

Bakersfield City School District Model Programs and Practices

District Information

CD (County District) Code: 1563321

County: Kern

District (Local Educational Agency): Bakersfield City School District

Demographics

Enrollment: 30,900

Location Description: Urban

Overview

The Bakersfield City School District, located in the southern San Joaquin Valley, is the largest pre-Kindergarten thru eighth grade elementary school district in the state of California. The District is considered urban, covers 158 square miles and serves an area partially located within the City of Bakersfield and adjacent unincorporated portions of the County of Kern.

The 2017–18 District enrollment is comprised of approximately 31,000 students with around 78.8% identifying as Latino, 9.5% identifying as White, 7.9% identifying as African-American, 3.8% identifying with a different ethnicity or multiple ethnicities. 28.8% of students are identified as English Language Learners. 1.2% of students are identified as foster students. 88.4% of students receive free or reduced lunch. The unduplicated pupil percentage (low-income, foster, or English Learner) for the District is 89.33%. The District has a transiency rate (percentage of new enrollees and students changing schools during the year at least once) of approximately 21%.

As an urban school district, the Bakersfield City School District serves primarily an economically depressed and high crime area within the city of Bakersfield and County of Kern. According to the Kern County Fair Housing and Equity Analysis, there are eight census tracts within the County of Kern that meet the Housing and Urban Development's definition of racially/ethnically concentrated areas of poverty. Four of the eight tracts are located within the Bakersfield City School District. The report also indicate that the Bakersfield-Delano area ranked as the fourth most impoverished metro area within the United States. Additionally, crime statistics compiled by the Bakersfield Police department show 1,194 violent crimes (i.e. aggravated assault, rape, robbery)

and 166 shootings (i.e. homicide-firearm, aggravated assault-firearm, and weapon firing) occurred within the boundaries of BCSD in 2017.

Bakersfield City School District embodies the message that “Parents are their child’s first teacher” through a comprehensive program designed to engage, empower, and educate parents and families through a collective partnership. Based upon an analysis of local data along with results from parent and student climate surveys, the District elected to leverage funding via its Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), through a series of intentional and purposeful actions, to enhance a comprehensive family and community engagement program. In the past three years, parent engagement across the district has been restructured to provide for a positive culture and caring climate at each of the District’s 43 school sites. Family engagement is tailored toward the diverse needs of the families within BCSD through a tapestry of resources interwoven throughout the schools, District departments and community.

Model Program/Practice

Name of Model Program/Practice

Family and Community Engagement (FACE)

Summary

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Description

The BCSD Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Program consists of three components outlined in a logic model for success: 1) Culturally responsive school site based programs designed to build a positive school culture and climate; 2) District programs designed to train families on navigating school systems and developing personal leadership and parenting skills; and 3) Parent leadership programs designed to give opportunities in family outreach and providing meaningful input to school staff around culture and climate. These are actualized through five strategies:

Strategy 1: District FACE Representatives - FACE Representatives are centralized positions that support site administration and FACE Liaisons to lead culture change for family engagement opportunities. As a part of the District’s service delivery model, FACE Representatives provide professional development and lead implementation of District based opportunities such as the Golden Bell winning Now We’re Cooking, District Parent Advisory Groups, and Summer Parent Academies;

Strategy 2: FACE Liaisons - Schools (42) receive a FACE Liaison to facilitate culturally responsive classes, organize parent outreach events, and coordinate District and community agencies to support the overall needs of families. FACE Liaisons are an important link between families and school; coordinating home visits and welcoming

newly enrolled families. FACE Liaisons are responsible for Parent Cafes, family education nights, parent education sessions, and community outreach. Day and evening events are provided to build community and welcome families in activities centered on student learning.

Strategy 3: Parent Cafe - Parent Cafes are structured to strengthen relationships and engagement among parents/families and school staff. These events occur at least monthly giving parents the opportunity to meet with the principal and other school staff over refreshments to engage in open dialogue around pertinent school and family topics.

Strategy 4: Parent University and Parent Resource Centers - These programs build parents' leadership and advocacy skills and allow opportunities for continued growth and development. Parent University is a multi-year program comprised of three different courses. Year one parents are provided with monthly sessions on navigating school systems, growth mindset, PBIS, and supporting their students academically. Returning participants choose to either attend a personal growth course or a parent leadership and advocacy course. Also, the District provides 24 Parent Resource Centers where FACE Liaisons coordinate with District personnel to provide parents with educational courses.

Strategy 5: Parents As Leaders (PAL) Teams - Highly engaged parents are recruited to receive monthly training in order to serve as parent ambassadors. PALs are provided impact opportunities for decision-making and communication such as rating their school using the District's Culture and Climate Rubric.

Implementation and Monitoring

The District is recognized as having an exemplary FACE Program. Recently, the Public Policy Institute of California recognized the District's PALs program as one of the top 15 LCAP-funded programs in their best practices study. Likewise, the District presented on family engagement at the 2017 National MTSS Professional Learning Institute and will present on family engagement and PBIS at 2018 Association of Positive Behavior Supports (APBS) national conference this spring.

Implementation of the FACE Program is aligned to the CA-SUMS (California Scale-Up Multi-Tiered Support System Statewide) initiative in order to facilitate a positive and engaging school culture and climate. Programmatic elements are designed in consideration of the SWIFT-FIA rubric regarding Trusting Family Partnerships: Elements 7.1 (Family opportunities to participate) and 7.2 (Shared responsibility). Accordingly, the District has implemented a FACE program that meets the qualifications for "Sustaining School-wide Implementation" in both elements 7.1 and 7.2.

All families are recruited to participate in school governance decisions through our FACE Liaisons in order to create equal opportunities for voice. In addition to traditional parent LCAP surveys, BCSD utilizes Parent University as a venue for our District LCAP parent forum. As a result, our LCAP forum has grown from 30 parents attending to

approximately 1,000 parents providing their voice. The LCAP is presented to parents directly by the Superintendent. Parents then provide individual feedback and suggestions in a classroom setting led by FACE Liaisons.

Schools have systematic strategies for soliciting input from families. An innovative example can be found in the implementation of the BCSD Culture and Climate rubric. Parents As Leaders (PALs) and parents serving on site governance councils conduct FACE Team school walks. These parents join with the school's FACE Liaison, the District FACE Representative, and the site principal to gauge the school's climate and culture using the BCSD Culture and Climate Rubric. The teams walk the school campus gathering observations and perceptions. During a debrief, results are discussed, and through a consensus building process, agreements are reached with respect to areas of strength and improvement. This feedback process allows parents to have a meaningful voice and partner with their school in order to improve the overall culture and climate.

The District FACE Program is monitored at the school and District level. Parent contacts and participation in FACE Program events are collected by school. Surveys are provided to parents in order to improve program delivery and offerings. The unique structure of the BCSD service delivery model, allows for continuous monitoring and accessible coaching and support from the District level. The District FACE Coordinator, and the FACE Representatives, monitor family participation and reviews for continuous improvement.

Results and Outcomes

As BCSD's Board President has noted, "We have seen a great increase in family and community engagement, specifically by parents, guardians, and grandparents taking part in our FACE programs. Whether it's via volunteering, serving on a committee, or attending a district event, our families have come out in great support. Many parents have taken part in our learning sessions and have gone through graduation ceremonies where their children were witness to their dedication to continued learning. Many students have used that as inspiration in the classroom and we are seeing continued growth in their academic achievement."

Results from monitoring indicate that the District has realized a substantial increase in family engagement. Contacts at Parent Centers have risen from 4,946 in 2015–16 to 15,240 in 2016–17 and 44,121 through December of 2017. Parent Center contacts are estimated to exceed 70,000 by year's end. Likewise, school site engagement contacts, which were not measured until this past year, have increased from 29,972 in 2016–17 to 93,902 through December of 2017. School site engagement contacts are estimated to exceed 140,000 by year's end.

Parent University attendance has also increased. In 2015–16 Parent University had 168 graduates. In 2016–17 the number of participants rose to 1,052 participants and 281 graduates. This year, there have been over 1,200 participants and over 300 are eligible to graduate. The PAL program has also seen an increase from 181 participants in 2015–16 to 282 in 2016–17 to 407 in 2017–18.

Board members also recognize and praise increased parent engagement in addressing issues such as reducing suspension rates and chronic absenteeism. Suspension rates were reduced from 3.3% in 2015–16 to 2.1% in 2016–17. Likewise, chronic absenteeism fell from 15.8% in 2015–2016 to 14.1% in 2016–2017. Academic achievement in English Language Arts rose 3% from 31% of students meeting or exceeding standards in 2015–16 to 34% in 2016–17. Similarly, achievement in mathematics rose 3% from 21% of students meeting or exceeding standards in 2015–16 to 24% in 2016–17.

2016–17 District parent climate survey data showed:

- 91.2% of parents felt welcome at their child's school
- 90.6% of parents felt the school provided regular opportunities for parents to participate
- 91.9% of parents felt the school treated them with respect
- 89.0% of parents felt their overall experience with their child's school was positive