

Live Oak Elementary School District Model Programs and Practices

District Information

CD (County District) Code: 4469765

County: Santa Cruz

District (Local Educational Agency): Live Oak Elementary School District

Demographics

Enrollment: 2,096

Location Description: Suburban

Overview

The Live Oak School District was established in 1872. As a diverse community in the heart of Santa Cruz County, our mission is to prepare preschool through 12th grade students to make meaningful contributions in a rapidly changing world through engagement in academically rigorous curriculum within a collaborative, innovative environment. (LOSO) serves 2,096 students in three elementary schools, one middle school, one alternative school, and two charter schools. The school student population includes 31% English learners, 62 % students eligible for free and reduced meals, 13% special education students and less than 1% foster youth (4 students). For LCFF purposes, LOSO has 67% unduplicated students; as such, all actions and services described in our LCAP have been selected and designed to support the educational needs of these student subgroups.

In the spring of 2013 foreseeing the LCAP would require the District to engage the community in the process of determining agreed upon priority issues and needs, the Board and Superintendent determined that the District needed to create a more inclusive strategic plan that could serve as the foundation for the LCAP going forward. A representative group of staff, parents and community partners convened to create a vision, mission, and strategic plan that was linked to the beliefs and aspirations the community held for its youth. This work resulted in four overarching goals:

1. Parent Engagement,
2. 21st Century Learning,
3. Wellness (social emotional and physical wellness and safety) and
4. Academic Achievement.

It was clear from the stakeholder comments that the community was very concerned about the emotional and physical well-being of the District students.

Following this visioning work, in the fall of 2014 all staff and the entire parent community were invited to participate in action planning meetings for the four District goals. In addition to the action planning committees, the district also facilitated five student focus groups (totaling 90 students) to collect student input into our plan. Our LCAP planning process continues to be strongly participatory and community based. The action planning committees are comprised of a variety of district stakeholders (parents, community members, teachers, principals, district leaders, and community/county service organizations staff). Each of the four Action Planning Committees are presented with information and/or data as it pertains to the state's eight priority areas and the district's four goals.

In conclusion we are proud of schools, and are especially excited by developments in recent years to further support our students' current and future lives.

Model Program/Practice

Name of Model Program/Practice

Category 1: Positive Culture and Climate

Summary

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

Description

The Live Oak Elementary School District supports the growth of students in multiple areas. In regard to this award, the district would like to highlight the work that has been completed and continues to be a focus in our LCAP Goal 3: Wellness. The district completed a visioning process in 2013, which defined the Wellness Goal as follows: 100% of all students in the LOSD will be supported in the areas of social emotional health, physical education, safety, and nutrition. This goal continues to remain relevant today and the language has been adopted as part of our LCAP.

As the goal encompasses several areas of wellness, the program in Live Oak can be best explained by breaking down each component of the goal. The social emotional health of the students in our district is supported through the use of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports at all sites, Second Step curriculum included in the instructional program for students in kindergarten through 81 grade, access to highly trained mental health counselors at each site, restorative justice practices to address issues related to bullying, partnerships with outside agencies, and a district wide emphasis on the Growth Mindset. All certificated and classified staff in the district participate in professional development that target best practices in supporting

students that may have a higher level of social emotional need, such as creating safe spaces for LGBTQ students.

The physical education and nutrition of our students is also a focus of our wellness program. Staff have been trained by Playworks and we have recess coaches that are running inclusive, positive, active games using this curriculum each day on all of our playgrounds. Our middle school has adopted an intermural sports program that operates during lunch, which promotes personal activity and teamwork among peers. Stakeholders have voiced their desire to promote physical health at our elementary sites as well, which has resulted in expanding our elementary physical education program. Our nutrition program provides handmade, local, season, and organic foods whenever possible. We have added salad bars and hydration stations to several of our school sites and are in the process of implementing this district wide.

Not to be overlooked is the area of safety, as it pertains to student wellness. Our district has been fortunate to work collaboratively with the County Office of Education and local law enforcement, as we all focus in on best practices to keep our students safe. As a district, we have adopted new procedures for suicide prevention and intervention. We use restorative justice practices to address bullying complaints and provide students and parents with multiple avenues to report any concerns that they have (an anonymous tip line, a confidential reporting box at each school site, questions asked during student focus groups, participation in the California Healthy Kids Survey, and annual parent surveys).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Live Oak Elementary School District recognizes that it is not the only district with a focus on student wellness. In fact, the state has placed an emphasis on all districts and schools to provide a nurturing, safe environment for students and families. Yet, there are particular aspects of the program within this district that elevate it to a status as one that could be modeled and potentially replicated. These aspects that pertain to how the program is implemented and monitored are community, coordination, and operation.

The community component of the implementation and monitoring of this goal within Live Oak is significant. Stakeholders from many different interest groups participate in the LCAP process and play a significant role in the programs and services that are offered to support the health of students. From the inception of the LCAP process, the level of community partnerships continue to grow and the benefits of having these minds at the table are seen in the addition of programming which directly support students. Over the past five years, the district has formed partnerships with Salud y Carino, Boys to Men, Live Oak Community Resources, Scotts Valley Counseling Center, California State University Monterey Bay, San Jose State University, and East Cliff Family Health Center. Each of these groups have brought forward additional staff to work with children and their work has been clearly attached to actions I services listed in the LCAP. With each partnership that is added, the district focus on the outcomes produced to determine if the support has an added benefit to students.

Within the district, the coordination and operation aspects of the wellness goal refers to the way that resources are allocated to support this goal. Over the past five years, the district has had to make difficult decisions in order to change their system in order to meet the needs of students. At the district level, an administrative position was allowed to remain unfilled in order to allocate more resources for the expansion of programs that directly served students. Job assignments have been rewritten in order to ensure that appropriate time and focus is given to this goal. New jobs have been created at each site: recess coaches, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports leads, and mental health clinicians, which are filled by licensed professionals. Each year the wellness team meets to discuss the actions and services provided in this goal and to determine the growth or lack thereof in the metrics developed the year prior.

Results and Outcomes

The outcomes of the implementation of our wellness goal is seen in multiple measures at the site and district level. The district has had a reduction in suspensions, with currently less than 2% of the student body receiving a suspension at the elementary level and less than 3% at the middle school. Students falling into the category of chronic absenteeism has reduced at two of elementary sites, remained the same at the middle school, and increased at one elementary site. This continues to be an area of focus for the district.

An increase has been seen in 5th and 7th grade students meeting the Healthy Fitness Zone on the state assessment. In 5th grade, the percentage has increased from 46% to 50% and in 7th grade from 63% to 73.5%. The district attributes these increases to the addition of a credential physical education teacher at the elementary level, recess coaches at the elementary sites, and added intermural sport programs at the middle school. The district has also been using data from the California Healthy Kids Survey to monitor the percentage of students eating breakfast in the morning. Several years ago, there was a concern that many students were not coming to school with a meal. After several years of developing a district wide breakfast initiative, an increased number of students are eating before school: 77% of 5th graders , and 70% of 7th grade students.

The district wellness goal metrics have also continued to highlight areas of growth. The most recent administration of the California Healthy Kids Survey indicated that 30% of 7th grade girls are depressed. While this is a decrease from the last administration of the survey, this is still an area of concern. Working together with Salud y Carino, after school groups have been formed at the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels. These small groups of about 15 girls operate weekly throughout the school year and focus on improving the physical, social, and emotional health of more than 75 girls at the middle school level.

As mentioned above, the district has expanded the counseling program by providing a licensed mental health clinician at each site. Each counselor meets with approximately 50–75 students per week in individual or small group settings. The district believes this is linked to the metric of students scoring high on school connectedness in the

California Healthy Kids Survey, 69% in 5th grade and 61% in 7th grade. We will continue to seek growth in this area.

Finally, the district has measured parent engagement through annual surveys to families and attendance at parent conferences in the fall. Over 90% of our families attended parent conferences this fall. At the elementary level, over 94% of parents responded strongly agree or agree that their school is welcoming, communicates important information, focuses on student success, shares leadership, and ensures student safety. At the middle school level, 87% of parents responded accordingly.