

Principal's Message

October 2011

A note of thanks to everyone for a wonderful start to our 2011-2012 school year. Back to School Night was well attended with kudos to Stefanie Lee, director and the staff of the Diane Adair Day Care who provided no cost child care and dinner to our children while parents attended Back to School Night presentations. This evening is very important for families and I hope that you enjoyed learning about the curriculum, activities and procedures in your child's classroom. A key message that I want to share with all of you is that we are off to a great start this year with a total of 471 unique and wonderful learners thanks to our collaborative efforts. Accolades to all our active parents, and in particular our dedicated PFC leaders and chairs, for working with teachers and me to create a smooth and dynamic launch to our 2011-2012 school year!

An important aspect to opening our school year is to reflect on the work of the year prior based on student achievement data. In our review of STAR data provided to us in August from the State (results from May 2011) our preliminary Academic Performance Index (API) is 912. This is up 20 points from the year prior! Congratulations to our hard working students, and talented teachers. We have much to feel proud about in these results as well as a renewal in our efforts around the work we began in 2010. One of many instructional practice put into place last year was our use of the Curriculum Associates Benchmark practices that students in grades 1-5 take about every 8-9 weeks. These formative assessments provided teachers with key data for adjusting instruction, focusing supports for students, and targeting essential standards and instructional strategies in daily lessons. We have already begun this process once again in these first few weeks of the school year by obtaining baseline data around concept development. Each time we examine this formative data, teachers develop SMART student achievement growth goals at each grade level. In order to achieve growth targets; teachers also use key instructional strategies that fully engage student learners. Our teachers are part of a Professional Learning Community that works in collaboration to develop and use consistent and effective practices in the classroom. The Bancroft teachers are amazing and our students benefit from their skills, talent and dedication.

A vital part of our instructional design has been the opportunity to bring back our Instructional Assistants. Your Dollar-a-Day contributions, beginning back in May 2011 and into our Info Days event, along with continued fund raising has made this possible. During our initial review of student achievement data and current levels of performance and needs, the teachers provided to me and our Bancroft CARE team exact times of the day and week for instructional assistance support. Based on teacher input, a support schedule was developed that will remain flexible based on needs and changing trends for support. Our *Bancroft Learning Center Instructional Assistants* are now fully assigned to classes and grade levels. Please find more detailed information about these times and supports as you read your child(ren)'s classroom newsletters or volunteer in the classroom. Parent volunteers who provide help with learning stations, classroom

projects and clerical needs also give the gift of support and collaboration. Your role with all students is a hallmark of success within our Bancroft community. Thank you.

Please join me in welcoming some new faces on our teaching staff;

- Lauren Balin, First Grade Teacher
- Amanda Smythe, Vocal Music Teacher,
- Nancy Hagen, 4th/5th grade SDC Teacher,
- Christine Crosno K/1 SDC teacher
- Carol Davis (SDC classroom assistant).

We also have many new students and families joining us this school year and we are thrilled to welcome you to all to Bancroft School. No matter our journey in life, we are now all connected to one another as Bancroft Bobcats! Gooooo Bobcats!!!!

Thank you for find time in your busy weeks to review school and classroom newsletters, PFC information, and visit our soon to be released school web site. We are moving towards less paper and more electronic communications. All school newsletters will continue to be uploaded to our website. If you wish to obtain a paper copy of communications, please stop by the school office or contact your child's teacher.

Measure C improvements are underway at many MDUSD locations. At this time, the Measure C improvements are the installation of solar panels. This project will need to be completed by April 2012 throughout the district in order to realize 8 million dollars in savings (the amount projected for PG&E costs over the next three years). This 8 million dollar savings is currently reflected in the three year MDUSD balanced budget.

The **Bancroft Solar Project** will begin in December 2011. Solar panels will be installed in the parking lot/car pool lane and in the area where the bike racks are located. I am working with district project managers to make our installation time during the school year as smooth as possible by considering and planning the temporary relocation of our car pool lanes, how we will handle staff and visitor parking, student drop off and pick up and Day Care arrival and pick up. I will be meeting with project managers and will be including our PFC leadership, staff and Stephanie Lee from Day Care in order to have a well rounded representation in our design and planning. I am fully committed to making sure our site solar project is successful with my full attention on making sure our students, families and staff have a clearly communicated plan. Please be keenly aware of information and changes that will be provided in the next several months to prepare us and see us through during this project.

Please be aware that most staff arrives between 7:15-7:30 am, however we do have employees who arrive for a start time of 8:00. The parking lot across from the school campus (by the canal) is clearly marked for staff parking. **We respectfully request all parents/drivers not to occupy a parking stall in the staff lot between 7:15-8:00 a.m.** Also, please do not park behind any vehicle in any parking lot, even for just a few minutes in order to drop off, pick up or wait for your child. Our children are watching us when we use or do not use of the life skill of respect and integrity, so let's utilize every

opportunity to behave in ways that we want our children to imitate. I encourage all parents/drivers to use our car pool drop off and pick up lane currently in operation along the campus side of Parish Drive (next to the MUR). The drop off and pick up curb at the Kindergarten yard on Parish Drive is for **K students and their siblings only**. Parents who wish to walk onto campus with their children in the morning or for pick up time are encouraged to do so after using street parking or open staff parking stalls after 8:00 a.m..

Finally, your help is needed to **never park along any curb painted red**. The red curb across from the bus circle is red because the school buses and day care vans need the full street (up to the curb) to turn out of the bus circle.

Thank you to our newly formed parent volunteers helping at the Parish Drive crosswalk near the K yard between 7:30-7:50 am;

- **Mr. Quinn**
- **Mrs. Guarnaccia**
- **Mr. Oakley**
- **Mr. Noonan**

If you can contribute to this volunteer support one or more days per week, please contact the school office to be added in our list of ***“Guardian Bobcats!”***

Thank you, Bobcat community for your help and attention in supporting our arrival to work and our children’s learning day in respectful and safe ways each and every day.

The Bancroft School Site Council (SSC) is seeking parent membership for the 2011-2013 term. Please see the information in the Bobcat Tracks to become more familiar with this committee.

With many wonderful Bancroft events planned during October, we are sure to have a memorable month! It all began on October 1 as Bancroft participated in the first **Walnut Creek Community Service Day**. Thanks to **Katie Pierceall** for her leadership on this event. We had 50 volunteers who painted new paw prints at the handball courts, sanded and painted the playground benches and flower boxes and worked in the Bancroft Learning Garden. Just a few days later, Bancroft participated in **International Walk to School Day** on October 5. Our school won \$300.00 for exceeding 50% participation (we had 70% of our students walk to school!). On October 11 we had another successful **Walk-a-Thon** lead by **Jill Collins**, parent coordinator and the many parent volunteers who helped throughout the day. Next, will be the annual **Fall Fest** on October 22. Thanks to **Michelle Allison**, parent coordinator volunteer and her team we have this event to look forward to! Before you know it will be time once again to shop at our semi-annual **Book Fair**, coordinated by parent volunteer, **Tracy Watson** the week of October 25-28.

On Monday, October 31 our annual **Kindergarten costume parade** will take place in the school courtyard. All of our students will attend the parade. Please remember that only K student can wear costumes on this day. I look forward to seeing you at all or most of these school community events! In closing, I want to take a final moment to acknowledge the privilege I am given each day to serve our Bancroft Community and to be such an important part of your child(ren)'s elementary school years. Your children are precious to me and I am always focused on their safety, their well-being and making certain that everyday counts for them educationally. Thank you for your trust and confidence.

Warmest Regards,
Linda Schuler, Principal