

LUCILLE M. NIXON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FINAL REPORT
2008-2009

Palo Alto Unified School District

DISTRICT GOAL: Create an exceptional learning environment that engages, challenges, and supports all students so that they thrive and achieve their academic potential every year, while preparing them to pursue college and other post-secondary opportunities to global citizens.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Strategic Plan Sub-Initiatives	Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities
<p>A1.1 Improve K-12 curriculum, articulation, coordination, and alignment to meet needs of the full range of students.</p> <p>A1.2 Expand curricular, instructional, and assessment support, and staff training to increase the breadth and depth of learning for all students.</p> <p>A1.3 Communicate a K-12 vision for the appropriate use of specific instructional strategies by curriculum areas.</p> <p>A2.4 Support K-12 development of requisite academic skills and personal habits of mind required for college/post-secondary success.</p> <p>A3.2 Examine particular needs of students performing below grade level and improve support.</p> <p>A3.3 Examine structures, policies, and attitudes that serve as barriers to achievement of underrepresented minority students to improve climate and foster respect, inclusion, and high expectations for diverse student groups.</p> <p>A3.4 Enhance early intervention (e.g. assessment, intervention programs).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff will assess, collect, examine, and use data (DRA, ERB/WrAP, California Standards Test–English Language Arts, CAT6, CELDT, classroom assignments, and observations) to develop and differentiate instruction, which supports learning for all students. ● Teachers will continue to refine their use of DRA reading assessment materials, K-5. ● The principal, classroom teachers, and learning specialist will hold Kid by Kid meetings in October to identify students’ strengths and weaknesses, plan strategies (Academy Reading Specialist, reading buddies, literacy summer school, peer and adult tutors), and will review and revise these plans in February with the principal. ● Teachers will continue to provide reading instruction based on “best practices,” (including but not limited to: direct instruction, guided reading, phonics, word attack skills, comprehension strategies, literacy circles, reading/writing workshop and genre studies). ● The ELD, reading, speech/language and resource specialist will consult with teachers throughout the year to monitor student progress and revise plans as needed. ● Teachers will collaborate at their grade level then cross-grades at staff meeting three times a year to share strategies and training. ● Staff will build partnerships with parents to support student reading through conferences, Student Study Teams and Homework Club. ● The reading specialist will meet with teachers to identify and support students having difficulty with literacy skills. ● Kindergarten teachers will continue with TACKLE to provide additional support for struggling kindergarten literacy needs. ● The librarian/media specialist will work with grade level teachers to ensure that students will be able to identify and use age-appropriate print, online sources and a variety of literary genre.

- The librarian will teach students to become effective users of information by identifying and using many print and online sources and support students in becoming lifelong readers.
- The principal and staff will explore staff development by outside professional resources to train for the implementation of new level readers and word analysis tasks.
- Teachers will administer the district writing prompts to assess student writing using the selected prompt and designated criteria specified by the literacy team.
- Staff meeting time will be used for grade-level scoring and cross-grade-level discussion of writing prompts.
- Teachers will continue the implementation and monitoring of the K-5 PAUSD writing notebook produced by the writing summit.
- Teachers will use grammar workbooks provided by the district writing network.
- Grade levels will continue to develop specific writing skills based on the six traits of writing, a variety of genre and rubrics.
- Teachers in K-1st grade will continue to use the Lucy Calkins writing program to support the PAUSD writing matrix and notebook.
- Staff will build partnerships with parents to support student writing particularly in relationship to differentiation through conferences and Student Study Teams.
- The District and the principal will provide opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development activities focused on curriculum, instruction and assessment in comprehension strategies and reading/writing skills.
- Staff will incorporate technology tools (hardware and software) that support the writing process as appropriate and available.

Assessment & Evaluation Questions About Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities

- **On the California Standards Test in English Language Arts (CST ELA), what percentage of students scored “Advanced” or “Proficient” in spring 2008? What percentage of students scored “Advanced” both years? What percentage of students made a year’s progress in the grade level curriculum?**

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of Nixon students in grades 2 through 5 who took the CST in English Language Arts in spring, 2009 scored at either Proficient or Advanced levels as compared to 84% in spring, 2008. For the 179 students who were tested in both spring, 2008 and spring 2009, 57% were Advanced in both years. 85% made at least one year’s progress as measured by this assessment.

- **What do the matched score APIs suggest with respect to overall progress? On the matched score APIs, comparing Base 2007 to Growth 2008, what number and percentage of students each year were (1) “Advanced” and “Proficient,” (2) “Basic,” and (3) “Below Basic” and “Far Below Basic”?**

The matched score APIs in English Language Arts show growth from base score 910 (2008) to 935 in 2009. The percentage of matched students performing in the Below Basic and Far Below Basic levels dropped from 7% in 2008 to 3% in 2009. The percentage of matched students performing at the Basic level dropped from 11% to 7% while the percentage of matched students performing at the either the Proficient or Advanced levels increased from 83% to 90%.

- **What do the Reading Benchmarks show with respect to the level of achievement and progress (a) for students in grades K-2; and (b) for students not yet on grade level in grades 3-5? How many students in grades 3-5 are not yet on grade level in reading?**

Looking at literacy assessment data for Nixon, we see 88% (June, 2009) of kindergartners meeting ending year benchmarks in literacy. The percentages are similar at second grade - 90% (June, 2009), 3rd - 88% and 4th grade - 88%. The percentages are somewhat lower at first grade 81% (June, 2009), while 95% of 5th graders met their benchmark.

At kindergarten, we are able to get a high percentage of our students, including many English Learners to meet the end of year reading benchmark – DRA level 2. (Interestingly, the authors of this assessment recommend a benchmark of Level 3 for kindergarten.) We discussed the progress of each of the students who did not reach the end of year benchmark to consider whether or not retention at kindergarten was a good idea. In discussion with the parents, we decided to retain three of the students. We choose retention when a child is chronologically and/or socially young, and we feel that additional time to master academic skills is the best strategy for a child’s long-term success. We do not choose retention when a child is chronologically older and/or socially mature compared to grade level peers because retention in this situation could disadvantage the child as s/he advances through school.

The amount of growth in reading skill necessary to progress from DRA level 2 to level 16, which is the ending 1st grade benchmark, is quite substantial. It is probably the greatest amount of growth needed for any single year. We had a lower percentage of Nixon first graders meet that ending first grade benchmark and we discussed each of these children to consider whether or not retention at first grade was a good idea. We decided to retain two first graders. All others would begin receiving additional interventions to address the gap in performance.

Seven 3rd graders, six 4th graders and four 5th graders were below grade level in reading at the end of 2008-2009 based on DRA assessments. Of these 17 students, 11 are special education students and 5 are English Learners. In each case, we felt that we had some understanding of why the student had not yet reached grade level proficiency as well as interventions in place to try to meet the student’s needs. Like every school in the nation, we are aimed at 100% of students reaching proficiency!!

● **What do the assessment results on the Educational Records Bureau/Writing Assessment Program (ERB/WrAP) show with respect to the level of achievement and/or progress for students in grades 4-6? What percentage of students are at or above grade level in writing?**

In fall of 2008, 92% of Nixon 4th graders and 99% of Nixon 5th graders performed at or above the Proficient level in writing on the ERB assessment. All but one of ten Nixon 4th graders who scored below the Proficient level in fall 2007 and returned to Nixon as a 5th grader, advanced at least to proficiency in fall, 2008; four students moved all the way to the Advanced level as 5th graders. Twenty-six of 29 4th graders who scored at the Proficient level in fall 2007 moved to the Advanced level as 5th graders in fall, 2008. Only one 4th grader who had scored at the Advanced level in fall, 2007 dropped to the Proficient level as a 5th grader in fall, 2008. All three 5th graders who had performed below proficiency as 5th graders in fall 2007 and who were at a PAUSD middle school in fall, 2008 scored at the Proficient level as 6th graders. Thirteen of the 28 5th graders who had performed at the Proficient level in fall, 2007 moved to the Advanced level in fall, 2008 at 6th graders; 4 dropped to below proficiency. Fourteen of the 17 5th graders who performed at the Advanced level in fall, 2007 and were at a PAUSD middle school in fall, 2008 scored again at the Advanced level; 3 dropped below that level as a 6th grader. We are very pleased with this performance and will continue to use our best practices for writing instruction developed in recent years.

● **Are there specific site strategies and improvement activities in reading and writing that appear to be most successful: (1) in helping students not-yet-Proficient; and (2) in challenging students at and above grade level? Do these suggest possible program adjustments in emphasis or direction to better challenge all students and support student learning? What are your next steps?**

Our specific strategies in reading and writing begin with a balanced literacy approach, as advocated by our district literacy specialists, using development of pre-reading skills, guided reading instruction, word work, shared reading/core literature, journal response writing, 6-Traits Writing skill development, etc. Much of this occurs in Readers' and Writers' Workshop formats. This format along with other strategies support differentiation in our instruction to address the needs of our students who span a wide range of skill levels. Small group reading instruction allows for targeted teaching to address both advanced and struggling readers. Writers' Workshop is a model in which a mini lesson is flowed by individual or small group support based on the particular skill that students are practicing in their writing.

Students in grades 1-3 who are not making sufficient progress as a result of classroom instruction and classroom level interventions in reading are referred for additional intervention with our Reading Specialist. Sometimes students are drawn into small group instruction with our Resource Specialist. Students in grades 1 and 2 can receive additional support through Reading Academy twice per week and/or literacy summer school. Our Resource Specialist includes students in her Homework Club with targeted materials for additional support at home. If problems persist despite these additional interventions, further assessment is often recommended in order to consider whether or not the student qualifies for special education support services. These strategies are not unique to Nixon, but the interventions have been very effective in helping most of our struggling youngsters to meet grade level benchmarks in reading and writing. Our next step is to continue our professional learning about effective practices in teaching reading and, in particular, teaching struggling readers, and to adjust our practice based on what we learn.

● **How many African American and Hispanic students do you have by grade level? Do you have other Under-represented Minorities (URMs, e.g., Pacific Islanders)? How many URMs are on grade level (Proficient or better) in achievement as measured by the CST ELA, the Reading Benchmarks and the ERB WrAP? What are your successes and challenges in reading and writing with these students?**

For the 2008-2009 school year, the following chart illustrates our African American and Hispanic students' performance by grade level and proficiency:

Numbers of African American and Hispanic Students at Nixon by Grade Level*						
	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
African American	0	3	2	1	1	2
Hispanic	2	8	6	4	4	7

* These are as reported by parents on registration materials. We have additional students who are multiracial and others whose parents have selected "decline to state" in response to the question about race/ethnicity.

Seventy-eight percent (7 of 9) of our African American students were at or above grade level on all grade level literacy measures. Sixty-one percent (19 of 31) of our Hispanic students were at or above grade level on all grade level literacy measures. (Keep in mind that a significant percentage of Hispanic students are English Learners.)

No child slips through his elementary education at Nixon unnoticed. Because of our low class sizes, we really get to know each student and his/her specific strengths and challenges. We pay attention, discuss and intervene with students who are not making necessary progress. We hold high expectations for success for all of our students, while knowing that some children may take longer or may need different strategies to reach the goals.

We recognize that it can be challenging for our African American and Hispanic students to be in the minority in their classrooms among our large groups of Caucasian and Asian American students. Our teachers and librarian include literature as well as pictures in the classroom that depict people of all races and ethnicities.

We have very few African American students, so it is difficult to draw accurate conclusions about their performance as a group from such a limited pool of data. We have a larger number of Hispanic students, but the group is still statistically small. Because many of our Hispanic students are English Learners we know that it may take a bit longer for them to reach grade level proficiency in reading and writing English. Research tells us that it takes 4-7 years to achieve fluency with academic language in a second language.

One strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of our instruction for these students is to monitor individual progress over time in addition to looking at each year's pooled data. It is important to us that students who are with us for the majority of their elementary education make continuous progress and exceed grade level proficiency whenever possible before leaving elementary school. To compete in the very high achieving group of peers in Palo Alto, we want these students to be above grade level in their reading and writing skills as they enter middle school. Of the five African American or Hispanic students who completed 5th grade in spring, 2009 and who had been at Nixon for at least three years, 3 were above grade level in reading and writing (measured by DRA and ERB WrAP), one was at grade level and one was below grade level.

MATH

Strategic Plan Sub-Initiatives	Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities
<p>A1.1 Improve K-12 curriculum, articulation, coordination, and alignment to meet needs of the full range of students.</p> <p>A1.2 Expand curricular, instructional, and assessment support, and staff training to increase the breadth and depth of learning for all students.</p> <p>A1.3 Communicate a K-12 vision for the appropriate use of specific instructional strategies by curriculum areas.</p> <p>A2.4 Support K-12 development of requisite academic skills and personal habits of mind required for college/post-secondary success.</p> <p>A3.2 Examine particular needs of students performing below grade level and improve support.</p> <p>A3.3 Examine structures, policies, and attitudes that serve as barriers to achievement of underrepresented minority students to improve climate and foster respect, inclusion, and high expectations for diverse student groups.</p> <p>A3.4 Enhance early intervention (e.g. assessment, intervention programs).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff will assess, collect, examine, and use data (California Standards Test - Mathematics, MARS, PAUSD math assessments, CAT6, classroom assignments, and observations) to develop and differentiate instruction which supports learning for all students. ● The principal, learning specialist and teachers will hold Kid by Kid meetings in October to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, plan prescriptive strategies (tutoring, PAUSD Math Academy, Math Intervention summer school, classroom aides), and will review and revise these plans with the principal in February. ● Teachers will collaborate at their grade level and across grade levels to share strategies and training that support computational skills, conceptual understanding, and problem solving skills in math, and strategies to reduce the achievement gap in mathematics. ● The math specialist will do a combination of pull-out and push-in strategies to support differentiation in grades 2-5. ● Grades 2 and 4 will work with the District TOSA to revise and implement two units using flexible grouping to differentiate. ● Teachers will be given staff meeting time to continue to develop an expertise in differentiation for students at all levels – Advanced, Proficient, Below Proficient, Gifted, Special Needs and ELL. (These are ideas like flexible grouping, centers/stations, labs, adult volunteers/tutors.) ● Teachers and math network participants will use staff meeting time to continue developing math content and instructional strategies and provide updates. ● Staff will build partnerships with parents to support students in math through conferences, Student Study Teams, and parent education communication. ● District staff and the principal will provide opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development activities focused on curriculum, instruction, and assessment in mathematics, with a focus on content knowledge, differentiation strategies and math adoption. ● Staff will incorporate technology tools (hardware and software) that support math as appropriate and available.

Assessment & Evaluation Questions About Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities

- **On the California Standards Test in Mathematics (CST Math), what percentage of students scored “Advanced” and “Proficient” in spring 2008? What percentage of students scored “Advanced” both years? What percentage of students made a year’s progress in the grade level curriculum?**
Ninety-two percent of Nixon students in grades 2 through 5 who took the CST in Mathematics in spring, 2009 scored at either Proficient or Advanced levels as compared to 89% in spring, 2008. For the 180 students who were tested in both spring, 2008 and spring 2009, 61% were Advanced in both years. 91% made at least one year’s progress as measured by this assessment.
- **What do the matched score APIs suggest with respect to overall progress? On the matched score APIs, comparing Base 2007 to Growth 2008, what number and percentage of students each year were (1) “Advanced” and “Proficient,” (2) “Basic,” and (3) “Below Basic” and “Far Below Basic”?**
The *matched* score APIs in Mathematics show growth from base score 928 (2008) to 956 in 2009. The percentage of *matched* students performing in the Below Basic and far Below Basic levels dropped from 5% in 2008 to 2% in 2009. The percentage of *matched* students performing at the Basic level dropped from 6% to 4% while the percentage of *matched* students performing at either the Proficient or Advanced levels increased from 89% to 94%.
- **What do the results on the MARS (Mathematics Assessment Resource Service) assessment show with respect to grade level achievement for students in grades 3 and 5? (If you are testing with MARS in grades 2 and/or 4 as well, please comment with respect to level of participation and achievement.)**
Ninety percent of Nixon 3rd graders performed at or above the Proficient level on the MARS assessment as compared to 85% in spring, 2008; 55% of the 3rd graders scored at the Advanced level. Ninety-five percent of Nixon 5th graders performed at or above the Proficient level in spring, 2009 as compared to 96% of 5th graders in spring, 2008; 76% of the 5th graders performed at the Advanced level. The MARS assessment requires students to solve complex, multi-step problems and to explain their strategies for solving the problems. This assessment is an important complement to the California Standards Tests.
- **Are there specific site strategies and improvement activities in mathematics that appear to be most successful: (1) in helping students not-yet-Proficient; and (2) in challenging students at and above grade level? Do these suggest possible program adjustments in emphasis or direction to better challenge all students and support student learning? What are your next steps?**
The challenge of mathematics instruction at Nixon, like all Palo Alto schools, is the wide range of levels of understanding of mathematics among the students in each grade level. Teachers have been working for years on strategies for differentiation within mathematics instruction. These differentiation strategies require small group instruction for a part of the time allocated to math. Understanding of mathematics is complex; it is not limited to proficiency with algorithms for solving arithmetic problems. Differentiation for advanced students is focused on challenging students with tasks of increasing depth and complexity. Struggling students receive interventions to break down concepts into smaller chunks as well as additional practice to increase understanding. At Nixon, we use some of our PiE funds to pay for math specialists at 2nd through 5th grade to assist teachers with small group instruction for the purpose of differentiation.
- **How many African American and Hispanic students do you have by grade level? Do you have other Under-represented Minorities (URMs, e.g., Pacific Islanders)? How many URMs are on grade level (Proficient or better) in achievement as measured by the CST Math and the MARS? What are your successes and challenges in mathematics with these students?**
During the 2008-2009 school year, the following chart summarizes our African American and Hispanic students’ performance by grade level and proficiency:

Numbers of African American and Hispanic Students at Nixon by Grade Level*				
	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
African American	2	1	1	2
Hispanic	6	4	4	7

* These are as reported by parents on registration materials. We have additional students who are multiracial and others whose parents have selected "decline to state" in response to the question about race/ethnicity.

Sixty-seven percent (4 of 6) of our African American 2nd through 5th graders were at or above grade level on all grade level math assessments. Sixty-seven percent (14 of 21) of Nixon 2nd through 5th grade Hispanic students were at or above grade level on all grade level math assessments.

As mentioned previously in relation to Language Arts, with small numbers of students it is difficult to infer very much from a single set of data. Rather, we are trying to look at student progress over time, most especially for students who are here at Nixon for at least three years. Of the five African American or Hispanic students who completed 5th grade in spring, 2009 and who had been at Nixon for at least three years, 2 were above grade level in math (as measured by CST and MARS), two were at grade level and one was below grade level.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Strategic Plan Sub-Initiatives	Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities
<p>A3.1 Continue and enhance efforts to address social, emotional, physical, and character education needs of students.</p> <p>A3.3 Examine structures, policies, and attitudes that serve as barriers to achievement of underrepresented minority students to improve climate and foster respect, inclusion, and high expectations for diverse student groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parents and teachers will work together to include all cultures represented in the Nixon learning community at school events such as the Back to School Coffee and fall picnic, parent education nights, international day, winter assembly, and PTA committees. ● Parents and staff will work together to inform and involve the parents in the school community through NixonNews, classroom newsletters, e-news, <i>happy</i> postcards, e-mails, conferences, and phone calls. ● Site Council and PTA will provide avenues through surveys and meetings for parents to provide input regarding the school climate. ● Social/emotional skills will focus on students being responsible, respectful and safe. They will be based on positive recognition, conflict resolution, buddy classes and class meetings. ● The site council will provide the leadership to explore the formalization of a character development program. ● A social/emotional skills program will be fully integrated through class activities, grade level, and whole school assemblies as appropriate. ● Staff will provide opportunities for all students to participate in student affirming recognition programs (Student of the Week, new student lunch with school psychologist and monthly lunch/ice cream with the principal). ● The duty schedule will be designed to place adults in a manner that provides a welcoming atmosphere to students each day as they arrive. ● Teachers will have a staff meeting in early-Sept. to communicate about the social/emotional needs of their students. ● Intermediate grade students will help acclimate primary students to their new school environment. ● Teachers will provide opportunities for students to use their multiple talents to demonstrate learning and understanding of the curriculum through art, drama, music, and technology.

- Teachers will share strategies and best practices for providing diverse avenues for student's success in the core curriculum.
- The school will provide students with age appropriate leadership opportunities such as student council, student-led activities, assemblies and sport programs.
- The school will provide opportunities for all students to participate in recognition programs.
- The school will support students with community outreach experiences.
- The staff will provide students with opportunities to share their talents, leadership, and skills with student council assemblies and sports programs.
- Staff and parents will provide students with a variety of noon recess activities (science, art, chess, team sports, and library).
- The staff and parents will find strategies to cultivate a feeling of community for kids from other neighborhoods (URM).
- Spring placement strategies will include the classroom clustering of URM students where appropriate, in order to foster a sense of belonging among students.
- The staff will foster 1:1 mentorships between interested staff and URM students.
- Staff and the parent community will provide opportunities for successful adults of color to act as role models for all students.
- The principal will facilitate the placement of URM students in school supported after school programs and parent-sponsored enrichment classes.
- The Nixon will have a "Green Team" which will provide the leadership and activities to protect our environment.
- The staff and parents will continue to work together to showcase our ethnic and racial diversity through multicultural events.
- The principal and staff representatives will continue to be actively involved in Leadership for Equity to provide all students with sense of belonging and academic achievement.

Assessment & Evaluation Questions About Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities

- **What do the school's results on the California Physical Fitness Test show with respect to the physical fitness of students in grade 5? Do any of these results differ substantially from the District results?**
In spring, 2009, 85% of Nixon 5th graders met the standard for the "Healthy Fitness Zone" on 5 of 6 state measures; 58% of them met the HFZ standard on all 6 measures. This compares to 71% of 5th graders in PAUSD meeting standard on at least 5 of 6 measures, with 37% meeting standard on all six measures. The percent of students meeting each particular standard ranged from a low of 81% on the flexibility measure to a high of 96% on trunk extension. This is an improvement over spring 2008 results when 51% of that year's 5th graders met the HFZ standard on 5 of 6 measures and 21% met the standard on all six measures. We will need to continue to monitor these results to see if the improvement is a trend or not. We are putting a focus on physical health and wellness in the 2009-2010 school year, but each group of 5th graders is about 70 students so variations in the groups can make a difference. This assessment is given only once in elementary school, so tracking progress over time is not possible.
- **What do the District results on the California Healthy Kids Survey (grade 5) show with respect to social-emotional needs, and health and safety issues? What strategies have you found successful in fostering social-emotional and physical health and resilience in students? Have you made notable progress in any specific areas and/or with specific programs?**
During the 2008-2009 school year, Nixon staff, under the guidance of the Site Council, sought to reinvigorate the school's character education program. Our Lifeskills program was initiated in January, 2009. Lifeskills include character traits which support moral development (e.g. Truthfulness, Integrity, Caring, Responsibility), social-emotional development (e.g. Friendship, Respect, Patience, Flexibility, Sense of Humor) and success in school/work (e.g. Effort, Organization, Perseverance, Resourcefulness, Active Listening, Personal Best). Daily morning announcements by students and staff explain and give examples of Lifeskills in practice. Teachers weave references to Lifeskills into classroom instruction and students are recognized for growth or for exemplifying particular Lifeskills at our bimonthly Lifeskills Awards Assemblies.
- **What needs and challenges have you identified in these areas for the school in general and/or for specific grade levels? What are your next steps?**
Teachers and the Site Council gave a positive evaluation to our initial efforts with the Lifeskills program. We will continue with this and explore opportunities to expand its influence through greater parent education and staff development for our classified staff. Our Site Council also identified the area of physical health, well-being and safety as areas for focus during the 2009-2010 school year. This effort is intended to include exercise and healthy eating to compliment our Lifeskills program, as well as personal safety training.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Strategic Plan Sub-Initiatives	Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities
<p>A3.3 Examine structures, policies, and attitudes that serve as barriers to achievement of underrepresented minority students to improve climate and foster respect, inclusion, and high expectations for diverse student groups.</p> <p>Site Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● English Language Learners will achieve measurable progress in English language acquisition. ● English Language Learners will improve in their ability to access the grade-level curriculum in English. ● English Language Learners and their families will be integrated into the schoolwide community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ELD teacher will administer the CELDT to all new students whose home language is other than English, and students receiving ELD services, to obtain baseline and annual data. ● ELD specialist FTEs per school will be decided by October 1st. ● Teachers will use Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies in all classrooms (30 mins/day). ● The principal and teachers will continue to provide opportunities for the communication between the school community and the families of English Language Learners (ELL) in order to cultivate greater community for English Language Learners and their families. ● The ELD specialist will be given time to attend all district level EL training and meetings. ● Staff will participate in staff meetings and staff development to focus on language acquisition and behaviors of second language learners, including strategies and environments to support their language acquisition and acclimation. ● Staff will provide opportunities for students and their families to share their culture. ● Primary language tutors will support first year ELD students who are at levels one and two. ● The ELD teacher and principal will continue to explore various program options and delivery methods to support EL students and their classroom teachers. ● The ELD teacher will continue to support teachers with grade level specific curriculum packets to be used for non-English speaking students as needed. ● The ELD specialist, in collaboration with specific grades, will pilot several instructional formats. The purpose of these is to support ELLs at their CELDT levels and enabling them to best access the core curriculum. ● Dyna Ed software will be used to instruct ELL students.

Assessment & Evaluation Questions About Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities

- **How many English Learners (ELs) took the annual CELDT (California English Language Development Test) at each grade level? How many of these students met the CELDT criterion for reclassification?**
One hundred fifty-six Nixon students took the California English Language Development Test between 8/25/08 and 4/17/09. Thirty-one 3rd through 5th grade students were reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (R-FEP) between 9/25/08 and 9/24/09.
- **How many students took the initial CELDT (California English Language Development Test) at each grade level? How many of these students met the CELDT criterion for reclassification?**
Sixty-one Nixon students took the CELDT for the first time between 8/25/08 and 4/17/09. Sixteen of these students were identified as Initially Fluent English Proficient (I-FEP).
- **How many students by grade level are Reclassified English Language Learners (RFEP)?**
The following numbers of students are presently R-FEP at Nixon: seven 3rd graders, seven 4th graders, and ten 5th graders; the difference between this and the 32 RFEP students listed in #1 above being those who graduated from Nixon in June, 2009.
- **What programs do you find particularly successful in supporting ELs and RFEP students? What are your major language groups?**
Our English Language teacher uses a combination of pull out and push in support for English Learners at CELDT levels 1-3. This has been very effective in supporting the progress of our English Learners. She makes use of a wide variety of materials and coordinates her teaching with classroom teachers to support her students. All Nixon teachers have their CLAD certification or the equivalent, so their ELD and SDAIE instructional strategies are also an important part of our efforts. The largest language group at Nixon is Korean; but a wide variety of languages are spoken in the homes of Nixon students.
- **What are the challenges and successes with respect to academic progress and learning environment for EL/RFEP students and their families? Are there distinctions to be made in needs and strategies between major language groups?**
Knowing the highly accelerated academic level of most Nixon and PAUSD students, we are careful to reclassify a student as FEP only when we are confident that the child can be successful in our challenging academic climate. We do not reclassify simply because a student has met the minimal state requirements for reclassification. Academic vocabulary and strong writing skills are the areas that are most challenging for many of our students. Many of the parents of English Learners at Nixon are associated with Stanford University and are, themselves, literate in English. These students get strong support from their parents as they translate their knowledge from another language into English. Our English Learners who have the greatest challenge do not have parents who are literate in English and many of these students are native Spanish speakers. Our ELD teacher speaks Spanish and reaches out to the families of these students to make sure that they feel welcome and understood at Nixon.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS: GIFTED, TALENTED & HIGH ACHIEVING STUDENTS

Strategic Plan Sub-Initiatives	Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities
<p>A1.2 Expand curricular, instructional, and assessment support, and staff training to increase the breadth and depth of learning for all students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The principal and teachers will implement the PAUSD GATE plan with a focus on: identifying URM, special education, and ELL students; addressing the social and emotional needs of GATE students; and improving parent communication. ● The principal and teachers, with support of the District staff, will implement the PAUSD GATE plan with a focus on: academics and addressing the social and emotional needs of GATE students; and improving parent communication. ● Teachers will provide classroom-centered experiences for GATE, high performing, and other motivated K-5 students through assignments and expectations modified for greater depth and/or complexity. Content, process and product will be the means of differentiation. ● Through the Kid by Kid process, the principal and teachers will identify high achieving students, develop a plan, and monitor student progress. The plan will be written and the student's parents notified by the end of November of each calendar year. ● The principal and teachers will use staff meeting time to share instructional strategies, curriculum materials and expectations that challenge high achieving students. ● A variety of differentiation strategies based on Blooms taxonomy will be used to challenge student within the classroom. ● District staff and the principal will continue to provide professional development opportunities on implementing techniques to provide differentiated instruction in the classroom, particularly in the academic area of mathematics.

Assessment & Evaluation Questions About Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities

● **Describe the GATE population with respect to ethnicity and ELL status.**

We have very few students who are identified as GATE. However, we have many gifted and talented students at Nixon. We have not put a great focus on identification of students, rather our efforts have been put into providing the differentiated instruction needed to meet the needs of highly capable students, regardless of whether or not they are officially identified. GATE identification does not provide any additional services, nor does lack of identification preclude a student from receiving differentiated instruction to meet his/her instructional needs.

● **What strategies and programs were used to support GATE and high achieving students?**

Our programs to support GATE and high achieving students have been described previously in this document. Teachers work extremely hard to differentiate instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics to meet the needs our many talented and high achieving students.

● **What are our next steps with respect to this objective?**

Our next steps for the 2009-2010 school year include a focus on differentiation in mathematics using the new Everyday Math program, learning what it has to offer and supplementing where necessary. Nixon teachers will also be continuing to develop their use of best practices for small group instruction within our balanced literacy program. A second strategy will be to send representative staff members to a regional training workshop to learn about the latest research regarding teaching gifted students. These representative teachers will share their learning with the rest of the staff at a faculty meeting.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS: SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Strategic Plan Sub-Initiatives	Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities
<p>A3.2 Examine particular needs of students performing below grade level and improve support.</p> <p>A3.4 Enhance early intervention (e.g. assessment, intervention programs).</p> <p>Provide communication between the school community and families of special education students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District staff, resource and speech and language specialists will provide staff with training about the specific learning needs of special education students. ● Teachers, resource and speech and language specialists will provide classroom activities and materials that allow special education students access to the core curriculum. ● The Resource Specialist will evaluate the progress of the special education students regularly to ensure that Individual Education Plan goals are met. ● The staff will be provided opportunities to become more knowledgeable about learning disabilities. ● The support team will implement and continue to monitor the revised student referral process. Revision should be continual with staff input.

Assessment & Evaluation Questions About Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities

- **What strategies and programs were used to support special education students?**
 Our primary special day class students receive all of their instruction in small groups, either within their own classroom or in their mainstream classrooms from our special education teacher and her team of instructional aides as well as our general education classroom teachers. Special education students with specific learning disabilities get targeted instruction from our Resource Specialist and her team of instructional aides in both pull-out and push-in formats. Our students whose disability is on the autism spectrum, get instruction from our Speech and Language therapist for social pragmatic skill development; some of these students also get support from district behavior specialists and, where appropriate, support from our Resource Specialist and a classroom aide.
- **What accommodations in regular education programs were implemented prior to referral for assessment?**
 Interventions for special needs students begin with classroom teachers differentiating and providing remediation at the classroom level. Students who are struggling will be recommended for Reading or Math Academy. In our Kid by Kid meetings and Student Study Team meetings, it may be decided that further support will be provided by our Reading Specialist. If these interventions are unsuccessful at bringing a student to grade level proficiency or if there are strong indications that a specific learning disability may be interfering with the student's learning, further assessment will be recommended through the SST process. This assessment process will determine whether or not the student qualifies for special education support. However, regardless of the qualification, the assessment process will provide valuable insight into the student's strengths and challenges to inform our instruction.

● **What are our next steps with respect to this objective?**

Our next step is simply to continue what we are doing. We have a very hard working, effective special education team. Students are supported in many ways before being referred for special education testing. We will be reviewing our intervention strategies at a staff meeting during the 2009-2010 school year and making improvements and adjustments as needed. Those students who are qualified for special education are receiving excellent instruction and making good progress. Sixty-one percent of Nixon special education students (grades 2-5) performed at the Proficient level on the ELA CST, spring, 2009. Sixty-eight percent of Nixon special education students (grades 2-5) performed at the Proficient level on the Math CST, spring 2009.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS: UNDER ACHIEVING STUDENTS

Strategic Plan Sub-Initiatives	Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities
<p>A3.2 Examine particular needs of students performing below grade level and improve support.</p> <p>A3.3 Examine structures, policies, and attitudes that serve as barriers to achievement of underrepresented minority students to improve climate and foster respect, inclusion, and high expectations for diverse student groups.</p> <p>A3.4 Enhance early intervention (e.g. assessment, intervention programs).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The principal, staff support team, and teachers will identify at risk students at all grade levels based on below grade level performance in reading, writing, and mathematics. ● District staff, the principal, and teachers will continue to work with all intervention programs (Academy, literacy, and math summer schools, Homework Club and tutorial programs) to further meet the needs of students who are performing below grade level. ● The reading resource and speech and language specialists, ELD teacher, principal will meet in September to place student in appropriate support programs. ● The classroom teacher, learning specialist or principal will make personal contact with the parents of each struggling student by November to insure that the parents are aware of strategies to support their student. ● Learning specialist will meet in early September to match struggling students with appropriate programs and balance specialists' student loads. ● SSTs, staff meeting triads, TACKLE, Kid by Kid and informal teacher team meetings are all formats to be used to develop strategies to improve each student's academic success.

Assessment & Evaluation Questions About Site Strategies & School Improvement Activities

- **What strategies and programs were used to support low achieving students?**
 We use a wide variety of programs to support low achieving students. Kid by Kid, SST, and TACKLE meetings all help us identify low achieving students and match them with appropriate support. The support includes intervention programs already mentioned such as Literacy and Math Academies, summer literacy and math programs, Avenidas tutoring program with adult volunteers and support from our reading specialist and ELD teacher. Additionally, we have successfully placed students in after school enrichment activities that help them recognize their strengths and build self-esteem. We are able to accomplish this by offering scholarships through an agreement with the program providers.
- **What are our next steps with respect to this objective?**
 We continue to recognize, identify and discuss each student who is not achieving to his/her potential. We will continue to consider additional interventions or improvements to our existing interventions to support under achieving students.

APPENDIX

2008-09 Demographic and Student Achievement Data Nixon Elementary

2008-09 Enrollment

	Number	Percent
Asian	156	36 %
White, not Hispanic	221	51 %
African American	8	2 %
Hispanic/Latino	31	7 %
Other	20	5 %
Total	436	
Free-Reduced Lunch	27	6 %
Special Education	47	11 %
English Learner (EL)	74	17 %

Source: SASI- August 2009.

Academic Performance Index (API)

2007 BASE	2008 GROWTH	2008 BASE	2009 GROWTH
941	943	939	955

Academic Performance Index (API) is calculated by the State using results of the STAR tests. CAHSEE is also a component of API for high schools. An annual target for growth is set. An API of 800 is considered exemplary.

MARS- Grades 3, 5 Percent of Students Scoring at Each Level

	Grade 3			Grade 5		
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Highest	73	47	55	71	63	76
At Standard	25	38	35	15	33	19
Below Standard	0	12	10	14	0	5
Minimal Achievement	1	3	0	0	3	1

The MARS test is aligned to NCTM standards and is designed to assess students' ability to solve mathematical problems and to explain their thinking.

Education Records Bureau Writing Assessment Program (ERB WrAP) Percent of Students in Suburban Stanine Groups 1 to 3, 4 to 6, 7 to 9

	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 5
Stanine 7 - 9	27	31	42	40	33	76
Stanine 4 - 6	66	67	42	54	57	23
Stanine 1 - 3	7	2	16	5	10	1
Number Tested	59	64	76	57	63	84

The ERB WrAP provides a direct measure of writing ability by having each student produce a writing sample. Each essay receives one score for each of six writing trails.

PAUSD Literacy Assessment Portfolio/Running Records Percent of Students At or Above Grade Level

Grade	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
K	76	93	88
1	83	85	81
2	89	85	90
3	90	83	88
4	95	84	88
5	100	94	95

The PAUSD Literacy Assessment Portfolio provides strategies and tools to be used district wide in assessing student progress. Running Records are a tool for assessing students' text levels using a series of graded or leveled reading materials.

Additional sources of data: School demographics, testing and accountability information, class size, staffing and financial information are available in the state-mandated School Accountability Report Card (SARC) for this school. This may be found on the PAUSD website, <http://www.pausd.org/community/about/sar.shtml>, or obtained at the school. Extensive data, current and historical, on all public schools is also available on the California Department of Education website: <http://www.cde.ca.gov>.

Nixon STAR Test Results

CST refers to the California Standards Test.

This table shows the % of students scoring at the proficient and advanced levels.

Grade	CST 2006			CST 2007			CST 2008			CST 2009		
	% Prof	% Adv	% Both	% Prof	% Adv	% Both	% Prof	% Adv	% Both	% Prof	% Adv	% Both
English/Language Arts												
2	35	57	92	26	52	78	32	53	85	29	54	83
3	29	41	70	32	52	84	18	47	65	22	64	86
4	15	67	82	19	73	92	13	76	89	21	67	88
5	22	73	95	25	66	91	23	71	94	19	73	92
Mathematics												
2	24	61	85	24	59	83	22	60	82	17	72	89
3	27	63	90	14	73	87	26	61	87	16	76	92
4	13	79	92	19	73	92	16	76	92	13	84	97
5	17	77	94	34	57	91	26	68	94	19	73	92
Science												
5	40	47	87	45	40	85	31	55	86	25	60	85