

## **Phoebe Apperson Hearst Elementary Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 01751016117600

County: Alameda

District (Local Educational Agency): Pleasanton Unified

School: Phoebe Apperson Hearst Elementary

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 679 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

Phoebe Apperson Hearst Elementary School is dedicated to the development of the whole child, providing a solid foundation that stimulates thought, wonder, and a lifelong passion for learning. Students, staff, parents, and the Pleasanton community share the responsibility of creating a positive environment that empowers each and every student to reach their fullest potential in all academic core areas including character development.

Hearst is located in Pleasanton, California, part of the Bay Area Tri-Valley. Our namesake Phoebe Apperson Hearst, dedicated her life and fortune to education, and is noted for founding the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The school enrollment is approximately 680 students with a population representing numerous ethnic backgrounds and languages. Hearst's current enrollment includes 3% African American, 15% Chinese, 9% Hispanic/Latino, 30% Caucasian and 28% Asian Indian.

Staff members provide a safe and nurturing environment where student differences are celebrated every day. Observers in any classroom will recognize that teachers enjoy

their work and are dedicated to providing a well-constructed and effective learning environment. Our community provides enriching activities and experiences that support learning.

Character education is at the heart of our efforts, following the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Program (PBIS). This program has been embraced by both the Pleasanton school district and the parent community. Walking onto our campus, students, parents, and staff are reminded of our commitment to our personal standards of: showing respect, solving problems and making good decisions. These concepts are the foundation of our academic instruction and interaction with students and each other. They are reinforced monthly as students, staff, and community members come together in a school-wide character education/patriotic assembly.

To assist in closing the achievement gap, staff at Hearst are involved in professional development and implementing Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Professional development is geared towards Math and English Language Arts strategies to help all learners. Our computer lab, Chromebooks, iPads in classrooms, and other classroom technology such as STEM kits, have paved the way towards 21st Century skills for our students. With professional development and technology, Hearst students were able to meet and exceed standards on California Standardized State tests.

At Phoebe Hearst Elementary, our behavior and academic interventions have been our signature practice. Our results set us apart from other elementary schools and helped close the achievement gap. With our growing number of English Language Learners, these interventions continue to aid in the success of all Hearst students. As a result of this practice the educational bar has been raised, the school climate has been positively impacted, and a culture of caring has been created.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Closing The Achievement Gap

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap

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

## Description

In 2015, Hearst staff attended a Response to Intervention (RTI) training with Mike Mattos and the idea of delivering strategic intervention for at-risk students gained momentum. As a staff, we knew that students did not make the expected academic progress with the interventions that were in place. Staff spearheaded an effective RTI signature process for supporting academically at-risk and students with social-emotional and behavior needs.

Strategic planning and delivery of academic interventions in ELA and Math for all students is at the forefront of our school's Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). The current practice directly benefits our unique student population because it creates a positive learning environment that focuses on closing the achievement gap, decreases chronic absenteeism and reduces suspension rates with early academic and social intervention in kindergarten through fifth grade during the school day and after school. Intervention curriculum, the hiring of two intervention paraprofessionals, and extended day online computer based intervention programs are funded by the Hearst PTA, LCAP funds, and the general fund. In order to close the achievement gap, distribution of funds to essential resources and professional development are prioritized.

Hearst staff utilize best teaching practices and effective interventions that make Hearst a model school for other schools. Time for grade level collaboration is planned to focus on the use of interventions and monitor student academic growth. Staff has had several opportunities to attend trainings and workshops during the regular school day as well as outside of school. Topics include Lucy Calkins Readers/Writer's workshop model , Benchmark curriculum, and the newly adopted English Language Development (ELD) standards training.

Staff members analyze data to identify students who are at-risk of not meeting grade level standards or are at-risk of retention, using indicators outlined in the District At-Risk Criteria. Data is compiled on each at-risk student to help determine the path of intervention, with areas of growth and areas of concern noted. TK–5 students are identified as at-risk for academic or behavioral reasons regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic level, or English language development level. Resource students are not included in this process since their goals are written into their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP); however students with only a speech IEP may be included in intervention for academic or behavioral concerns. As a staff, we realize that we can't do it alone. A goal of the program is to increase parent/guardian participation at school by promoting and inviting them to volunteer during intervention time. The current intervention process arose from a need to take a problem solving approach. Once skills are identified, a set of measurable goals, along with targeted intervention are put into place.

## Implementation and Monitoring

Currently, in 2018, students are reaping the benefits of the interventions that are in place. Implementing a new process within a school is not always easy; it takes a shared vision. In 2014, administration first shared this vision with the Leadership team at

Hearst. Implementation was agreed to the following school year. A core of Hearst teachers and the administrator formed an RTI committee and attended professional development training by Mike Mattos to further hone skills and knowledge of setting measurable goals and models of classroom intervention. At Hearst, our behavior and academic interventions have been our signature practice for three years. An emphasis is placed on professional development and training in the use of the researched based and data-driven intervention programs.

The Hearst intervention process is comprised of five steps. First, students complete a Common Formative Assessment (CFA) in ELA which provides staff with important information on the student's current academic level. These assessments are given to students three times a year to monitor student growth and to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional learning activities. Next, after the administration of the CFA, grade levels participate in Data Talks to analyze the data and collaborate to create groups that meet each student's needs. For example, a group will focus on early literacy skills (Intensive Group), another group will focus on instruction around reading fluency and reading comprehension (Strategic Group), another group focuses on grade level reading strategies and writing skills (Benchmark Groups). Students are challenged academically in (Enrichment Groups) where the teacher provides extension/enriching academic activities for students that are at or above grade level standards.

Collaboration around curriculum and instruction takes place with administrators, Early Literacy Instructional and Intervention Coaches. After an eight week cycle of intervention, a CFA is administered to progress monitor student growth. Students are assessed throughout the year and groups are flexible to allow students to move to the next group when progress is made.

Finally, if a student is not making the expected growth after a cycle of intervention, the teacher consults with colleagues and specialist team members to develop 3 to 4 SMART goals based on assessment data. The goals and planned interventions are then documented on the Student Improvement Plan (SIP) form. The teacher then meets with families to review the SIP plan. After the meeting, the plan is implemented by the classroom teacher for 4 to 6 weeks and student academic and behavior progress is monitored.

The Hearst intervention process has remained a cornerstone and continues to be used to improve student achievement through data-driven measurable goals that address individual student needs, and uses progress monitoring to document and support student growth over time.

## **Results and Outcomes**

The effectiveness of the intervention process is monitored and assessed by classroom teachers, specialists, and administration. At the end of the year, an intervention summary form is shared with the teachers for each class to show student growth. The administrator creates a spreadsheet to document any student in the intervention, SIP, SST or IEP process that has occurred throughout the year if the goals were not met.

Between 2015 and 2016, students between third and fifth grade showed growth in the ELA and Math portions of the CAASPP. Overall, there was an increase of 1% in the ELA and 2% in the Math portions of the CAASPP. In analyzing the data from 2015 and 2016, we noticed results of the implementation of the intervention process. As a school, there was an overall increase with the identified subgroups such as; African American, ELs, Hispanic/Latino, LI, and students in Special Education. In looking at our data from 2015 and 2016, there was a 14% increase in the ELA and 83% met or exceeded standards in the Math portion of the CAASPP test for the African American population. There was a 27% increase in the ELA and 26% increase in the Math portions of the CAASPP for our EL population. Also, there was an increase of 10% in the ELA and 17% in the Math portions of the CAASPP for our Hispanic/Latino population. There was an increase of 32% in the ELA and 22% in the Math portions of the CAASPP test for students identified as LI. For the subgroup identified as students in Special Education, we saw an increase of 10% in the ELA and 22% in the Math portions of the CAASPP.

Another example of the intervention process working at Hearst is our Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) data. As a way of assessing student growth on an ongoing basis, the DIBELS test is administered to students in grades ranging from kindergarten to second grade. When desegregating the 2016 DIBELS data, a total of 86 students in grades kindergarten through second grade started the school year in the most intensive group. These are students at-risk of not meeting grade level standards. The data from the Spring of 2016 shows that 37 students remained in the intensive group. The early intervention process proved to be successful for 49 students in grades K–2 to move from intensive to benchmark levels. In reviewing the expected results of this signature practice explained above, we were able to identify ways to improve and to accelerate the impact of this practice.

One way to improve on the intervention process would be to provide continued professional development opportunities for all staff to enhance the delivery of best instructional practices and engage in the practice of progress monitoring. Our next step moving forward would be to look at ways we can support our small group of upper grade students who have been in the intensive intervention groups, SIP process for multiple years and continue to be at-risk.