



Benchley/Weinberger

“Achievement through Communications Magnet”

Grades K - 5

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Benchley-Weinberger

Achievement through Communications Magnet

VISION:

By providing a challenging curriculum and teaching high-level communication skills in a supportive learning environment, we aim to empower every student to be a successful lifelong learner and effective communicator in the 21st century.

Our standards based interdisciplinary curriculum focuses on higher level communication concepts and skills as the catalyst for instruction. Students demonstrate the ability to:

- Collaborate with others in relevant, real world and historic projects
- Access information successfully
- Create ideas and products using their learning style strengths
- Evaluate the value of data and materials critically
- Participate in artistic, technological, and academic activities and venues
- Creatively communicate through ideas, sketches, art, models, paper products as well as through their computers, cameras, digital recorders and technological texts.
- Become even better learners through self-reflection, questioning, innovative efforts, critical analysis, multi-domain resources and creative investigations and designs.

MISSION:

Through the cultivation of better interpersonal, global/ media and artistic/alternative communication skills, our students will access, understand, analyze and evaluate all the powerful words, images, ideas, sounds and practices that make up the climate and culture of communication at this school and in the world around them.

“Cultivating communication to inspire 21st century imaginations”

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Interpersonal Communication

In this theme, activities and instruction embrace the essential personal interconnections students have with other students and the people in their learning communities and lives inside and outside of school. It includes all the thinking, sharing, talking and learning skills needed to be successful in the real world context of their global community.

Panda Pals

Every student in the school is paired up with cross-age buddies for regular learning and communicating opportunities.

Service Learning

School wide service projects include Teddy Bear Drives, Lincolns for the Library and Clean Ups.

Social Skills

Our “Character Trait of the Month” and bold banners reinforce our values and views.

Performances

Students engage in Spirit Assembly songs, class oral presentations and plays, Poetry Readings and Historic Wax Museums.

Thinking Skills

Every classroom recognizes in their teaching methods the value of training the brain to think at progressively higher levels as they go from “knowledge of” to “evaluation of” materials. Learning “how to learn” fuels their interactions with information throughout every subject. Questioning strategies support higher level thinking skills that engage all learners.

Global Exchanges

From Flat Stanley , to our symbolic butterfly migration to Mexico, to ePals and skyping. students correspond around the world.

Cooperative Learning

Through the use of flexible groupings, peer tutors, inquiry discussions, study teams and work groups, our students learn to value the thoughts, ideas and efforts of their fellow students.

Diversity & Differences

Through opportunities such as our Multicultural Fair, learning sign language, afterschool Spanish club and PTA sponsored assemblies, students experience the cultures, languages, food, music, dance and art found within the community of students coming to us from all over the city.

Physical Education

From our “Character of the Month”, class debriefings, P.E. Grams, class points, running chart, games leaders and our rewarding “stuff” (baked goods) all students learnt to interact, play and compete while doing physical activities, games, sports and fitness events.

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Global/Media Communication

Reaching the Global/Media Communication goals of our curriculum requires us to access the extensive knowledge of the world our students already have and get them to reflect on its value and role as they rethink, report or respond to the task at hand. Getting them ready for the real world context, content and communication factors of the future is clearly embedded in the discussions and direction of the learning opportunities here on campus.

Panda xPress

This student written and photographed newspaper is a community hit.

KRBW

Broadcasts are created here on campus. Students learn what it takes to produce, write, anchor, direct and air a news broadcast.

Science Symposium

Upper grade students actively participate in inquiry science through the development of Inventions and Science Fair projects displayed for judging here and viewing at the High School Fair.

Mentoring/ Partnerships

Various mentors in the communication field support our school with their interactions, site visits or products.

Media Skills

In our lab and in the classrooms, students are learning to explore, express and even exchange media online. Through the creation of media from the simplest of illustrated poems to online homework, PowerPoint development, Safari Montage, individualized skill practice, digital surveys, online voting, research, various feedback forums, movie making, photography and skypeing, our students are building and designing their way into the technology of the future.

Writer's Corner

Students participate in an afterschool Creative Writing Club aimed to enhance each student's writing skills. Ideas are exchanged within the community through partnership with USD students and "Open Mic Nights".

Multicultural Fair

Countries around the globe are celebrated through their people, dance, music, art, food, resources and activities as students travel around the world with the help of parents and members of our diverse community.

Websites/Moodle

Classroom webpages where students learn to use forums for giving and receiving information, parents access information and teachers can network online with their students.

Library

All our communication goals are enhanced in our student-centered school library through book and author discussions, author visits, researching resources, the Books and Beyond Reading Program and our "Lincolns for the Library" fundraiser.

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Artistic/Alternative Communication

Artistic and various alternative forms of communication are an integral part of our instructional outlook here at school. Extending into the more creative and innovative aspects of learning is the ultimate way to communicate a student's thoughts and ideas to the world. Reaching this valued aspect of expression and learning fuels many activities and projects throughout the year.

Visual Arts

An art teacher provides meaningful and interconnected art lessons throughout the year.

Music

Students in K-4 receive choral music and grade 5 students participate in instrumental music weekly.

Performance

All grade levels participate in productions that are presented to families, buddies, and/or the school at large, from the famous Teddy Bear Picnic in Kindergarten to the Grade 5 promotion presentation in June. Classes often go to the symphony, plays, and performances at the local middle school and in the community.

Design Time

All grade 4 students participate in Design Time where they can select activities to participate in on Friday afternoons. These activities include: drama, robotics, fashion design, jewelry making, game board development, math competitions, Lego building, iCoaster, marble mania, origami, gardening and art projects.

Languages & Code

Throughout the year, one can find everything from sign language, Morse code, afterschool Spanish, Navajo code busters to the "language of flowers".

Variety Show

School wide cast of performers hold an annual variety show to showcase the various talents and skills of our students.

School Gardens

Through various grants and funding sources, all grade levels have been involved in some aspect of our school gardening. This can be seen in our kindergarten learning lot, Integrative Pest Management Teams, Native Naturalists, Hummingbird Gardens, Vermicomposting, Butterfly Way Stations and Colonial Gardens, as we continue to add to our developing garden pathway around the school.

Kindergarten

Interpersonal Communication

Letters to the Troops Students have an authentic audience to write to and learn to express their feelings in print.

Communications Celebration Performances for parents and Panda Pal classes of songs and nursery rhymes in sign language along with the Teddy Bear Program.

Kindergarten Rotation This wheel promotes community building as all Kindergarten teachers get to know all kindergarten students in order for students to feel comfortable with each teacher.

Global/Media Communication

Sign Language Sign language is taught during the Kindergarten afternoon wheel.

Presenter's Voice During oral presentation, we practice using a loud, slow, clear voice to communicate clearly to the listener. Listeners pay attention and respond appropriately to the speaker.

Flat Stanley Flat Stanley travels the globe writing and taking pictures of his adventures for the children to learn about geography.

Artistic/Alternative Communication

Reader's Theater Builds confidence as a performer and provides a public forum to practice speaking.

Native American Symbols Students learn how Native Americans communicate using symbols.

First Grade

Interpersonal Communication

Panda Pals Provides communication across grade levels by reading, writing and interacting with their third grade buddies.

So Simple Sight Words Students use their various learning styles and modalities to incorporate spelling, movements, songs, and rhymes to interact with other students as they learn sight words.

Home School Connection Students share a poster of themselves. Compliments are written to the star of the week.

Global/Media Communication

“Write Back Journal” All students in first grade communicate in writing by using this journal to tell about what they have done for the week. Students take it home, family members write back in the journal which the student then shares.

Newsletter/Calendar A newsletter/calendar is used to communicate classroom activities and news with parents.

Scholastic News Students learn information about different cultures and communicate what they have learned through written and verbal responses.

Skype Students Skype with their pen pals in other countries.

Procedure Demonstration Students demonstrate a step by step procedure that is connected to the real world and their lives.

Artistic/Alternative Communication

Performance Program Communication through songs, poems and movement for the community throughout the year.

Classic Literature Students give performances of literature they are studying.

Pershing Middle Theater Students go to Pershing Middle School to see former students perform. They learn how actors communicate a story through theater.

Second Grade

Interpersonal Communication

Meet the Author This event provides students the opportunity to interview authors and illustrators.

Self Reflection Students share a poster of themselves, focusing on self-esteem. This is a learning community experience. Every child writes a compliment to the “star” of the week.

Global/Media Communication

Non-fiction Oral Reports Students learn to speak to an audience, while acquiring presentation skills. The audience learns good listening skills as they ask questions to the presenter.

Heritage Reports Students communicate about their family heritage, which teaches the class about the countries and ancestor’s countries of origin.

Artistic/Alternative Communication

Pershing Middle School Theater Students visit Pershing Middle School to see former B-W alumni perform and learn how actors “communicate” a story through theater.

Poetry Students read a poem they wrote and act it out in class.

Drama/Readers’ Theater Students bring books to life through a dramatic presentation of a play.

Communication “Wheel” Students rotate through the second grade classes to learn different aspects of communication.

Third Grade

Interpersonal Communication

Panda Pals Students mentor and help younger children academically and socially.

Performance Conference Presentations in front of an audience to learn speaking skills.

Writing Consultant Students learn to communicate kindly through poetry and writing.

Global/Media Communication

Whale Study Students learn about whale culture, survival, communication, migration, echolocation and interactions.

Partner Reports Children do partner reports using reading books and internet research.

SDSU Anthropologist Classroom presentation of artifacts and information about the Kumeyaay Indians.

Poway Days Hands-on living history experience and reenactment of early California times and places.

Wildlife Rehabilitation Visit Students increase their awareness of their impact on the world around us and the wildlife that lives there.

Artistic/Alternative Communication

Pottery In response to science and literature inquiries, students make a clay sun that is glazed and then fired in a kiln.

The Nutcracker Students experience a form of communication through the art of ballet dance.

Earth Day Students visit four regions and take pictures or draw plants and animals from the local regions. This fosters an understanding of local geographic regions and a concern for the world around them, while practicing photography techniques.

Fourth Grade

Interpersonal Communication

Design Time/iVIES Students utilize video as a project based learning tool in the classroom. The best videos are formatted to a county wide video festival.

Westward Expansion Music Students participate in an historic song project focused on how the people of that time period lived, interacted and enjoyed life.

Screen Casting Students develop individual and group screen casts to communicate a skill or idea to others.

Global/Media Communication

Science Innovation Fair Science Innovation Projects give students the opportunity to design a project, reflect on its value and create a display to communicate its value to others.

Feats of Engineering Students experiment with paper airplanes and catapults, recording their results in media tables for math tabulations.

Midway Magic Students participate in lessons about electricity, magnetism and communication aboard the aircraft carrier.

Media Literacy Researching, reviewing and evaluating various forms and aspects of media and informational literacy.

Artistic/Alternative Communication

Wax Museum Students use costumes, props, posters and verbal portrayal to communicate the life and times of historic Californians.

Project Based Social Studies Students learn goals and standards via projects and activities of this subject area via active learning skills.

Morse Code Students reinvent the telegraph device to transmit the Morse code and learn how to send a message for communication.

Integrated Theme Based Projects Students participate in theme units focused on standard and communication goals where they may teach mushers and dogs using GPS systems on line during the Iditarod or study authentic artifacts and documents of the Titanic.

Fifth Grade

Interpersonal Communication

Debates Students work with each other to do research during persuasive units to learn the art of debate.

Panda Pals Big Buddies to younger students with emphasis on literacy, art, physical fitness and communication.

Collaborative Studies Students communicate about books, read through collaborative projects, biweekly interactive response essays and online journaling about the text with feedback from the teacher.

Global/Media Communication

Science Symposium Science Fair Projects give students the opportunity to pose a question, design a project or product and reflect on its value.

Survival Math Students learn to solve math problems by using “real world” problems.

Classroom Presentations Teaches students to speak to an audience and learn presentation skills, while the audience learns good listening skills as they ask questions to the presenter.

Global ePals Students email students throughout the world.

Class Newspaper or Moodle (eLearning) Updates parents of activities of the class that is written by the students and includes photographs.

Artistic/Alternative Communication

Book Club Students complete finished products, shadow boxes, mini-plays, comic strips and maps to report on their books they have read.

Competition Math Club Grades 3, 4 & 5 learn how to articulate math in a competitive setting.

Math Art Students develop various mathematically fueled art with tessellations, compass art and coordinate grid work.

Technology Students use PowerPoint to tell a story through pictures, words and recorded voices, as well as social studies presentations.

Media Lab


Global/Media Communication

All grade levels visit the Media Lab. Our B-W Foundation recently purchased 22 MacBook Pros for the lab.

Depending on the grade level, Benchley-Weinberger students learn keyboarding, word processing, presentation programs, storyboarding, photography and video making/editing, researching skills, and create customized avatars to motivate and improve message comprehension. Students also learn basic Sign Language and Spanish via on-line lessons. Students may work independently or they may work with partners as a method of interpersonal communication.

In addition to regularly scheduled class time, students use the lab to work on our very own KRBW (Kids Report Benchley-Weinberger) news station, and the Panda xPress, our student-run newspaper.

Library



All grade levels visit the Library.

Books and Beyond– This PTA sponsored program is our students’ favorite reading program. They read for prizes and “gold” medals. The goal is for the student body to read 1,500,000 pages between November and May. The program is non-competitive and is designed to encourage the love of reading in our students so that they will become lifelong readers.

“Lincolns” for the Library-This is a special collection program. During the month of February, students and staff collect “Lincolns” (pennies) in honor of Abraham Lincoln. Part of the money collected is used to buy books for the library.

Birthday Book Club-This PTA supported program helps to fill our library with great books. When a child donates a book to the library in honor of their birthday, their name is displayed on one of the birthday cakes on the wall. The child’s name is stamped inside the book.

Guest Readers-Family and community members come into the library or classrooms to read to the students.

Volunteers-Assist our librarian with these programs. These programs are successful with the help of these volunteers.

“If you drop gold and books, pick up the books first, and then the gold”

-Jewish Proverb

Physical Education

The Physical Education curriculum at Benchley-Weinberger is described as a sequential, developmental, age-appropriate program designed to provide students with the knowledge and ability needed to maintain an active, healthy lifestyle. Each class meets once a week for 55 minutes. Class emphasis is on participation while learning new skills and developing these skills through exposure and activity.

Kindergarten works on space exploration, group cooperation, locomotor skills and following rules. Emphasis for first grade students is in moving through space and time (fast and slow) and skills such as tossing and catching alone. In second grade, students begin to move and interact with partners and at the same time doing manipulating skills and celebrating the success of others. Grades third, fourth and fifth go from practicing continuity and change in movement to manipulating objects with accuracy and speed. Lead up games related to soccer, hockey, volleyball and basketball are done in smaller groups with higher participation.

Interpersonal Skills

During the months of the year, a different interpersonal skill is presented and discussed in each class. A class of the month award is given to the class best representing that skill. P.E. Grams are awarded every week to two students in each class who exemplify the six characteristics displayed on the gram.

Movement exploration is presented to first to fifth grade students. This includes a fifth grade trip to the Mission Trails Golf Course, enabling the students to practice their newly learned skills in the appropriate environment.

Our run/walk program starts each morning at 7:25 am for 15 minutes. Students receive monthly awards for running 25, 50, 100, etc. miles. Benchley-Weinberger staff and parents also participate in this program.

Benchley-Weinberger Foundation

WHAT IS THE BENCHLEY-WEINBERGER FOUNDATION?

The Foundation is a registered 501 © 3, a non-profit organization, created by B-W parents. The objective of the Foundation is to fund present and future programs or projects to benefit the children at Benchley-Weinberger. The Foundation complements B-W's outstanding PTA. The bylaws of the Foundation offer flexibility in the allocation of funds to programs, services and equipment that cannot be supported by the PTA fundraising activities. The PTA and the Foundation have become vital partners in sustaining the high standards of our school.

WHAT ARE THE FOUNDATION'S ACTIVITIES?

The Foundation sponsors several fundraising activities throughout the year including the B-W Auction and Jog-a-Thon. The Foundation also sponsors "Family Night at the Bench", which is a family movie night. The Foundation is made up entirely of parents of B-W students. They volunteer their time to raise funds and support programs and activities that benefit all children. Their general meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month in collaboration with the PTA. All parents are welcome!

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Air conditioning in classrooms and library
- Computers and software for the media lab and library
- Emergency backpacks for classrooms and support staff
- P.E. storage shed
- State of the art camera and equipment for the KRBW news station
- Classroom enrichment monies for teachers
- Music and Art teachers
- Running Club Program

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PTA

Committees & Programs:

- Back-to-School-Night
 - Book Fair
 - Books & Beyond
 - Cereal Box Tops
 - E-Script
 - Community Service
 - Cultural Assemblies
 - Everyone-A-Reader
 - Halloween Happening
 - Hospitality Committee
 - Membership
 - Art Programs
 - Variety Show
 - Multicultural Fair
 - Room Parent Coord.
 - Kindergarten Liaison
 - PTA Newsletter
 - PTA Website
- ...and much more!

Opportunities for Helping Families Support Student Learning: The PTA hosts educational workshops for parents. This includes math skill workshops and seminars on various parenting subjects.

Opportunities for Building Skills and Enjoyment: The PTA helps fund art and choral music instruction by district approved consultants. It sponsors a school-wide art show through visual arts, photography and a Spring student Variety Show.

Opportunity for Intercultural Awareness: The PTA funds multicultural assemblies and a Multicultural Fair to celebrate our ethnically diverse student population.

Opportunities for Community Outreach: The PTA Community Service Committee participates in the Law Enforcement Holiday Teddy Bear Drive and fund raising for charities. It also rewards individual student's acts at the Student Green Card Store.

Opportunities for Connecting with Families and Building School Spirit: The PTA rings in the new school year with a Back-to-School Night for families in September. It hosts a fun-filled Halloween Happening in late October. The Hospitality Committee welcomes parents and teachers back to school. The PTA helps families stay connected with the monthly newsletter Paw Prints, a school-wide directory, monthly PTA meetings, an annual PTA membership drive to welcome new members, a volunteer orientation and a bulletin board outside the front office with news of upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. A kindergarten liaison chairperson works to orient new parents to the school and its activities. The PTA website is a valuable source of information and the monthly eNewsletter, Paw Prints, is an award winning publication to help keep families informed.