

Sanger Unified School District Model Programs and Practices

District Information

CD (County District) Code: 1062414

County: Fresno

District (Local Educational Agency): Sanger Unified School District

Demographics

Enrollment: 12,193

Location Description: Rural

Overview

Sanger Unified School District is located in the heart of the Central Valley, approximately 12 miles southeast of the city of Fresno. The city of Sanger is a rural, agriculturally based community with a population of 24,270. Of the total population, 80% are Hispanic, with the second largest group 32% identifying themselves as other races (2010 United States Census). The median income for a household in the city was \$32,072 and 24% of the population living below the poverty line (2010 United States Census). The child poverty rate is two to three times above the national average. Many of these families are locked in a cycle of poverty. Sanger Unified has twenty schools, including three charter schools, a community day school, and an adult school. The district covers 180 square miles and serves a population of 31,000. Within the boundaries of Sanger Unified are the city of Sanger and the communities of Centerville, Del Rey, Fairmont, and Lone Star, Tivy Valley and portions of the Sunnyside area of metropolitan Fresno. Attendance in the District's schools currently numbers 12,200 students. Of Sanger Unified students 73% (8,445 students) of our students qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch, and 20% (2,268 students) are English Language

learners. Despite the challenges our children face, Sanger ranks 5th in the nation with similar demographics and has an 83% Daily Attendance rate, a rate we continually strive to improve. Sanger Unified success continues to be built on foundational principles that have been consistent and are pervasive in the culture of Sanger Unified:

- ·Hope is not a strategy
- ·Don't blame the kids
- ·It's about learning

- Every child can and must learn

Our district is centered on the educational practices that focus all efforts on three goals: student achievement, closing the achievement gap, and ensuring a safe environment for our students. Sanger Unified collaborative cultures have been built through our practice of Professional Learning Communities. The foundation of the PLC's continually allows our teams to "learn by doing." Most recently, our district adopted the vision, "All students will have the options to demonstrate what they learn and the opportunities to be successful and achieve their dreams." Our superintendent encourages all to chase the vision and the scores will follow. The model practice being highlighted in this application, a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS), is indicative of this effort.

Model Program/Practice

Name of Model Program/Practice

Multi-tiered System of Support

Summary

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Description

Sanger Unified School District's model program is our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) which incorporates three elements: (1) Support for all students (2) An alignment of initiatives, supports and resources (3) Implementation of a continuous improvement cycle embedded throughout the organization. Sanger Unified chose to adopt the MTSS model of practice to provide a coherent and aligned system. This inclusive system is fully aligned with Sanger Unified vision that all students will have options and opportunities. Our model addresses the academic, social-emotional and behavioral needs of all students through rigorous data analysis, system-wide collaboration, and a unified system of tiered supports and interventions. At the Tier I level, all students, including students with disabilities, English Learners, and foster youth have access to and benefit from effective, rigorous, high quality instruction in the content standards and our social emotional and behavioral supports. At the Tier II level, targeted, supplemental supports are provided to 5–15% of students. At the Tier III level, intensive supports are provided to 1–5% of students. Sanger Unified's LCAP is a living document, where strategies and relevant expenditures around essential resources for each tier are the means to achieve goals in California's eight state priority areas. For example, Tier I priorities and investments address the academic and behavioral needs of all students, while Tier II and III become increasingly targeted to the needs of more intensive student groups.

To ensure meaningful authentic parent engagement, Sanger Unified regularly hosts numerous opportunities such as district parent involvement teams, community forums

and LCAP meetings, parent interviews and surveys. Ongoing, systematic teacher and administrator professional development and support is provided to ensure evidence-based strategies including Response to Intervention (RTI), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are incorporated. Each school site implements a PBIS framework for maintaining and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions that enhance academic and social behavioral outcomes for all students. This is supplemented by a Restorative Justice system focused on mediation, relationship-reparation, and alternatives to a punitive punishment response. UDL provides a roadmap for staff to infuse flexible methods, materials, and assessments to build on individual student strengths and respond to needs. Implementation of our MTSS model is having beneficial outcomes for our students. Sanger Unified attendance rate is high (E- 95.5%, SED 95.2%) and we are seeing positive results in many of our subgroups around chronic absenteeism. Our graduation rates remain very high for English Learners (96.9%) and for Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students (97.7%).

Implementation and Monitoring

Sanger Unified recognizes the importance of having an effective overall implementation and monitoring plan for each component of the MTSS model. The District's MTSS Data Team developed a shared model with all stakeholders. To gather the parent perspective, input is obtained through a series of parent forums, individual and small group parent interviews. Each school site created an MTSS team with the focus of implementing and monitoring all elements of the data, using the parent perspective in the development. Multiple methods are used to communicate the process to the learning community including a monthly district-wide newsletter and school websites which contain links to access the MTSS process, resources, and information. In November, all parents receive an LCAP survey at their student's Parent Conference.

All staff, including teachers, administrators, and support staff receive MTSS professional learning. For Tier 1 Instruction, Sanger Unified teachers intentionally design lessons based on UDL, to be proactive in engaging students, make learning relevant, and create multiple means for content to be delivered as well as provide options and opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge. UDL supports Sanger's LCAP goal of improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap. At the Tier II level, our students receive targeted, supplemental academic and behavioral support. Parent engagement is multi-faceted based on supports needed or requested. Parents of students beginning to struggle with social and/or emotional issues receive updates on student's improvement and may be referred to both district and community resources for support. For Tier 3, representing our smallest yet most intensive group, students receive very specific support, and continuous parent outreach takes place.

Throughout implementation Sanger Unified has multiple monitoring tools to assess MTSS efforts. We continue to build the capacity and professional learning of our teachers and administrators. Monthly MTSS lead meetings are shared with staff. Team workshops are held annually giving time for professional learning in elements of MTSS, reflection on progress, and to share best practices and improve the process. Sanger's

Administrative Achievement Leadership Teams (SAALT) consisting of Principals from similar schools meet monthly to discuss MTSS data and develop action plans to enhance opportunities and share effective practices and ideas. At Principal PLC's, principals on different teams have an opportunity to learn from their colleagues. The discussion and action plans shared at these PLC's are disseminated and analyzed by the District MTSS Team. This team synthesizes information and makes collaborative decisions on next steps that are communicated to the Superintendent's cabinet. Finally, school board presentations are conducted annually to communicate the progress and refinement of this continual improvement cycle.

Results and Outcomes

SUSD recognizes the importance of having an effective monitoring and assessment plan for each component of the MTSS model. As a result, the District's MTSS Data Team developed a plan to monitor and assess results on a monthly basis - the monthly plan includes a cycle of review which begins in teacher PLC's and moves through site leaders, to district data teams and ends with District's Superintendent and Board.

Sanger uses a monthly data calendar, PLCs, and data documents to monitor and assess our MTSS system around student outcomes. This calendar identifies the eight federal and state priorities, LCAP metric, and local measures for MTSS teams to collect and evaluate data to ensure positive student outcomes. Each month specific data indicators are evaluated. For example, the MTSS's data calendar for November 2017 consisted of ELD, Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism, Suspension and Expulsion and local measures; after-school program and major and minors in behaviors were analyzed. The results from the District MTSS Data Team included information learned from grade level PLC, Principal PLCs and SAALT team analysis. As a result of the November analysis, teams found trends in decreasing minors across the district. For example, students with disabilities the prior year accounted for 713 minor behavior reports. In the 2017 review, minors were reduced to 325. Next steps included tightening data collection around students who participate in restorative justice to ensure students aren't repeating behavior. Qualitative data with survey questions centering on student learning is gathered from students and teachers. As a result of our MTSS process student target groups are improving in the following data indicators. According the CDE dashboard, SUSD has seen an increase in the graduation rate for our EL target group from 96.9% in 2014–15 to 99.4% in 2015–16. Students with disabilities grew 2% in CAASPP ELA and math from 2015–2017. We are seeing positive results in many of our subgroups around chronic absenteeism, such as our homeless and foster youth over the past two years; homeless students: 17.9%, 2015–2016 to 10.7%, 2016–2017, foster youth: 7.69% to 5.49% respectively. By looking at our data for early literacy, we discovered the majority of students were being referred due to deficits in phonics. Since we were able to evaluate the numbers of students requiring tier 2 or 3 supports due to phonics, we were able to recognize it as a tier 1 instruction deficit. The data analysis allowed Early Literacy Specialist to identify needs and target coaching support to teachers in the area of phonics instruction.

Data is collected and summarized with a written analysis of findings in many areas: Grade level PLC's, MTSS teams, SAALT and District MTSS teams. All MTSS analysis results are used for continuous program improvement including modifications to accelerate the impact for student success. This data cycle is shared with all district stakeholders.