

The Chabot Family Resource Center Workshop
November 17, 2009 (PTA Meeting)

Academic Roundtable

Presented by Sam Boonin, Parent Co-Chair, School Site Council
Jessica Cannon, Teacher On Special Assignment
Brennan Agajan, 3rd Grade Teacher

Academic Achievement Handout and Q & A

Parent: Can you expand on differentiated learning?

Ms. Cannon: Chabot staff is not only very committed to meeting the individual needs of our students but they are experienced professionals in the art of differentiation. The concept of differentiation is complex and it occurs in all classrooms; it goes beyond handing out different worksheets for different students. Sometimes differentiation is subtle and may not be readily apparent through a drop-in observation. For example, a first grade teacher leading a phonics lesson will purposely stimulate the higher level students with a more in-depth question and in the next moment, will stimulate the kids who are just learning to connect the letter K with a "KA" sound. Teachers offer a large assortment of challenge activities for early finishers including math stars and partner games. Parent volunteers to lead these activities are always appreciated. It is important to remember that school is as much about fostering social skills, being part of a group, patience and resiliency as it is about helping students to master academic concepts. There is a lot to be learned from patiently helping other classmates understand a concept. There is a lot to be learned by independently engaging in a productive task when one's work is done. If you have further concerns about your individual child, we encourage parents to first speak with their child's teacher and then consider talking with Ms. Cannon about scheduling an Student Success Team (SST).

Parent: How do teachers feel about Open Court? What are some of its strengths and weaknesses.

Ms. Cannon: I would defer to the teachers on this question, but my feeling is that Open Court works well for the lower grades. In the upper grades, it helps that our teachers supplement the program with novels and other writing programs.

Mr. Harrison: In first grade, we feel that this program is very helpful. Particularly the phonics element. The fact that it is systematic, and we are consistent about how we teach it, is helpful. The downside is that the writing program isn't as effective, but we've implemented the "Being A Writer" program as a supplement, and that program very useful.

Ms. Cannon: How and when are new academic programs assessed?

Through the Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) and Site Leadership Team (SLT) all academic programs are evaluated on an ongoing basis. Our primary evaluating factor is whether they are influencing student performance in

a positive way.

Parent: Do you think the PLC's will have a "side benefit" of better familiarizing the grade level teachers with the students to support better matching of students to teachers at the next grade level?

Ms. Cannon: The PLC's definitely do allow all teachers at the grade level to get to know the students better. This is beneficial in many ways. Chabot does not match students with teachers, however grade level teachers do work together to create equal and diverse representation of all skill levels, learning styles and backgrounds.

Parent: How much time do teachers spend prepping students for standardized tests?

Ms. Cannon: As Mr. Agajan responded, it varies from classroom to classroom. In some ways it goes on throughout the school year, throughout the curriculum, but not at the exclusion of other learning. When reviewing all tests with students, teachers will go over test taking skills. At Chabot, we have more freedom and flexibility because our test scores are high year after year. As the California Standards Test approaches, we will do more preparation to focus on learning the format of the questions, so students feel comfortable and confident.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AT CHABOT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Here at Chabot Elementary, we have the absolute belief that every child can learn, and that every child learns differently and needs different supports to help him/her learn. To support this belief, Chabot upholds **three core principles** that are reflected throughout every aspect of our school program:

1. Consistency & Excellence in Instruction

- We **engage all students** through a variety of teaching strategies.
- We assess every child and move him/her forward through **differentiated learning**.
- We ensure that the entire faculty delivers **high quality instruction**, and is supported to do so.
- We are committed to **closing the achievement gap** and providing culturally responsive teaching.

2. Recognition that No Teacher is an Island

- Our teachers participate in **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**, which enable purposeful collaboration geared toward improving student performance.
- Our **Action Teams**—teacher-organized groups—address critical areas such as learning for all, community building, and technology.
- We encourage **family involvement**.

3. Understanding that Student Needs and Issues Go Beyond the Classroom

- We provide **Student Success Teams (SSTs)** for targeted student support.
- We offer immediate, quality **student intervention** (psychologist, speech, occupational therapy).
- We foster **leadership and community building** on the schoolyard (Junior Coaches, Conflict Resolution), and around the school (Safety Patrol, Student Council).

This is a quick overview of some fairly complex programs, all dedicated to ensuring that Chabot delivers the best quality educational experience to our students. We look forward to continuing the discussion.

Learning the Chabot TLAs (Three Letter Acronyms)

API: Academic Performance Index

STAR: Standardized Testing and Reporting

SSC: School Site Council

SST: Student Success Team

PLC: Professional Learning Communities

TSA: Teacher on Special Assignment

ELL: English Language Learners

FRC: Family Resource Center

OT: Occupational Therapist

RSP: Resource Specialist Program

SDC: Special Day Class

SLP: Speech & Language Pathologist

AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress

CST: California Standards Test

PD: Professional Development

SLT: Site Leadership Team

PCAD: Parents & Children of African Descent

EPS: Essential Power Standards

ELA: English Language Arts

ELL: English Language Learners

CHABOT SUCCESSES IN 2008-2009

Standardized test scores are not the only measure of a school's academic performance; however they are a good way to track school progress over time. Here is a quick view of Chabot's numbers [Note: there are five quintiles of test performance: A/P/B/BB/FBB - Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Below Basic, Far Below Basic]:

Chabot Academic Performance Index (API) Scores

2009 API = 932 (up from 905 in 2008)

English Language Arts (ELA) 2009 Highlights

- 84% of students Proficient or Advanced (up from 77% last year)
 - 89% of 4th grade (up from 78% last year)
 - 94% of 2nd grade (up from 77% last year)
- Subgroups:
 - 70% African American (up from 58%)
 - 89% Asian (up from 83%)
 - 63% Latino (up from 55%)
- 25% English Language Learners (up from 20%)
- 25 students moved from Basic into Proficient or Advanced
- 10 of 318 students tested were Below Basic or Far Below Basic

Math 2009 Highlights

- 86% of students Proficient or Advanced (up from 80% last year)
- Subgroups:
 - 68% African American (up from 61%)
 - 88% Latino (up from 65%)
 - 60% Free/Reduced Lunch (up from 50%)
- 6 of 317 students tested were Below Basic or Far Below Basic
- Among students who took the test two consecutive years, Chabot went from 18 Below Basic/Far Below Basic to only 3.

'Use Your Voice' Highlights

- 95% of students agree that "my teacher makes clear what I am supposed to learn"
- 90% of students agree that "my teacher helps me learn in different ways"
- 96% of students agree that "my teacher is respectful of my cultural background"
- 95% of parents agree that "at school, my child gets to learn about different cultures"
- 96% of parents agree that "all the adults at this school work together for the benefit of the students"
- 99% of parents, 88% of students, and 90% of teachers/counselors are satisfied with their school

About the School Site Council

Officially, as mandated by state law, the School Site Council (SSC) is an elected committee of Chabot teachers and parents who work together with Principal Mayer to develop, review and implement an ongoing School Improvement Plan. Under the California State Education Code, the SIP must address curricula, instructional strategies, and materials responsive to the individual educational needs and learning styles of each pupil.

Unofficially, the SSC is a place where overarching school issues are discussed in an open environment among teachers, administration and parents. These conversations break into three main areas: **Academic Achievement, School Climate, and Parent Involvement.**

The Chabot SSC meets the last Tuesday of each month at 5:15pm in the staff lunchroom.

Everyone is welcome!

SSC Co-Chairs

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