

Miraloma Elementary 2009 Self-Guided Tour

Welcome to Miraloma Elementary School!

Miraloma Elementary is a safe and supportive child-centered environment where students can grow to be life-long learners. We offer a variety of arts and enrichment programs to help guide the development of the whole child to his or her greatest potential.

In order to provide the best learning environment for our children we ask that you:

- **Observe the classrooms from the hallway. Please do not enter any of the classrooms, even if they are empty.**
- **Refrain from using cameras**
- **Avoid interacting with children, teachers or staff**



Look for direction signage at each tour stop. Signs are green and black with a large dragon and letter.

Basic information

School hours: 7:50-1:50

K-5 school, approximately 365 students

Three classes each K-3rd grades

Two classes each 4th and 5th grades

One 4th/5th grade combination class

One Special Day class

Class sizes (maximum): 20 each grades K-3rd, 25 each grades 4th and 5th

Inclusion school

Built in 1952, 51,900 sq ft

18 classrooms (No portable classrooms), 3 outdoor yards

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TOUR STOP A – Library

Welcome to our library. Classes visit once a week to check-out books, hear a story, study, or conduct research. Our librarian and parent/guardian volunteers help by shelving books and keeping our 6000 (and growing) book collection accessible for everyone. The library is open every school day. The library is also the site of our annual Book Fair and Read-a-thon. Come inside and take a look or read a book!

- Staffed by parent volunteers and a part-time librarian.
- All books (6,000+) are catalogued on the computer using the Library of Congress bibliographic information and the Dewey Decimal system.
- All obsolete and damaged books are weeded out, and the collection is expanded every year.
- Each class visits the library once a week. They hear a story read (often read by a parent volunteer) and each student has a library card and can check out a book. The 4th and 5th graders have additional time to use the library for research.
- Annual Scholastic Book Fair tied in with our Read-a-thon.

TOUR STOP B - Auditorium

(Across from the library)

Our auditorium seats 250 and hosts many events. Come visit the prime gathering space in our school.

- Weekly sing-alongs for K–2nd grades (Friday mornings at 8:00 AM) and 3rd–5th grades (Thursday mornings at 8:00 AM). Families are welcome to join in. If you wish to observe/participate at a future date, please check-in at the office first.
- Also used for
 - assemblies
 - talent show
 - music and movement lessons
 - student performances
 - performances by outside organizations such as SF Symphony

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TOUR STOP C - Student of the Week/Calendar

(Down the hall, across from the main office)

Every student has at least one opportunity to be Student of the Week in his or her class. It's an opportunity for the children to tell about their family, interests, and a way of building community. It's also part of the school's TRIBES program.

Our calendar is located on the wall behind you. It shows everything that is taking place at the school.

Other means of communication used at the school include:

- Wednesday envelopes – Children take it home each Wednesday and return the envelope the next day with a parent's signature.
- School listserv – All are welcome to join the group, managed by parents.
- Morning circle – Students and parents gather in a circle on the yard in the morning for greetings and announcements before going into the classrooms.
- Room parents – Parent volunteers reach out to class families and help coordinate classroom activities
- Principal chats (monthly) – Our principal, Mr. Machado hosts an informal chat session sharing school news and answering parent questions
- Website – www.miralomasf.com
- Hallway bulletin boards – These boards allow classes to share what they're working on, while other boards are dedicated to certain topics or committee activities.
- Annual yearbook

TRIBES

This is a program that establishes a caring environment for cooperative learning and structure for positive interaction. Teachers are trained in its philosophy and children are taught its five agreements starting in kindergarten.

- Attentive listening
- Appreciation / no put downs
- Right to pass
- Mutual respect
- Be safe

For more information, go to www.tribes.com

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TOUR STOP D - Community Service

(Down the hall from the main office – left side)

The children, teachers, and parents have an impact on the world outside of our school too! Community service projects have included:

- SF Food Bank food drive and warehouse help
- Pennies for Peace
- Halloween collection for UNICEF
- Sweets for Soldiers (sending candy to soldiers)
- Adopt-A-Family
- Laguna Honda Hospital entertainment

TOUR STOP E - Classroom Boards & Art

(Outside room 105 and all other classrooms)

Communication from teachers is posted outside of each classroom. Numerous art programs fill our hallways with color and imagination and fill our school with activity.

Parent information boards may display classroom newsletters, parent volunteer schedules, pictures and information on the Student of the Week, wish lists, and snack sign-ups. Families are asked (not required) to provide snacks for the entire class for a week. Typically, families sign up for two weeks per year.

Art at Miraloma

- Art committee is a collaboration between teachers, staff, and parents in promoting and supporting visual arts, music, movement, and writing.
- Art instruction in the classroom is lead by the teachers and parent volunteers.
- SF Arts Education Project – Several instructors teach movement (dance) for ten weeks to students in K-2nd, and rhythm to 2nd grade students for 9 weeks.
- Chorus in 3rd-5th grades.
- Artist/ceramicist in residence – artist-in-residence budget and Prop H money is used to hire an artist who can provide art and clay instruction. We also have a kiln onsite.
- Sing-along for all grades (K-2nd on Fridays, 3rd-5th on Thursdays at 8:00 AM – all are welcome)
- Poet-in-residence - Sally Doyle provides all children with age-appropriate poetry experiences.
- Music instruction - The school district provides music instruction by a credentialed music teacher for 3rd-5th grades. 3rd graders learn African rhythms, and 4th and 5th graders may choose instruction on the flute, violin, clarinet or trumpet.

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TOUR STOP F - Miraloma Garden & Science

(Down to the end of the hall and exit to the right)

In Miraloma's Educational Garden, students dig in the earth, plant seeds, and nurture vegetables and fruit. They taste and appreciate diverse edibles, discovering the source of the food we eat and the science of how it grows.

Like our garden, this educational program is successful and growing. New additions include a greenhouse, rainwater irrigation system, and outdoor classroom.

- Our part-time credentialed gardening teacher works with classroom teachers in incorporating lessons into curriculum (math/science/ecology/nutrition)
- Funded by PTA.
- Families sign up to maintain the garden during the summer months and reap the benefits of the harvest.

Science at Miraloma

- Science with Lawrence Hall of Science, which is a three year professional development program working with the teachers to provide a science curriculum based on the inquiry process. The program culminates each year with a school-wide science night. We are in our third year.
- Science Education partnership with UCSF where teachers partner with scientists to bring science into the classroom with hands-on approach.
- California Academy of Science TISS (Teacher Institute on Sustainable Science) program used in one 4th grade classroom.

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TOUR STOP G - Kindergarten

(Downstairs – Room 8 immediately on the left and two rooms, 1 and 2, on the right down a few steps)

- Three classrooms
- The teachers rotate classes for an hour twice a week
 - Allows them to specialize and work on strengths (see professional development)
 - Know all the students in the grade
- Teachers decide at the end of the year which 1st grade class the children are assigned (as do all the other grade teachers determine where the students will be assigned for the next grade)

TOUR STOP H – Kindergarten-1st grade Yards

(Exit the building into the yard. Turn right down the stairs to the kindergarten-1st grade yard. Continue alongside the building to the right to the playground.)

K and 1st graders have their own playground, opening directly to two of the three K classrooms.

- For kindergarten and 1st grade classes during their recesses (kindergarten only for the first ten minutes).
- PTA finalized work on a master plan for the outside areas of the school, including this new play structure, re-paving, sand area, and dramatic play area in the kindergarten yard in May 2006.
- The playground directly below the kindergarten yard is for K and 1st graders.

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TOUR STOP I - Upper Yard

(Go back up the stairs from the K-1st grade yard)

The spacious upper yard is used for Morning Circle and Physical Education. It will soon be renovated to add trees and new structures.

- We assemble on the yard every morning at 7:50 for morning circle to hear announcements.
- Reserved for grades 2-5 during recess (staggered).
- No bungalows -- fire marshal prohibits.
- The grounds committee, made up of parent volunteers, staff members and the principal, is currently working on a master grounds plan.

Miraloma Playground (aka Sandy Park)

(Note playground and field next to school)

Students also have access to the city park next door with their teachers.

- Kindergarten classes end their day there on Fridays
- Some classes use playground and field – parents/guardians sign field trip forms annually
- SF Recreation and Park Latch Key program is another after school alternative for many families.

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TOUR STOP J - Upper Grades, Academics & Test Scores *(Enter the building where you exited. Walk down the hallway)*

The mural on the wall was done by Precita Eyes and the 2003 graduating 5th grade class with the theme of world peace.

The 4th and 5th grade classrooms are on the first floor. Note the Smart Boards which were installed last year utilizing technology in the classroom.

Technology

- Computers are in all classrooms, allowing for real time usage in supporting lessons
- Smart Boards
- Data collection – used in the office to record tardy students, visitors, and volunteer hours
- Library – cataloging of all publications and used for student checking out of books
- School surveys – majority of our families take the annual school survey online making analysis easier
- Tours – Podcast virtual tour is available online at www.miralomasf.com, as well as sign-up for tours

Our API is 851. It has steadily increased every year for the past five years.

Class sizes

- Miraloma receives QEIA funding to keep K-3rd at 20 or less and 4th and 5th grades at 25 or less
- Two 4th grade classes, one 4/5 combination class, two 5th grade classes

Professional development of teachers

- Professional teacher development with Berkeley math professor, Dr. Wu
- Half-day release for grade level teachers to collaborate
- Class rotations to reinforce lessons given by teachers (i.e. teach same lesson three times to three classes to fine tune skills vs. once a year) and allows for specific skill/topic focus.

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Resources include:

- Student advisor
- Learning Support Professional
- Resource specialist
- Reading Intervention Teachers (2)
- Paraprofessionals (5)
- Speech language specialist (part time)
- USF counselors -- Available every day to assist with identified children (and families) with emotional, developmental, situational issues.

Special Education at Miraloma

Special Day Class

- The Special Day class is for "identified learning disabled students."
- 3rd/4th/5th grade combination with a full-time teacher and a full-time aid.

We are an inclusion school (inclusion students in every classroom) for children with minor to severe special needs, with a full-time inclusion teacher. Children are included in the classroom and pulled out for special services when needed.

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TOUR STOP K - Cafeteria

(Towards the end of the hall, turn right. Note mural by 5th graders of 2008 and Precita Eyes.)

The cafeteria is versatile and connects directly to the upper playground and the gymnasium. Breakfast and hot lunch are available. The kids eat in shifts to allow everyone the opportunity to eat inside, regardless if a student buys or packs his/her own lunch.

- Breakfast and lunch are both served. Students can either bring lunch from home, purchase a school lunch (\$2.00 for lunch, \$0.50 for milk, \$1.50 for breakfast), or receive a free lunch if they qualify. No one is segregated or pointed out if they receive a free or reduced priced lunch. Hot lunch menu is available monthly at the SFUSD site, www.sfUSD.edu.
- Students eat inside, and if weather permits, lunch may be eaten outside.
- Lunch is eaten after recess, allowing the children to burn off energy first and then focus on eating lunch.

TOUR STOP L - Gymnasium

(Walk through the door under the sea animal painting to enter the gym.)

Miraloma has a dedicated full-size gymnasium, a rare feature for an elementary school in the City.

- Used by classes for P.E. instruction and the SF Arts Ed project – music and movement – as well as our science night, art show, and Spring Festival
- The 20-foot horizontal climbing wall was purchased by the PTA.
- It is also used by the after school programs with portable partitions.

A P.E. specialist is here every day, to do sports and physical activities with the kids during PE, recess and

- Work with teachers to integrate physical activities into the school curriculum
- Implement youth leadership coaching program, train 4th & 5th graders to lead and guide cooperative games during recess
- Work with each class once per week.
- Supervise at each recess, organizing games and other activities.

Please find your way back up the stairs to the check-in table.

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TOUR STOP M – Thank you for visiting!

Thank you for visiting Miraloma Elementary. There are Miraloma Community Podcasts on our website – www.miralomasf.com

Please read on for more information about our school. If you have questions, please ask a tour guide, they are here to help!

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Additional Information

After School Programs

There are two on-site after school programs. Approximately 2/3 of the student population utilizes these programs.

- **MEEP (Miraloma Educational Enrichment Program)**
 - fee-based, parent-organized enrichment program for grades K–5 that offers homework assistance, martial play, soccer, photography, theater arts, music, Mandarin and Spanish instruction (additional fee); separate grade classes for K-2; dedicated teachers, healthy snacks, and recreation.
 - 1:50-6:30pm school days and 8:30-5:30 on staff development days.
 - Limited part-time care available.
 - Cost \$410/month.
 - MEEP camp is offered during the last three weeks of summer break and is a great way for new students to transition to kindergarten and Miraloma.
 - To find out more information, check the website www.MEEPinc.com
- **YMCA program**
 - This free program is funded by a grant
 - Science, art, movement, photography, technology, skateboarding, cooking, soccer
 - Encourage community involvement and student leadership
 - 1:50-6:15
 - Grades K-5

Additional after school programs or options:

- **Rec. and Parks Latchkey program at Miraloma Playground**, for children six years and older
- Mandarin and Spanish classes (run by MEEP, open to all students)
- Piano lessons (Keyboard Educators)
- Girls Scouts (Juniors and Brownies)
- Chess club
- Misc. parent-run offerings (soccer, basketball)

Staff & Parent Organizations/Committees

- School Site Council (SSC)
- Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Diversity Committee
- Technology Committee
- Grounds Committee
- Garden Committee
- Arts Committee
- Grantwriting Committee
- Communication Committee
- Community Service
- Tours and Outreach

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Frequently Asked Questions

How are behavior problems handled?

All of our teachers have received training in TRIBES, a community-building pro-social skills program based on the principles of mutual respect and fairness. Teachers address behavior problems in the classroom by giving the child a warning and then a consequence, such as missing part of a recess. If the problem continues, the teacher may send the child to the office or phone home.

Children who have consistent behavior problems may be referred to the Student Success Team (SST), made up of the classroom teacher, principal, student advisor, school psychologist, and other staff members. The teacher may also develop a behavior plan for the student, which helps students and parents monitor school behavior. Students are also referred to a USF counseling intern, who is on site every day.

Is transportation available?

Bus transportation is available. Check with District.

How much parent involvement is there?

While parent involvement is not mandatory, historically, parents/guardians have been eager to help. Parents are involved in many ways. For example, we have an active PTA with many committees; volunteers in the classroom and library; and parents organize many events, such as the Spring Festival, book fair, and clean-up days.

Parent Involvement programs include:

- Classroom work and room parents
- Committee work, such as
 - Grounds Committee
 - Garden Committee
 - Arts Committee
 - Tours and Outreach
 - Fundraising Committee
 - Grantwriting Committee
 - Technology
- Fundraising

How much does the PTA raise?

PTA raised over \$165K last year. Miraloma does targeted fundraising – funds designated for certain needs. The PTA works closely with the School Site Council (SSC) on the needs of the school community. The target amount this year is \$220,000. Fundraising events include:

- Miraloma for the Kids (direct donation)
- Auction
- Fun Run
- Read-a-thon/book fair
- Box tops collection

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What enrichment opportunities are available?

In addition to music, physical education, art and computer instruction, there are several enrichment programs offered.

Students are identified as Gifted and Talented (GATE) beginning in the 3rd grade. Teachers receive specialized training to enhance the curriculum with appropriate challenges and opportunities for these students. Teachers monitor GATE students' projects and portfolios for evidence of continuous progress.

How many kindergarten seats are there?

We have three kindergarten classes with space for a total of 60 students.

How big are the classes?

K-3rd grade classes are limited to 20 students. The 4th and 5th grade classes have up to 25 students due to special funding for class size reduction.

With approximately 28 teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals on the staff, the ratio of students to adults in the school is approximately 13 to 1. (This does not take into account the many parents who are frequently present.)

How much homework is there?

Homework starts in kindergarten. Time spent on homework depends on the child. Most target ten minutes of homework per night in addition to reading. The amount increases each year. Reading by the parents to the students or by the students themselves is expected each night.

How diverse is Miraloma?

Miraloma is a diverse school – racially no one group exceeds 10%. In addition, there is diversity in religion, socio-economic levels, family structure (single/dual/guardian/gay/straight/etc. families), political, etc.

What books / learning methods are used?

The district uses Everyday Mathematics. The reading program is Houghton Mifflin. The teachers focus on differentiated instruction, recognizing children learn in different ways and at different paces.

How does the school address the needs of each child?

We like to focus on the whole child – physical, emotional, in addition to academic development. Services are available with USF counselors, inclusion, and tutoring when needed.

Are accommodations made for different learning styles and if so how?

The teachers understand differentiated learning styles, using different senses. In addition to using words to explain a concept, visuals and manipulative materials are used. Homework packets may also be differentiated.

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What is the situation with regards to teacher stability?

All of the teachers here are credentialed. The teachers on staff have an average of 7.5 years with the San Francisco school district. We have a teacher with almost 20 years at Miraloma. No teacher turnover the last two years. The staff works well together, teaming to utilize the strengths of each member. For example, the three kindergarten teachers coordinate and rotate classes to teach different subject matters.

What is the school's biggest success and what is the most pressing challenge?

The biggest successes are the parent/family involvement and collaboration among families, teachers and staff.

The biggest challenge is the achievement gap between socio-economic and language groups.

Who is the "target" group that the school is trying to attract?

There is no "target" group. Miraloma welcomes all and encourages everyone to be a part of the school community.