

## **Emerson Elementary School Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 01611436090211

County: Alameda

District (Local Educational Agency): Berkeley Unified

School: Emerson Elementary School

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 312 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

I See You.

I Appreciate You.

I Am So Glad You Are Here.

Emerson Elementary is an extraordinary school. Our entire staff is dedicated to the success of all students and they thrive under our care. Our highly trained educators work collaboratively to create a challenging, engaging, and equitable learning environment and are skilled at bringing out the best in everyone. In addition to our common core aligned programs of reading, writing, math, science and social studies, we provide art, music, physical education, computer skills, and gardening.

Our learning community of 312 students is 17% African American, 9% Asian, 19% Latino, 38% White, and 17% Two or More Races. Of our 310 students, 122 are

Unduplicated. Per the Local Control Accountability Plan, Unduplicated Students are Socially Economically Disadvantaged, Foster Youth, or English Learners.

In preparing students to be citizens of the 21st century, we have integrated technology into curriculum. Every upper grade student has a personal chromebook at school and technology is used to listen to books, compose essays, do research, enhance math concepts & skills, and teach digital literacy. We increase family engagement by making our programs available at home through our Emerson Library Website.

At the heart of our school is the community we create for our students. In addition to the close bonds built in classrooms, our monthly All School Meeting (ASM) is a tradition well-loved by all. We greet the community by chanting affirmations: I See You, I Appreciate You, I Am So Glad You Are Here. At ASM, students are recognized for their unique personalities and contributions. Their talents and accomplishments are celebrated through student performances including song, dance, drama, poetry, spoken word, instrumental pieces, & jump rope rhymes.

Emerson has many systems in place to support students. Our intervention teachers and tutors provide support to over 40% our student population. They work with students individually and in small groups to provide extra instruction in reading, writing, and math. Kids' World, our after-school program, provides homework support, as well as classes & activities. Students play on soccer, basketball, and football teams, exercise their creative talents in art and drama, and have multiple opportunities to build meaningful relationships with staff. With this level of expertise and support, students do not fall through the cracks at Emerson School.

Emerson has an enthusiastic parent community whose members volunteer in classrooms, at events, and on special projects. They support our welcoming and inclusive school environment by advocating for policies that support all children and public education. The Emerson parent community is truly committed to working and learning together to cultivate an equitable, nurturing, and exciting place to learn.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Multi Tiered Support Systems (MTSS)

Length of Model Program/Practice: Less than 2 years

Target Area(s): Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Prevention, Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Professional Development, Use of Technology

Target Population(s): Black or African American, Hispanic, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

Strategies Used: School Climate, Small Learning Communities, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Health Support,

Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Professional Development,  
Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers,  
Instructional Materials, Facilities)

## Description

What if there were a net to catch all students - a net to support students responsively, offering more assistance in times of need and reducing support when not needed? At Emerson, we have created such a net. Berkeley Unified provided training to assist schools in developing a MTSS and we have focused on enhancing this system. Our MTSS net is multi-tiered and constructed of strong systems including core instruction, collaboration, intervention, positive behavior and equity based instruction and support, parent engagement, and effective monitoring of systems.

On the frontlines are our exemplary classroom teachers. They form the foundation of the net, providing solid Tier 1 instruction through delivery of core curricula in reading, writing and math as well as science and social studies. They implement instruction thoughtfully and effectively and are highly responsive to student needs.

Teacher collaboration is an enduring thread woven into our net. Teachers consistently work in teams to plan, share resources, and review data. With district-provided PLC (Professional Learning Communities) training, Emerson enhanced its platform by incorporating examination of student work to set attainable and measurable goals in six week cycles. This ongoing, data-driven, practice produces reflective and responsive classroom practices. Tier 1 instruction is strengthened so students are getting what they need in their classrooms every day.

The next layer of support comes through our Intervention Program. All intervention teachers, aides, as well as part time specialists work collaboratively to support students. Confering regularly with classroom teachers, interventionists plan and deliver intensive support to target students. This instruction strongly complements and enhances classroom curriculum. We work together and group students by need rather than by label, so that all students are successful.

At Emerson we use Equity based instruction and Positive Behavioral Support Systems to address the institutionalized, persistent inequities that exist for students of color across the nation. We reinforce positive student behaviors with our CBGs (Caught Being Good passes) and utilize Equity based instructional practices, such as Opt In and High Help/High Expectations to engage ALL students.

Parent Engagement is another key link in supporting students and our Family Equity and Engagement coordinator is a vital member of our team. She provides wrap-around services to families such as obtaining glasses for students and securing housing and transportation to provide a critical layer of support for our at-risk families.

MTSS at Emerson is coordinated by a highly collaborative team. Through weekly COST (Coordination of Services Team) meetings we discuss student concerns, case manage,

evaluate and adjust interventions, and track student progress. When students enter the doors of Emerson, they are seen, they are heard, and they are appreciated.

### **Implementation and Monitoring**

Our MTSS is monitored on an ongoing basis. Along with the district, we have implemented six-week progress-monitoring cycles, directly linked to our PLC work at Emerson. Grade levels determine the content area on which to focus and then pick a specific area to target within the content. Focal students are selected based on local data. Grade levels meet to plan the intervention. Throughout the six weeks, students are informally assessed to ensure each focal student is making growth. If growth is stagnant, then instructional practices are reexamined and refined by the grade level. Collaboratively the teachers implement new strategies to address student needs. After implementation, teachers determine if the cycle of inquiry should continue for their focal students. As a result, teachers continually reflect upon their practices with the goal of improving classroom instruction.

Our MTSS systems are analyzed bimonthly at our Case Managing meetings (with all interventionists in attendance). We look at pre and post data during every PLC to ascertain where students have exhibited growth. We use this data analysis to inform our next steps as interventionists. Possible outcomes of our Case Managing meetings could consist of: next action steps to be taken, interventions to be added or changed, new classroom practices to be implemented, and if needed, additional outreach to occur.

At the District level, the department of BREA (Berkeley Research, Evaluation, and Assessment) collects school data and creates reports for data analysis. Emerson interventionists use the data to note patterns and rates of progress of grade level cohorts, target subgroups, and individual students.

As a staff, we also monitor our needs for professional development school wide. With District support and guidance, and based on site needs, Classroom and Intervention Teachers lead professional development in areas such as Equity, Literacy and Math, PBIS, and Inclusive and Welcoming Schools. We also work with BUSD or the PTA to bring in outside trainers, such as SEEDS (A nonprofit Restorative Justice training organization) and First Aid & CPR to keep the staff ready for each and every day.

We continue to monitor parent and student engagement through participation in School Governance Council, English Language Learner Committees and Annual Surveys. In addition, families are invited to school events such as Family Art Night, Author Celebrations, Books and Cookies events, and other outreach activities. We also collaborate closely with the PTA to plan financial support of programs such as Art, Physical Education, and Bilingual Clerical Assistance.

### **Results and Outcomes**

At Emerson, teachers review data on a regular basis as part of our practice. As a learning community, we also reflect on the school year as a whole and prepare for the

upcoming year. The district assists us with final data culmination by providing reports on both local and CASSP Data. Examining this data assists us in analyzing the results of our Model Program Practices.

Looking at the big picture we are seeing positive, measurable gains. For example, on the CAASP last year (16–17), 72% of our students met or exceeded standard in ELA and 68% of our students met or exceeded standard in Math, showing growth of over 16 points in both areas from the prior year. Looking deeper at the growth of our at risk populations, African American, SED, EL, and Students with Disabilities, saw gains of between 17 to 24 points last year in ELA alone. In math, our African American students gained 19 points and Students with Disabilities gained 16 points. Solid classroom instruction coupled with strategic intervention is making a difference.

Looking closely at our target intervention students, 82% of whom are Unduplicated, 70% are now at or near grade level based on our end of year local reading data (16–17). Over 80% of our third graders, a target group in our LCAP, have reached or exceeded proficiency in reading. This is more evidence of a successful model of instruction and support.

In addition to measuring student progress academically, we also consider how well students are doing in the social emotional domain. According to our CHKS (15–16) survey results, 89% of 5th graders felt safe most or all of the time at school, 88% felt that they were treated with respect, and 89% felt happy at school. In addition to getting the academic support they need under our model, we are also providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive school climate.

Parent involvement and engagement is key to student success and is monitored through our annual LCAP survey. According to last year's results, 94% of parents who completed the survey reported feeling welcome at Emerson with 97% expressing that their child(ren) felt safe and secure while at school. In addition, 91% voiced that their cultural backgrounds were appreciated. In the realm of communication, 94% of parents and families believed that classroom and schoolwide activities/events were well communicated by classroom teachers and site. This is evidence that parent partnership and engagement is strong.

As you can see, Emerson's MTSS model is an example of how effective classroom instruction coupled with a coordinated intervention program serve the needs of all students. When envisioned and fueled by a sense of urgency and purpose, progress can be achieved by all students, especially those who have been historically underserved. At Emerson, we see you, we appreciate you, and we are so glad you are here.