

## **Joseph Azevada Elementary School Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 01611766000681

County: Alameda

District (Local Educational Agency): Fremont Unified

School: Joseph Azevada Elementary School

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 641 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

Joseph Azevada Elementary School in Fremont Unified School District (FUSD) opened as a K–6 elementary school in 1966 with ten classrooms. Over the years, Azevada has grown to a school with 641 K–6 students enrolled in thirty-three classrooms with thirty-one full-time teachers, six part-time teachers and twenty-six additional support staff members. An important part of our population includes our moderate/severe special education students enrolled in our three Special Day classrooms.

In Spring 2010, after much work by a dedicated group of parent and community members who had a strong desire to offer a Mandarin Immersion (MI) program in our district, the FUSD Board approved the opening of the first MI Kindergarten classroom at Azevada. Our school was chosen because of space availability due to declining enrollment and its ability to offer the in-place infrastructure needed for the MI program in its “start-up” stages. With much support from the parent, school, and district stakeholders, and the exploration of several successful MI programs in our area, we opened our first Kindergarten classroom in Fall 2010 with twenty-eight students. The benefits our thriving MI Program include a yearly increase in student population and

skilled staff members, additional funding due to increased student population, and increased involvement of highly engaged parent and community members.

Our MI student population has increased by two classrooms each year. In Fall 2017, our MI classrooms make up slightly less than half of all general education classrooms at Azevada. Our current general education classroom breakdown includes: four Kindergarten classrooms (two MI and two English only (EO)), four grade 1 (two MI and two EO), four grade 2 (two MI and two EO), four grade 3 (two MI and two EO), four grade 4 (two MI and two EO), three grade 5 (two MI and one EO) and two grade 6 (one MI and one EO). In Fall 2018, we will have two MI classrooms at every K–6 grade level.

We are very proud that families choose to bring their children to Azevada to be part of our community, and we celebrate the diversity of our increasing enrollment. Our student population currently includes 1.7% African Americans, 0.6% American Indian, 50.9% Asian, 6.6% Filipino, 21.1% Hispanic or Latino, 0.9% Pacific Islander, 12.2% White, and 6.1% Two or More Races. Our English Learners make up 46.6% of our total student population.

Our facility was modernized in 2000 with all buildings receiving seismic upgrades, creating the safest possible structures. During the summer of 2015, due to increasing enrollment, a new building with four classrooms was erected. Those classrooms and a new playground structure were opened in Fall 2015.

As a school community, we strive to create an inclusive, rigorous, and invigorating educational environment and, as the honored recipients of the 2016 California Gold Ribbon Award, we are proud of our accomplishments, and we are excited as we look towards the future!

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Mandarin Immersion (MI) Program

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

Target Area(s): Education Supports, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Target Population(s): American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Filipino, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

Strategies Used: School Climate, Small Learning Communities, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

## Description

Prior to 2010, there was no Mandarin Immersion (MI) Program in Fremont Unified School District (FUSD), even though the Asian population in our district has historically been at or near 50% of the district's total K–12 student population. In Spring 2010, after much work by a dedicated group of parent and community members with a strong desire to offer a MI Program, the School Board approved the opening of the first MI Kindergarten classroom at Azevada Elementary School. Azevada was chosen due to declining enrollment, space availability, and its ability to offer the infrastructure needed for the “start-up” stages of the program. With much support from parent, school, and district stakeholders, and the exploration of other local successful MI Programs, we opened our first Kindergarten classroom in Fall 2010 with 28 students. The benefits of the now thriving MI Program include a yearly increase in our student population, a yearly increase of skilled staff members, additional site funding due to increased enrollment, and increased involvement of highly engaged parent and community members.

The MI Program at Azevada is the only MI Program in our district. MI students are taught the same California Common Core standards as are taught in all other English-only (EO) classrooms. In addition, MI students receive Mandarin language arts instruction using board-adopted curriculum. While there are three other district elementary schools with Spanish Immersion programs, our program is unique because we use and strictly adhere to the components of the 90/10 instructional immersion model.

Our model begins in Kindergarten with 90% of the school day taught in Mandarin and 10% taught in English. The percentage of English instructional time increases by 10% each year so that by grade 4 and through grade 6, our students are taught 50% of their school day in Mandarin and 50% in English. Additionally, our program is unique when compared to the Spanish immersion programs in our district because, during the English portion of the instructional day, our students receive instruction in English using the same district-adopted English Language Arts curriculum as all other classrooms in the district.

The goal of our MI program is to develop students with high levels of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Mandarin and English. In building our program, we also strive to develop students who value Chinese culture and customs. We do this by involving many key stakeholders in our overall program development. Our teachers, administrator, parents, and district officials have visited other local MI Programs and have implemented information learned to improve our program effectiveness. In addition, our staff members and leadership team work as professional learning communities (PLC) and have received professional development focused on ways to strengthen and create rigorous learning environments in our EO and MI classrooms.

## Implementation and Monitoring

The Mandarin Immersion (MI) Program at Azevada Elementary School is the only MI Program in our district. In Fall 2010 we opened our first classroom. At this time, the School Board agreed to allocate classroom space, furniture, personnel, and core curriculum with the understanding that parents would provide the MI instructional materials. This created the necessity for parents to immediately begin working together to raise funds for the program. This inspired the creation of the Chinese Immersion Parents Council of Fremont (CIPCF). At the beginning of the Program's third successful year, the School Board voted to purchase the Mandarin instructional materials for all future MI classrooms. This freed CIPCF to support other needs, and because Azevada does not receive specific funding to support the MI Program, CIPCF has assisted by providing Chinese cultural activities for the entire school such as the annual Chinese New Year Lion Dance assembly. Additionally, CIPCF works closely with school administration and our PTA to co-sponsor other school-wide events such as Family Movie Night and our Holidays Around the World celebration.

The MI Program at Azevada continues to be very popular. Each year we fill two Kindergarten classrooms with wait lists at many grade levels. CIPCF helps to advertise our program to potential parents by organizing the involvement of our students in community events. Our MI Program has been featured on local English and Chinese news channels and local newspapers. Our students have also performed for the School Board, the City Council, and a variety of community events.

CIPCF holds monthly meetings at our school site, attended by parents, the site administrator and MI teachers, to discuss business such as funding, budgets, and program support and as a means of creating community-building activities. Monthly attendance logs are kept and compared to evaluate meeting interest and effectiveness.

All district staff participates in professional learning communities (PLC) to improve instructional practice and increase student achievement. MI teachers and English Only (EO) teachers create their same-grade level PLC teams and meet to review and support their English Language Arts program. The MI teachers also meet as a MI PLC team. They are released regularly to review and plan MI Program strategies. They also meet with district coaches to discuss instructional strategies, review data, and evaluate the MI priority standards.

Beginning in Spring 2016, and yearly thereafter, we began using the Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) assessment to evaluate our students' achievement in Mandarin reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In addition, to evaluate our student's success in learning the common core standards, we continually review our CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress), district, and classroom assessment data.

## Results and Outcomes

Monitoring and evaluating our Mandarin Immersion (MI) Program is an evolving process. Because our program is fairly new, and our pioneer class is currently in grade 7, we now have three years of California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) standardized assessment results to gauge student achievement.

The 2015–17 CAASPP results reveal that our 3–6 grade MI students are making significant academic progress. When reviewing the English Language Arts (ELA) results, 52–80% of ALL and 77–100% of MI students met standards. In regard to Math results, 52–80% of ALL and 86–100% of MI students met standards. As this data shows, MI students have out-performed their same grade level peers for three years. These positive results show that MI students are making significant academic progress in ELA and Math. This data also demonstrates that our MI students have positively impacted our school's overall assessment data results.

We began using the standardized Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) in 2016 to evaluate our students' achievement in Mandarin reading, writing, listening, and speaking. STAMP assessment data from 2016, which serves as our baseline data, reveals that the following percentages of grade 3–6 MI students met or exceeded standards: 50–96% in Reading, 46–100% in Writing, 86–100% in Listening, and 29–100% in Speaking. In comparison, our 2017 STAMP data reveals the following percentages of students met or exceeded standards: 64–100% in Reading, 58–100% in Writing, 87–100% in Listening, and 90–100% in Speaking.

This review of STAMP data illustrates that MI students are progressing in Mandarin reading, writing, listening and speaking. A deeper review also reveals that our 3rd grade students have the highest percentage not meeting standards during both STAMP assessment periods. As a result, we are re-evaluating the percentage of Mandarin and English instruction used, the timing of teaching Pin-Yin (Chinese characters), Mandarin materials used, and students' computer literacy skills. Because STAMP requires students to navigate the Chinese character keyboard, we have determined that grade 3 students require instructional time to learn this new skillset.

If a student in the MI Program is not progressing, the teacher works with their grade level team to determine needed interventions. If the struggle continues, the teacher refers student to our Collaboration of Services Team (COST). The COST team (administrator, psychologist, resource teacher and speech pathologist) meets with teacher to review student progress, struggles, interventions and next steps. Progress is monitored and, when needed, Student Success Team (SST) parent meeting is scheduled. If struggles continue, the COST team will meet to determine next steps. The same process happens when a student is not being challenged. Our goal is to provide a rigorous and challenging educational environment for all students, including high achieving students.