



El Carmelo Elementary School

PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

3024 Bryant Street, Palo Alto, CA 94306

Phone 650-856-0960 Fax 650-856-4817

Danaé L. Reynolds, Principal

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Dear El Carmelo Families,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year. May this letter find your family enjoying the summer season, spending time together in the outdoors, reading, and indulging in what brings you joy. I am looking forward to building upon the relationships we created last year and to welcoming our new families, fostering our inclusive school culture. El Carmelo truly is *The Hidden Gem, in the heart of Midtown*. My continued priority is supporting teaching and learning. I look forward to partnering with you to ensure each and every child reaches his or her fullest intellectual, social, and creative potential.

Milton and I spent some time in Seattle and on Orcas Island, one of the San Juan Islands off the coast of Washington. We saw a pod of five orcas, ate delicious local seafood, and enjoyed the gorgeous ocean and mountain views. My professional learning this summer included attending a week-long Orton Gillingham training that provides educators with systematic and explicit research based instructional strategies to teach struggling readers.

This year, students and families will experience our commitment to artfully differentiated instruction, elevated student engagement and learning, cultivating friendships, and thoughtful community building. El Carmelo will continue to be a school where all students feel a sense of belonging, and their unique personalities, talents, and gifts are valued.

Teaching and Learning Highlights

- El Carmelo is entering our third year as a Columbia University Teacher's College *Reading and Writing Project* School. Classroom teachers participate in five days of professional development with a Teacher's College Staff Developer over the course of the school year. Grade level teams work directly with students and receive coaching from the Staff Developer. Our students will continue to love reading and writing and share their skills and growth through our reading and writing celebrations after each Unit of Study.
- Teachers will be delving into the newly adopted History Social Science curriculum, *History Alive* from publisher TCI. This new curriculum creates opportunities for students to engage in civic participation, learn about the past from primary source documents and engage in interactive learning with peers in the classroom and online.
- Teachers will continue to deepen their knowledge around the *Bridges in Mathematics* program that was adopted by the district last year. Students will dialogue about math, explain their thinking, ask questions, describe observations, and engage in meaningful activities that reinforce skills.
- Technology Integration in all content areas remains a focus as we strive to create opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate their understanding in a variety of ways.
- Through the implementation of *Responsive Classrooms* practices and *Project Cornerstone* lessons, we all will continue to refine our social and emotional learning initiatives.
- Our students will continue their social-emotional growth with activities and learning experiences designed to develop their self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills and social awareness.

Some of you will be starting your elementary school experience as a parent for the first time. For others, this will be your last year at El Carmelo. For most of you, we will have many more years together. Regardless of where you are in your own El Carmelo journey, know that you and your child are an integral part of our community's fabric. May this school year be filled with academic, social, and emotional growth for each and every student.

Warm Regards,

Danae L. Reynolds, M.Ed.

Principal, El Carmelo Elementary School