthly to discuss and monitor the school plan and budgets. Parents of English Learners are invited to join the English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) to provide oversight on English Learner programs. Title I parents receive individualized invitations to Title I Parent Group meetings. Parents of Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) students also have special meetings and events. Recently, representatives of the ELAC, Title I, and GATE parent groups were invited to be part of School Site Council so that focus and alignment occur and communication and decision making are streamlined.

Furthermore, each parent group sends a representative to district level committees to be a voice for Durham and to bring back essential information to the group. A former SSC parent generally is asked to participate in the Superintendent's Parent Representative Advisory Assembly. A parent of an English Learner joins the District English Learner Advisory Committee and a parent of a GATE student attends district GATE meetings.

The most successful strategies we use to assist in accelerating student performance for our neediest students are the Student Study Team (SST) and the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In these meetings, a team of certificated personnel including the principal talks to parents. Sharing knowledge and expertise, they create a plan for the student's success. This personalization enables powerful interventions to be in place at school and home in both academics and behavior.

## **PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION** 12CA34

### **1. Curriculum:**

Durham Elementary teachers create their weekly schedule based on the required number of instructional minutes for every curricular area including Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, and PE. Health and nutrition units are taught at certain times of the year while technology education is integrated throughout the day. In addition, English Language Development (ELD) is required for all English Learners weekly. Teachers then create a curriculum map for the year outlining the units they plan to cover monthly by subject.

The state provides a list of instructional materials that are aligned to state standards. Our District adoption committees choose materials from this list that support the District's strategic goal of ensuring that all students are college ready. Materials also have to align with the district's philosophy of instruction and meet the diverse needs of our student population.

As a result, our teachers use the Open Court reading series for English Language Arts which has a very strong phonics strand. Although Open Court has an ELD component, we use Santillana materials for our

English Learners levels 1 and 2 who need more oral language activities. To increase reading practice and develop a love for reading, the Accelerated Reader Program is used as a supplement to encourage students to read a variety of genres and move to higher reading levels. Daily reading fluency practice occurs in every classroom. Read Naturally is used to provide intensive and strategic interventions for students with fluency problems. Reading Eggs help younger students practice simpler phonics skills.

Everyday Mathematics is our district adopted math program for grades K-5. Daily teacher directed lessons provide a base of understanding for concepts and standards. The math concepts are cyclical in nature ensuring that no concept is learned and then forgotten. Everyday Math utilizes games and many hands on activities to help further understanding and retention of math concepts. For 6<sup>th</sup> grade, McDougal Littell Math Course was chosen to align with junior high school algebra curriculum and prepare students for high school. ST Math software provides students with visual models to help concretize mathematical concepts. Math fluency practice also occurs in every classroom.

Our adopted Social Studies curriculum is Scott Foresman for grades K-5 and Holt Rinehart and Winston for sixth grade. The science curriculum is Houghton Mifflin for grades K-5 and Prentice Hall for grade six. Durham's science lab allows hands on experiments directly related to the curriculum. Every grade level is also encouraged to go on at least one field trip a year that supports and enriches some aspect of either the social studies or science standards. These field trips are extremely important since we have a large group of socio-economically disadvantaged students who never experience visiting such places. Examples of previous field trips include the local Tule Ponds, Monterey Bay Aquarium, The Tech Museum of Innovation, and The California History Museum.

Physical Education is taught in part by a PE specialist with specific emphasis on the state standards for developing appropriate gross motor skills. Fifth grade students are mandated to take the state wide Physical Fitness Test. Each spring we hold an Olympics event where classes participate in three days of athletic competitions. Boys and girls basketball teams compete in a league with other elementary schools. These activities assist with building personal self-esteem as well as cultivating team-building skills. Our music curriculum and after-school band program engage different parts of our students' brains for more holistic development. Drug and alcohol education (Too Good for Drugs curriculum) and Health and Sex Education for 4<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> grades are also implemented to guarantee good health habits.

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

As part of the Fremont Unified, Durham Elementary is required to use Open Court for its English Language Arts curriculum. In Open Court, instruction involves systematic, explicit teaching of the relationship of individual sounds to spoken language, sound/spellings, the blending of sounds into words, and the application of this knowledge to reading and writing. Students use the sound/spelling cards as tools for reading and writing. Consistent instructional routines are used across grade levels to help provide universal access. Students are taught specific routines for the sound/spelling cards, blending, and dictation. Teachers model the key reading strategies used by expert readers and provide students with multiple opportunities to read fine literature.

For example, a typical first grade reading lesson includes the introduction of a sound/spelling card. Students learn the name of the card (the memory anchor), the sound represented by that card, and the letters used to spell that sound. Students then practice blending words with the teacher using this sound/spelling which later appears in the decodable books assigned for more practice. Following this decoding practice, students work on encoding or dictation to make the reading/writing connection with the target sound/spelling.

Comprehension is a primary goal of reading instruction. The use of the Concept/Question Board to build a community of learners fosters oral language development and communication. Comprehension is a collaborative activity where students help each other build knowledge through discussion and cooperative learning. Students are explicitly taught reading strategies such as "making connections", "visualizing",

and “inferences”. This instruction involves consistent teacher modeling of reading strategies gradually releasing responsibility to the learner as they begin using these independently.

At Durham, reading fluency is practiced daily. Younger students have decodable books and older students their own fluency folders where they mark their daily scores. Kinder and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students use the Reading Eggs software for supplementary phonics practice. To increase automaticity, struggling readers are regrouped for fluency intervention using the Read Naturally Program. To improve vocabulary, reading is encouraged through the Accelerated Reader Program of leveled books. Individual needs are met during Workshop time when teachers focus on individual or small groups while other students are given independent practice. These strategies have proven very effective in accelerating the progress of underperforming students.

### **3. Mathematics:**

The Everyday Math program in grades K-5 program was developed by the University of Chicago’s School Math project. It is based on neurological research about how children learn and develop mathematical power. By design, the program positions instructors as expert guides and facilitators as students construct their own conceptual knowledge.

One hallmark of Everyday Math is its foundational strategy of having students engage in hands-on activities to develop solutions to problems stemming from real world scenarios. For example, students are given a variety of coins and asked to find different ways for representing a given value. In finding multiple paths to a solution and then sharing their various strategies with their peers, students develop the flexibility of thought that is vital to success for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

Based on brain research that advocates for spaced practice rather than massed practice, the program gives multiple exposures over time to ensure solid comprehension. Two key means of practice are math journals in which students record, organize, and demonstrate their learning and playing instructional games on a daily basis. This curriculum provides students with a review of prior knowledge, a grasp on current learning, and the foundation to further concepts. Program routines such as Frames & Arrows, What’s My Rule, and Name Collection boxes play a vital role in developing a solid foundation in number sense and algebraic concepts from the earliest grades. Unit aligned software games provide additional practice.

Sixth grade classrooms begin the transition to secondary mathematics through use of McDougal-Littell’s Math Course 1, a more traditional program. To bridge the connection between their formative experiences in Everyday Math and more traditional math programs, sixth grade teachers utilize games and activities from Everyday Math.

In addition to the adopted curricula, Durham students engage in online games from the MIND Research Institutes Spatial-Temporal (ST) Math program featuring their penguin mascot, JiJi. As students work to move JiJi past an obstacle, they engage in conceptual activities that deepen their understanding of grade level standards with a special emphasis on number sense. This program meets the needs of a broad range of learners from students still developing their foundational knowledge to those seeking enrichment. This ST Math software also has a strand of math fluency. Being web based, ST Math is accessible at school and at home. Teachers likewise supplement with more activities to ensure student mastery of math facts.

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

Durham envisions a safe, nurturing, and rigorous educational environment where life-long learning, social responsibility, and diversity are valued. Durham’s character education program called Head, Heart, and Hands (H3) teaches personal, moral, and social responsibility which empowers students to become effective leaders. Based on the 40 developmental assets and integrated with language arts instruction, the H3 program builds the Eight Great Traits of caring, honesty, responsibility, integrity, respect, citizenship, planning and decision-making, and problem solving. Every month, one trait is focused school wide, and

teachers create T-charts on what this trait would look and sound like. Certificates are awarded at assemblies to Students of the Month who exhibit the focus trait.

Students are also well versed with the personal standards of behavior emphasized by Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies. Students are recognized during instruction through team points given by the teacher or awards handed out by student scouts who observe these three personal standards of showing respect, making good decisions, and solving problems.

Our staff is trained in the PeaceBuilder program which focuses on supporting students to build peace at home, at school, and in the community. Every room has a poster of the PeaceBuilder Pledge which is recited daily. Everyone pledges to be a PeaceBuilder by praising people, giving up put-downs, seeking wise people, noticing and speaking up about hurts they have caused, righting wrongs, and helping others. Conflict resolution begins with an I Message followed by a PeaceBuilder plan of action for future incidents. Praise notes are also given to reinforce positive behaviors.

To ensure coherence of all programs, the Durham Eagle mascot was chosen as the school symbol of pride and leadership. We build high expectations and provide nurturing supports for success to allow teachers and students to reach these great goals. Positive reinforcements create positive behaviors and attitudes that encourage success in discipline and academic performance. Staff and students who see themselves improving, get addicted to the feeling of success and strive to be more successful. Strategies are shared with a collective effort since “WE... are the Durham Eagles! We only do our best and nothing less!!!” Through the strong emphasis on character education and the services of an onsite counselor, Durham has decreased suspension rates and fewer intensive behavior cases. This positive atmosphere assisted all students in improving academically and enabled the school to exceed federal and state academic targets.

#### **5. Instructional Methods:**

Teachers follow the Pyramid Response to Intervention model to ensure that the needs of our diverse student body are met. They use checks for understanding to monitor student performance while teaching the core curriculum, adjusting lessons as necessary. Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies are implemented to engage all students and offer scaffolds for universal access especially for English Learners (ELs) who make up 33% of our student population. GLAD strategies include using chants, cooperative learning structures, sentence patterning charts, and other visuals or pictorials. To provide ELs with English Language Development (ELD), students are regrouped during the day based on their California English Language Development Test (CELDT) scores. Students who are not EL are divided into various intensive, strategic, benchmark, and challenge groups and given differentiated instruction in language arts or math. Teachers use fluency scores to determine whether students need additional leveled practice or if they require more comprehension strategies. Equipped with data from various formative assessments in language arts and math, lessons during regrouping time are targeted to the needs of students. Student performance data are analyzed every 6-8 weeks and students are regrouped accordingly.

Title I Specialists and para professionals make regrouping, push in, and small group instruction possible in grade level blocks of time. Before and after school interventions are offered by classroom teachers who give focused lessons based on results from benchmark tests. Special accommodations are given by all teachers for students with a 504 plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Furthermore, our Special Education teacher gives additional individual and small group instruction as outlined by each student's IEP.

The technology software component in each of our core curriculum (Open Court and Everyday Math) gives students a chance to receive differentiated instruction. All our supplementary programs such as ST Math, Accelerated Reader, Read Naturally, and Reading Eggs start students at their individual levels. Students proceed to more difficult concepts and activities when ready. Most programs are web based and easily accessible at school and at home.



Durham Elementary is fortunate to have advanced hardware with two full computer labs, one for our primary students and the other for our intermediate students. Each classroom is also equipped with five computers, a SmartBoard and a document camera. Every classroom teacher has two laptops, one for professional use and another that can be connected to the SmartBoard for more creative and highly interactive teaching and learning.

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

Durham's professional development plan focuses on three main academic areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, and English Language Development. The level of training is systematically tracked to maintain focus and prevent overload. For example, in 2009-10 we had five days dedicated to implementing the Open Court program for language arts. In the following year 2010-11, we had four days of training in the newly adopted Everyday Math program and follow up items in Language Arts. This year, writing is the focus. All areas, however, are addressed yearly to ensure a well-rounded professional development for staff.

Durham school begins with 2- 3 days of professional development before the first day of school. The yearlong calendar is created to include a monthly staff meeting after school and early dismissal every Wednesday. Thus, teachers have 5 hours for teacher collaboration every month either as a whole staff or as grade level teams. Teachers also have 4-6 half days throughout the year to ensure that they revisit their cycles of inquiry, analyze student data, and plan for powerful interventions for students. This constant monitoring of student progress made the most impact for our students. Teachers are experts at using the district OARS assessment software to analyze student performance to the level of item analysis. Through collaborative work, they share their expertise with one another and raise their knowledge and skills as a group. The trust, mutual respect, and cooperative nature of our teachers are observed by students who in turn have shown supportive behaviors toward each other. Additional on-site coaching on specific strategies also occurs. For example, GLAD consultants demo lessons, observe, and give feedback to teachers on their implementation of GLAD strategies. District literacy and math coaches also provide in depth support through training or work sessions.

The District Office regularly offers training to teachers throughout the school year. As a Title I school, we are part of the Focused Intervention for Title I (FIT) network and receive extra funding to release our leadership team for three days to work in professional learning communities with other Title I schools in the district. On network days, we analyze program data through the CA Academic Program Survey which identifies the key Essential Program Components (EPC) to focus on. We also learn the latest trends in education and successful practices implemented by other schools. These ideas help us develop and adjust our school work plan.

#### **7. School Leadership:**

The School Site Council oversees the school plan. This group is composed of 50% parents and 50% staff including the principal, certificated teachers, and classified staff. The council ensures that the school budget complies with federal and state regulations. Regular meetings occur to plan, monitor, and review programs. The English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), GATE and Title I Parent group also monitor the programs and budgets for English Learners, GATE and Title I students. Recently, representatives from these parent groups have been invited to be part of our School Site Council. We also have our Parent Teacher Association that takes care of fundraising and school wide carnivals.

The Durham leadership team meets every other week and is composed of the principal, Title I Specialists, and grade level representatives K-6. Lead teachers work with their grade level colleagues and serve as guarantors that the school's plan is implemented with the necessary calendar and structures for success. The principal and Title I Specialists meet more often to review formative data in depth, discuss issues, and determine next steps of action. They ensure that feedback loops are in place between school wide conversations and grade level work. The leadership team also monitors and assesses the effectiveness of

professional development and cycles of inquiry at various levels (school wide, grade level, classroom, individual). They look closely at the big picture of reform and make adjustments to the school plan as needed.

Although leadership begins with the adults, students also have several opportunities for leadership. Student Council officers create a calendar of activities for the school. They are center stage, awarding certificates during monthly assemblies. Students are regularly honored as cafeteria helpers, kindergarten helpers, buddies or mentors to the primary grades, ball and bathroom monitors, and members of the Go Green Team (environmental clean-up and recycling). Leadership is also celebrated through excellence and improvement in academic performance. As Durham Eagles, all are expected to do their best and nothing less.

With the dramatic improvement in academic and behavior performance, students developed a higher level of confidence and leadership. Over 30% of eligible students in Gr. 4-6 ran as candidates for Student Council in 2011-12, giving excellent speeches to the whole school. Additionally, over 30% of eligible students in Gr. 4-6 tried out for the Durham Eagle Basketball teams for 2011-12. Durham Eagle pride and leadership are definitely strong. Eagles are soaring high!