

## **James Madison Elementary School Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 01612916002414

County: Alameda

District (Local Educational Agency): San Leandro Unified

School: James Madison Elementary School

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 506 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

James Madison Elementary School is one of eight elementary schools in the San Leandro Unified School District (SLUSD). We serve more than 500 students who represent a diverse community rich in culture, language, and pride in their heritage. We are an urban school where 50% of our population fits into the states definition of Socio-economically disadvantaged. Our families speak more than seventeen different languages which reflect ethnicities and cultures from every part of the world. Our creative and energetic staff educates students through a variety of instructional practices that are innovative, culturally responsive, and that develop critical thinking skills. Working closely with our district, we support 21st century learning at all grade levels. Access to innovative educational technology, common core state standards aligned curriculum, and real time assessment data allows our teachers opportunities to inspire, differentiate, and challenge students, regardless of their ability levels. Teachers and families understand that their students will experience real world application and purposeful learning each day.

It is our mission to inspire 21st-century competencies by creating experiences that help each student reach their full potential. The success of every student depends on nurturing a positive attitude, developing usable skills, and acquiring knowledge in order to reach goals now and in the future. Working collaboratively with parents and the community helps us ensure an excitement for learning. This excitement is evident on the faces of our students every day. Students are challenged to learn beyond the school day with support of on site childcare and Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) funded after-school programs. James Madison is also home to five moderate to severe special education classes that support our district's most challenged learners. We embrace the opportunities to foster an inclusive and caring school climate that is accepting of all differences. We are proud of how our school works and how our school is active in the broader community. We align our work with the SLUSD strategic plan and LCAP to maximize efficient use of resources and prioritize our efforts to ensure a trusting and successful learning environment for all students.

In 2013 Madison was named a "Rockstar" school by Edmentum, and in 2014 we were honored by being named the Alameda County English Language Learner Site of the year. In each case we were asked to share our best practices at conferences in Ohio, Seattle, San Diego, Sacramento, and Monterey. For three years in a row, from 2015 to 2017, Madison was recognized by the Campaign for Business and Education Excellence through the Educational Results Partnership as an Honor Roll School. To become a California Distinguished School in 2018 would be the greatest honor to date and reflect the years of ongoing outreach between our school, home, and community.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Parent Facilitator Program

Length of Model Program/Practice: 8+ years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, Use of Technology

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, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support

## **Description**

The James Madison Parent Facilitator Program began in 2006, when our school leadership team, School Site Council, and English Language Advisory Committee began looking at the achievement gaps of students. Through extensive surveys, we

found that many of the district and site support programs were not being accessed by those same families. More than one-third of our students were English Language Learners and an even larger percentage of students lived in homes where families spoke Cantonese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Half of our students are identified as socio-economically disadvantaged. We used our site based Economic Impact Aid to hire parent leaders and start the Parent Facilitator Program. For a few hours a week, they worked alongside teachers to directly support an understanding of how school can serve to create student success. We created a way for every student and their family to understand class assignments, homework, attendance procedures, lunch applications as well as health and wellness services. Our success to eliminate the information gap has led to eliminating achievement gaps. We are committed to keep parents informed on every aspect of what was happening at school. Parent Facilitators quickly became the bridge between home and school. Our behavior incidents were significantly reduced and our suspension rates were lowered to single digits. Attendance rose dramatically and parent frustration was replaced with trust and student success.

As families became more connected, the parent community became more involved in the organizational leadership of the school and district. We began to harness previously unvoiced perspectives and this feedback provided us with targeted action steps. More than just translating information, we found a way to help families understand the what, how and why of student success. The building of trust, allowed teachers to raise expectations and better target support for students. The partnership between home and school created social and emotional supports students needed to grow and take risks.

The Parent Facilitator Program has now been adopted district wide. It is identified in the district strategic plan and supported with professional development and aligned resources. At James Madison, it is still about parents helping parents support their children. The Madison Parent Facilitator Program has helped to establish and sustain trust and understanding. There are two key factors that distinguish our program from the rest of the district model. The first is that our parent facilitator has been a part of our school community for over ten years. The second is that we have hired a facilitator that is currently a parent of children at Madison. As our program support evolves, we enrich the dialog for every family to build reciprocal relationships that promote and support the positive social, emotional, and academic development of our students.

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

Madison has designed the implementation of the Parent Facilitator Program with the mindset that some parents know very little about schools and why they operate the way they do. We set aside a space, designate phones, and provide access to resources and services. As our parent facilitators reached out to families in their own language, parents were able to better communicate what they needed. We, as a school site, began targeting parent information nights based on information gained through the parent facilitator. State, district and site expectations were articulated for families in order to support alignment of home and school. Teachers can communicate to parents stories of student success, areas of concern and ways to remedy problems. Likewise, parents were able to communicate stories of their child's struggle and the

circumstances that helped explain behavior. Efficacy grew, and an alignment of purpose and priority developed between home and school. As families became more connected with our school, their feedback helped guide our decision making process. As the program evolved and was adopted by the district, it was expanded to all sites, formalized and funded centrally as a part of the district strategic plan. This coordination of information creates consistency and equity among all sites of district. Centralized training and professional development initiatives, collaboration with instructional coaches, allowed us reach out consistently to individuals with a consistent accurate message. Our parent facilitator develops connections through a variety of methods, including phone calls, emails and personal face-to-face contact. This transparency in standards, instruction, learning and results has demystified success and opened the conversation for teachers to become more effective with each learner.

We have monitored the Parent Facilitator Program for more than ten years. We started by creating surveys with the School Site Council and English Language Advisory Committee. We surveyed teachers and parents, along with students to ensure the program was continuing to support parents outreach as our school population has grown and changed since it was initially implemented. Additionally, our parent facilitator attends selected staff meetings throughout the year to educate our teachers on concerns parents have, the best ways to communicate, and to keep us informed of parent needs. This in turns allows teachers to target their communications with parents in their classroom more effectively. The Parent Facilitators Program is now centrally funded and supported with access to all district resources. The Parent Facilitator Program has become the signature piece of our school support system.

## **Results and Outcomes**

From 2006 to 2013, our Parent Facilitators were instrumental in helping us increase our school wide Academic Performance Index from 768 to 878. Our English Learner subgroup made even more impressive growth, going from 709 to a high point of 884 during the same span of years. We reached another milestone when every demographic subgroup reached the statewide 800 API benchmark. In 2012 and 2013, all subgroups surpassed the state target of 800 on the API. We first accomplished this with statistically significant populations, but then it carried on for two years with all demographic populations. In 2014, the Parent Facilitator Program was presented as part of Madison receiving the Alameda County English Language Learner Site of the Year recognition.

Since the introduction of the Smarter Balanced Assessments and California School Dashboard, Madison students have continued to perform well. In spring of 2017, students produced double-digit growth greater than 20 points in Mathematics and Language Arts. The English Language Learner Progress indicator increased from 75.2 in 2015 to 82.7 in 2017. Our Hispanic population increased 17.2 points in English Language Arts, and 15.9 points in Mathematics. Not only did our Hispanic population make significant growth, but our ELD students' proficiency in math also grew by 6.8 points. Spring of 2017 results have set the bar high and have attracted new families to Madison from within, as well as outside of the district. As these new families become

part of our learning community, our Parent Facilitator Program is busy reaching out to connect with families to maintain this high level of success. Suspension rates have declined and attendance continues to be among the highest in the district.

Our Parent Facilitator Program continues to evolve in order to adapt to an ever-changing student population. The purpose continues to remain constant by strengthening the home to school connection, by clarifying the changing standards and expectations, and by defining success for students and families. We have defined and articulated success as a combination of Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge, or “A.S.K. for success”. This message has resonated with our families to create one clear voice to articulate purpose, progress, and achievement. It has allowed us to use a common language to define expectations from the first day of Kindergarten to the last day of fifth grade. Regardless of language, economic status, or current student performance, our Parent Facilitator Program bridges any gap that impedes success. Initiatives like technology integration, Project Based Learning, facility upgrades, new curriculum adoption, and a host of family support systems. College to career readiness is the message, and parent facilitators have become an effective way to communicate this message to all families.