

Dry Creek Elementary SART Survey Q&A – Spring 2009

Dear Parents: We appreciate receiving your SART surveys. We had a high rate of return and many of you offered compliments and suggestions. I have listed several of the most common questions or comments below, and have provided additional information or responses. Please feel free to call or email if you have other questions or concerns. As always, thank you for helping to make Dry Creek a great place to learn.

Robert Hansen, Principal

Summary of Survey Results (% of “Excellent” + “Good” responses)

Overall School Quality:	97% (CUSD average = 93%), increase of 6% from 2007
Safe School Environment	90% (CUSD average = 87%), increase of 8% from 2007
Challenged to Learn	83% (CUSD average = 82%), decrease of 2% from 2007
School/Home Communication	83% (CUSD average = 78%), increase of 4% from 2007
Character Counts	87% (CUSD average = 85%), increase of 1% from 2007
Positive School Climate	91% (CUSD average = 86%), increase of 4% from 2007
Instructional Materials Quality	85% (CUSD average = 86%), decrease of 1% from 2007
Buildings and Grounds	87% (CUSD average = 90%), increase of 10% from 2007
Racial/Cultural Understanding	80% (CUSD average = 80%), increase of 5% from 2007

Q. “How can we improve traffic and parking at Dry Creek?”

A. *This is a perennial “favorite” and an ongoing concern for us as well—there are a lot of cars around the Dry Creek campus at any one time. Traffic volume drops quickly after the first 7-10 minutes following the 3:15 dismissal bell, so if some of our parents are willing to come just a few minutes later, this would be a big help. Parents are reminded that the front of school (along Armstrong Ave) is for Kindergarten student pickup only. All other students should be picked up at Parent Pickup on Nees. And, if we have students who could be riding the bus instead of being picked up, that too would reduce the number of cars. Finally, all of us have to be cautious drivers, alert for pedestrians and patient with fellow drivers—even though at times the actions of a few drivers frustrate us (parents and staff alike!). The Clovis Police Department has been, and will continue to be, very responsive to our requests for assistance.*

Q. “Sometimes it is hard to get information on all of the programs that are available for students to participate in. It would be nice if there was a place on the school web site that listed all the activities, along with contact information.”

A. *Great idea! We are working on doing just that.*

Q. Comment: “I think that a packet of information should be available to prepare children for basic skills (such as letter sounds, number recognition, etc.) to know before kindergarten might help parents.”

A. *Excellent idea. We have been including such information in material provided at the pre-screening appointment in May. However, we can start giving this packet of material out sooner at the point of kindergarten registration.*

Q. Comment: “I feel like combination classes are the result of monetary rather than educational decisions.”

A. *You are absolutely correct. The state of California provides a funding formula that requires that classes are built at a minimum enrollment number. Operating classes at a much smaller size, while educationally desirable, are not sustainable from a financial standpoint. Consequently, there are times when the number of students at a particular grade level cannot be readily divided into units to justify a full class. Dry Creek typically has one combination class each year, although the grade levels involved vary. Students in those classes experience the same curriculum as their grade level peers in non-combination classes.*

Q. Comment: “The sports programs have done an amazing job of helping my child develop a sense of self-esteem.”

A. *The purpose of Dry Creek’s after-school co-curricular programs is to give upper grade students a chance to participate in a variety of activities, to learn cooperation, teamwork, responsibility. And, as we like to say, how to “win with class and lose with dignity.”*

Q. Comment: “Please improve bathroom cleanliness.”

A. *We are keenly aware of the challenges of keeping student restrooms clean. Our custodians check all restrooms three times each day and perform thorough cleaning each evening, but clearly there are times when that is not enough. We do appreciate hearing from students when a particular restroom needs attention.*

Q. Comment: “Can we have more of the anti-bullying program?”

A. *Starting this year, we are using “Bully Proofing Your School” lessons at all grade levels for the first six weeks of school. These lessons are age-appropriate and target the kinds of issues that arise among elementary students.*

Q. Comment: “Can we have more field trips?”

A. *We agree that field trips or other non-standard learning experiences are valuable and often remembered long after other lessons are forgotten. Each grade level at Dry Creek will take at least one field trip this year. The stipulations are that the activity must align with grade level curriculum standards and be financially viable.*

Q. Comment: “Thank you for all the wonderful special events: Mother-Son Dance, Donuts with Dad, etc.”

A. *We feel the same way about these ‘special events.’ They are not fundraisers, although some do make a little money for Student Body. The real reason for doing them is to provide a setting for fun, positive interaction among parents and students, and hopefully, some long-lasting memories.*

Q. Comment: “Love having a dress code but it needs to be evaluated every 10 years.” And “I would like to see the dress code altered—shorts need to be allowed more—this is California after all!”

A. *CUSD’s student dress code is evaluated each year. The CUSD Interschool Council (comprised of student representatives from each high school) reports each spring to the CUSD Governing Board on matters important to students. Recent examples of changes that have come about because of parent and student input include a relaxation of the definition of appropriate shorts, footwear requirements for 7-12 students, and use of personal cell phones on campuses. Probably the #1 request from parents is to allow shorts to be worn year around or at least longer than the current window.*