

Fairlands Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 01751016002323

County: Alameda

District (Local Educational Agency): Pleasanton Unified

School: Fairlands Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 788 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

In September of 1973 Fairlands Elementary school opened with the chosen mascot, the Flyers, rooted in local history: the surrounding land, with its scenic hills, had long been a popular choice for hot air balloonists. Flash forward forty-five years to a bustling suburb with the school surrounded by Stanford Valley Care Hospital, Hacienda Business Park, the 580 freeway, and a myriad of single family homes, apartments, and newly built condominiums. Although much has changed, our priority at Fairlands remains the same: to serve and grow our students. One of nine elementary schools in Pleasanton, Fairlands serves students in transitional kindergarten through fifth grade and follows a traditional school calendar. The student population at Fairlands has remained in the high seven hundreds over the last five school years, while the English Learner population has doubled since 2012–2013: from 10.7% to 23.5% in 2016–2017. In the fall of 2017, 57.2% of the students entering Kindergarten were English Learners. The majority of our student body is of Asian decent representing a variety of cultures and countries throughout India and Asia. The number of students qualifying for free and reduced meals has stayed constant over five years and represents 6% of the total population. In addition 6.34% of students qualify for special education services.

Student emotional and academic success is the utmost priority for our fifty-five member staff. Our beliefs are cemented in the shared vision to provide a positive, safe, and rigorous learning environment. We seek to encourage independent problem-solving and school-to-home collaboration, while fostering the whole child's academic, social, and emotional development.

Our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework dovetails with the "Community of Character" initiative, a partnership between the Pleasanton Unified School District and the City of Pleasanton emphasizing the six character traits of responsibility, compassion, self-discipline, honesty, respect, and integrity. To expand our PBIS framework in order to create Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) we have embarked on our first year of implementation of Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTI2). Consistent blocks of time for intervention and instruction are strategically scheduled by grade level. Instruction during this time frame is designed using student data analysis, teacher collaboration, and curriculum planning.

The commitment of our community to work together to support and enhance the learning experience of all students is evident in many ways. Our Parent Teacher Association works closely with the school to provide numerous family events and curriculum enrichment. Parent volunteers within the classroom are a constant. We offer parent education classes, including our School Smarts Parent Academy. Together we work to promote a positive and inclusive community honoring the diverse cultures and family heritages at Fairlands.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

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

Target Population(s): Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic, 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, Professional Development

Description

High suspension rates and a lack of systematic procedures targeted our work to develop an inclusive school culture that promotes an equitable learning environment. Year one started with the creation of mutually agreed upon school rules: The Fairlands 3Bs are Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe. Expected behaviors in all areas of the school were defined through a behavioral matrix. Staff training occurred on minor

versus major infractions and a flow chart was utilized to support consistent practices. We educated the student body and community through assemblies, parent meetings, a poster contest, informational handouts and signs displayed school wide. Social and emotional behavior was addressed within the classrooms through the Second Step character education curriculum. The creation of a positive and safe climate through school-wide acknowledgement systems strengthened positive behaviors and reduced student misbehavior. The Galletti Gold program and Golden tickets were implemented to award individual students and classrooms following the 3Bs. Non-monetary awards attached to these programs are implemented weekly. When misbehavior occurs, a student receives a refocus form. This form is used to bridge communication with parents and offers students an opportunity to reflect and change behavior.

We want Fairlands students to be engaged and connected. We chose to offer new service opportunities and lunchtime activities. In October, Fairlands collects socks and toiletries. This year we donated 3,400 socks to the Hanger and 13 boxes of toiletries to fire victims. In November, students participate in Kids Against Hunger and packed hundreds of meals. In May, the school participates in Abilities Awareness Week. Funds are raised for the Wheelchair Foundation, volunteers read ability awareness stories, and students participate in disability simulations. PTA funded games and art materials as a daily option for play. A rotation of lunch time activities is offered to all students, including coding, yoga, dance crew, book club, and the garden. We have an active student leadership in charge of monthly spirit days and school-wide flag salutes. 5th grade students produce Fairlands TV, a weekly video bulletin and every Wednesday the student body and staff practice mindfulness using calm down strategies from Second Step.

Year two focused on developing systems for at-risk students. The school's specialist team worked with the PBIS team to create referral forms, Tier 2 interventions, and identifying wraparound services such as tutoring, counseling and parenting classes. New interventions, the Check in/Check out program, in which students are paired with a mentor teacher and individualized behavioral charts were drafted. Team meetings shifted focus from implementation to analysis of student data. Based on our research, consistent practices, and data analysis, action plans were developed and implemented correlating to specific student and classroom needs.

Implementation and Monitoring

PBIS is at the forefront of the school plan. The SSC conducted a review of discipline, attendance, SBAC, benchmark, and the Healthy Kids/staff survey data. The data was disaggregated by grade level, ethnicity, socioeconomically disadvantaged, English learners, and special education to ensure all students and groups were being addressed. After analysis, two goals were defined:

Implement positive and proactive discipline practices and policies that consistently focus on teaching prosocial behaviors

Include parents and community members as an integral part of our students' learning process through the improvement of communication and parent education

Targeting the first goal, teacher surveys were used by the PBIS team to not only define the school-wide practices but to pinpoint areas of growth and professional development needs. Professional development was strategically planned for staff in-service days and teacher collaboration time. Teacher demonstrations, peer coaching, a PBIS program binder, and a weekly staff bulletin is used to distribute information to all classified and certificated staff. In addition, administrators guest teach Second Step lessons within all grade level classrooms. At the start of the 2017 school year, the school administration began using the PBIS app, SWIS (School-Wide Information System). The SWIS system allows student data to be entered into an online program to be summarized into reports. The program provides information about individual students, groups of students, and the entire student body.

A communication campaign was used to engage parents as integral members of the school environment. In 2015 we introduced Friday Folders to strengthen communication through consistent routine: each student received a special school folder for handouts and school work that could be expected at home on Fridays. To support working parents, we offered daycare at nighttime PTA meetings and scheduled Principal coffees not only during the day but at night. Working with the PTA, an educational component was added to the beginning of each PTA meeting. In addition, the PTA and school collaborated to create one electronic bulletin and increased distribution from bi-weekly to weekly. Furthermore, the school worked with district parent liaisons to identify students/families needing access to technology. Identified families were given chromebooks, ensuring all members of our community received school information in a timely manner. To engage our growing EL population, we sent personal invitations and emails for ELAC meetings and provided daycare. In addition, in May the SSC and the ELAC committees provide surveys to the community in order to gain a better understanding of their needs.

Results and Outcomes

We are committed to our students and know they will thrive in a socially and culturally sensitive environment. On the 2015–2016 Healthy Kids Survey 73% of 5th grade students reported feeling connected to the school and felt adults at the school cared for their well-being. 97% of the students felt they were treated with respect. Furthermore, the spring 2017 Parent Community Survey results showed over 80% of respondents on a scale of 1 to 5, rated Fairlands as a 4 or a 5 in using consistent behavior standards for all students and 92% of respondents felt like their child was developing character traits at school. Further data from the community survey supports that our families know about the PBIS initiated activities. Over 80% of the families know about Galletti Golds, the 3Bs, and spirit days. Over 65% knew about golden tickets, character traits, and flag salutes.

Data-based decision making is crucial to ensure all groups of students achieve at high levels. SWIS is used to support the academic and behavioral success of students. Our

school staff has shifted from observation to action: we analyze the data to make concrete, positive changes and better meet our students' needs. Recently we determined the majority of referrals being issued after recess during line-up and at morning drop-off. Knowing this allowed the PBIS team to introduce the problem to the staff and then to create procedures to minimize the problem behavior. SWIS data is used to progress monitor the targeted areas allowing the team to make informed decisions.

Prior to PBIS, Fairlands suspension numbers were in the twenties. We reached our goal to decrease student suspensions by implementing preventative and alternative practices. Suspensions dropped from 22 in 2012–13, to 6 in 2015–16, to 2 in 2017–2018. Refocus forms are tracked within SWIS. Three refocus forms initiates a student reflection meeting with the administration to create an individual action plan to improve problem behaviors. Six refocus forms initiates a referral to tier 2 in which a student study team meets, including parents as important members to ensure appropriate interventions and wraparound services are provided.

Fairlands was awarded the highest performance level on the California DashBoard for our EL progress and performance on ELA and math. We attribute student success in these areas to a positive school climate that enables children to learn. We feel strongly that a continuous cycle of reflection and improvement is needed to not only sustain practices but to identify further supports for all children. Future work will continue to target the achievement of subgroups behaviorally and academically. RTI implementation will mirror PBIS and MTSS will fully be in place by Fall of 2019. In conclusion, Fairlands staff takes a collective responsibility to meet our students and their family needs. We believe creating an MTSS framework will ensure student achievement for all.