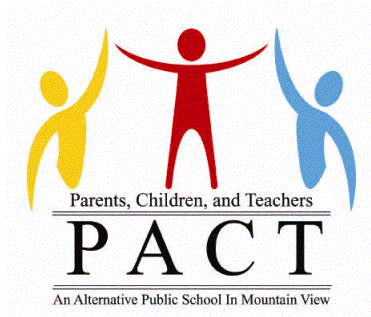


**PACT  
(PARENT-CHILD-TEACHER)  
Alternative School**



**Report to the  
California State Department Of Education-  
2004-2005 School Year**

**Mountain View-Whisman School District  
Mountain View, CA  
December 7, 2005**

## INTRODUCTION

The PACT (Parent-Child-Teacher) program of the Mountain View-Whisman School District in Mountain View, California is a **parent-participation, alternative** school for grades K-5. Kathleen Cotton and Karen Reed Wikelund stated in *Parent Involvement in Education* that “Research overwhelmingly demonstrates that parent involvement in children’s learning is positively related to achievement...Considerably greater achievement (is) noted when parent involvement is active – when parents attend and actively support school activities and when they help out in classrooms or on field trips, and so on.”

PACT philosophy and goals have three main components:

- develop **innovative teaching** methods and **curriculum**
- provide **developmental learning** opportunities
- build a strong **community**

This report overviews how we meet and continually improve on these goals. In the 2004-2005 school year, we focused on improving the curriculum, program organization and communication between the principal, teachers and parents. Much time and energy was also expended on analyzing and giving input to a school closure and relocation plan that will heavily affect our program. This report covers:

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## **PACT OVERVIEW**

### **Philosophy and Goals**

PACT teachers and parents use a variety of **innovative teaching** methods in an effort to reach each child in his/her own way – cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically. As often as possible, material is presented using an experiential, hands-on approach that allows children to find their own meaning in subject matter and to gain knowledge through research and discovery. In many cases, PACT parents turn their own expertise into extended hands-on lessons for the children. “Experiential” projects have included carpentry, electricity, gardening, yoga, dance, orienteering, engineering, weaving, and innovative art projects. Such projects aim to teach curriculum content in an integrated, real-world manner. In addition to in-class lessons, the PACT program goes on numerous fieldtrips throughout the year. For most of these fieldtrips, parents provide transportation.

In the multi-age classrooms and groupings, children are encouraged to help and be helped by each other. They experience the benefits of being the oldest and the youngest, the masters of some skills and the apprentices of others. Conflict resolution is taught as a skill using a variety of methods such as conflict rugs and community circles. The multi-age classrooms and programs facilitate a sense of **community**.

**“Developmental learning”** means that educational challenges are presented to a child based on the child’s readiness, not on their age or grade. PACT accomplishes this with low student-to-adult ratios and multi-age classrooms. Parent participation in the classroom often provides student-to-adult ratios of 5-to-1 or lower. With the help of parents, teachers are able to spend more time with each child. This allows them to assess the children and adapt educational materials appropriately.

When the **community** of the principal, teachers and parents are all working together to achieve the first two goals, children learn by example how to build relationships, accomplish common goals and take responsibility for emotions and behavior. In addition, children see adults as familiar, helpful and approachable rather than distant and authoritative.

### **Enrollment and Class Configuration**

The PACT program has been operating since the 1996-1997 school year. There are 8 fully enrolled classes with a total of 179 children. The classes are configured as follows:

- Three kindergarten/first grade classrooms
- Three second/third grade classrooms
- One fourth grade classroom
- One fifth grade classroom

This classroom configuration ensures that the program’s size is sustainable while maintaining a vibrant organization. In particular, this class configuration provides:

- Greater teacher-to-teacher collaboration

- More focus on developmental learning
- Better “enrollment feeds” into the 4<sup>th</sup> grade as the class size increases to 30 from 20

**Composition of PACT: Families**

PACT is a district-wide program with approximately 30% of PACT families coming from the Slater School neighborhood. It is open to all families who support the PACT philosophy. Alternate arrangements (such as helping to prepare classroom materials) can be made for families who are not able to work in the classroom and all financial contributions are confidential and voluntary.

**Composition of PACT: Faculty**

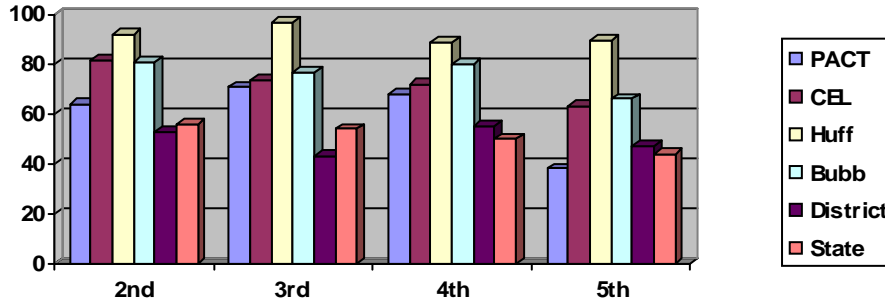
The PACT program has been successful at recruiting and retaining high quality teachers. They are innovative, dedicated and collaborate with families to better teach their students. PACT teachers are active in both school and district-wide committees. There are currently eight teachers in the PACT program with two teachers there since the inception of the program.

## 2004-2005 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

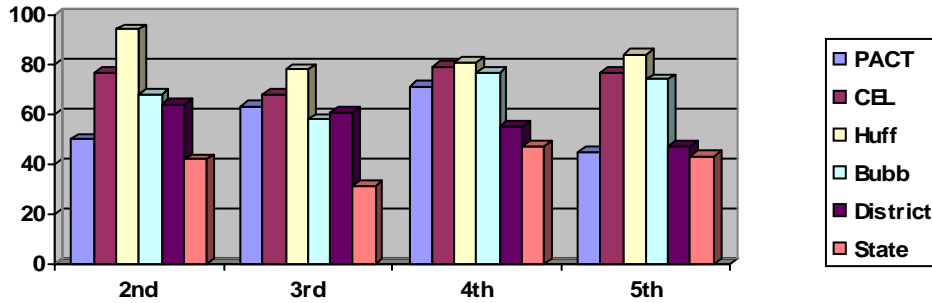
### Academic Accomplishments in 2004-2005 - Assessments

Students in the PACT program take all the District's prescribed assessments. The charts below show the District and PACT scores for the California Standardized Test.

#### CST Language



#### CST – Math



## Academic Accomplishments in 2004 – 2005 Curricular Achievements

Throughout the school year, teachers and parents collaborated in the delivery of integrated PACT curriculum with activities in gardening, cooking, literacy circles, physical education and music. They provided transportation for field trips relevant to their classroom studies, adding a valuable set of hands-on experiences for each student.

- Arts Focus: Grades K-5. Provided 45 hours of arts education per child per year (in addition to the CSMA instruction). There were 5 disciplines: Clay, Paper, 3D, Drawing & Painting, and Textiles. Multi-age classes were comprised of students who rotated through each discipline - learning about the medium, creating art pieces of their own inspiration and learning about that discipline's history and artists (see Appendix A).
- PACT hosted its second annual Science Fair at Slater Elementary in April '05. This year's event was expanded to include the whole school and alumni. More than 150 children from PACT and non-PACT (Slater neighborhood program) participated in this optional, extra-curricular activity designed to encourage children to listen, look and explore the world. Experiments included electricity, magnetism, biology, zoology, chromatography, engineering, physics and sociology.
- Kid Writing: Grades K/1. All PACT K/1 classes implemented a "Kid Writing" program where students wrote daily in their personal journals. The children wrote freely at their developmental level, read their story to an adult who then underwrites the "kid writing" with adult writing, thereby modeling the correct conventions and orthography.
- Little Red Hen: Grades K/1. This interactive unit which featured the character of the Little Red Hen (played by a costumed parent) integrated science, math, social studies and language arts. Children helped plant and care for wheat seeds sowed in spring, then harvested the wheat in the fall. The students counted the grains, ground the wheat and made homemade wheat pancakes.
- Autobiography: Grade 1. One class of first graders wrote their own, seven-chapter autobiography. This involved researching their own family history, making a family tree and timeline, as well as researching the geographic location of family members. Students interviewed key family members, wrote a cohesive narrative answering questions from the teacher's prompt for each chapter, asked parents to proofread their writing, copied the final draft onto special paper and read their chapter aloud to the rest of the class one day a week for the last two months of school. Students were videotaped during their oral presentations and had a wonderful time reading to classmates, parents, and siblings selections from their autobiography binders at an end-of-year party in June.

- Drama: Grades 2/3. Building on the theme of dragons, the class adapted the book “How to Train Your Dragon” by Crissida Cowill, into a play. The children made sets, props and costumes and performed the play for the student body as well as doing a second performance for parents.
- Quilting: Grades 2/3. The children each hand sewed six quilt squares during the year. The quilt squares each represented part of the year’s curriculum; science, language arts, social studies and math. The children then sewed their six squares together to make a small quilt to represent their year’s study.
- Engineering: Grades 2/3. Engineering was a year-long theme in another 2/3 class. Children learned about engineering project phases such as requirements analysis, design, and design reviews, then used a similar approach to design and build a model park. They wrote reports on their park design, created rules for their section of the park and presented the benefits and costs of their park design to a group of parents and other students. The students continued the unit by using the skills learned to research, prototype and build two working catapults. The project integrated science, math, drawing, language arts and social/team skills.

- Stream Study: Grades 2/3. Students studied stream ecosystems and related environmental issues, performed chemical tests to monitor water pollution, and raised steelhead trout in the classroom that were then released to a local stream. This is another example of an integrated unit which supported science, math, social studies and language arts.
- Cooperative Curriculum: Grade 4. PACT teacher worked with neighborhood teacher to plan numerous lesson plans in science, math and social studies. Children rotated among the classrooms with PACT parents managing the small groups.
- Japanese Internment: Grade 4. Class attended a program presented by former Japanese Internees, interviewed local internees, and participated in a (teacher created) Japanese Internment Simulation covering the entire experience of internees. The class finished up by conducting a Japanese Tea Ceremony led by a Japanese internee.
- Gold Rush: Grade 4. Class studied Gold Rush, author of "Great Horn Spoon" and performed the story as a play.
- Cooperative Science: Grade 5. PACT and neighborhood classroom teachers planned science units together. PACT parents assisted in preparing the hands-on materials. As a result, students in both PACT and neighborhood classes received rich, hands-on science explorations and experiments.
- Drama: Grade 5. Children performed mini-plays as skits of novels that had been read in class. The kids were responsible for deciding roles, improvising the skits, and performing the final results for classmates.
- Math: Teachers in all grades continued working on math lesson study techniques that had been taught to the teachers by Li Ping Ma as part of a Carnegie Foundation grant and study program.

**Program-Wide Accomplishments:** Improvements to the daily operations and overall organization.

- Offered on-going parent education throughout the year through the efforts of the Parent Education committee: topics included dealing with emotional changes in childhood and understanding how teachers implement CELL literacy training in the classroom.
- Continued addressing ideas surfaced by 1<sup>st</sup> PACT Parent Survey conducted in 2003-2004. Survey focused on Curriculum, Parent Education, Communications, Community and Organization.

- Continued refining the Parent Education training. Current training consists of 4 sessions, 3 hours each, focusing on literacy and classroom management.
- Displayed PACT children's artwork at the Mountain View City Hall. Helped organize the Slater School chorus.
- Updated and improved website. New website has improved layout, navigation, content and visual appeal. The new site supports communication between potential families and PACT leadership.

**PACT Volunteer Activities for Entire Slater School Community:** Activities that help the entire Slater student body.

- PACT parents logged approximately 12,500 volunteer hours, many of which supported the entire Slater School community.
- Provided gardening activities during the lunch hour in the Slater. All Slater School students were welcomed to participate. There was a mix of neighborhood and PACT children.
- "Greater Slater" Committee supported the neighborhood teachers and students by assisting in the library, providing individual tutoring and classroom support, staffing an after-school homework and providing input to the district school closure process.
- Walkathon Committee members comprised of 88% PACT parents logged approximately 400 hours preparing for the Slater Walkathon – Slater School's biggest fundraiser of the year. 398 kids participated in the walkathon with 175 kids from the PACT program and 223 kids from the neighborhood program. Nearly \$20,000 was raised for the Slater PTA. Since the committee's goal was to build community among all Slater families, they added many family-friendly games and activities for the children in addition to walking laps.
- Held leadership positions within Slater School's PTA and School Site Council.
- Organized activities related to school closure and signed up to serve on school closure transition committees.
- Participated in school-wide clean-up days and maintaining plantings in hallways and the front of Slater.
- Organized and staffed two Slater Book Fairs. The fairs contribute books from Scholastic to go to teachers and classrooms.

**Pact Volunteer Activities Supporting the MVW School District or the Mountain View Community:** Volunteer activities that help strengthen the community we live in.

- PACT parents participated in the Mountain View Educational Foundation team.
- PACT teachers were quite active supporting district initiatives. Two K/1 teachers served as Math Mentors, 1 teacher served on the district's GATE committee, 2 worked on the Report Card committee, 1 teacher worked on the School Closure Task Force, 1 worked on the Writing Committee and 2 others worked as liaisons in Science and Math.
- PACT parents participated on a number of district committees including the School Board, and Budget Task Force. In addition, PACT parents attended and spoke at numerous board meetings related to the closure of Slater school, reviewed district reports related to the closure decision and signed up to serve on district closure transition committees.
- PACT members were involved in "Leadership Mountain View" (LMV). This past year, 1 parent served on LMV council and 2 parents helped organize the Education Day program for the LMV class, 2004.
- PACT parents were involved in the Northeast Mountain View Advisory Council – Air Quality Meetings. One parent sat on the executive committee and several participated in their regular updates.

## **Learning Goals for 2005-2006**

The move of the program to Castro school will necessitate that most 'goal' time be spent on planning for this move rather than focusing on any new programs. Therefore, the program goals will center on planning for the move, as well as furthering progress made on last year's goals.

- Participate in planning for the impending move to Castro school
  - ‡ Participate in district-led transition committees
  - ‡ Communicate transition committee progress to PACT membership
  - ‡ Solicit input from PACT membership for district committees
  - ‡ Establish special 'transition' committee to help organize communication and planning
  
- Ensure the PACT philosophy, structure and programs remain intact during and after the move to Castro school
  - ‡ Communicate and educate others on the PACT program
  - ‡ Communicate PACT requirements to district-led committees
  - ‡ Check to make sure all programs and activities continue this year and are planned and supported at Castro
  - ‡ Place a strong emphasis on recruiting for first year at Castro.
  
- Increase the alternativeness and curriculum integration of the program. For 2005-2006 this effort will focus on two areas:
  - ‡ Garden-related curriculum
  - ‡ Science-related curriculum

## **Other Program Goals for 2005-2006**

- Continued emphasis on building leadership within the PACT organization.
- Continued emphasis on building community within PACT

## **Appendix A - Arts Focus Program for the 2004-2005 Academic Year**

The Arts Focus Program offered three sessions of 5 weeks during the 2003-2004 academic year. The entire PACT student population of 179 students received 45 total contact hours in the program (15 hours for each of the three sessions in three different disciplines). The program was funded by a one-year grant from the Peninsula Community Foundation.

Given the space constraints of the program and the number of teachers available for supervision in the classroom, Arts Focus offered eight classes this year, including returning a newly-revised class (3-D "A") to the rotation. The Arts Focus program had curriculum for ten classes in five disciplines: Clay, Drawing and Painting, Paper, 3-D, and Textiles. Textiles "B" was offered for one session and then replaced in the rotation by the new 3-D "A" and a section of Drawing and Painting was not offered during 2004-05.

As new parent volunteers join the team of teachers for Arts Focus, they bring their own expertise and experiences to the program, which adds depth to all the classes. Minor changes may be made in the curriculum for each class to take advantage of those strengths, but the primary curriculum remains unchanged. Having an "A" and "B" curriculum in each discipline allows us to explore many areas of the topic. For example, Paper "B" focuses on techniques used with many types of paper. The class provides many types of paper, lots of books, and allows students hours of paper-exploration time. They learn quilling, explore origami and paper-folding, and develop an appreciation of the impact paper has on our culture and history, and on other cultures. This complements the Paper "A" class, which focuses on making paper and then items made from the paper students create. The Clay "A" class uses firing clays, and the students learn about glazes, pottery techniques, and the role of pottery throughout history. Clay "B" introduces several types of non-firing clays, and is fortunate to have a nationally-recognized polymer clay artist co-lead several of these classes. The students explore new mediums and are exposed to an artist who is successful both financially and artistically.

The Textiles "A" class focuses on spinning, weaving and dyeing, using hand looms as well as large looms, to explore textile arts. The Textiles "B" class curriculum includes the making of three quilts and a quilting bee in each session. The children also create a number of items that relate directly to their lives including hats, dolls and stuffed animals, as well as learning new skills such as sewing buttons. The 3-D "A" class focuses on puppets and musical instruments made from common and easily found materials, as well as storytelling and performance using the items made in class. The 3-D "B" class, entitled "Size and Environment", went on a guided walking-field trip viewing local sculpture and 3-D art, and culminated their class with team-built water sculptures. The Drawing and Painting class draws on different techniques and varied artists' styles to provide inspiration for their instruction.

The Arts Focus program relies on the dedicated work of many parent volunteers. More than 55 parents work in the classroom or in committee positions. Volunteer hours during

the 2004-2005 school year totaled approximately 2375 hours. The new procedures for recruiting volunteers by assigning a staffing requirement for each class of three full-time and one part-time or the equivalent has been very successful, allowing the classes to be fully staffed with less effort than has been needed in the past. These procedures are part of an ongoing effort to make the program as self-sustaining as possible.

We are pleased to report that all three sessions proved entirely successful. The children were given ample opportunity to explore each medium in depth. In addition, they received instruction on basic art concepts, learned a little about the historical and cultural context of each medium, and received information regarding the materials and social applications of their particular medium (based on the objectives outlined in the California State Visual and Performing Arts Standards). Each student completed an evaluation form on the last class of each five-class session. The responses were tabulated and provided to our funder for purposes of evaluating the success of the program.

We are very pleased to have exceeded our expectation that mixing all grade levels would contribute to the strengthening of the sense of community. We found that not only did the older children help the younger ones, but that the younger ones contributed ideas that older children wanted to emulate. The children were given an opportunity to explore the techniques at their own level and children who repeated a class taken earlier found new abilities and interests in the materials. Many parents have reported that their children have taken a renewed interest in creating art at home, as well as noticing art found in the community.

The program culminated in our Arts Focus Exhibition. This year we were very proud and excited that the City of Mountain View invited us to show our art for two weeks, displaying it at the City Hall Rotunda. The exhibition was held from May 17 through June 1, 2005. Each child was allowed to choose one item from each of the three sessions for inclusion in the show. All artwork was then returned to the children at the conclusion of the show.

The Arts Focus Program will continue to provide three sessions of classes during the 2005-06 academic year, funded by donations from the community and fundraising efforts within the program. We will be combining aspects of the two Textiles classes into one course, as well as offering Clay "A" and "B", 3-D "A" and "B", Drawing and Painting and Paper "A". Due to a reduction in the number of classes in PACT in 2005-06, the Paper "B" class has been taken out of rotation this year. The year will include another two week exhibition at the Mountain View City Hall Rotunda, which will take place in February, 2006 in order to accommodate the City Hall's schedule of displays.

Additional goals for 2004-2005 include identifying ways to further improve the process of staffing the program and working with the teachers to implement a new approach which spreads the staffing requirements equally throughout the classes and creates a new mechanism for finding substitutes when parent volunteers are unable to attend an Arts Focus class. In an effort to share some of our successes with the neighborhood program,

parent volunteers are offering to demonstrate projects from the Arts Focus curriculum in the neighborhood classes.