



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2009

Contact: Barbara Bickford  
Principal, Waldo Rohnert Elementary School  
(707) 792-4830

### CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY VISITS WALDO ROHNERT SCHOOL

ROHNERT PARK, CA - What is in common between Harvard Medical School and Waldo Rohnert Elementary in Rohnert Park? Both use Visual Thinking Strategies, a student-centered, research-based instructional strategy and curriculum that asks classroom teachers to facilitate open-ended discussions of developmentally sequenced works of visual art. Based on 20 years of research, we know that VTS deepens diagnostic skills for doctors and develops critical thinking and language skills in K-12 students. The critical thinking and oral literacy skills developed in these discussions have been proven to transfer to other areas of instruction and learning (including standardized tests and writing). Furthermore, all students demonstrate growth using VTS, and recent studies have found the curriculum to be especially effective at addressing the needs of English Language Learners and students labeled "at risk".

On Monday, October 13, 2009, Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey visited Waldo Rohnert Elementary School in Rohnert Park to see the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) program in action. Congresswoman Woolsey first visited with Ellen Giunchigliani's second graders. Then she observed a VTS lesson with Alex Moores' fifth grade students. Students were actively engaged in sharing their thoughts about the image, identifying details to support their point of view.

All teachers at Waldo Rohnert School use the VTS curriculum. Mr. Moores commented that his students are engaged during VTS lessons and he sees more use of details in student writing as a result. Ms. Giunchigliani said, "I use VTS strategies in science." Students are engaged in exploration and questioning of scientific phenomena using thinking skills developed through VTS. The integration of arts education with development of language and critical thinking skills enriches our curriculum.

Waldo Rohnert School joins 14 other schools in Sonoma County who are using VTS strategies. District officials hope to develop a plan to expand the implementation of the program into its other schools. (PHOTO BELOW)

Below: (L) Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey and Waldo Rohnert 5th grade teacher Alex Moores



###