

## OVERVIEW OF FOSTER ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2007-08 SCHOOL YEAR

**Foster Road Elementary** (PreK-5) is part of the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District. It is a community center school located approximately eighteen miles southeast of metropolitan Los Angeles in a middle to lower middle class residential community of La Mirada, which is 7.78 square miles. The school is surrounded by some industry, residential single-family homes on the North and South with an Industrial area and an old refinery on the west, and a Catholic Church and Catholic school on the east. There is a local park one block west, which offers seasonal recreational activities. Foster Road Elementary is a unique school setting which includes preschool both regular education and special education preschool on its campus as well as a large population of elementary special education students.

This year, the school has 67 preschool students and 450 (K-5) with a total population of 517. All of our regular and special education students participate in the School Base Coordinated Program (SBCP).

Spanish is spoken as the primary language in many of the homes from which Foster Road Elementary draws its school population. The ethnic composition of Foster Road's population was reported in October 2005 on the CBEDS School Information Form. The CBEDS reports:

- + 82% Hispanic
- + 9% White
- + 3% Asian
- + 4% Black
- + 2% Filipino

Foster Road has a monthly absence rate of 96.58%. Foster Road received the District's attendance banner for the month of October. 68% of the students participate in the free and reduced school breakfast and lunch program. The occupations of the working parents range from skilled to unskilled with about 4% falling in the professional/semi-professional category.

### **Staffing and School**

The instructional team at Foster Road is under the direction of the principal, Dr. Jean Maddox. **Our full-time certificated staff** consists of the principal, 19 regular education classroom teachers, 3 special education classroom teachers, 3 preschool teachers, one RSP teacher, and one speech and language specialist. **Our part-time certificated staff** consists of one APE teacher, and one school psychologist. **Our full-time classified staff** consists of one secretary, one senior custodian, one night custodian, a library/media technician, two special education aides, and three preschool aides. **Our part-time classified staff** includes one clerk, one attendance clerk, one RSP aide, 24 special education aides, two state preschool aides, one cafeteria manager, and two cafeteria workers. Out of our SBCP funds, we have 1 part-time clerk and 1 part-time bilingual aide.

### **Core Curriculum**

Foster Road uses the district's grade level standards and benchmarks as its core curriculum. These standards are aligned with the State Standards, ELD Standards, and Curriculum Frameworks. The adopted text series include: Houghton Mifflin Reading and Mathematics, Harcourt Brace Science and Social Studies' new adoption, Scott Foresman, and Hampton Brown "Into English (ELD). The 17 out of 25 teachers attended training on using read alouds and shared reading to enhance our literacy program with our district literacy coaches. Fourteen teachers were trained using CGI (Cognitive Guided Instruction) for math.

### **Program Evaluation**

Foster Road combined their Shared Decision Making Council and their School Site Council together to form one council. The Shared Decision Making/School Site Council meets on a regular basis, starting in October after elections, and is committed to improving student achievement. The council includes: staff and parents who work together to implement the school's goals. The focus is student achievement with a primary focus on reading and writing skills. The council is made up of ten members: three teachers, the principal, one classified representative, and five parents. Parents vote for parents at the school's Back to School Night, teachers vote for teachers at a staff meeting, and classified vote for their representative. The length of each member's term is two years. The members' terms are on alternate cycles. Other decision-making committees at the school include the English Learners Advisory Committee and PTA. Their roles and responsibilities play an integral part in establishing and achieving schoolwide goals and revising the school plan. These teams, along with the total staff, make decisions regarding the allocation of resources to continue the improvement of student achievement.

Teachers work in grade level teams evaluating the school plan. Teachers present their revisions to the school plan on an annual basis. Parents provide input at our various parent meetings regarding revisions to the school plan. The Shared Decision Making/School Site Council discusses the revisions, adds input, and approves the school plan before it is submitted to the Board of Education for final approval.

Teachers meet in grade level teams to analyze the school data. The teachers use the various test results to plan instruction. Student progress is disaggregated to see how our different populations are achieving. The school focus is student achievement, and how we as a staff can use the school's resources to continue student growth.

### **Student Success Teams**

The first goal is commitment towards higher student achievement. Foster Road Elementary School is committed to improving student achievement, and is learning new ways to provide our students with a high quality instructional program, which meets all our students' needs. The school has seven Student Success Teams (SST), which meet for the purpose of determining the students' educational needs such as learning problems, behavioral issues, attendance, language needs, special education testing, GATE, retention/acceleration, placement in RSP, SDC, speech, and other placements within the school or district. The parents are an important member of this team and give feedback, information, suggestions, and written consent to help their child receive the best educational program the school has to

offer. Teachers emphasize the use of multiple intelligences and show an increase in the application of technology as a learning tool.

### **Student Conduct and Recognition**

Foster Road Elementary is very proud of its students and their improvement in behavior. A schoolwide discipline plan sets clear expectations for each student and classroom rules that include positive rewards using the school's star bucks reward system which lets the students purchase items from the students' classroom store. The school follows the principles of "Conscious Discipline." School rules and expectations for behavior are made clear to students and parents through special assemblies, parent notices, parent workshops, district mailer, principal newsletters, class newsletters, school agendas, classroom discussions, and classroom rules. Our school conducts monthly assemblies for student achievement, trimester and year-end awards assemblies to acknowledge perfect attendance, honor roll and academic strength, exemplary behavior and specialized classroom achievements, and Accelerated Reader progress.

### **Staff Development**

Our staff development program has focused on the Literacy Initiative for Language Arts. Each teacher has received monthly trainings on reading strategies (Read Alouds, Shared Reading) during our roll out sessions. During our monthly team meetings, teachers were provided a substitute teacher, so they could work with our Literacy coach on reading strategies. They were able to watch demo lessons and try them with a partner throughout the year. Our staff development has equipped our teachers in authentic assessments, early literacy skills, varied instructional strategies, integrated thematic lesson designs, second language acquisition approaches, expanding our technology use, multiple intelligences, cooperative learning structures, and brain research. Staff development is planned to align with schoolwide goals and objectives as well as the curricular area identified by the school. 9 out of 10 reading by 2007 is our goal. The school leadership team, the shared decision making/school site council, bilingual advisory committee, and the school staff determine the areas for focus depending on current data on student achievement. This year and next year, the staff will continue the Literacy initiative. Staff development is planned to enhance the teachers' skills and help improve student achievement. Foster Road is focusing on the 6 traits for improving writing skills, and a team of teachers will attend the Columbia Writing training this summer. Accelerated Reader is implemented throughout the school. The read alouds and shared reading strategies have enhanced the Houghton Mifflin Language Arts program. In math we have 14 teachers who have been trained in CGI (Cognitive Guided Instruction). Ten teachers attended CGI training last summer at the district office with the consultant from Wisconsin.

### **Instructional Support**

Foster Road Elementary's instructional program emphasizes hands-on real life experiences and current brain research. Each teacher's long-range plans reflect the required components within the State's frameworks. Early release on Wednesdays, provide staff time to plan together and focus on student achievement. The teachers' work in clusters to create and coordinate instruction to address their students varied needs. They plan activities that address

English Language Development for the limited English students. As a SBCP participant, Foster Road seeks to improve student achievement through the use of additional resources and materials purchased with categorical funds. The teachers meet with the principal after each trimester to discuss all the students' progress, and together a plan is developed to ensure student achievement and growth. Individual learning needs are discussed. If the students need to be referred to the Student Success Team, the process begins with teachers filling out forms and consulting with the parent to help students to succeed. Homework is assigned on a regular basis to extend and reinforce the daily assignments and activities the students learn at school. Homework will be reorganized this school year to reflect current teaching practices. Programs are also designed to integrate students beyond their own classroom to facilitate friendship and understanding between all Foster Road students and community.

The teachers' meet with parents to communicate student progress during parent/teacher conferences twice a year, and many teachers meet with parents on a regular basis to help individual students meet grade level standards. Individual classrooms have newsletters to keep parents informed of what is happening in the classroom. The principal has a monthly newsletter for the parents and community to keep them informed about school progress and events. A new phone service will be activated this year to help with community communication on the events of the school throughout the year. Parent inservices are offered monthly to help our parents help their children improve their skills and to explain student achievement strategies as well as student progress. The classes are offered in Spanish to help our ELL population increase achievement.

The school library is composed of library books, computers for on-line research, and accelerated readers. It is used by students and staff to help reinforce reading, curriculum, and library skills. The media clerk directs instructional programs, which emphasize information skills, literature appreciation, reading for pleasure, and story telling. Students have access to the library/media center each week with their class on a regular scheduled basis. The students have access to our computer lab, which is connected to the internet for them to do research and interactive projects.

### **Program Coordination**

Regular and Special Education teachers work together to plan activities for all students to participant in. Students from special education are mainstreamed when appropriate in various classes. In this manner, a better understanding and positive learning experience is provided for all students. Students will use the school's schoolwide postal service throughout the year to help develop their writing skills and communicate to students and staff. It fosters students' writing and builds on their communication skills among all school members, and the students enjoy receiving mail from their fellow students or staff members.