

Reading First News

Long Beach Unified School District

Volume 2, Issue 3

February 2006

Data Analysis Stimulates School Wide Sharing of Workshop Ideas at Muir

At the end of each Open Court Unit the principal and coach at Muir meet with teachers to discuss data results. Together, data is analyzed, student progress is discussed, needs are determined, and effective strategies are shared to meet specific student needs. During our December meetings teachers requested the need for workshop activities and how to differentiate them for all of their learners. As a result, Principal Jerry Gloria encouraged teachers to share and exchange ideas, activities, and strategies that they are using in their classrooms during workshop with grade levels. As grade levels met, teachers brought copies of examples to share with their peers. They walked away really excited to implement these new ideas in their classrooms.

The sharing of ideas elevated to the challenge level when teachers met with a group of K-5 teachers. Teachers were encouraged to bring samples (handouts, dittos, flash cards, and copies) from their grade level teams and became “experts” by articulating what their other team members are doing in their classrooms. It was clearly communicated that these activities may not be at students’ appropriate grade levels, but it was hoped that all teachers walked away with ideas that they can modify for their own students.



“Bookworms Infest Whittier”

If you have visited Whittier Elementary lately, and walked into Room 3, you would have noticed kindergarten students who were discussing the infestation of bookworms that fill their classroom! Of course Room 3’s bookworm invasion is the kind of infestation all classes would like to have.

Each week Kindergarten teachers Erica Hartman and Alicia Huizar introduce a new decodable book to their students. The decodable books have high frequency words the students are expected to know in order to be proficient in reading. Last year the teachers were concerned with their students’ lack of interest in the books and they decided to come up with a system that might motivate the students to read more. This year both teachers implemented a “Bookworm” system. Each week, after the book has been introduced by the teacher and practiced by the students, a book is sent home with each child. Through reinforcement at home and continued practice during Workshop time at school the students get the time needed to reach accuracy and fluency in reading their decodable books. If they read the book fluently they are “Bookworms”. They then each receive a bookmark to put in his/her pocket chart, and they each receive one Gummy Worm treat. Each bookmark represents a decodable book read with accuracy and fluency. The teachers feel the new system has had a positive effect on the motivation goal. The students are all very motivated to read their books AND get the gummy worm treats.



Reading First Schools:

Barton, Burbank, Burnett, Harte,

Lafayette, Lee, Lincoln, McKinley, Muir,

Powell, Roosevelt, Sutter, Webster, Whittier

Schools that submitted articles for this newsletter





Sutter Academy Launches “Language for Learning”

Teresa Osburn, Principal of Sutter Academy, likes to quote the following, *“If you always do what you’ve always done then you’ll always get what you’ve always gotten.”* Keeping that in mind, and always searching for ways to improve student performance and raise student proficiency, Sutter Academy administrators, coaches, and teachers met to discuss and brainstorm new ways to provide intervention to those students most at risk.

We currently have a strong after school tutoring program for grades 3-8 and are implementing “Kaleidoscope” during the day for our 2nd and 3rd grade students. After surveying teachers and examining data, the intervention team felt that we now must address the needs of our first grade students--those that are struggling with language issues that are directly affecting their performance on school wide and district assessments. With over 75% of our first grade students classified as English Language Learners, Sutter has begun implementing “Language for Learning”, a new after school intervention program geared toward second language learners.

Our first grade students who qualify for this program will be invited to participate in an after school program Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays for one hour. During this time they will be given intensive instruction in English--above and beyond their daily 30 minutes of ELD provided by their classroom teacher. It is our hope and belief that our students will become proficient readers and writers more quickly once they become fluent English speakers.



Barton Third Grade Teachers Visit Harte Classrooms

Barton third grade teachers had the opportunity to visit the third grade teachers at Bret Harte. On Wednesday, Feb. 8, they spent time in four of the third grade classes checking out their stimulating Open Court environments.

Sherry Nieto, one of Harte's Reading First coaches, was nice enough to take over the classroom instruction so Barton teachers had time to converse with each classroom teacher. Barton teachers were full of questions about the wonderful things that Bret Harte is doing. They particularly noticed the emphasis on Inquiry and Investigation. There was evidence everywhere that students were making conjectures, coming up with questions they were curious about, and then following the investigation process to find answers.

Presentations included mock television broadcasts and pop-up books, as well as skits and puppet shows. Teachers also noticed varied types of workshop activities that were differentiated according to a student's proficiency level.

Thank you, Bret Harte, for allowing our teachers to see first hand all the terrific things you are doing and for taking the time to answer all the questions we had!



Morphology Man and Workshop

at McKinley

Morphology Man Update

McKinley students, gripped by the excitement of Morphology Man, look forward to the weekly morpheme. Students are excited about the Morpheme of the Week, and it helps students see the importance of using the vocabulary strategy ‘Word Structure’ for unknown words. Circle Maps, Tree Maps, and other Thinking Maps are being utilized to help teachers and students organize their morpheme hunts. You know students are motivated when they come to you on a Friday afternoon asking for clues and hints for the following week’s morpheme! Students are actually trying to guess and predict the next Morpheme of the week!

“Work” During Workshop?

The Gradual Release Model and Workshop have been a focus in grades two and three. Teachers are modeling and guiding during instruction, and then providing independent practice during Workshop. Teachers are appropriately matching passages with Workshop groups and scaffolding activities when necessary.

The goal is to allow students time to practice and review throughout the week. After instruction has taken place, teachers are providing meaningful activities during Workshop for students to complete as “proving behavior.” Covert independent activities raise level of concern and are excellent tools for accountability. Proving behavior coupled with differentiated independent reading is essential to the growth of our students. One cannot expect a student to perform well on an assessment when they are not provided enough time to grapple with a passage throughout the unit. Students must be given time to use their decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies independently.

The anticipation level is high at our school site, and students are benefiting from great teacher planning, and of course, brilliant teaching!

Kindergarten Students at McKinley working independently during Workshop

Kindergarten Class Reading Interactive Writing Books & Making Words & Sentences Using Their Alphabet Box



Sutter Kindergarten Students Are "Racing To Read"

Kindergarten teachers Christy Boss and Mindy Yatsui came up with an idea that provides a fun way for the students in their classroom to learn words. "Racing To Read" has become a year long project that gives their students an opportunity to chart how many words they are learning each week, by following their racing cars along the road to success! The picture below shows the bulletin board, placed just outside their classroom that shares with the rest of the school and parents, one piece of the reading success that is happening in their classroom.



READ ACROSS BRET HARTE ELEMENTARY!

The secret password at Bret Harte during *Read Across America Week* was "READ!" Students honored Dr. Seuss and focused on their own literacy skills with daily celebrations. One special event was our 2nd annual "Read Across Bret Harte." An intermediate classroom partnered with a primary classroom to "buddy read" Dr. Seuss books or other special books. Together the "buddy readers" sat in selected areas all around the playground. An intermediate student read aloud to the paired primary student, and then the primary student would read aloud to his or her "big buddy." We have found when our older students have the opportunity to mentor our younger students; the rapport built is meaningful for both. "I love to read!" exclaimed Mrs. McBride's first grader when time was called.

Another exciting event was our "Families Celebrate Literacy!" night on March 2 that took place from 5:00-6:30 p.m. Teachers at every grade level created literacy experiences that students and their parents could participate in together. They made "Cat in the Hat" puppets, read an onomatopoeia poem (a poem with words that make sounds like buzz and snap), and teachers all over the school were reading aloud and having a great time with books. Students and parents were able to attend three different classroom activities and everyone made sure they went to the cafeteria to eat a piece of Dr. Seuss' birthday cake and toast literacy with some juice. Students also participated in our first "Book Trade." Students were invited to bring used books during the week from home, which were then leveled by our librarian, Minerva Samayoa. Before going home, students chose a "new-to-them" book from tables in the library.

Another successful *Read Across America Week* has passed, but Bret Harte students continue to read across our school and celebrate their literacy growth daily!