



# The Edible Express

Volume VII Issue III Winter-'08-'09



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...creating an information bridge that allows educators easy access to ready to use, research based nutrition information.

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2009 will be just fine, if we

## Start with Real Inspiration!

★ Alisal High School took a leap of faith- and finished the last school year with a **48 point jump in their Academic Performance Index!** To use today's popular language, they said "Yes we can!" and they did.

Principal Dan Burns tells how it happened: "3 things contributed to the school's success.

**First**, we all made a commitment to personalizing the high school experience for freshmen. We now **teach them how to be a high school student**: study habits; research methods; how to join clubs and be part of the school's activities.

The idea came from looking at ways to make high school relevant, and using the Carnegie concept of small learning communities, teachers at Alisal mirrored the "learning families" from middle school, but brought the experience up to a high school level.

There are many more students in clubs and activities now ~ and "school spirit" is a big evidence that this is working.

**Second**, we devote a lot of resources and energy to preparing kids to pass the California Exit Exam.

Want to know more about "Professional Learning Communities" Check out these references:



<http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html>

<http://www.allthingsplc.info/>

<http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/ch10/chp10proflearning.aspx>



Alisal High School Principal Dan Burns

Curriculum is aligned with **focus standards** developed by our teachers, and 10th grade teachers collaborated using the state-adopted intervention curriculum to develop **intervention techniques** that helped individual student achieve success.

★ The school enters a 7-week focus period right before the exam. [Knowing that well-nourished students do better academically,] we make sure **ALL students are provided with meals, and on testing days we offer a nutritious snack before the exam.**

★ ★ **Third**, we implement a collaboration schedule for teachers ~ every two weeks they meet and focus specifically on what their students need to know.



# At Jack Francioni School, a laser-like focus...



Principal Dr. Jeanne Tutop

At Jack Francioni School in Soledad, Principal Dr. Jeanne Tutop runs a tight ship that is entirely focused on student achievement. She explains the school's **47 point increase in API** by saying:

## **ACADEMIC SUCCESS IS NON-NEGOTIABLE.**

Three factors contributing to this year's success are:

**First** is the focus on academic achievement. For the last three years we have developed a strong **Professional Learning Community**. Everything we do is in support of an increase in student learning. We step in early to improve learning for individual students:

- If a child is not at benchmark, there are interventions that can help. Most teachers invite students to come in before school, or stay later, so that the teacher can re-teach standards already presented in class. There is a Read Naturally lab after school that focuses on reading comprehension and a math lab using Tools For Success; these are intensive labs that are offered 3 times a week for 8 weeks.
- If a child is not meeting the 85% mark in Accelerated Reading, they are assigned to an AR club after signing a contract with their parents. These clubs of 8-12 students enjoy help from instructional aides, the Outreach Consultant, and the Family Advocate, as well as EL Resource Teachers and RSP teachers.

- Students who don't read enough on a regular basis to take tests come into the principal's office during recess to read. Many times there are 5-10 students sitting in my office reading.

**Second** is the focus on data. We begin the first day back from summer vacation and keep looking at it till we leave in June. Every teacher and grade level looks at their data and engages in an ongoing dialogue based on their observations:

- Every teacher submits an Action Plan to the principal addressing the strengths and weaknesses they see in their class and grade level data. Their plans discuss in detail just what steps will take 85% of their classes to benchmark by June.
- There are monthly grade level meetings with the principal to discuss data collected from classrooms ~ How many students have passed tests? Teachers then provide evidence of the re-teaching and re-testing process that will help students master standards.
- There is a chart and post-it system in the staff workroom that feature post-its detailing the ELA and math levels of each and every student on campus. After every bench-mark or unit test, teachers move post-its to indicate new results, and I look to see the progression of students from FBB to Proficient & Advanced.

**Third** is the focus on staff development and improvement of curriculum delivery. *This focus is laser-like:*

- DataWorks delivered 3 workshops that addressed student engagement, curriculum delivery and curriculum alignment.
- I go into the classroom at least three times a week *(continued in side bar)*

I try to get in daily to all the classes ~ not always surprise visits. Sometimes I write on our agenda board, describing what kind of engagement strategy I expect to see when I go into the class room.

Our staff meetings are meetings of our **Professional Learning Community**. We do a book study each year. Each month a different grade level presents a chapter of the book being studied, and presenting teachers model good teaching strategies. I also bring in articles in PowerPoint form that spark group discussions on effectively incorporating these strategies into our school environment.

We have two peer-coaches & a Visual Aid coach that help teachers in their delivery of the curriculum.



# At Rose Ferrero, student growth and success is celebrated



Physical Education



Math



ELA



"S.O.S."



3



The school's **54 point increase in API** is a worthy reason to hoot'n'holler. Principal Julie Brush explains that it is a combination of many factors providing the learning environment that support academic achievement. "There are so many strategies that we have put into place or altered in our determination to raise student achievement that it is difficult to pick three." Nonetheless:

**First**, "the strategy I would say has had the biggest impact on the increase of student achievement isn't necessarily a teaching strategy. Our entire staff embraced the theory and practices needed to become a **Professional Learning Community**. This has many components such as embedding intervention and enrichment into the daily schedule. Teams collaborate together weekly with a focus on student learning. They use the data from common assessments to drive the focused instruction that takes place during this intervention time.

**Second**, last year our school was awarded a P.E. grant which resulted in a part-time P.E. teacher. This has been huge in our ability to differentiate and personalize instruction. Every other day teachers send half of their class to P.E. for 40 minutes while they focus on the specific needs of the other half. This directed teaching time along with the increased fitness has made a difference.

**Third**, another aspect of education that we believe to be pivotal is school climate. We know that when children feel safe, cared for and secure they are better able to learn. Our school has implemented Safe School Ambassadors which is a program that "empowers the bystanders". Selected students learn how to notice mistreatment, think about which of their actions could help the situation, and then act accordingly.



Principal Julie Brush

Behavior referrals, bullying and physical acts of violence have decreased, partially because of this program."

There are other, seemingly minor actions that add to the mix of success:

- Bell Works ~ short, subject-focused activity pages in math, ELA and science that are formatted like test pages and use the language and directions of test-taking
- The S.O.S. (support our students) program in which a staff member "adopts" a student; makes sure to make friendly eye contact and "Hi - how are you doing today?" daily, and generally provides an ongoing, supportive and personal adult contact for the student.

Brush concludes that "As a staff we celebrate our successes and the growth of each student. We have frequent award assemblies where many students are recognized in a variety of areas, a service club which gives students the opportunity to feel good about helping their school - as well as a sense of belonging - and an incentive program to encourage reading. These things, and many more come together to make Rose Ferrero a warm, caring and focused learning environment.

# Brain Foods

All three principals from these up and coming schools agree that **good nutrition and physical activity are key components to school success**. All three schools make sure that students are well-nourished. In testing season, breakfast really IS the most important meal of the day. Bananas are distributed. Drinking water is plentiful. A nourishing snack is provided. Recess is a time for vigorous physical activity, prompting students to breathe deeply.

Another wise step is to let parents, teachers and students know which foods promote healthy brain activity (you can deduce that the usual fatty, salty and fast foods have the opposite effect~ slowing down the thinking process as the body deals with the onslaught of calories).

It is generally agreed ~from UC Berkeley to CSPI ~ that certain foods are “brain foods”, mostly due to their omega-3 fatty acids or anti-oxidant contents. These include fish (especially fatty fish like salmon, tuna and sardines), nuts, whole grains, citrus fruits berries and avocados ~ and chocolate! In moderation.

Knowing this, one might consider a night-before-testing supper of fish tacos in whole wheat tortillas (with guacamole) with blueberry crisp for a postre. A good breakfast might be ½ cup of fresh orange juice, a cup of home-made granola with nuts and a cup of cocoa.

I know ~ you're going for the chocolate!

You know me well.

## 10 Really Good Reasons Exercise is Important for Your Child - print for parents

[http://www.activelivingresources.org/assets/kids\\_activity\\_spanish.pdf](http://www.activelivingresources.org/assets/kids_activity_spanish.pdf)

[http://www.activelivingresources.org/assets/kids\\_activity\\_english.pdf](http://www.activelivingresources.org/assets/kids_activity_english.pdf)

Thanks to NFCCC



The University of California Cooperative Extension's Youth Nutrition Education Program is for teachers, youth program coordinators, staff and counselors working with students at schools that have 50% or more participation in the Free and Reduced School Meal Plan, in Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties. Our goal is to encourage students to try many different foods, eat plenty of nutritious fruits and vegetables and enjoy appetizing and nutritious snacks, especially whole grain snacks that they can prepare themselves. Gardening projects help students learn about plant food sources from hands-on experiences.

UCCE offers free on-site workshops, for teachers or staff, free ongoing program support and free curriculum - choose from a variety of educator-developed selections geared toward helping your class to achieve AYP goals. Partner with Youth FSNE to practice math and language skills for testing, using activities with nutrition content.

For more information call Kathleen at 831.759.7373 .

