



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING



Clairemont Elementary School

“As constant learners, we approach our work through a Deeper Learning lens, resulting in meaningful and impactful teaching and learning for our students.”

Erin Gutfreund, Principal

Clairemont Elementary School is the quintessential neighborhood school, binding the community together with a strong culture and rigorous academic program. The positive school culture is thoughtfully nurtured through Expeditionary Learning (EL) structures like daily crew meetings, weekly community meetings, EL work habits, and celebrations of learning. These structures showcase student learning and give students an active role in sharing the process of their learning with their families.

Classroom learning expeditions, which address state standards through active, in-depth case studies and projects, involve the development of authentic products for authentic audiences and provide students with the academic and social skills necessary to work collaboratively with each other and with professionals to produce high-quality work.

Since becoming an EL School in 1994, Clairemont’s innovative practices have inspired changes throughout the district. Clairemont was the first EL school in Decatur and now, thanks to their success, all five elementary schools in the city are EL schools. Their success has also been recognized by the state of Georgia. Clairemont was named a Georgia School of Excellence for its gains in math and reading.’

CITY: DECATUR, GA
GRADES SERVED: K-3
STUDENT ENROLLMENT: 310
EL PARTNER SINCE 1994
CLAIREMONT.CSDECATUR.NET



Learning expeditions allow students to do the work of real professionals, conducting fieldwork and original research.

Evidence of Success

- Since 2009, Clairemont has consistently raised student test scores in all subject areas. In 2013 89% of CL 3rd graders “exceeded” state standards in reading, 75% “exceeded” in math and 80% “exceeded” in science.
- In 2012 Clairemont was ranked #6 of all elementary schools in the state of Georgia using the new College and Career Readiness Performance Index.
- In 2011, Clairemont was one of 26 schools in the state to be named a Georgia School of Excellence, in recognition of student gains in math and reading.
- In 2011, Clairemont was chosen by the National Council of State Governments to host newly elected legislators from eight southern states seeking to better understand the policy implications of school reform movements.

www.elschools.org

Engaging Families in the Life of the School

Clairemont Elementary School was one of the first EL schools in the country and has long enjoyed strong community support for its innovative and engaging practices.

While Clairemont’s performance on state tests has been strong and consistent for many years, what truly distinguishes the school is its sense of community, marked by respect, responsibility, and joy in learning. The EL design principles provide a blueprint for building a positive school culture and encouraging students to challenge themselves and take responsibility for their learning. In morning meetings and community meetings, students reflect on how they embody design principles such as *Service and Compassion* and *The Having of Wonderful Ideas*. One student reflected, “I feel joyful because it teaches me how to be nice and be together.” In a true show of support for the school, Clairemont parents began a recent PTA meeting by discussing EL’s ten design principles and what they mean to their families.

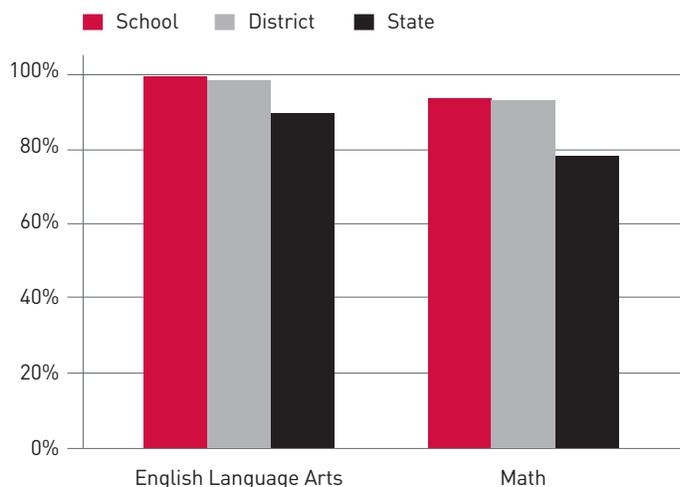


Students and families regularly reflect on how they embody the EL design principles.

Clairemont parents are highly involved in the life of the school, and they have been equally involved at the district level. When the school district restructured in 2004, parents from Clairemont urged the school board to bring EL to the district’s other K–3 schools. Today every K–3 student in Decatur goes to an EL school, and educators from around the country have visited the city to observe the schools.

Parents have remained key to the district’s ongoing efforts to provide all students with a high-quality education. All four of Decatur’s EL schools have sent parents to EL site seminars and, in turn, the PTA has made generous financial contributions that have allowed teachers to attend EL professional development.

English Language Arts & Math % of Students Proficient (2012-2013)



Student Profile (2012-2013)

