

## Site Validation Team's School Description

Please write a brief description of the site validation team's overall impression of this school. If appropriate, indicate areas of particular strength, particularly those addressing the seven areas of the application, that the team would recommend to others as a model.

**Reminder:** A copy of this report will be sent to the school upon request and may be used by the CDE to assist the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to prepare for official school visits. Please limit your response to the space provided on this page.

From the start of the day with the aerobics group activities of the PASS program, the sense that this school is a cohesive family permeates the campus. We witnessed the "clap out" on Friday afternoon that formally pulls the activities of the week to a close. We understand that a "clap in" begins the week's activities for the whole school on Monday morning. So much of what is consistent and shared from classroom to classroom is represented by the all inclusive "claps." A strong emphasis on high academic expectations was obvious beginning with the CELL (California Early Literacy Learning) work in reading and writing that was going on in the K-1 and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were challenged on their levels in all subject areas to think on their feet and develop a facility with content-facts and quick thinking. It is obvious that each teacher and the teachers together as a team have designed a standards based curriculum that builds from year to year. The needs of the teachers have been met with opportunities to attend sustained and continuing professional development. The primary teachers had extensive CELL training and go to meetings to keep their momentum going. Another example of powerful professional development here was in the way that the PASS program was instituted. Teachers attended a week long training to begin the program and followed up with additional training the following year. Since we know that programs are best instituted when sustained training takes place we can see the results of this in the powerful way that the PASS program works at Coulterville Greely Hill Elementary School.

Students with special needs receive the services of a resource teacher in a multi-graded class where curriculum is adjusted for their needs. The students cycle in and out of the special education classroom and into their own grade classroom keeping them an integral part of the regular school. There is a seamless movement of students without there being a stigma for being in "special ed." There is an emphasis on pulling all the far below basic and below basic students up to basic.

The community here provides support as well as many challenges for school personnel. The entire staff shows an interest in their students that goes far beyond the classroom and the curriculum. Teachers notice the needs of their students whether they be for health or emotional reasons or just because the child may need a new winter coat. The other side of this picture is the way the community interacts with the school and the students to care for the whole child and the family. With programs like the Santa's Workshop and the summer children's program, the volunteers who provide field trips or visit the classrooms this is a community that holds its children close to its heart. The children of this K-8 school from the younger to the older have nothing but positive things to say about being part of this school--being with older and younger students and the way they get along with their teachers. There seems to be a progression up to the older students being more responsible for their behavior which is necessary to give the younger students something to aspire to. While a strong academic base is obvious here the emphasis on the whole child is evident in all the extra curricular sports activities, and musical and art programs. This school truly recognizes the whole child.