



Franklin Focus

News from the Principal
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Creativity Requires Discipline and Structure

Students in school must first build basic skills to be able to use those skills for gaining deeper understanding and developing opinions based on their expanding knowledge. For them, it all starts with the ability to sit, listen and follow directions. Without this in place, a child misses learning opportunities.

However, sitting passively, listening to the teacher and doing what she says, does not directly lead to learning. Tell me and I'll forget it tomorrow, show me and I'll remember it for a while and engage me in it and I won't forget. Research shows that active students retain more concepts than passive students. So then, how does the ability to sit, listen, and follow directions help students?

Sitting, Listening, Following Directions

What sitting, listening and following directions does do is create the environment for the students to get information and process it by engaging in activities. A child who does not receive the information from the teacher about an activity, may remember the activity, but will not have the concepts to make connections. A part of learning requires the student to be able to receive a new process and observe how to replicate it. Then, the child is guided by the teacher.



Once the child demonstrates understanding, the teacher allows the child to practice independently.

This same process is used by all of us when learning how to do something new. Whether it's learning how to cook or ride a snowboard, a beginner first stops and observes how others do it. Then, they are guided through, whether through the use of a cook book or an instructor. If we are not listening, our recipe fails or we end up not being able to stop our snowboard as it heads down the hill.

At Franklin, our teachers expect children to have these skills in place at school. Please support your child by explaining the importance of developing these skills. Encourage your child and guide your child to be successful in the classroom. You are your child's first teacher and you can make a huge positive difference.

Areas Identified for Improvement

Franklin's API Remains Above 800

Our 2010 API (Academic Performance Index) was released and Franklin's API dropped from 860 to 845. Any school with an API over 800 is considered a proficient school by the state of California.

The percentage of proficient students declined from 61.8% in 2009 to 57.6% in 2010 for English Language Arts and from 74.3% to 71.7% for Mathematics. However, the percentage of students scoring advanced on the CST increased in both math and language arts.

Reading comprehension remains the focus for Franklin, but it's imperative for us to increase the number of students reaching proficiency in both language arts and mathematics. Upper grade students scores were as high or higher than California and District averages, with 60-90% of students scoring proficient in some areas. However, our primary (Gr. 2 & 3) students scored below the District and state averages. This is a major concern that we will address this year. Details of test scores will be provided at the annual Title I State of the School meeting on October 19th at 6:30pm.

"Speaking in Tongues" Hails Immersion Programs

Airs on PBS September 30th at 9pm

"Speaking in Tongues" explores the experiences of families with students enrolled in immersion programs, Mandarin or Spanish, during a time when 31 states have passed "English Only" laws. Many Americans embrace negative opinions about learning languages other than English in school. We are becoming a modern-day Babel, detractors warn; our national identity is at risk. Nashville, Tennessee, recently voted to make English the city's "official language," joining 31 states.

However, a growing resistance of parents are using common sense, research and the absolute value of bilingualism to battle the fear and questionable "patriotic" stance of English-only advocates, many of whom feel threatened and often not in a position to offer this advantage to their own child. More and more parent groups are speaking out and taking action for what they consider an advantage for their child, by enrolling them in immersion programs. Immersion programs provide students an opportunity to be more successful in life.

Bilingual education builds confidence and motivation among heritage speakers and English-language learners by valuing their cultures and skills. Research has shown that English-language learners in bilingual education programs are less likely to drop out than their peers in English-only programs.

In an economy that's growing more "global" every day, the ability to read and write fluently in two languages - as well as speak them - is a tremendous professional asset. Bilingual education means enhanced opportunities for all students.

Students in language immersion programs learn to read, write, speak, and listen in English just as well or better than students in all-English programs. In addition, students who learn second languages tend to do better on standardized tests (like the SAT and the ACT) and in college. Graduation rates are higher for bilingual students attending college and unemployment rates are lower for bilingual students with advanced degrees when compared to monolingual students. These facts are becoming more important to parents who are making educational choices for their elementary children, as described in "Speaking in Tongues" (Sept. 30th - 9pm on TBS).

BIG Changes Coming to Franklin's Instructional Focus

Teachers analyzed student achievement data during a recent Instructional Leadership Team meeting and identified a need to change the instructional focus at Franklin Elementary School. The change will be subtle at first as we develop a focus statement and create SMARTe goals.

SMARTe is mnemonic for; S=Specific, M=Measurable, A=Attainable, R=Relevant, T=Timely and e = for everyone. We will present more details at the Title I State of the School parent meeting on October 19th at 6:30pm in the auditorium.

BFE Foundation Continues to Raise Funds - Meet Needs

The Benjamin Franklin Foundation recently kicked off its fundraising event with a goal to provide up to \$150 of supplies to each teacher. At a recent meeting, Board members discussed that while it's important to raise money to help our students, it's imperative to make all parents and students feel included in the foundation's goals. Not all parents can provide financial support or provide time to help, but the foundation will still look for ways to include everyone and support every student at Franklin.



A foundation project last year included painting murals around school.