



SPRING 2023



THE DISTRICT BRIDGE

Sharing Our Progress, Accomplishments, and Appreciation

Dear Friends,

We owe so much of our accomplishments in the Sunnyvale School District to our community's shared commitment to the growth and success of our students. Our work begins with partnering with families as we listen to understand the unique needs and perspectives of each student, and we support families to bolster student learning at home.

Nonprofit partners like Sunnyvale Community Services and El Camino Health Foundation help ensure our families have access to services that help them stay housed and healthy. The residents of Sunnyvale also play an important partnership role by passing school facilities bonds that ensure we have modern, safe classrooms and play areas for our children. The City of Sunnyvale partners with us by maintaining beautiful, safe fields for student play and recreation during the day and the rest of the community in the evenings and weekends. It really does take a village, and we are grateful for each community member that makes up ours in Sunnyvale.

These partnerships all help us support the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral development of Sunnyvale's students. Our teachers and staff provide compelling curriculum and engaging instruction to empower our children to go as far as their imagination and hard work will take them.

We make it clear that we believe in each child and have high expectations for them. Once our students know that they are capable and can work through even the most rigorous challenges, they develop a growth mindset — a belief system that assumes that they can control their ability to succeed. Next, we employ an enriched curriculum, provide support for challenging lessons, and encourage children to take the lead, leaning into learning — analyzing, creating, collaborating, and problem-solving. And we joyfully celebrate their victories every day, just as we celebrate every partnership that makes these victories possible.

Thank you for your continued trust and support.



Michael Gallagher, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Sunnyvale School District



OUR SCHOOLS

Bishop Elementary
Cherry Chase Elementary
Cumberland Elementary
Ellis Elementary
Fairwood Explorer
Lakewood Tech EQ
San Miguel Elementary
Vargas Elementary
Columbia Middle
Sunnyvale Middle

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Isabel Jubes-Flamerich
Eileen Le
Michelle Maginot
Nancy Newkirk
Bridget Watson

Cracking the Code

We continually reassess and reevaluate our practices, methods, and curriculum, using both promising new research-based resources and strategies as well as successful time-tested approaches to help our students achieve the best learning outcomes.

Earlier this year we convened several teams of teachers from throughout the District to select new core and supplementary curricula for improving student outcomes in early reading, English Language Arts, and math. Supported by instructional coaches and District staff, the pilot teams tested and reviewed proposed curricula and recommended what they felt best reflected the needs of our students.

We are grateful to our teachers and staff for their commitment to equitable student learning and their innovation, thoughtful reflection, and respectful dialogue throughout the pilot process.





Supporting Teachers, Empowering Students

Building the cultural awareness of our teachers and staff is one way we empower our students. When teachers understand the backgrounds of their students, they can create an environment in which every child is welcomed, included, and valued; and they can design lessons and select curricula that lead to increased student engagement and, ultimately, improved outcomes.

Effective, culturally-responsive instruction requires sophisticated and skilled hard work from all of the educators in our system, but especially from our teachers. To support our teachers as they strive to meet each of their students' unique needs, our school leaders have been participating in culturally responsive walkthroughs in partnership with the **New Teacher Center**. During these walkthroughs, our school leaders observe lessons and student engagement through the lens of individual students.

Our culturally responsive walkthroughs are part of the District's commitment to improving achievement for all students, especially our students who are learning English.



Creating Independent Learners

As children mature, we aim to help them grow into adept and independent learners. To do so, we use a method called “gradual release of responsibility,” which is a lot like it sounds: we shift the cognitive workload slowly and intentionally from the teacher to the child.

There are four main phases to the process: a period of focused instruction, where students primarily watch the teacher deliver a lesson; guided instruction, where the teacher and student go through the lesson together; collaborative learning, where students work in teams; and independent learning, where students do the bulk of the learning on their own. Gradual release of responsibility helps students build a variety of skills that they will employ throughout their learning.

Using this method, the teacher acts as a flexible facilitator. At times, they encourage children to work together to deconstruct or analyze problems and create team solutions. Other times, they may encourage students to take on more analysis individually, offering guidance and questions to help the student progress toward a solution.

By mentoring students in this way, we aim to help them become capable problem-solvers and learners, ready to tackle increasingly higher-level challenges that lie ahead in school, career, and life.



Juntos Has it Together

Santa Clara County School Boards Association recently recognized San Miguel Elementary School's Juntos program with a Hoffmann Award for its significant impact on student success!

Children currently can join the Juntos Spanish-English Dual Immersion program in kindergarten, and next year Juntos will expand to include transitional kindergarten. Students begin learning in both English and Spanish from day one, and by the time they leave San Miguel, they are fluent and literate in both languages.

We recently expanded Juntos to allow graduating San Miguel students to continue the program at Columbia Middle School through grade eight. This dual-language fluency is highly advantageous for students entering high school or college.

Studies show that bilingualism at an early age helps advance critical thinking skills and can enhance student achievement in all academic areas.

The Hoffmann Awards honor Glenn W. Hoffmann, who served as the superintendent of Santa Clara County schools from 1967 to 1984. He believed that strong educational leadership was key to quality education.



Modern Facilities Help Kids Grow and Learn

At Ellis Elementary School we have moved into our new two-story classroom building. When students come back to school in the fall, they will return to a completely renovated campus, complete with a new transitional kindergarten (TK) and kindergarten classroom wing, new daycare building, new parking, and a new multi-use building and media center!

Sunnyvale Middle School's modernization is in progress. We've selected an architect and formed a Campus Committee to help drive key decisions in accordance with the District's Facilities Master Plan. The project will include a new two-story classroom building and a modern academic quad.

In preparation for expanding our TK program, we are upgrading our playgrounds at Cherry Chase, Cumberland, Fairwood, San Miguel, and Vargas. This will provide an age-appropriate, safe, and educational environment for our TK students at all of our elementary schools.

We are also making improvements at Fairwood, Vargas and San Miguel schools, such as painting, installing new roofs and digital marquees, and replacing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems.

And we are taking steps toward going green, installing electric vehicle chargers at Columbia Middle School and Fairwood Elementary!

Thank you to the Sunnyvale community for supporting our bond programs that enable us to provide spaces that help our students grow and learn!



819 W. Iowa Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

www.sesd.org

We are proud of the many local, regional, and state awards our district has recently earned, including:

AAA rating for financial health from S&P Global Ratings, a bond rating agency.
This puts the District in the top 3 percent of school districts in the state!



SCAN ME!

or visit our website at
sesd.org to learn more!



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