



# The Lion's Roar

McKinley Monthly Newsletter



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The McKinley Staff wish you happy and bright holidays!

## Happy holidays from our family to yours!

It has been a great year so far! We want to take a moment and thank all of our students for working so hard, being role model citizens upholding our pillars of character, taking on new challenges in stride, and for engaging in learning every day. We also want to thank you parents, guardians, and family members, for contributing to the school by volunteering, attending events, communicating with your child's teacher, and donating. Your positivity and teamwork with us is one of the reasons why McKinley is so special. Thank you,

Dr. Benjamin, Principal



## The New McKinley Learning Annex

We did a little "remodeling" and what was once a library storage space is now our new Learning Annex where teachers can work with small groups of students! With limited space on campus, we are excited to provide this pleasant and inviting learning space! Students will have direct access to the library books and resources, and can sit and enjoy the view to the beautiful outdoor courtyard.



### Save the Dates for After Break!

January 12, 8:45am, Auditorium- AASG Meeting

January 15- No School

January 17, 8:45am, Auditorium- Bagels with Dr. Benjamin (Academic Discourse Presentation- See article on page 3)

January 18, 3:15, Auditorium- Site Governance Meeting

January 19, 8:45am, Auditorium- Special Ed Resource Meeting

January 26, 8:30am, Yard- Outdoor Assembly TK/K Caring

January 26, 8:45am, Auditorium- PTA Meeting

January 26, 4:00-7:00pm, Yard- International Day!

January 29, 6:30pm, Auditorium Lincoln staff meets with 5<sup>th</sup> gr. parents



Have a roaring good time this holiday season! Love, Mac the Lion



## Science Instruction



Due to your donations to the Santa Monica Malibu Education Foundation (SMMEF), and due to P.S. Science, our students receive science instruction. In these photos 4<sup>th</sup> graders are being Paleontologists and digging for fossils in a hands-on experience with Ms. Aimee Oyenoki.

**Did you Know?** We have 20 general Ed TK-5 classroom teachers, 2 special Ed preschool teachers, and 2 life skills teachers. 3 are National Board Certified. 8 have over 11 years of experience and the average teaching experience for all our teachers is 12 years. Our most veteran teacher has 30 years of teaching experience! If you include all our support staff and classified employees, we have over 100 staff members at McKinley!

## McKinley Teachers as Lifelong Learners and Innovators

Some of our teachers have volunteered to join a SMMUSD teacher cohort to learn about and implement “Blended Learning.” Blended Learning includes purposeful use of digital tools and an exploration into flexible seating. Blended Learning is a formal education program in which a student learns in part through digital and online media with some element of student choice and control over time, place, path and/or pace. Implementing Blended Learning is one way to increase student engagement and technology use. Ms. Ross (1<sup>st</sup>), Ms. Marshall (3<sup>rd</sup>), Ms. Kim (4<sup>th</sup>), and Ms. Talbott (5<sup>th</sup>) are part of this innovative cohort. Only 29 teachers in SMMUSD are part of this program. Last week the Assistant Superintendent of Ed Services, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Educational Technology Teachers on Special Assignment, along with Dr. Benjamin, came to observe our amazing teachers in action. We are proud that our teachers are lifelong learners, always eager to grow their instructional practice!



## Academic Discourse is Engaging our Students

This year the district has been working with a group called InnovateEd. InnovateEd has helped each school to develop a **Site Leadership Team (SLT)**. McKinley's team is composed of 12 members: the Principal, Assistant Principal, Literacy Coach, PD Leader, two Special Ed teachers, and one teacher from each grade level. The team works together to analyze data to determine what our students need support in. Once the team has identified a focus, the team develops a Site Plan to support students in that area.

After analyzing data, the McKinley SLT found that our students needed support in the areas of listening and speaking. The goal for students will be to demonstrate a thorough **ability to deliver information orally** for a variety of uses, have effective **listening skills** for a range of purposes and audiences, to **express their thoughts** to solve a problem, and to **critically interpret and use information delivered orally**.

So based on these needs the team selected **Academic Discourse** as a focus, not only because it tied directly into our areas of need of developing students listening and communicating skills, but because it would develop students' higher-order thinking, critical thinking, and problem solving skills, which are all skills that are going to transfer across subject areas and prepare students for college and career. Discourse also particularly benefits our English Learners, because research shows that discourse opportunities develop academic vocabulary at a very high rate. We also chose Academic Discourse because it engages students; when students are actively involved in their learning they are deepening their understanding, while also building relationships with each other and becoming more connected to school. Providing discourse opportunities also ties directly into our District, LCAP, and SPSA goals by preparing students to be ready for college and career, helping ELs to be proficient in English, and engaging all students in learning!

Last month Dr. Benjamin and teacher Ms. Sandra Kim (PD Leader, Math Coach, SLT Member, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher) presented to the Board of SMMUSD about McKinley's Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), as well as our Site Plan focus of Academic Discourse.

If you want to hear more about the wonderful discourse opportunities McKinley teachers are providing for your child, you are invited to attend a **Bagels with Dr. Benjamin** (Dr. Benjamin's version of Coffee with Principal) on January 17<sup>th</sup> at 8:45am in the Auditorium. She will share videos of discourse happening in McKinley classrooms, and share strategies for what parents can do at home to develop students' listening and speaking skills.

### Highlights and Accomplishments

- All Teachers using discourse across the curriculum to engage students!



Discourse with Responsive Classroom

Higher Level Thinking and DOK

Referencing Sentence Frames; Genius Hour; Cross Grade Collaboration; Sequencing- Discourse Tied to Standards; Developing Language for English Learners

Engagement!

Clear Routines; Various Discourse Protocols

Discourse in CGI; Discourse to Help with Thought Processes such as Clarifying, Building Relationships