

Chula Vista Elementary School District Model Programs and Practices

District Information

CD (County District) Code: 3768023

County: San Diego

District (Local Educational Agency): Chula Vista Elementary School District

Demographics

Enrollment: 29,600

Location Description: Urban

Overview

Located between the city of San Diego and the United States/Mexico border, the Chula Vista Elementary School District (CVESD) serves more than 29,600 students at 47 schools across 103 square miles, making it the largest K–6 district in California. With 51% of its student population in the free/reduced lunch program and 35% English Learners, CVESD embraces the belief that "Each Child is an Individual of Great Worth." This focus on the whole child has resulted in innovative programs and services that have earned the District's schools and staff multiple awards for student achievement and positive school climates, including Gold Ribbon Schools, Golden Bell recognition, NCUST awards, and National Blue Ribbon School honors.

Students in CVESD experience a rigorous 21st Century learning environment that is rooted in effective teaching practices and high-quality instruction. Our mission is to nurture every child's imagination, intellect, and sense of inquiry. Working collaboratively with stakeholders, we tap a collective intelligence rich with the spirit and creativity necessary for students to become difference makers in our community.

Recognizing the important role families play in the success of our students, the first goal of our 2017–18 Local Control and Accountability Plan states: "The District will improve and increase access to services for students and families that support social, emotional, physical wellness, and school success." Significant resources have been allocated to support this goal, resulting in the hiring of four new District Social Workers, a new Special Education District Resource Teacher, and improved staffing ratios for attendance health clerks and School Psychologists. CVESD is proud to have been the first district named by the County of San Diego a "Live Well, San Diego" school district

in recognition of our commitment to improve the health and well-being of our students. It is a designation that guides our work daily.

CVESD's academic success are highlighted by outstanding achievement in English Language Arts and Mathematics along with a robust Visual and Performing Arts program. CVESD students consistently outperform their peers from across the County and State on assessments, with encouraging English Language Arts results for English Learners (with RFEP) and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students of particular note. In 2015, CVESD embarked on an ambitious strategic plan to build a hallmark VAPA program and hired our first VAPA Coordinator in 25 years to re-establish the program. Today, 78 VAPA teachers serve more than 29,000 students with programs in Visual Arts, Dance, Theater and Media Arts.

CVESD is committed to providing a successful, safe, challenging, and nurturing educational experience, while promoting the joy and importance of learning for all our children. Our goal is that all students exit elementary school as multi-literate, life-long learners with a mastery of essential skills.

Model Program/Practice

Name of Model Program/Practice

Exceptional Strides in Student Achievement

Summary

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Description

The Chula Vista Elementary School District has made exceptional strides in student achievement through strategically developed goals and services that place teacher collaboration and teacher professional development as crucial pivots in meeting the needs of our diverse students. This approach is reflected in our District's Instructional Focus Statement, and is backed through our Local Control and Accountability Plan

(LCAP). The LCAP spells out \$25 million in overall services and supports this fiscal year that address state and local priority areas. Of that amount, CVESD dedicated nearly

\$10 million to teacher collaboration, teacher coaching, mentoring and professional development. These objectives were successful in addressing both overall student needs and the needs of our target populations. Classroom teacher collaboration is made possible by CVESD's nearly \$6 million annual investment in arts instruction. CVESD employs 78 Visual and Performing Arts instructors. Their presence provides classroom teachers with critical release time to meet as grade-level teams to plan, collaborate on best practices, and implement high-impact strategies with target groups. While classroom teachers are collaborating, students are engaged in arts instruction.

The funding for collaboration while boosting arts instruction was a key factor in the District's Golden Bell Award in VAPA by the California School Boards Association.

CVESD dedicates about \$4.3 million in annual LCAP funding to employ 40 District resource teachers—one per each District school site—to support teacher use of data and modeling of exemplary teaching strategies. District and teacher leaders strategically constructed a three-year instructional plan to improve teaching and learning to reduce the achievement gap for English Learners, students with disabilities, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged youth, and foster students. The instructional plan was built upon the conviction that high-impact, research-based strategies that develop language are the most powerful impact on student learning. Included in this work is the belief that the teacher-student relationship is one of the strongest indicators of student success.

Educator Effectiveness funds provided summer teacher professional development focused on each educator receiving two days of Benchmark curriculum support and collaboration opportunities, which in turn support our LCAP goals.

Careful, strategic resource alignment to meet student needs, particularly target populations, is directly related to our strong results on CAASPP. CVESD students again outscored San Diego County and California state testing averages. Overall, 63% of District students in grades 3–6 met or exceeded standards in English Language Arts. In math, 51% of District students met or exceeded standards. CVESD students outperformed the testing averages of 13 states across the nation in ELA, and all but Washington state in math—states who were also part of SBAC.

Implementation and Monitoring

Chula Vista's work in implementation and monitoring is exemplary in the eyes of outside researchers, not just our stakeholders. For example, the research group Learning Policy Institute has identified CVESD as a "positive outlier district" in California due in large part to our strong achievement results with students in target groups, and in particular, students of color. The institute's president and CEO, Linda Darling-Hammond, Ed.D., a Stanford University professor, former president of the American Educational Research Association, and a member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, has included CVESD in a study to better understand how the District has achieved such success.

The District's LCAP builds in planning and monitoring of the use of technology learning accelerators across the District in various content areas. We monitor progress in literacy by lexile growth. We strategically include professional learning opportunities on the use of technology accelerators that emphasize one-on-one, differentiated support to students in all subject areas. We supplement individualized support through curricular programs such as Benchmark and Go Math! Our leadership team ensures that all professional learning includes not only building content knowledge around the use of new technology, but that technology is utilized to support student collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity.

CVESD Board members and administrators have shared with the state Board of Education our process for developing an LCAP that incorporates all students, including English Learner and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students. The District participated in this state Board meeting because of our work in closing the achievement gap among English Learners. CVESD was one of two school districts honored in 2016 by Californians Together, a statewide coalition of parents, teachers, civil rights and education advocates committed to equal access for all to a quality education, with its prestigious “Multiple Pathways to Biliteracy” District Recognition Award.

CVESD’s success in English Learner achievement starts with generating the data of who they are, and where they are academically. English Learner progress is monitored continuously and data used to provide timely interventions. When the superintendent conducts campus visits, he asks principals, “Who are the school’s Long Term English Learners and what is being done for them?” Professional development in reading, math, and writing has focused on explicit instructional practices that accelerate language and literacy for English Learners. In 2016–17, CAASP English Language Arts results indicated 51 percent of English Learners (with RFEP) met or exceeded grade level standards. In addition, 50 percent of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students also met or exceeded grade-level standards. These results are better than some school districts’ overall student achievement in ELA.

Results and Outcomes

Strong academic results are a reflection of our instructional focus statement: “The CVESD community will work collaboratively to ensure that all students, including English learners, students with disabilities, and designated target groups, show measurable growth, which will lead to reducing the achievement gap in literacy and mathematics.”

Teachers, parents and school leaders have worked together to make a difference for our target groups, and the overall student population. For example, the investment in teacher collaboration and VAPA instructors resulted in more than 29,000 students receiving standards-based arts instruction during the instructional day. It also provided a structure for classroom teachers to create lessons that are intentionally and strategically designed to support our English Learners, students of poverty, and foster youth. Based on figures released in the 2016–17 California Assessment of Student Progress and Performance (CAASP) and Local Measures, CVESD students continue to outperform their peers from across the County and the State in English Language Arts and Math. Specifically, 63% of CVESD students met or exceeded standards in ELA, bettering the marks of 54% for the County and 46% for the State. In Math, CVESD students also showed outstanding achievement in comparison to their peers with 51% meeting or exceeding Math standards, surpassing the County's figure of 46% and the State's 39%.

For CVESD's target populations of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, and Foster Youth, the numbers were equally encouraging. The District's English Learner target group’s scores of 51% meeting or exceeding ELA standards and 39% meeting or exceeding Math standards surpassed or matched the state's figures.

Our District also invested considerable resources to strengthen parent involvement, engagement, and leadership. Parents' roles as advisors, decision-makers, and members of our educational community contributed to students' academic and social-emotional excellence. Meaningful engagement in the LCAP process provided the necessary support and buy-in for services and supports to target groups. Parent feedback even resulted in "Professional Development for Parents." For the past two years, our District parent leaders have presented at the California Association for Bilingual Educators (CABE) annual conference, where they highlighted the elevated level of parent engagement in CVESD. The District Advisory Committee (DAC), and the District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) met jointly to provide LCAP input, and helped promote an online survey tool called Thoughtexchange to other parents. The Superintendent's Parent Leadership Committee, known as his "Parent Cabinet," provided input on target population needs (Special Education, English learners, low-income, foster/homeless youth). Our belief that "Every Child is an Individual of Great Worth" is coupled with the belief that every parent is an individual of great worth.