

Stevenson PACT Spotlight



Let the Adventure Begin!



September/October
2009

Stevenson PACT
School

750-B San Pierre Way
Mountain View, CA 94043

650-903-6950

www.pactschool.net

Principal: Stephen Gilbert

Cutting the Ribbon- an exciting time for everyone at Stevenson PACT on Friday, August 21, 2009

School Year Opens at New Stevenson Campus

By Tracy Wingrove



Class posting day had special significance this year. For the first time, PACT opened its school year on its own site, Stevenson School. To celebrate, alumni, former teachers, district personnel, and the architects who planned the renovation, joined PACT families at the ribbon cutting. District Superintendent Dr. Maurice Ghysels said, "Over the years I have been thrilled by the collaboration to grow the PACT program. This exceptional program does wonders for students with its hands-on approach that is standards-based and in line with the District's initiatives. We all look forward to working together to ensure the ongoing success of Stevenson School-- its students, teachers, staff and parents."

Special thanks to Dr. Ghysels, Craig Goldman, Bill Gould & Associates, Steve Gilbert, the Board of Trustees and the Move Committee for all their work.

Some things stay the same...

Stevenson PACT School Vision Statement

PACT School is a public K-5 school that offers progressive education and a developmental curriculum. Through innovative teaching methods and a strong collaboration between teachers and parents, we emphasize growth of the whole child—intellectually, socially, physically, and creatively. Within our diverse and caring community, we provide an environment that challenges each child to become:

- A lifelong learner
- An independent thinker
- A respectful individual
- A responsible global citizen



Welcome!

A message from the Principal

I want to welcome everyone back to school and to our new adventure at Stevenson School. We've had two wonderful parent evenings in the past weeks, our grand opening on the 21st, and our Back to School night on the 27th. Thank you all for your active participation.

As you'll see when you visit the school, we still have some contractors working here on the fences, landscaping, and a variety of small repairs, fixes, or finishing touches. We're new; we're started; and kids are in classes and learning.

We're using three basic rules at the school. If you can reinforce these at home, it will help the students to internalize them and make these a part of their interactions with others.

• Be Safe

• Be Respectful

• Be Responsible

As a child does something that violates one of those rules, ask them if they were acting in a safe, respectful, or responsible manner. More often than not, they'll be able to identify the problem and explain how they'll change the next time.

We're all looking forward to a great year. Thank you for all you do for the children here at Stevenson!

Get to know the great Stevenson PACT school staff



Stephen Gilbert
Principal



Lanita Villasenor
School Secretary



Michelle Perry
Librarian Technician



Abe Farias
Custodian

Thank you leadership teams!

Foundation Board Members

(Left to Right in photo)

- Rina Lee – Treasurer
- Leigh Stevens- Vice Chair
- Karen Heitkamp – Chair
- Mona Akerblom- Secretary



Advisory Board Members

Principal: Steve Gilbert

Teachers: All

Parents:

(Left to Right in photo)

- Theresa Lester
- Liza Levin – Chair
- Sandy Bartlett
- Jim Schwartz
- Rommy Kushner
- Margaret Abe-Koga



---PACT's Decision Making Groups---

Two groups help guide PACT School's day-to-day and long-term decision making.

The PACT Foundation

The PACT Foundation is the parent-teacher organization for Stevenson School. The Foundation is a formal, non-profit version of the Operations Committee. The Foundation supports the goals of Stevenson School by providing funds for classroom activities and overseeing the parent volunteers outside of the classroom.

The Foundation board consists of a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. Monthly meetings are attended by the board, a representative from each classroom, a teacher representative, and the Advisory group liaison. Any parent/guardian or staff member is welcome to attend.

Foundation Classroom Representatives report information from the Foundation meetings to their classrooms. They also stay in close communications with other room parents, the teacher and the classroom coordinator in order to represent classroom issues to the Foundation.

The Advisory Board:

The Advisory Board membership consists of:

- Steve Gilbert, School Principal
- All ten Stevenson PACT Teachers
- Six parent representatives (selected by teachers) who serve a two-year term

The Advisory Board focuses on long-term policy and high-level program goals. Among its many duties, the Advisory Board reviews questions about PACT, studies long-term issues regarding structure and curriculum, communicates and collaborates with The PACT Foundation, and reviews policy. The Advisory Board is studying and has guided PACT on such issues as: PACT philosophy review, Stevenson PACT School report to the State of California Education Department, classroom configurations, conflict resolution plans, Arts Focus/CSMA Art review, school growth, and 5-year planning. The Principal and teachers have the final word on all Advisory Board matters.

The Advisory Board meets monthly. Meeting days and times are set to accommodate the greatest number of schedules. Meetings are open to Advisory Board members only and by special invitation. Minutes will be published (uploaded) to the files section of the Uptous PACT Community (you will receive email notification when minutes are published.)

If you have a comment or question about the Advisory Board, please email the current Chair, Liza Levin at mikenliza@sbcglobal.net.

Teacher Spotlight



**Bonnie Malouf- Kin-
dergarten, Rm 11**



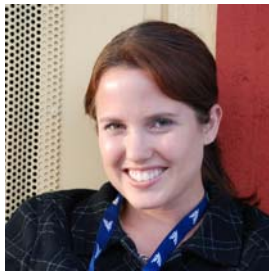
**Devon Williamson-
Kindergarten, Rm 10**



**Brandi Wecks-
Kindergarten, Rm 4**



**Jamie McCleary-
1st Grade, Rm 8**



**Amanda Bean-
1st Grade, Rm 9**



**Terri Hygate-
2nd Grade, Rm 1**



**Katrina van der Linden-
3rd Grade, Rm 3**



**Bernadette Ross-
3rd Grade, Rm 2**



**Stan Adermann-
4th/5th Grade, Rm 7**



**Sarah Loyola-
4th/5th Grade, Rm 6**



**Kirstin Solorzano-
Resource, Office**



**Monica Lipscomb-
1:1 Aide, Rm 4**

PACT: A Silicon Valley Start-Up in Education

By Kim Smith-Nillson

*Kim Smith-Nillson and Bonnie Malouf,
two of PACT's founding parents*

In the beginning...

My memory of the first years of PACT start before there were any classrooms at all. The small group of parents, and later district-sponsored study group, first visited several other alternative schools, and interviewed hundreds of community members. Out of that process, we put together lists of what we thought of as best practices, and also what seemed to be the biggest concerns we heard from people. It was out of those concrete observations and concerns that we developed a list of criteria for any new program or school we would



help start. Included in that list were three that I think continue to define the program today:

1. That education focus on the whole child, with attention to emotional, physical, academic, and social skills. This led to an emphasis on off-site learning, project based learning, and integrated curriculum.
2. The program must represent, as much as possible, the socio-economic make up of the district as a whole. This grew to include a greater understanding of how to include families whose first language is not English.
3. The program must not drain volunteers from the district as a whole. This was a major concern we heard in our planning, and it was indeed a legitimate one. So, PACT instituted a 20% guideline in its early days: 20% of our time commitment should be given outside of the PACT classrooms and program. While the formal 20% was phased out later in our history because it was so hard track, the intention was by that time rooted deeply in the culture of PACT, and it became a part of our identity.

The Philosophy Takes Shape

Bonnie Laster was the first teacher hired to teach in PACT. She came to a parent meeting and it became clear that her philosophy was aligned with ours. She took the risky step of leaving her established position to start with us. The program started at Slater School, with Lance Tagomori as principal and two classrooms— Bonnie taught Kindergarten and Pat Polifrone taught a first grade/ second grade combination class. From the beginning, we had to learn how to be part of a school within a school, maintaining our own pedagogy and still supporting and collaborating with the neighborhood program. The Slater neighborhood teachers and families helped us understand better our growing sense of community: starting with the classroom, moving out to the families, the program, the greater school, the district, and the town. We often talked about it as an onion, with multiple, interdependent layers.

There was a real "start up" feeling when PACT began: parents, teachers and the district were taking a leap of faith that this choice program would fulfill our goal of a progressive alternative in Mountain View and strengthen the district at the same time. Parents and teachers signed on with no classrooms, curriculum, or visuals in place, and it was an incredibly creative time. We learned as much from our missteps as from our early successes, and the time we had at Slater helped us to hear and learn from others in a way we would not have if we had had our own campus. The relationships that were formed there over ten years were priceless in shaping our sense of PACT as part of something bigger than itself, and I am very grateful for that.

The Most Important Voices of Stevenson PACT

What do you like best about the new Stevenson campus?

“I like how big the field is,” Lucas

“I like the way kids have recess at the same time,” Katie

“Mainly the air conditioning. It’s not as loud as Castro,” Alec

“I like the bigger field. Kids aren’t all bunched up,” Niles



“There’s no play structure. I like hula-hooping and Chinese jump rope,” Georgia

“It’s not as loud when you eat,” Madison

“You don’t have to walk all the way around to the play ground. It’s simple, easy,” Zanny

“I like my classroom,” Stephanie

“It took 10 minutes to get to the bathroom at Castro,” Mikiyah