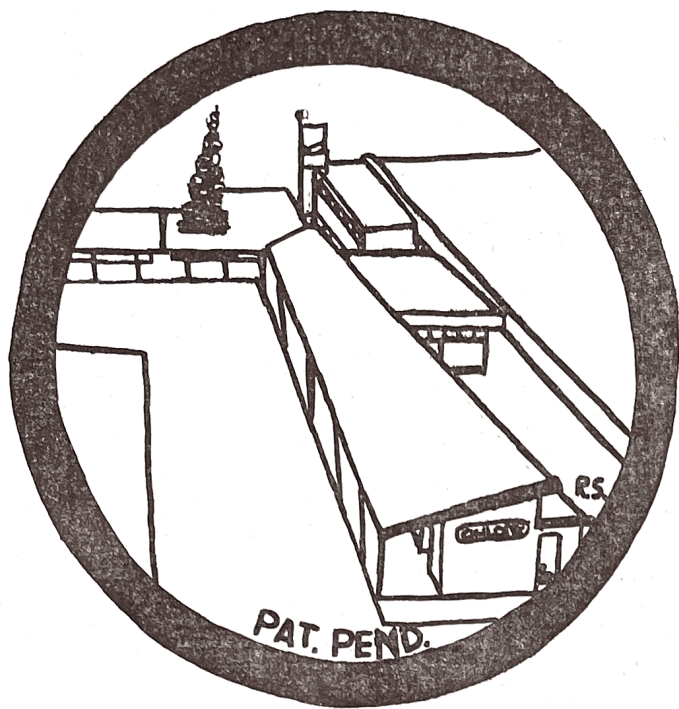




HILONES[®]

A to Z - '72 - '73



A-Z

OHLONES

1972-73

This booklet highlights some of the many activities, events, and features in which the children, parents, and staff associated with Ohlones School have been engaged during the current year. It is not a summary report, but rather a cross section of an evolving program which emerges, grows, is refined, and changes. Readers are encouraged to dip into the booklet at any point, and urged to ask questions about any sections which pique interest or curiosity.

ACTING IN PLAYS - The school has many plays produced by Ohlones students. Most of these plays are written by the students with assistance from teachers or volunteers. The Multipurpose Room is in almost constant use for either instrumental music programs or play rehearsals. These plays are presented to other classes by invitation from the students who are doing the play.

AFFECTIVE EDUCATION - Along with a sincere interest in developing cognitive skills, the staff holds goals in the affective domain in high regard. These goals are shared by most Ohlones parents as revealed in a poll taken in September 1971. Goals such as development of self-concept, personal adjustment, decision-making, motivation toward learning, creativity, and personal adjustment were ranked by both staff and parents as being relatively more important than goals such as spelling, penmanship, math computation and reading skills. Among the objectives for the school is the development of an individualized program which meets the totality of needs for every child, including affective needs. One way this goal is being reached is through the use of the Human Development Program in many classrooms.

ARROW, OHLONES - The Ohlones Arrow is the monthly communication provided for all parents by the PTA. It features excellent articles pertaining to educational issues as well as school news of interest to parents and students. Occasionally it features original writings by students.

ART - Art is an integral part of the Ohlones program. At any moment during a given day children can be found engaged in various art and craft activities. In addition to lessons presented by the classroom teacher, there are weekly art classes from the traveling prep team for the older students. Many art activities are interrelated with learning projects. For example, children have created battle scenes of Gettysburg as part of a project studying the Civil War, while still others have built models of Mt. Everest after reading the book Tiger of the Snows. Parents and other volunteers add thier special talents in acting as art and craft resources. The school has a potter's wheel and two looms which provide children with experiences with ceramics and weaving.

A

BAKING - In many classes small ovens are available for baking projects. Hardly a day goes by when some class is not extending their learning by mixing, measuring and keeping track of time and temperature, to say nothing of the challenge of fractionalizing a pan of brownies into the right number of pieces so that everyone has an equal share. In one room a cooking club was organized. The students baked cupcakes and cookies which they sold during recesses to earn money for purchasing raw materials. This project led to considerable learning about food costs, fair pricing, and profits. The results were delicious.

BELLS - Traditionally a school is run with bells. About a year ago the staff decided to eliminate half of the normal daily bells. We realized that children don't need a bell to tell them when it's time for lunch! In January, 1973 the staff voted to eliminate all bells on a trial basis. The result has been so pleasing and satisfactory that the trial basis has been extended indefinitely. School hours are clearly understood by both children and teachers and it has not been necessary to ring a bell at the school at any time since the experiment began. The elimination of bells has led to a less interrupted, more flowing school day. It also strengthens the relationship between teachers and students. Students know that teachers expect them to be responsible about coming in from the playing field when the teacher indicates that recess is over.

BULLETIN BOARDS - In most classrooms there are one or more bulletin boards which are completely decorated by children. These bulletin boards may feature original work, the results of individual or small-group study projects, or current news events of interest to the children. When children make a bulletin board they learn a valuable aspect of visual arts. Since we believe that the classroom is a cooperatively run room with teacher and students working together, it seems reasonable that students be given important roles in the decoration of their room.

CLASSES - The 402 students at Ohlones School are organized into 15 multi-aged, heterogeneously grouped, self-contained classes. Each class is taught by a full-time teacher with the assistance of student teachers and volunteers. Average class size for primary children is 25. For the intermediate children the average class size is 28. With the exception of one kindergarten class, each room has children of at least two years age span; that is, six- and seven-year-old children learn together within the same classroom. About 20% of the children have the same teacher this year as last year. In most cases these children were in the younger half of the class last year. This year they are in the older half of the class. This is in no way retention of children, but an opportunity for children and teachers who work together harmoniously to continue this relationship beyond one year. Teachers who have worked with some of their class for two years report that they become leaders in the classroom the second year, set the tone at the beginning of the year, and help the entire group to more quickly coalesce into a unified class.

CLASS MEETINGS - In almost every room there are daily class meetings when the school day is planned or reviewed and children have an opportunity to share what they have been learning with each other. Children suggest items for the class meeting agenda at any time during the day; frequently these are jotted down on a blackboard for the class meeting. In some rooms the class meeting starts the day, while in others it is the final activity of the afternoon and serves as an evaluation and planning session for the next day. Through class meetings children learn to work together in large groups to solve problems which arise during the day, to discuss what they are learning, and to evaluate projects they are undertaking.

CLUSTERS - The teaching staff is divided into three groups called Clusters. Cluster One includes those teachers who work with five, six and seven year olds. Cluster Two consists of teachers who work with eight and nine year olds, while Cluster Three involves teachers who work with ten and eleven year olds. The teachers meet by Clusters bi-weekly to discuss programs and problems that relate to the children of the age with which they work.

CONSORTIUM - Ohlones is a member of the Consortium of Northern California Schools which includes four schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. These schools work cooperatively with the International Center for Educational Development which provides in-service training, classroom visitations, weekend workshops and seminars for staff members about open, or informal, education. Teachers at Consortium schools have the opportunity to visit other schools where teachers are attempting to implement the principles of open education.

CONSULTANTS - In addition to consultants available through the district, the school Board has agreed to provide consultant service to Ohlones School from the International Center for Educational Development in Encino, California. The prime consultants are Dr. Virgil Howes and Dr. Robert Keuscher, directors of the I.C.E.D. Their staff is augmented with classroom teachers and elementary school principals who are practitioners of open education and who provide high-quality consulting services to the Ohlones teaching staff.

CONTRACTS - In many classrooms children and teachers develop a daily or weekly contract which outlines the work to be covered during a school day or week. These contracts may be individual or may apply to a group of children within the classroom, and in some cases, apply to a total classroom.

COOKBOOK - The Ohlones PTA undertook a major project during 1972-73 to gather recipes from parents and staff for a cookbook, the proceeds of which will be used in the Human Relations Program sponsored by the PTA. The cookbook features recipes from many cultures and is titled Recipes for Happy Feelings.

CURRICULUM - The curriculum at Ohlones School is prescribed by the State Department of Education and the Palo Alto Unified School District Board of Education. Our curriculum is the same as that of any other elementary school; however, the method of presentation is somewhat different than other schools. Our basic goal is to provide children with a firm foundation in the skills of oral and written communication, including mathematics, in such a way that the children see the relevancy of the skills they are learning and enjoy the use of the skills as they are developed.

HORSES

*I will not change my horse with any that walk
When I'm astride him, I soar, I am a hawk,
He trots the air;
The earth sings when he touches it.
The horn of his hoof is more musical than that of a pipe
He's of the color of the nutmeg and of the heat of a
gingery smell.
He's pure air and fire, and of the dull elements.
Of earth and water
But only in patience, stillness, will his rider mount him.*

Laura Whitmore

Age 10

DAVIS, MRS. LOIS - Ohlones and Mrs. Davis have been synonymous for fifteen years. And in these years students, parents and staff alike have loved her. Her tremendous capacity to handle a multitude of detailed tasks with accuracy and precision, coupled with her genuine interest in people, make her an outstanding person and an excellent secretary.

Mrs. Saye Nouguchi, with her happy competence, joins Mrs. Davis in the mornings. Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Nouguchi make the incomparable Ohlones secretarial team.

A third important member of this team is our Custodian, Mr. Ole Lara, who is well known by the children as able to do everything from repairing flat rubber playground balls to helping with construction of a pigeon coop.

DECISION-MAKING - The staff believes it is important to help children acquire decision-making skills. Some of these skills have been introduced at staff inservice meetings by members of the district guidance team. Within individual classrooms children have opportunities to practice decision-making through simulation games, as well as when they write daily and weekly learning plans.

DEDICATED TEACHERS - The Ohlones staff consists of fifteen dedicated classroom teachers. Each has voted to be part of our educational program for two years in a row. Each has devoted many hours on evenings and weekends to attend seminars, discussion groups and planning sessions during the year. Each combines his unique relationship with children with the general philosophy of open education to provide children with opportunities for growth in skills, attitudes and feelings. The 1972-73 staff at Ohlones School includes the following members:

Teachers

Mrs. Charlyne Beuter	6-7 year olds
Miss Joyce Bryson	8-9 year olds
Miss Carol Cochran	7-8 year olds
Mr. Ted Cross	10-11 year olds
Mrs. Maxine Fink	8-9 year olds
Mrs. Helen Fleming	6-7 year olds
Mrs. Margaret Killingsworth	10-11 year olds (first semester)
Mr. Kris Krause	9-10 year olds
Mrs. Jeannette Kwong	6-7 year olds
Mrs. Jan Leask	10-11 year olds (second semester)
Mr. Winston Lora	10-11 year olds
Mrs. Faye Morrison	9-10 year olds
Mrs. Sylvia Pollack	5 year olds
Mr. Robert Tanner	7-8 year olds
Mr. Willard Thompson	5-6 year olds
Mr. Ted Wassam	10-11 year olds

Certificated Support Staff

Mrs. Florence Bogner
Mrs. Joan Cunneen
Mrs. Ursula Growald
Mrs. Evelyn Hough
Mrs. Janet Helin
Mr. James Mathiott
Miss Pat McCarty
Mr. Jules Shuchat

Nurse
Librarian
Learning Assistance
Guidance Consultant
Vocal Music
Principal
Speech
Instrumental Music

Classified Staff

Mr. Eddie Aquino
Mrs. Lois Davis
Mr. Ole Lara
Mrs. Saye Noguchi

Assistant Custodian
Secretary
Custodian
Clerk

ELEPHANTS

*Swaying to and fro
With his giant stride
Look, his chest's puffed out
So full of pride
Selfish giant doesn't care
About stepping on insects
Here and there*

Sarah Golden

Age 11

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY - The educational philosophy of Ohlones School has been spelled out in a document titled "Questions and Answers Frequently Asked About Ohlones School." This document is available upon request from the office of Ohlones School or by calling 325-5186.

ETHNIC STUDIES - In harmony with the District Human Relations Program all classrooms at Ohlones have participated in human relations or multicultural activities during the school year. Five classrooms in particular have developed long-term projects involving ethnic study. One classroom studied the contribution of blacks to the American culture. They climaxed this study with a visit to the Afro-American Museum in San Francisco. Two classes engaged in a study of Chinese contributions to American culture and culminated this study with a day-long field trip to San Francisco's China Town, including a tour of China Town with a Chinese group leader and lunch at a Chinese restaurant. Two other classes engaged in a study of the Japanese contributions to the American culture and culminated their study with a field trip to the Japan Center in San Francisco.

EVALUATION - Evaluation of the Ohlones program is an on-going, evolutionary process. At the end of our first year of participation in the Consortium of Schools project, parents, staff and children evaluated our program. The results of these evaluations were made available to the School Board and to the public in June of 1972 with the publication of the Ohlones Report for 1971-72. Plans for evaluation this year include a survey of the staff in May and a parent survey to be conducted in June. Results of these surveys will be made available to interested parties in the Fall of 1972. The school is continually interested in evaluation of open education in general and is beginning a collection of evaluation documents from throughout the country.

EXPERIENCE - One of the fundamental, philosophical beliefs in the Ohlones program is that children learn best from the direct experience. To this end, children are given many experiences in measuring, counting, writing, creating, cooking, dancing, etc., each designed to provide a direct physical experience with a portion of the child's environment. These activities are related to the Chinese proverb which reads "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand."

Dear Mr. Mathiott,

We want to thank you for letting us visit another Palo Alto school last Wednesday. The main difference we saw was in the teachers.

Ohlones Teachers are always running around and helping kids and making neat projects for them to work on. Their classrooms have lots of different projects going on all the time. Like in one room there is a big giant globe the kids made for studying geography, and the closet is fixed up like a science lab. The rooms are decorated with childrens art work and projects. In some of the rooms there are different learning centers - like an area for math separate from an area for reading. In some classes the kids write at the end of each day about what they have done and learned that day.

Some Ohlones teachers even invite kids to their homes. One teacher takes her students home for an overnite in the mountains. They seem to really care about kids. The teachers also let parents take small groups of kids on several mini-trips into the community. In general, the teachers seem interested and enthusiastic.

The first class we visited in another Palo Alto school was just about like an Ohlones class. The teacher was alive about what was going on in her classroom. They had math assignments and when they finished then they could play fun math games. In another class the desks were arranged in groups and kids were working on different things like Ohlones.

But in general most of the teachers seemed boring. One was just sitting at the desk glaring around the room while the kids talked. In another class, a teacher was reading to the whole class, but only three people up front were listening. The others were goofing off, chatting, or just not paying attention cause they couldn't hear. Most of the classrooms were dull to look at, nothing much on the walls and windows. Most of the teachers seemed less interested than the teachers at Ohlones. At Ohlones we learn a lot, but the learning is fun.

Thank you,

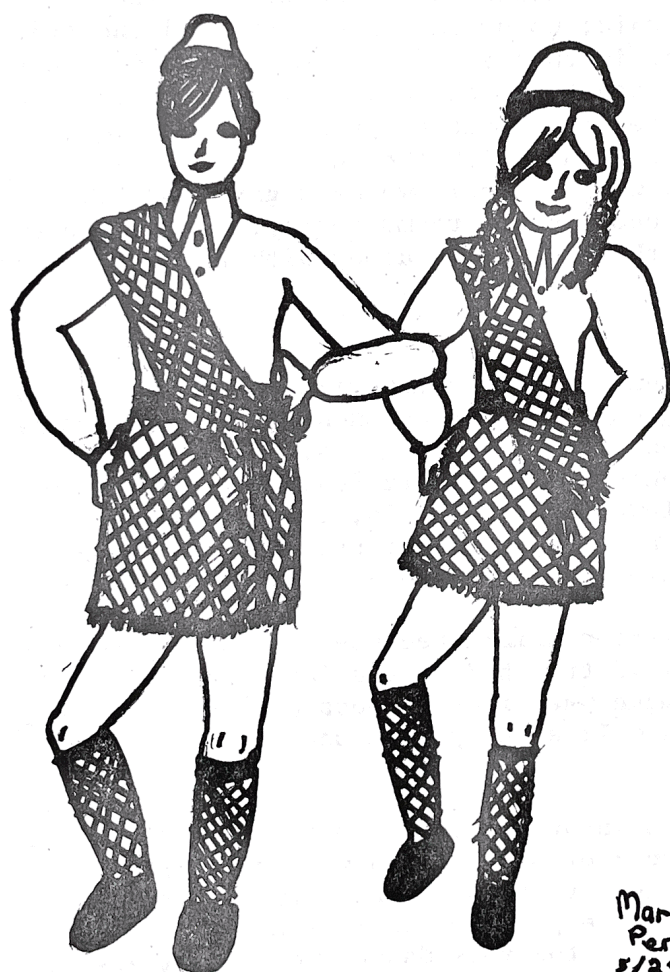
Alison Markley, Age 8

Jennifer Markley, Age 9

small group study and projects with other classes.

FAMILY WEEKEND FIELD TRIP - Two classrooms at Ohlones took a field trip over a weekend early in the fall which included whole families. These classes visited the town of Columbia, California; Columbia State Park; and the gold mining and historical points of interest in that area. Since the field trip occurred over a weekend, families were invited to bring their children to designated spots at certain times where tour guides available or park rangers were available who shared information about the area, not only with the children in the classes, but with their families. Each family was on their own at night, some choosing to camp in the state park while others chose motel rooms nearby. Almost every child in the two classes participated in the field trip along with their brothers and sisters and parents.

FURNITURE, CARDBOARD - In January the staff had a workshop on the construction of cardboard furniture. Using a special type of three-layer cardboard which has great strength and rigidity, teachers and some students constructed a number of tables, room dividers, study carrels, book shelves and cubbyholes for use in the classrooms. We have found that cardboard carpentry is a very inexpensive way of adding to our classroom furniture at the same time providing a learning opportunity for children inasmuch as the cardboard can be worked much like wood only with much more immediate and satisfying results.



Marianna
Perlak
5/25/1973

GRADES - In harmony with other elementary schools in Palo Alto, we do not issue report cards nor give letter grades to students, unless specifically requested by parents. The reason for this is because the staff does not feel that letter grades are an accurate way of communicating progress to students or to parents. This belief was endorsed by a vast majority of the Ohlones parents several years ago when a survey was taken following the elimination of report cards. However, the staff is very concerned about the need to report pupil progress both to the students and to parents.

Each teacher holds at least two conferences with every parent during the school year, usually one in the fall and one in the spring. In addition, because of our modified Wednesday schedule, teachers are able to hold far more frequent conferences with parents if either teacher or parent feels this is wise. In addition, at the end of the year a letter is written by the classroom teacher to the parents which describes the pupil's progress for the year and makes any recommendations for the following year. A copy of this letter becomes a permanent part of the child's record at Ohlones School.

GRATITUDE - We are grateful for the continued support of many people. Without support our school could not function the way in which it does. We are grateful to the Board of Education for providing the funds for our participation in the Consortium. We are also grateful for the support of Dr. Santee, Superintendent of Schools, and his Cabinet for giving us the opportunity to develop open classrooms. The staff is especially grateful to the parents of Ohlones School who have shown us in many, many ways that they support our efforts as professional teachers and as workers with their children.

GROUPS - While one of our goals is the individualization of instruction, sometimes this is misunderstood to mean that every child always works only by himself. Quite the contrary, there are many times when children work in groups. Small groups of children work together on projects in which they share mutual concerns. Other small groups of children work with teachers on specific skill areas such as a new step in mathematics or a particular English skill. Still other small groups meet with our guidance consultant to discuss how they have adapted to a new school or how to help children to find friends. Large group instruction occurs when the teacher feels that it is appropriate. Almost every class has a daily class meeting which is a form of large group instruction. In addition, there are instrumental music groups, chorus groups and library groups meeting every week. While much instruction is individualized, we acknowledge the need for children to learn the skills of working together in groups and our responsibility for providing such opportunities.

G

WHAT ARE OPEN SCHOOLS?

An open school is a place where children learn to make their own decisions. The teachers and our principal went camping and talked about our school. The principal made up two words for an open school. They are safety and courtesy. And whatever and where ever we are we have to be safe and courteous for ourselves and others.

Lisa Finley

Age 10

HENRY VIII MUSICAL PLAY - A highlight for the children in Room 14 this year was the writing of a musical play under the inspiration and leadership of one of our college volunteers. The students conceived the idea for the play, helped write lyrics and lines, learned parts, helped create scenery and costumes (some of which were supplied by the Palo Alto Children's Theater) and produced the play for two assemblies at school as well as in the evening for parents. Every child in the class participated in the play.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM - Twelve of the fifteen teachers at Ohlones School this year have participated in the human development program under the sponsorship of our Guidance Consultant, Mrs. Evelyn Hough. The program consists of mini-lessons which are presented by the teacher through classroom discussions and which help the children become more aware of how they relate to other children and to adults.

HUMAN RELATIONS PROGRAM - Both in the classroom and through the PTA, we have had a very active human relations program. At least a third of the classrooms have used the newly developed social studies materials which emphasize human relations and the contributions of various ethnic minorities to the American culture. Staff inservice training has dealt with a variety of topics including a minimum day meeting with the citizens ad hoc Textbook Evaluation Committee in which we became more aware of the subtle racial and sexual biases of primary and intermediate reading textbooks. The PTA Human Relations Committee has had a monthly book discussion meeting as well as producing a cookbook - the sale of which goes to support our PTA human relations program.

PIANO PLAYERS

*The piano players are only human
Yet have this feeling in their
fingers which brings them to the piano.*

Debbie Webb

Age 11

IMPRESS, PROJECT - Project Impress has been an attempt to provide carefully selected children with a controlled program of reading development. Under the direction of Mrs. Ursula Growald, college student volunteers and student teachers have worked for ten to fifteen minutes daily with children whose reading achievement is not quite as high as we would like to have it. The technique is deceptively simple. Student and tutor read together orally from materials which are within the comfortable reading range of the student. The simultaneous oral reading provides reinforcement for the student with every word that he reads correctly and immediately provides him with words which he has difficulty decoding. The results of Project Impress have been extremely encouraging and will be available in written form at the end of the current school year.

INDIAN NECKLACES, APACHE - One of our many classroom visitors this year had spent considerable time with the Apache Indians near Phoenix, Arizona and shared with the class some of his wealth of information about the Indians. He also provided materials for them to make necklaces which they enjoyed wearing and sharing with their friends.

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION - The key to open classrooms is individualized instruction. Ohlones teachers have worked exceptionally hard during the past two years to develop techniques and methods for reaching each child.

INSERVICE WORKSHOPS - As part of the participation in the consortium of school project, the staff has had the opportunity to attend a number of inservice workshops. The topics of these workshops have included primary reading, mathematics, science, independent activities, Piaget theory, using the outdoor environment for learning, art, drama, classroom organization, record keeping and motivating techniques.

TORTOISE

*A tortoise walks slowly
And it is big and it is heavy
It has short legs that's why it walks slowly
And last year when we went to the zoo we saw
some tortoises and one of them crawled under
the fence and bent it out of shape.*

Guy Klauminzer

Age 7



JANUARY - During the month of January, each class kept a record of all the books which were read by boys and girls in that class. A total of 350 children (not including kindergarten) read 1,085, or an average of 3.1 books per child. This compares with an average of 2.85 books read during January of 1972 and indicates the increase in the amount of reading which children are doing. Independent reading under carefully supervised conditions has enabled children to move rapidly ahead on an individualized basis. We find the children are making a far greater use of the school library and are making more frequent visits to the Mitchell Park Library as well.

PIANO

*Up and down the scales
the little fingers flew
'till the only one not played
was the lowest;
Little Lue*

*Little Lue was sad
the other keys were mad
that the little fingers
forgot poor little Lue
So again the fingers flew
This time including little Lue.*

Marta Fajardo

Age 11

J

KALEIDOSCOPE - A kaleidoscope of activities going on in the fifteen classrooms at Ohlones School was made visible during the week of January 22 to 26, 1973. We kept a daily record of all of the activities that occurred in each classroom. We did this by using our student teachers and college volunteers to interview students from each classroom as well as the teachers in the classrooms. Each teacher filled in a daily class summary sheet which asked the teacher such questions as what the schedule for the day was, any special events that occurred during the day, such as field trips, guests, visitors, assemblies and so forth, whether or not there was a class meeting that day and any whole group instruction that took place in the class; whether there was small group instruction in the class and any other information which might be useful. Each teacher did this each day during the week, then the student teacher or volunteer interviewed 1/5 of the class and asked them to write or describe what they had done during the school day, what they liked best about the day, what had happened that they had wished had not happened during the day, how they would rate that particular day and anything else about the day at school which would be helpful. All of this information was compiled into a notebook which is available for inspection in the Ohlones office.

The scope of activities, special programs, visitors and other events which occurred at school during that one week is extremely broad. The gathering of this data dramatized for all of the staff the number of interesting experiences which are part of the life of the children and staff at our school.

FOSSILS

*One day I went out to play in the sand
I was digging for my lost rubber band
But before I knew it, right in front of my eyes
Lay a little tiny fossil completely alive.*

Jennifer Markley

Age 9

K

LEARNING MAGAZINE - The April, 1973 issue of Learning featured a four-page article about Ohlones School titled "Open Education in Yankee Land." The article highlights nine staff members and their reactions to their open classrooms. The article features pictures taken by one of the staff showing teachers and children at work. Copies of the magazine may be borrowed from the Ohlones office.

LISTENING - One of the skills which we have attempted to enhance is the skill of listening; reflective listening, not just to the words of children or peers, but listening to the feelings which are revealed along with the words.

LISTENING SKILLS - In an effort to improve student listening skills, our Guidance Consultant, Mrs. Evelyn Hough, worked with carefully selected students in small groups with materials designed to improve concentration and skillful listening.

LOVE - Words such as love, joy, respect, and phrases such as warm supportive atmosphere, joyfully produced work, affective education, and trusting relationships are found frequently in discussions between staff members and in class meetings. We are conscientiously attempting to enhance our school by creating a learning atmosphere which fosters the growth of children in all areas. Our concern for and sense of responsibility for the academic roles of children has not diminished, however. Our interest in helping children learn in an atmosphere which includes growth in social and emotional dimensions is also important. We feel that we are dealing with human beings as well as learning beings. The overall goal of our school, as stated several years ago, is "To help each child acquire the tools of learning - reading oral and written language, mathematics - in such a way that each child experiences a joy of learning, is able to use these tools to further his learning, and has the desire to further his learning."

THE ELEPHANT

*The elephants a clumsy fellow
He loves the flowers, green and yellow
It has a great big nose, you see;
and picks up things like you and me.*

MINI-FIELD TRIPS - Field trips have long been recognized as a valuable way for children to learn. Classes at Ohlones take many field trips and increasingly teachers are organizing mini-field trips. A mini-field trip may involve as few as one student in the room or as many as half of the class. A mini-field trip may occur when several students who have been studying a common topic take a trip under the guidance of a parent, after the trip has been carefully planned by the teacher. The children then report to the whole class on their trip. Mini-field trips have been taken this year to the Palo Alto Times, the City Library, the City Sewage Disposal Plants of Palo Alto and Mountain View, the City dump, Stanford Art Gallery, Cubberley High School and the Bay Fill Project in Mountain View.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA - This city was the site of the 1973 national conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Ohlones principal, Jim Mathiott, was invited to help lead an action lab on the open classroom. This action lab was sponsored by the International Center for Educational Development from Los Angeles. Mathiott shared some of the highlights from the Ohlones program, showed slides of the school, exhibited black and white pictures of children in action, and answered questions about the Ohlones report which was written by the staff last year. Mathiott reported widespread interest at the conference in informal education.

MOVIES - Ohlones students have "starred" in several recent movies. One was made by a parent, Mrs. Georgette Evans, and featured the children who receive special help from Mrs. Growald. The students created, wrote, acted and produced their own play, filmed in Mitchell Park and the patio off of the teachers' room. Other students have helped produce animated films under the guidance of Antioch College student volunteer, Doug Brodoff. Stanford Senior, Rose Deighnan, is currently editing a film about Ohlones which she undertook as an independent undergraduate project. She plans to have her film ready for use by September 1973.

MULTI-AGE GROUPING - Multi-age classes in the primary years have been common at Ohlones for a number of years. This year the multi-age concept was extended throughout the school. Each class has children of at least two years' age spread in it. Three classes have six and seven year olds; two have seven and eight year olds; two have eight and nine year olds; two have nine and ten year olds; and four have ten and eleven year olds. Teachers report that the two-year spread provides several advantages: older children set the tone for the younger children in the room, older children have a chance to excel, "sixth grade-itis" is diminished, and a sense of family is built into the class. This year about 20% of the children are with the same teacher that they had last year and next year we expect this figure to increase to about 30%. In general, a child will spend two years with a teacher providing that this is agreeable with the child, his parents and the teacher.

NIGHT - Ohlones is one of the most frequently used elementary schools in Palo Alto. In addition to Scouts and 4-H groups, which use the school late afternoons and evenings, we find ourselves being used every Sunday morning by a Sunday School group. Saturday mornings have seen a special drawing class for artistically talented students in our MP room. As for night meetings, two adult education courses taught by Ohlones staff members were held at the school in the evenings, as well as PTA meetings and a number of other outside groups that regularly use our facilities. We are happy to have our building used by the community, although we realize that our informal classrooms, many of which do not have individual student desks, may cause some problems.

NOISE - One of the most frequently heard comments about informal classrooms is that they are noisy. There is truth in this statement for when twenty-eight children undertake a number of different projects and activities at the same time there is some increase in noise in the room, and this is as it should be. However, teachers have learned to differentiate between active, involved, productive noise and unnecessary, unproductive noise. Interestingly enough few children seem to notice the increase in noise, perhaps because they are absorbed in their work. Occasionally children ask for an absolutely quiet place to work, in which case, various parts of the office and library are pressed into service.

Some classes have decided to regulate their activities so that for a given period of time, usually an hour in the morning, there is a period for uninterrupted, silent, sustained reading - shortened by the children to USSR. During such a period students may choose to do any activity which does not involve either talking with other students or making noise in the classroom.

A sharp decrease in outdoor noise has been noticed with the elimination of all bells, and the very infrequent occasions when a teacher has to use a whistle on the playground.

THE WORLD

*Is the world round like a ball?
Well, can you bounce it around
the moon or Venus or the sun or Jupiter?
I can maybe throw it around the stars.
I will try it when I get a little bigger.*

Kelly Finley

Age 11

OHLONE INDIAN EXHIBIT - Thanks to Mrs. Florence Fava, Historian for the town of Los Altos Hills, our library has a fascinating display of Ohlone Indian artifacts, including beads, handtools, bones, and decorative items. Our school was named for the Ohlone Indians who once populated the area around Palo Alto. Mrs. Fava has been extremely generous with her time and energy, having given several outstanding assemblies for our school. We appreciate the efforts she has made to help children become more aware of the historical and cultural backgrounds of the natives of this area.

OPEN - The word "open" has so many meanings that we sometimes avoid using it! Two years ago we started talking about the Ohlones Plan. But within a few months everyone had tagged Ohlones as the "Open school" or the school with "open classrooms." It is interesting to note that in England, where many open education practices originated, educators do not use the term "open." They simply talk about good, modern, child-centered education.

In general, open or informal classrooms refer to rooms where the teacher and student work together to evolve a learning environment which: is rich in opportunities for boys and girls; where boys and girls have many responsibilities for making decisions about how they will use their time; where there is a genuine communication between teacher and student, based on the interest and needs of the student. This is sharply differentiated from the term "open-space" which refers to a large, undivided building which may house up to 150 students and 6 teachers plus helpers. An open-space school may be open in the sense described above, but it may also be very structured. The key is who is deciding what a child will do, when he will do it, how he will do it, and how it will be evaluated.

Ohlones teachers wrote their own definition to open classrooms at the end of our first year of participation the Consortium of Schools and will do the same at the end of their current year.

OHLONES ADVISORY COMMITTEE - The PTA has established an Ohlones Advisory Committee. The committee will consist of eight parents and one community member, three teachers and the principal. The eight parents and community member will be selected to include representation of all age levels of the school population, economic levels, ethnic groups and other identifiable sub-groups. The committee will meet independently from the PTA Board but will report through its chairman regularly to the PTA Board. The first charge to the committee will be to establish guidelines for its own operation. These guidelines will be in harmony with those stated in the Policies for Early Childhood Education Report from the State Department of Education, issued in January 1973.

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PARENTS - The support of parents has already been mentioned (see GRATITUDE). Many Ohlones parents have been helpful in specific ways. Some have been regular tutors working in classrooms or with individual students on a weekly or semi-weekly basis. Others have faithfully manned our library on days when the librarian is not present so that children have had access to the library five days a week. Still others have helped by driving on field trips or on mini-field trips (see MINI-FIELD TRIPS). Others have contributed their time and talents as room mothers, PTA Board members, typists, Arrow writers and production helpers, and juice bar sales persons.

A uniquely different way of helping Ohlones this year has been to volunteer ones' home for a college student volunteer. Over twenty-four homes have been offered and seventeen of our college volunteers have lived with Ohlones host parents.

PIAGET - The Swiss Educational Psychologist, Jean Piaget, has evolved a theory of educational development which is currently being carefully examined by educators in the United States, although his work has been well known and regarded for many years in Europe. This winter the staff had a workshop on the theories of Piaget, and found that his theories provide an underpinning for many of our practices.

PLAYS - Thanks partly to our college student volunteers who are able to help children with play rehearsals, we have had an increase in student plays, both student written and those found by students in reading materials. For the description of one play (see HENRY THE VIII).

PROGRAM PLANNING - Program planning for children who have been identified for the Advanced Placement Program is an important step which the teacher and Guidance Consultant undertake after the child has been identified on an individual intelligence test. This program planning and end of year evaluation is repeated each year until the child enters junior high school. It involves seeking specific ways in which the program for academically talented youngsters can be enriched and augmented to help them make best use of their abilities.

PROJECTS - In many classrooms the heart of the curriculum for some boys and girls are individual or small group projects, which they undertake with the guidance of their teacher. A project may vary in content, length and involvement, but in every case its goal is to extend the skills of the child as he studies a topic which is of interest to him. See the entry headed FAIR, LEARNING for examples of projects that were undertaken in one classroom.

PTA - The Ohlones PTA is an integral part of our school, and helps to better the educational program for boys and girls in a number of ways. For the past two years each teacher has received \$25 from the PTA to purchase materials for his classroom. The PTA has also helped to support field trips, programs, assemblies, and (through the Human Relations Committee) educational experiences for boys and girls.

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QUALITY WORK - One of the goals discussed by the staff early in the year was how to help children get deeply involved in projects, and how to encourage them to produce work of a high quality. As projects, reports and events of a quality nature have been shared with the principal this year, they have been spotlighted in various ways. Many pictures, poems and stories have been exhibited for all to enjoy in the windows of the office. Several outstanding reports have been featured on the bulletin boards in the office. Original art work of high quality has been submitted for local and state-wide shows. The Intermediate Chorus, directed by Mrs. Helin, was chosen for the City Tree Lighting Ceremony at City Hall in December.

Teachers are finding that through patient encouragement of children they learn to produce work of a high quality and derive great satisfaction from knowing that they have done so.

QUIET - See the heading titled "NOISE."

OHLONES

Ohlones

Good school

Bongos at recess

Lots of nice teachers

Learning.

Eric Schmidt

Age 10

REACTIONS - Each visitor is given a reaction sheet which asks him to give written comments and suggestions, questions and reactions to our school anonymously if he so chooses. With over 250 visitors this year we have some 200 reaction sheets on file in the Ohlones office for anyone interested to read.

READING - How do Ohlones boys and girls do in reading? Quite well, according to standardized test results given all children, ages 6, 7 and 8 in the State of California. On tests given in May 1972, 95% of the Ohlones youngsters did as well as 75% of the youngsters nationally; or to put it another way, only 5% of our boys and girls scored in the bottom quartile of the test. This compares extremely favorably with other Palo Alto schools whose percentages for the bottom quartile range from 3% to 24%. Only one elementary school in Palo Alto had a lower number of percentage of children who scored in the bottom quartile.

For eleven-year-olds tested in October, only 4 of the Ohlones boys and girls had reading test scores that caused us concern and upon retesting these four in April, three of them were above grade level in reading (see JANUARY).

RESEARCH SKILLS - With the help of our librarian, Joan Cunneen, older boys and girls have been developing skills in research and report writing. Children enroll with their teacher's permission in a course offered by Mrs. Cunneen which includes a visit to the Mitchell Park Library, research in encyclopedias, books and magazines and the use of other resources such as audiovisual aids and personal interviews. Each project includes note taking, draft writing and final editing and copying of a report. The student selects the subject, Mrs. Cunneen helps with research techniques and guidance, and the result is a finished product which is highly prized by the student and a whole new set of research skills which the student takes with him for his next project.

RESPONSIBILITY - One of our goals is to help children develop responsibility. This includes responsibility for his behavior and for use of time and materials, and for selecting worthwhile projects. We find many children need to learn the skills of accepting responsibility just as they need to learn the skills of an academic subject. Children vary in their "responsibility quotient" just as they do in any other dimension of their growth.

RETREAT - The first weekend in May the Ohlones staff held a retreat at the YMCA-sponsored camp near La Honda. The theme of the retreat was "Where Do We Go From Here" and the staff discussed school organization, program planning and the future of our involvement with the Consortium of Schools. A side benefit of the retreat was getting to know each other as people in a much closer way than is possible during the regular school week.

SELF-DIRECTION - One of the qualities we are attempting to help children develop is self-direction. Rather than the teacher telling the student what to do, when to do it, how to do it, why he is doing it and how he did, we are encouraging students, as they show that they are ready, to accept responsibility for some of these decisions. As the student becomes more capable of making wise decisions about his use of time, materials and resources, he is enhancing his ability to be self-directed, rather than teacher directed.

SHARE - Project SHARE couples college and high school students with elementary age children. It has been enthusiastically received by several Ohlones boys and girls. A SHARE tutor is something of a big brother or big sister for the elementary age youngster and while the SHARE tutor may ostensibly be helping his young friend with school work, he also provides a model for the youngster.

SHARING - Sharing of ideas among staff members is important and fun. Last year we had Project Capture where teachers were encouraged to tape record highlights of their classrooms, new ideas, creative inspirations, or the unfolding panorama of their classrooms. These tapes were transcribed and reproduced for all staff members.

This year the staff has shared ideas in a number of ways, frequently through the biweekly Cluster meetings which were usually held in classrooms. During the Cluster meeting teachers have opportunities to share ideas, solutions to problems and questions with each other.

A second important way in which we share ideas is with teachers of the other Consortium schools. There have also been several district-wide meetings where staff members have told about their program. In addition, we have shared our program with over 250 visitors this year who have come and spent a part of the day at our school.

STUDENT TEACHERS - We have been fortunate to have a number of student teachers with us this year. They have enabled teachers to facilitate the individualization of instruction and have added an enhancing dimension to our staff meetings, parties and discussions. We have had student teachers from San Jose State College, The University of California at San Jose; Santa Clara University; College of St. Benedict in Minnesota; and Principia College in Missouri.

SUBSTITUTES - Bless them! Substitutes have had varied reactions to Ohlones. Most have had a very enjoyable time and comment favorably on the self-direction and responsibility shown by students. A few, unprepared for the informal classrooms, have had difficulty giving children the freedom to which they have become accustomed, and these substitutes have had difficult times with classes. We acknowledge that substituting is a difficult job in the first place and substituting at Ohlones is especially difficult.

TUTORING - Cross-age tutoring is common at Ohlones. It occurs in two ways: within the cross-aged classrooms older students frequently help younger students in math and reading; between classrooms it is common for older students to contract with their teacher to spend time working with younger classes, helping in a multitude of ways. Research shows that both the tutor and tutee benefit from this and the children tell us that they especially like it -- both the younger and older children.

TRANSFERS - In May 1972 parents of Ohlones students and parents of students at two adjacent schools were told that boundaries would be opened among the schools. Any parent could transfer any child to another school as long as space was available. Of the 380 students at Ohlones last year, only six left because of our program. We received 63 students, not only from the two adjacent schools but from 13 of the 19 elementary schools in Palo Alto. These 63 students are all brought to Ohlones by their parents as the district does not provide transportation. A recent survey indicated that except for transfer students who are leaving sixth grade or moving out of town, all but four expect to continue at Ohlones next year. Our present student body, 402 students, is at our capacity with 25 in primary classes and 28 in intermediate classes.

TROKAB - This word was coined by the students in one of our older classrooms. It represents the first letters of the qualities they wanted to see developed in their classroom: trust, responsibility, openness, kindness, acceptance, and being yourself. TROKAB has become the class motto and has become a standard against which specific behaviors are measured. Some of these students visited a town meeting held by a local state assemblyman and told him about TROKAB. He was so taken by the idea that he shared it with his constituents through his newsletter.

Book

Words, periods.

Fun to read.

Good, bad, easy, hard.

Story.

Tom Nix

Age 9

UNGRADED - This term at Ohlones refers to an attitude toward boys and girls as well as a way of organizing the school. What we mean by ungraded is that children are seen as individuals with individual strengths, weaknesses, assets and needs. They are freed from the traditional stereotypes which are frequently associated with "fourth grade" or "first grade". While it is difficult to remove the term from all conversation and impossible to get away from it for certain purposes, such as attendance records, it is more important that we remove it from our thinking about children; that is, we consciously attempt to remove children from slots or categories based on grade or sex, just as we make a conscious effort to remove children from categories based on race or religion. In this sense we are honoring each child as an individual being, not as a statistic. This takes effort and it takes time to retrain thinking patterns long accustomed to graded type thinking. But we feel we have made progress in moving toward our goal.

UNSTRUCTURED - Like the term "open", the terms "structure" and unstructure" have many meanings. Obviously, there is structure in the classroom at Ohlones. No classroom -- no social group -- can exist without some type of structure. But at Ohlones structure is different from that found in the traditional classroom where the teacher provides (very benevolently, at times) the structure for the class. We prefer to think of the structure of our classrooms as evolving from a jointly shared interest by students and teacher. One of our staff differentiates between structure and stricture, the last referring to the artificial fetters which teachers place on students without their consent or, at times, their knowledge. We attempt to reduce such strictures; however, there is structure. There are rules in the classrooms. There are standards of expectations. There are work expectancies which the teacher holds for students. However, these expectations may vary from child to child. Some are agreed upon mutually through individual conferences; some are formalized in contracts between teacher and child; and in a few cases, between child and the principal. Many are arrived at through class meetings and result from discussions based on problems which the children bring up. A good example of a standard of expectation arrived at through class discussion is described below.

USSR - In many classrooms there is a daily period for uninterrupted, silent sustained reading (USSR), a title we borrowed from another open school. During this period no activity which produces or results in noise are allowed in the classroom and children will be found reading. The decision to have USSR is usually arrived at as a result of class meetings, when children indicate they want to have a time of absolute quiet for individual reading, study and quiet work.



VASCONCELLOS, JOHN - As an outgrowth of one class' study of government, a group of students took a mini field trip (see MINI FIELD TRIP) one evening with their teacher to hear California Assemblyman John Vasconcellos talk at a town hall. The students not only listened attentively, they asked questions of Mr. Vasconcellos after his talk, participated in the discussion, shared information about their classroom and school (see TROKAB), and then shared their experiences with the class the next morning.

VISITORS - Word seems to have gotten out that Ohlones is an interesting school to visit for we have had over 250 visitors this year. We have no special visitation policy other than asking visitors to call ahead for an appointment to be sure the calendar is clear. Next year we plan to have a cadre of Ohlones mothers trained to receive visitors, orient them to the school and answer questions.

VISITS - Visits to other schools have been very helpful this year. Teachers have enjoyed the opportunity of seeing classrooms in other schools, meeting teachers and talking with them about their programs. In addition to visiting the other schools in the Consortium, several teachers have visited schools in the cities of Los Angeles, Manhattan Beach, San Diego, St. Paul and Minneapolis where teachers are implementing open classrooms.

VOLUNTEERS - What a help they are! Our volunteers, well over 100 in number, include parents, college students, high school and junior high school students, personal friends of teachers and members of the community. Some work full-time at Ohlones, while others work on a scheduled weekly basis. Still others work as needed on call. We love our volunteers and acknowledge that without their help and support our program would greatly diminished.

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WEBBING - This is a British term and it applies to the process of helping a child take a given interest and expand it into a range of other interests and areas. As an intellectual activity it has provided the basis for several stimulating staff meetings where teachers have brainstormed how a child's individual interest could be webbed or linked to other interests, including the traditional academic skill subjects. For an example of one kind of a web centered around a child's interest in mini bikes, see the other side of this page.

WEAVING - Yes, we do have weaving. In fact, one room has used a lovely loom loaned to us for most of the year and the children have created a beautiful, colored tapestry over six feet long.

WHY? - Why do we do it? That is, why do teachers willingly work as hard as they do to have open classrooms? There is no doubt that the open classrooms are more demanding on teachers than are traditionally organized classrooms. When asked why they do it, most Ohlones teachers respond that once having tried it, once seeing the differences in children, once having watched children develop self-direction and responsibility, they would never be satisfied with going back to their old way of teaching.

WRITING, CREATIVE - One of the activities which has blossomed with open classrooms is creative writing. Freed from artificial time constraints and inspired to express themselves in writing, some lovely prose and poetry has resulted. Over 40 children participated in writing poems for a Palo Alto City theater production. Over half the children have "published" books of poems and stories by members of the class. Several creative writing groups have flourished with college student volunteers as sponsors. Reproduced below is a poem written by a ten-year-old girl.

OHLONES SCHOOL

*It's free.
You can do what you want.
Oh, we do math and reading, and
all that stuff.*

*But most important it's free,
and that's what's important to me.
If I was all closed in,
it would be like I was in a bin,
but luckily I'm not.
I'm free.
That's something special to me.*

Brooke Farr
Ohlones School, 1973

W

YEAR TWO - The 1972-73 school year is our second year of membership in the Consortium of Schools. It has been a year of great growth for us all. In many ways it has been less frustrating than last year as we have become more familiar with the principles of open education and more comfortable with our relations with children. However, it has also been frustrating at times for we all see ways in which we would like to see our school improve even more. But we realize that change takes time and are pleased with the results to date, realizing that there is refinement and improvement still to come.

YOGA - Yes, every Monday afternoon during the spring, between 4 and 5 p.m. there has been a yoga class in our M.P. room open to anyone interested. About half the staff has participated, along with a generous sprinkling of parents and students. The class was initiated and arranged for by one of our teachers and each participant pays a weekly fee.

YOU - If you have read this document this far you must be very interested in Ohlones. If you have not visited us, may we suggest that you do so (see VISITORS). We would like to meet you, talk with you about your ideas about education and perhaps even ask you to give us a hand. Our volunteer program is large and still expanding. We have room for YOU!

Leaves

Pointed ones

Blowing fast away.

Trees - lonely, cold, empty

Sad.

Mary Sue Strand

Age 10

Originally named Ohlones but named was corrected to Ohlone in 1970's. In 1974 it was made an alternative school for the open philosophy of education. In June, 1982 Ohlone closed and the school retaining the name of Ohlone moved to the Los Ninos site.