

# Alvarado Elementary School



## Fact Sheet:

### Overview

Alvarado is a K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade school with 2 programs: **Spanish Immersion and General Education**. We have approximately 480 students living in about 330 families.

### Teachers

There are 2 classes in each grade in each program up to third grade. Each program has one fourth, one fifth and one four-five split class. Our maximum student to teacher ration is 27:1, compared with a district-wide ratio of 34:1 Many teachers have been here for a long time: the average is 10 years, but some have been here 20 years.

### Principal

Our Principal is Robert Broecker. Before becoming principal two years ago, Mr. Broecker taught computer lab for five years while completing his Masters degree. He worked on the School Site Council and served as Acting Principal when needed. Prior to Alvarado, he taught 4<sup>th</sup> Grade in a French Immersion school in Minnesota, and he taught high school French for 14 years.

### Curriculum

Both Spanish Immersion and General Education programs follow the same standards and offer the same curriculum based on California state standards. Spanish Immersion is a dual immersion program: in Kindergarten the children are taught 90% of the time in Spanish, and that number is reduced by 10% each year, so by 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the kids are taught 50% in English and 50% in Spanish.

### API

The Academic Performance Index (API) is an annual measure of the academic performance and progress of schools in California. API scores range from 200 to 1,000, with a statewide target of 800. Our API was 826 in 2008. In 2007, we ranked 7 out of 10 compared to all schools statewide and compared to California schools with a similar social make-up.

### Kindergarten classrooms

Every day, the class splits into 4 groups that rotate through Listening, Reading/Phonics, and Writing and Art centers. Teachers work with small groups on reading skills when parent volunteers are available to help other students. We have a program called Book Buddies, in which 5th graders come in to read to their Kindergarten partners once a week.

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## **Art program**

We have an extensive art program that is a model for other schools in the district. We have our own clay studio with two kilns, plus a stage in the auditorium. Classroom teachers have completed extensive professional development in the arts, including the literary arts. Art and science (more below) learning is coordinated with what is going on in the classroom.

Every student has 16 weeks of visual arts and clay classes taught by our artist-in-residence. Kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> graders have 8 weeks of music taught by a certified music teacher. Fourth and fifth graders can choose to take instrumental music with a certified music teacher all year.

## **Computer lab**

We have a full-time, bilingual computer teacher. Every class goes to the computer lab once a week for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Kids start in Kindergarten, learning to use the keyboard and mouse. By 5<sup>th</sup> grade, they are learning programs they need to know for middle school, including MS Word and PowerPoint. The curriculum is developed in collaboration with the teachers, so the work done in computer lab is consistent with and integrated with what students learn in the classroom.

## **Science Lab**

Students come to the Science Lab and work with a special science instructor once a week for 8 weeks. The PTA also funds science-specific field trips for each classroom. Some classes bring in a group like the Insect Discovery Lab (1<sup>st</sup> grade), and others go on science-focused overnight trips (4<sup>th</sup> grade). Science is integrated throughout the year in the classroom curriculum as well.

## **Motor Skills Room**

Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students go to Motor Skills twice a week all year. Second grade and two special education classes have one session per week all year. Our teacher, Jamal, focuses on gross motor skills to improve coordination, balance and aerobic abilities. The program is in line with state standards.

## **Lunch**

Students eat in 3 groups: K-1, 2-3, and 4-5.

## **Schoolyard**

There is a lot of space for the kids to play. We have a relatively new play structure and two gardens that are used as outdoor classrooms. The entire school convenes in the yard every morning for Morning Circle. We start each day as a community, listen to announcements, sing songs, and do something different every day. At

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least once a week, the principal recognizes classroom achievements. The schoolyard is covered with murals created by the students.

## **Library**

We have a bi-lingual librarian, Chris Lamb, who works 3 days/week, thanks to Prop H money. All kids come to the Library with their classes once a week and can borrow books starting in the 2nd grade.

## **PTA**

An active PTA funds most of the arts program, literacy support, playground equipment, science program, and other programs. The budget is available for viewing on the school website. We raised about \$230,000 last year.

## **After School Clubs**

A variety of offerings: gardening, knitting, chess, yoga, clay and art, for example. We encourage parents to initiate and lead clubs. We typically offer a Fall and a Spring session of clubs and the clubs vary from semester to semester depending upon the interest of the parent community.

## **After School Programs**

We have two on-site programs. GLO (Growth and Learning Opportunities) is an accredited, fee-based program. It runs from 1:50 to 6 pm every day. Families must sign up prior to the beginning of the school year. Check their website starting in June. Our other program is Excel, a free, academics-based program for kids who qualify. The focus is on tutoring, as well as fun and exercise. In addition, we have a list of off-site afterschool care in the entryway.

## **Sports**

We have a fourth and fifth grade girls basketball team coached by one our teachers, Mr. Guzmán. The team travels to and plays against other schools in the district. They practice during recess and after school. We have a co-ed kickball team for 4th and 5th graders coached by our motor skills teacher, Jamal. We participate in Girls on the Run, an on-site afterschool program for girls in grades 3 through 5.

## **Nurse**

We have a nurse 2-3 days/week, funded by Prop H money.

## **Website**

Visit [www.alvaradoschool.net](http://www.alvaradoschool.net) for updated information about our school.