

Davis Joint Unified School District Model Programs and Practices

District Information

CD (County District) Code: 5772678

County: Yolo

District (Local Educational Agency): Davis Joint Unified School District

Demographics

Enrollment: 8,079

Location Description: Suburban

Overview

The Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD) covers the southeastern section of Yolo County and a small part of Solano County. The district includes eight TK–6 elementary schools, one rural K–3 elementary school, three 7–9 grade junior high schools, Davis Senior High School and Da Vinci Charter Academy (7–12 grade). The district's Martin Luther King, Jr. High School (grades 10–12) and Davis School for Independent Study (grades K–12) provide unique alternative educational opportunities. Davis Adult and Community Education.

(DACE, formerly Davis Adult School) serves approximately 3,000 students in a broad range of courses, including coursework for earning a high school diploma. Da Vinci Charter Academy is a dependent Charter school with a focus on Project Based Learning and has approximately 700 students enrolled each year. Da Vinci is staffed by DJUSD employees and follows all district policies and collective bargaining agreements. The district also operates the Children's Center and a special education preschool. Before and after school childcare is available on elementary school campuses.

Student Demographics

In 2017–18, 8079 students were enrolled in the DJUSD. Enrollment by ethnicity and race was: White, 50.5%; Hispanic, 14.3%; Asian, 16.5%; two or more races 13.8%; African American, 3.1%; Filipino, 1.0%; American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.4%, and Pacific Islander, 0.2%. 22.7% of DJUSD students were socioeconomically disadvantaged, while 10.7% of DJUSD students were English Learners. The district projects stable enrollment over the next several years. Enrollment is projected to remain

constant at 8079; elementary is currently 4,381 and 3,698 are enrolled at our secondary sites. The district continues to work with the City of Davis, UC Davis, and others to determine potential increases in enrollment as a result of development. New developments such as the Cannery Park project will also positively impact district enrollment. Actual new development projects have slowed down due to economics and city slow growth policies.

Comprehensive Educational Program

The DJUSD offers a comprehensive educational program based on the California Common Core standards. The program provides sequentially developed course work in English/language arts, fine arts, foreign language, history and other social sciences, mathematics, music, physical and life Sciences, physical education, and a Career Technical Education program. Davis Senior High School offers Advanced Placement (AP) courses in approximately twenty academic subject areas and a diversified vocational educational

program, which includes biotechnology, auto shop, home economics and Computer Assisted Design, among other courses. The Davis Joint Unified School District's comprehensive educational programs are supported through academic guidance from counselors, library programs, performing arts and extracurricular programs, including a large interscholastic athletic program.

Model Program/Practice

Davis Joint Unified School District is exemplary in the intentional, systematic, integrated support of student performance through our inclusive philosophy and practices. In the Davis Joint Unified School District, enrollment processes, including students with Individualized Education Programs are included in all programs, on all sites. IEP teams do confirm placement decisions, and what is remarkable is that by nature of Special Education structures in place at every site, almost all students with Special Education needs can be served within their choice program or neighborhood school.

Inclusive education is a strategy which enables all students to participate in and contribute to their neighborhood school regardless of the severity of their disabling condition. A free and appropriate education is the right of all children in our country. Inclusion in Davis provides the appropriate supports, accommodations and modifications necessary to educate all children within the student's neighborhood school environment in the general education setting to the maximum extent that is beneficial to the student. District core values are closely aligned to our model practice called Full Inclusion. We define this to include classroom practices, school climate, academic course offerings, and teaching pedagogy. All interplay to ensure that students with IEP are given an equal opportunity and equal access to a rigorous core curriculum and extra-curricular activities offered at the school site.

This is the 28th year of DJUSD providing an inclusive education for students with moderate and severe disabilities. DJUSD was the first school district in the state of California to start an Inclusion program. Inclusion started when a small group of Davis parents and teachers whose children were being served by Yolo County's Special Education programs at Greengate School in Woodland wanted to bring their students back to Davis to attend their general education, neighborhood schools. In 1989, DJUSD served four students in inclusion programs at two elementary school and now hundreds of students are included at sites throughout the district. The District's inclusive philosophy also benefits students who are identified with mild/moderate disabilities as the emphasis is on keeping all students in general education classes to the maximum extent possible; our goal is always to have students and families in their neighborhood schools, or choice program, to benefit their sense of belonging, partnership, and equitable access to education. Each year summative and formative data are used to refine and improve upon full Inclusion services. Strategies that work are expanded while those that yield negative results are changed or abandoned.

At elementary sites this means a Special Education student is in a general education class, where students are learning with typical-aged peers, benefiting from age appropriate play and content, as well as developing a sense of community. The Special Education teacher consults with general education teachers regarding accommodations, modifications or how to differentiate for students. This often serves as an access point for other students in our classrooms. Additionally, the special education teacher can pull students out for direct instruction as needed, takes the lead on much progress monitoring, and can co-teach as an option with general education teachers. This is all true at secondary sites and students are often offered a Study Skills class as another layer of support and point of student contact. The results are an increase in parent engagement and partnership, remarkable student outcomes, high graduation rates and high performance levels.

Summary

Length of Model Program/Practice: 8+ years

Description

All comprehensive school sites have case managers for the students with IEP's. Special education teachers are inclusion specialists and they work with all teachers to help the students they serve access their education. Case managers work with general education teachers to ensure that students have access to the mainstream curriculum. Case managers pre-teach concepts to students work on subject specific vocabulary and help students plan so they can get their assignments turned in and so they are prepared for assessments. They engage in progress monitoring and act as liaisons to parents and future teachers during transitions from one grade level to the next or to another school in the district. Students are exposed to grade level curriculum and robust academic conversations occur regardless of their current academic abilities. The rigorous academic exposure in combination with appropriate accommodations/modifications allows students to participate and learn with their peers.

This setting benefits students in holding high expectations of learners as well as promoting our inclusive values.

Students may receive very targeted instruction and intervention from a speech therapist, set goals under the guidance of Special Education teachers and psychologists, and participate in grade level, college preparatory English. During instruction the student may benefit from more written expression to demonstrate understanding, receive prompting from a Para educator, and get organizational support during a Study Skills class. Many of the supports benefiting students in the general education classroom allow students with disabilities to have a typical school experience. Other students benefit as well. Students engaging in conversation, extracurricular opportunities, friendships, and challenges otherwise not available.

Inclusion of students with disabilities works based on a variety of measures. Evidence shows that students with disabilities are meeting state standards and have access to courses that are on track for A–G courses and graduation. Students with disabilities are suspended less and are achieving more. The 2016–17 Annual Performance Report, Davis' "Graduation Four Year Rate" for students with disabilities was 91.30%, which far exceeded the state's target of 74.84%. Davis' "Dropout Four Year Rate" for students with disabilities was 2.4%, which was far below the state's target of 12.72%. Student achievement show 33% of Davis' students with disabilities achieved a score of 3 or 4 on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASSP) in English Language Arts and 29.4% met that achievement target on the CAASPP mathematics assessment. The state has set achievement targets of 13.9% and 11.6% for students with disabilities on the CAASPP English Language Arts and mathematics assessments, respectively. We believe that skillful teaching, deliberate partnerships, and inclusion are the bedrock of these successes.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Davis Joint Unified School District is committed to ensuring that school remains a safe and welcoming place for all students and families, regardless of their legal status, race, color, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or gender expression. Our Board of Education and district leadership have ratified this language and values into our resolutions and actions. This was supported publicly by our community.

Our Board of Education goals, Strategic Planning Committee, and Local Control Accountability Plan all include an inclusive environment as a primary goal. This is realized in part by the implementation of Special Education Services throughout our district as fully inclusive. Our model Special Education practices ensure that all students with IEP have equal access and equal opportunity to succeed in all campuses activities including courses, curriculum, school programs, culture events, and student activities with peers as fully included members of the community. DJUSD is made up of over 19 sites and has only five special day classes. In these classes students may get all core instruction, though they also participate in some general education classes during the

day to the maximum extent possible. In a neighboring district, there are 18 full inclusion rooms for their 19 sites. We know we have implemented a successful, research-based approach to inclusion when comparing structures among colleagues.

Our inclusion model allows for Special Education students to learn grade level standards with appropriate scaffolds, but also provides for relationships and learning with typically developing peers. In many schools, inclusion is reserved for students with mild disabilities and is implemented with caution. In Davis, the assumption is that students are able to learn with grade level peers and teachers will differentiate and make accommodations for the best student outcomes. It is also part of our core belief that all students benefit from learning with and from diverse perspectives and learners. All Special Education teachers are included in professional growth opportunities and expected at school site meetings which frequently include adult learning opportunities such as: Common Core standards, differentiation, restorative practices, data driven decision making, making connections with students, or using new curriculum, for example. On every site in DJUSD our adult Special Education staff is present to collaborate with general education teachers as case managers, for curriculum differentiation, and as specific conduits to parent partnership and engagement. Inclusion specialists are an integral part of our staffing model at all comprehensive sites and drive successful student engagement, outcomes, and conditions for learning.

Results and Outcomes

DJUSD monitors the progress of our Special Education Services directly through our Special Education Department at the District's central office. A designated director, program specialist, and support staff coordinate services in collaboration with school psychologists, site leaders, and case managers. Frequent meetings, driven by protocols, are held to support site staff in decision making, to anticipate needed areas of professional development, and to review practices that serve Special Education students in general education classes. Each year the Annual Performance Report is generated through the California Department of Education and reviewed by Special Education staff. DJUSD also monitors success of program, sites, and individual students in the same processes and protocols used for all other student groups. On sites, Special Education students are monitored by general education teachers, Special Education teachers, counseling, and site leaders in addition to annual IEP's, triennial IEP's, and transition meetings.

Principals and Instructional Services review the LCFF rubric (dashboard) and CAASPP scores, common assessments within the district, performance levels, growth over time (or potential decline), or relative performance to typically developing peers for the purpose of progress monitoring. Special Education students are served by actions and services around differentiation, positive behavior intervention, restorative practices, parent engagement, coaches who promote and model best first instruction, and teacher training for Common Core Adopted materials.

According to the 2016–17 Annual Performance Report, Davis' "Graduation Four Year Rate" for students with disabilities was 91.30%, which far exceeded the state's target of

74.84%. Along these lines, Davis' "Dropout Four Year Rate" for students with disabilities was 2.4%, which was far below the state's target of 12.72%. In terms of student achievement, 33% of Davis' students with disabilities achieved a score of 3 or 4 on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) in English Language Arts and 29.4% met that achievement target on the CAASPP mathematics assessment. The state has set achievement targets of 13.9% and 11.6% for students with disabilities on the CAASPP English Language Arts and mathematics assessments respectively.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Special Education is one of many areas that we hope to see continuous improvement. DJUSD's model of inclusion provides positive outcomes for students and undergirds school community values.