

**Resources for Prospective Parents:
Questions to Ask When Choosing an Elementary School**

Choosing a good school for your child is important to you, but there aren't many resources readily available to help you make this decision. In fact, most of the time the only information you may be able to find on a school is their standardized test scores. This information is seldomly helpful, because it doesn't tell you what you actually want to know. In California, school test scores are averaged across all classroom types (e.g., special needs classrooms and non-special needs classrooms), as opposed to providing you with relevant information about the type of classroom where your child will be. What's more, study after study shows that test scores are mostly predicted by out-of-school factors, like income and parental education level. That means they basically measure what resources students have before they ever enter school. But parents don't want to know how many resources their child already has. Parents want to know whether a school will provide their child with *additional* resources. Will this school support your child, keep them safe, help them thrive, and nourish their growth?

When thinking about what school will be best for your child, here are some questions that can help you evaluate whether the school will be a good fit for your child.

Questions to Ask	Answers for Bret Harte Elementary School
How long, on average, have the teachers been at this school? (Good schools tend to have high teacher retention rates.)	Bret Harte's teachers love Bret Harte and our students, and it shows. In fact, the average length of time our teachers have been teaching at Bret Hart is more than 16 years.
What enrichment programs does the school have in addition to the standard curriculum?	<p>Bret Harte offers a variety of enrichment programs both during school hours and after.</p> <p>For example, Bret Harte has a full-time music teacher and all students from kindergarten to 6th grade have music curriculum weekly.</p> <p>We also have a robust gardening program, where students participate throughout the year in seasonal gardening activities that literally bring current classroom content to life.</p> <p>Other enrichment programs include Weekly Mindfulness Yoga, after-school sports programs, and choir.</p>
What type of access do students have to technology?	In a world where technological literacy is of increasing importance, Bret Harte is pleased to offer students and teachers a 1:1 computer ratio. Each student at Bret Harte has access to their own computer at any point throughout the day. This provides teachers the flexibility of incorporating technology into their curriculum as needed.
Is before-school care available?	<p>Yes, at Bret Harte we know mornings can be busy and many parents need to get to work immediately after dropping off their children. That's why we have supervision in the cafeteria starting at 7:20 am.</p> <p>Students can be dropped off at 7:20 am and enjoy a hot breakfast. Beginning at 7:40 am, we also have supervision on the playground until the bell rings at 7:55 am.</p>

<p>How does the school support kids with different learning styles and needs?</p>	<p>Bret Harte believes in tailoring educational support to each child, that's why we offer many specialized programs such as RSP. We also have classes tailored to students that may require personalized curriculum due to any number of factors, including Autism, physical challenges, and special learning needs.</p>
<p>Is onsite after-school care available?</p>	<p>Yes, Bret Harte is pleased to offer onsite after-school care to any family interested. Our after-school program is managed through Target Excellence Target Excellence works closely with the Principal to maximize consistency and continuity between programs.</p> <p>For more information on Target Excellence or to enroll please send message call (916) 873-3938.</p>
<p>What student and family support does the school offer?</p>	<p>The Student Support Center at Bret Harte Elementary School has been providing students and their families with the support they need in order to achieve success at school, at home and in life, for more than two decades. Services includes: links to basic resources (food, clothing, shelter, holiday assistance, etc), mentoring and tutoring, health insurance and health care, mental health counseling, and so much more.</p> <p>If you are interested in services for your student, or just want more information about the many resources our Student Support Center offer, come by for a visit or call us at 916-277-7043.</p>
<p>Are parents actively involved in the school?</p>	<p>Yes, Bret Harte Elementary School has an active PTA. There are various opportunities for parents and families to volunteer and participate in many different events and activities throughout the year. Plus, families are always welcome to help in the classroom.</p> <p>Additionally, as a neighborhood school, Bret Harte is also fortunate to be supported by active involvement from community members, who participate in the Gardening Program, reading tutors program, and other events throughout the year.</p>
<p>What is the teacher to student ratio?</p>	<p>For grades K- 3 the teacher to student ratio is 1:24 or lower.</p> <p>For grades 4-6 the teacher to student ratio is 1:32 or lower.</p>