

PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Report  
to the  
Community  
2007-2008*



**Nixon  
Elementary  
School**

**School Description  
& Mission Statement**

**School Description**

Lucille Nixon School, located within the Stanford University community, is one of 12 elementary schools in the Palo Alto Unified School District. Nixon's unique physical environment features a pod architecture with central library and computer lab, a variety of instructional spaces, and spacious multi-level grounds.

Nixon serves the students from the communities of the Stanford campus and the foothills area west of Foothill Expressway, as well as transfer students. The growing diversity of our school community has enriched the lives of all our children.

At Nixon School, we recognize the vital importance of providing all youngsters with a broad-based and well-balanced curriculum. We believe in equipping students with the academic skills and knowledge upon which future learning is built. We also believe our responsibility in educating children goes much further. Our students must be challenged to apply what they have learned, to think critically, and to express themselves creatively. They must also develop abilities to solve problems as individuals and in groups, to engage in the cooperative exchange of ideas, and to work independently as well as on a team. They must have the confidence to take risks and to achieve their potential.

To create a climate for this learning, we value and celebrate each student's differences, efforts, growth, accomplishments, and talents.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of our school is that students become lifelong learners who demonstrate: Intellectual reasoning and creative problem solving through the development of the ability to think, apply, and communicate. The first goal is self-fulfillment through the nurturing of individual potential, self-esteem, and personal integrity. The second goal is academic excellence through instruction in a rich curriculum of knowledge, concepts, and skills. The final goal is respect for others and a commitment to partnership in reaching common goals through the encouragement of teamwork and cooperation.

*Student demographics, testing and accountability data, class size, staffing and financial information are available in the state-mandated School Accountability Report Cards. These may be found on the PAUSD Web site: <http://www.pausd.org/community/about/sar.shtml> or obtained at your school. Similar information, current and historical, about individual schools and school districts is also available on the California Department of Education Web site: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/>.*

## Opportunities for Parental Involvement

The breadth and depth of involvement and support that the community provides Nixon is evident by the many ways in which parents participate in the school. Parents show the high value they place on education by working in classrooms, assisting in the library, providing art and science enrichment at lunch, helping with field trips and performing tasks at home. Parents are an integral part of planning, organizing, and participating in many school-wide events. The Site Council meets monthly. They help develop, monitor and create a budget, which support the Single Plan for Student Achievement and the School Safety Plan. Their meetings are open to the public and the agendas and minutes are published.

The Bilingual Advisory and GATE parent representatives meet at least bi-annually. Their meetings are open. The agenda and minutes of these minutes are public record.

The PTA sponsors classroom mini-funds, the acquisition of instructional and library materials, classroom instructional materials, teacher grants for innovative programs, and educational school assemblies. They also support hardware and software for the computer lab. PTA sponsors projects such as: Noon Art and Noon Science, assemblies, the third grade bicycle safety program, student council, the volunteer tutor program, playground programs, parent education programs, and library support. The PTA also organizes and monitors an extensive after-school enrichment program. The PTA assumes a leadership role in organizing special schoolwide community builders, including the Welcome Back Coffee, the Fall Family Picnic, the book fair, the skating party, several Family Fun Nights, and a Spring family celebration. The leadership of all these organizations is noted in the NixonNames directory and phone numbers can be obtained by contacting Becky Brewer, the school secretary, at (650) 856-1622.

## School Safety Plan

Each year this is developed by the Site Council, reviewed by the staff and students and is available to all parents. It has four areas of concentration with goals a major goal in each area.

- Personal Experiences of Students and Staff: to develop expertise throughout the school community in responding to emergency situations regarding physical injury and safety.
- The School's Physical Environment: to practice and adhere to emergency procedures for disaster drills and lockdown situations.
- The School Social Environment: to continue to develop leadership and civic skills through Student Council, class meetings, a schoolwide life skills program, community outreach, and conflict resolution.
- The School's Culture: to develop in student a sense of responsibility for treating themselves and each other in a respectful way: to celebrate the diversity of our community.

## Nixon Elementary School

1711 Stanford Ave.  
Palo Alto, CA 94305  
(650) 856-1622 FAX: (650) 813-1417  
www.nixon.pausd.org

Principal ..... Barbara Welch  
School Secretary ..... Becki Brewer  
Secretary/Clerk ..... Ginny Chu  
Custodians ..... Abi Okunuga  
Willie Wilcox  
Guadalupe Ponce

### Certificated Staff

K ..... Kim Bossi  
K ..... Stephanie Han  
K ..... Jody Harrier  
Susie Davidson  
K ..... Deborah Schweningen  
K/1 ..... Marie Legrand  
1 ..... Kathleen Bianchini  
1 ..... Ginna Brereton  
1 ..... Kim Peckenpugh  
1 ..... Joe Young  
2 ..... Jan Krinsley  
Joan Dreschke  
2 ..... Laura Lajuensee  
2 ..... Lisa Lichtensern  
3 ..... Amanda Gantley  
3 ..... Kristina Hayes  
3 ..... Nancy Kaye  
4 ..... Kerrie Edmonds  
Britt Brown  
4 ..... Nicole Manou  
4 ..... Kevin Stevens  
4 ..... Martha Waterhouse  
Britt Brown  
5 ..... Beryl Deremigio  
5 ..... Sean McDaniel  
5 ..... Donna Rumwell

### Support Staff

Resource Specialist ..... Deb Lipari  
Reading Specialist ..... Sue Chakos  
Speech/Language ..... Mary Jude Doerpinghaus  
Psychologist ..... Sharon Zebker  
Library Media Teacher ..... Janice Mulholland  
English Language Dev. .... Megan Cox  
Computer Lab Instructor ..... Barbara Vana  
Math Specialists ..... Revathy Shiv

### Site Council Co-Chairs

Beth Most  
Pam Rasmussen

### PTA President

Gioia Allegretti

## School Instruction & Leadership

The instructional program at Lucille M. Nixon School provides children with a broad-based curriculum. The forces that drive that curriculum are school and district goals, state frameworks and assessments, and teacher observation. Instructional strategies encourage individual growth, help students clarify their thinking and communicate their ideas, and provide opportunities to extend and apply learning. Students work independently, in small groups, and in large groups.

The Principal at Nixon has been in this leadership position for 11 academic years and had experience at the Middle School, High School and collegiate level prior to this assignment. The staff leadership team is made up of teachers representing primary and intermediate grade levels. Their primary role is to agendaize the staff development portion of each staff meeting calendar and advise the Principal. Six site staff sit on the Site Council matching the number of parents. Parent leaders represent the PTA, Site Council, BI-lingual Committee and GATE. The yearly budget and fundraising efforts are developed collaboratively among these groups in order to support the Single Plans for Student Achievement.

- **Language Arts** reflects a balanced program, which includes literacy groups and direct instruction in specific reading skills along with a literature-based approach that integrates reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students' experience both guided and shared reading and writing. The Six Trait Writing are taught through enriched literature, directed lessons, and rubric-based assessment. The school site literacy team has hosted parent education in literacy as well as maintaining a literacy resource room for teachers. Every class receives a 30-minute weekly lesson from our credentialed library teacher. We have a reading specialist who works with K-3 students and supports staff at all grades.
- Grade-level core curriculum in **History-Social Science** is taught with specific text and in the context of literature, writing, and visual arts. Students demonstrate their understandings through individual and group projects. A wide range of classroom and school-wide activities helps students develop cultural understanding, democratic principles, and civic values.
- In addition to proficiency in computation, the **Mathematics** program seeks to help students gain problem solving skills and develop a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. Students experience a wide variety of instructional activities

designed to reinforce basic math facts and proficiency in arithmetic operations. Math skills and understandings are integrated into other curricular areas as well. We also have math specialists who work with 2nd-5th grade students to develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills.

- Grade-level units provide the core of the **Science** curriculum. These units provide children with in-depth, hands-on experiences that develop conceptual understanding and science process skills. Community resources — such as speakers, field trips, and assemblies — augment the science curriculum. Nixon participates in the eight-district science consortium, Bay Area Science Education Excellence (BASEE).
- Students participate in a wide variety of **Physical Education** including individual, partner, and small group and team activities. PE materials and equipment are accessible and abundant. Emphasis is placed on encouraging the enjoyment of physical well being as a lifelong pursuit. District specialists augment the program with weekly lessons in grades 1-5.
- **Performing and Visual Arts** are integrated with other curricular areas in the classroom. District specialists support the music program on a regular basis. The SPECTRA docent program provides a breadth of visual arts lessons for all teachers. Student artwork is displayed throughout the school. PTA-sponsored assemblies further enhance this area. Teachers often schedule field trips to see arts performances (S.F. Symphony and Stanford Lively Arts, for example).
- **Technology** Students and teachers are using their technological expertise to enhance curriculum in all areas, including reading, writing, research projects, math, art and presentation skills. Every classroom has at least one high-end computer with Internet and networking capability. Every class has a projector that is used with the classroom lab top. All teachers have access to Smart Boards and student sets a mobile laptops. The technology lab is comprised of 23 iMac workstations; all locally connected to a file server. Grade 2-5 classrooms come to the computer lab for an hour of instruction and work (1st grade 1/2 hour) every other week. Grade 2-4 classrooms also come for 20 minutes of touch typing practice once a week. The lab also has a scanner, LCD screen projector, a digital camera and a digital video recorder.

## *Meeting Students' Special Needs*

- The school's Student Study Team serves as a forum in which teachers can raise academic, social or behavioral concerns and develop strategies for meeting individual student needs.
- The PAUSD Academy program provides after school and Saturday morning support to students identified as being at risk in reading and math.
- Targeted students receive support through a tutorial pullout program and an after school math Academy and homework support.
- Students with special learning or speech needs receive support in the Resource Specialist Program or with the Speech/Language Specialist.
- Children identified as Gifted and Talented participate in classroom experiences designed by their teacher.
- A specialist teacher and tutors support students with limited proficiency in English.
- A reading specialist supports students and staff.
- Math specialists support staff and provides additional challenges to GATE and other students as needed.

The progress of all students is measured with multiple measures from the State and District. This data is desegregated to examine student growth and measure program effectiveness. All teachers meet 1:1 twice a year with the Principal to discuss the individual students in their class. The purpose is to examine student needs and appropriate strategies on a "kid by kid" basis.

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

- Our school features a relaxed, child-centered environment in which a strong rapport bonds Nixon staff, children, and parents.
- All K-5 students learn about conflict resolution strategies in which children "talk it out" — expressing themselves, listening to others, and reaching solutions together.
- Every student at Nixon is recognized during the year as Student of the Week.
- During assemblies the Principal and students focus on a life skills that exemplify positive values. The concepts are reinforced with classroom activities.
- All students at Nixon participate in a cross-age buddy program, which matches older classes with younger classes.
- Our teachers recognize the role of teamwork in reaching mutual goals and the academic value of the exchange of ideas and knowledge. Throughout the school, students are frequently engaged in cooperative projects designed to tap their individual strengths and to help them develop in areas needing improvement.
- Each spring, students celebrate the work they have done in a particular subject area through our annual curriculum night. On this evening children, parents, and staff tour the school to see how learning progresses through the grades.
- The PTA and Nixon community sponsor Parent Education Nights throughout the year. On these evenings speakers focus on curricular areas, assessment, special needs students, and topics of parent interest.
- Throughout the year schoolwide activities and classroom lessons, promote an awareness and appreciation of racial and cultural groups in our community. Annually students, teachers and parents celebrate the ethnic and cultural diversity of Nixon at the International Day celebration.
- Twice a year a schoolwide performance is held that celebrated global understanding through music and drama.
- The school discipline and behavior code is published annually in the school handbooks, which are sent to every family. Classroom expectations are aligned with the code and reviewed frequently in classrooms and schoolwide assemblies.
- The districtwide Academy program for student performing below grade level is held twice a week. Bilingual tutors, adult tutors and reading support as available during school hours. Homework Club meets twice a week with students in grades 2-5 by teacher recommendation.