

## **Del Rey Elementary Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 07617706004444

County: Contra Costa

District (Local Educational Agency): Orinda Union Elementary

School: Del Rey Elementary

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 423 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

Del Rey Elementary School rests nestled in a neighborhood just east of the Caldecott Tunnel, in Orinda, CA. We serve 423 Transitional Kindergarten through 5th grade students. Our school setting includes two creeks bordering the campus, beautiful mature oak trees, a natural habitats garden, and views of the hills. Built in 1953, our campus includes 20 full sized classrooms, a multipurpose room, library, science, music, art, intervention, makerspace, and computer laboratory. Del Rey has an incredible community of teachers, parents, support staff, students, and the greater community, who work together to do what is best for all students.

Research supports that the one most significant factor in raising academic achievement is the expertise of the teacher. It also supports the deprivatization of classrooms. We work to build teacher expertise on an ongoing basis. We have weekly grade level collaboration time for teachers to work and plan together. We focus on vertical alignment, opening our doors to each other through peer observations, coaching and lesson study. Columbia Teacher's College, SVMII, and BaySci provide ongoing PD. We have literacy, math and technology coaches providing professional development and

cohesion across the district. Our professional development aligns with district LCAP and site goals. We have no significant subgroups this year.

Technology tools support our work. Classroom tech. tools include document cameras, projectors, SMARTBoards, a 1:1 laptop program in the 4th and 5th grades, and a 2:1 iPad program in TK–3rd grades.

When visiting our school you see quality instructional practices in classrooms including reading and writing workshops, math workshops, project based learning, and more. We bring parents into the fold, valuing their input and talents, and utilizing their skills. Parents donate time and energy to maximize our potential, raising a significant amount of money, channeled through our School Site Council to support curriculum and professional development goals. Our community values smaller class sizes, committing to maintain the 20 to 1 ratio in the lower grades. Parents support an excellent enrichment program, lunch program and character education program. Together we help students learn to connect to their community and build good character. We highlight character education through the Read-Aloud program, through our work with Kidpower, and our Second Steps curriculum. We have a weekly broadcast called “Good Day Del Rey” produced and edited by our students highlights happenings inside and out of the classrooms that brings the community together.

In summary, we are an inclusive community that listens to each other respectfully, communicates effectively, and values the bonds we work hard to create. While we are competitive in our performance, we are collaborative and hardworking in our day-to-day operations. We are about people and what is best for all students.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Collaboration and the deprivatization of practice

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

Target Area(s): Professional Development, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Target Population(s): Two or More Races

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

## **Description**

Our signature practice is collaboration and the deprivatization of practice. People and training are the main resource needed to grow this work. The structure for this work lies with the Vertical Team. (VT) meets monthly, with the goal to align curriculum. This is our think tank; a place to bring ideas to the table for discussion. We dedicate every other staff meeting to a VT agenda. At our first meeting together we determined that opening

our doors to each other and sharing best practices would benefit instructional practice and thereby all students at Del Rey. The VT researched coaching models and presented ideas to the staff. Peer observations and VT conferences on video were used as models at staff meetings to move the work forward. This work shifted our culture to one where our doors are open. Parents, students, and teachers expect visitors, are used to seeing multiple educators in one place, and value the input of others. It isn't unusual that during a teacher's preparation time they visit a colleague's classroom to observe and assist. Students know all of the teachers, and are supported by a network of people who care about them. A student focused connected community supports the social and emotional needs of kids by providing a safe and supportive place to learn as evidenced by the Parent Pulse Survey rating of 98% of students feel respect and dignity, 96% feel safe at school.

In year two we aligned our practices in scoring reading assessments. (Fountas and Pinnell). Teachers discovered discrepancies in scoring practices that made reporting to families and working with students more challenging. For example if a grade level before you scored students significantly higher than you, it looked like scores were dropping. Were we in need of a consistent practice? The teachers on VT practiced first, using cameras on their computers to capture the work with students. Then they led staff to score the assessment, discuss differences discovered, and come to consensus on the score earned by the student. This led to a more consistent delivery and scoring system. Teachers continue to videotape assessments and to bring them to their grade level for further analysis.

In the third year we went deeper into the practice of Lesson Study. Currently we are focused on NGSS, discussed in the next section. Student engagement is one measure we use to push practice. This lens allows us to view all students and how they are accessing their learning.

Members of the Vertical Team share and discuss important topics with their grade level teams during weekly collaboration and on a bigger scale at staff meetings. Our Vertical Team has shared their work with the greater community as well by addressing Site Council and Parents' Club. Parents' Club values the thoughtful practices put in place at Del Rey, and supports our professional development journey by partnering with OUSD in funding PD experiences as well as providing subs allowing for collaboration time.

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

This signature practice of collaboration shows the way we have moved from working in isolation to one where we have deprivatized, raising the quality of instruction, creating a culture of students first, and increasing student achievement. This year:

The Vertical Team (VT) is composed of a teacher from each grade level and the principal and meets monthly setting targets for our collaboration. Targets are determined through analytical and anecdotal data collected from assessments, surveys, the site plan and align with district goals and LCAP. Year one targeted opening classrooms to each other and constituted a change in school culture. Year two targeted

calibrating assessments and grading practices. Year three targeted lesson study by grade level. This current year targets science as we move toward the NGSS. Each year builds upon the work done previously.

The VT discussed how we could strategically examine our instructional practices in science. We receive ongoing training in science from BaySci, and have common expectations for our practice which include the use of FOSS curriculum, and science journals at every grade. Going farther at our site, we planned a meeting where every teacher brought at least three science journals from their class. Arranging three teams with representation from grades TK–5, we focused on science journaling with the following questions to guide the discussion: Is there significant evidence of use of journals in each grade? Can we identify the units of study by studying student work? Do we see rigor that progresses as we go up the grade levels? Abuzz, we came together to share out our findings, which included the need for some calibration across grades to ensure that we continue to expect more each year a student progresses. In other words, a 4th grade journal should be more complex than a third grade journal. This is addressed in team collaboration. We also determined our next needed steps. Examine the curriculum at each grade in order to eliminate significant overlaps and to identify the investigations at each grade that have the biggest impact on the NGSS standards. We continue with this focus by observing each other teach science, collecting feedback on student engagement and product. We collect our findings and record our work on a shared Google document, which we can refer back to. Through this work we build capacity across our site, thereby benefiting students.

We regularly communicate our practices and findings in both Site Council and Parents' Club meetings. Parents support our work financially by paying for PD with BaySci in addition to supporting our release time for lesson study and collaboration. We communicate through an electronic newsletter, where educational updates are provided. We also have a student produced news channel that highlights activities across our school. The principal shares practices with the district, and educators from around the district request and are welcomed to observe.

## **Results and Outcomes**

Del Rey Elementary School addresses the needs of all learners by working collaboratively to build the teaching expertise necessary to impact student achievement. Our baseline data from CAASPP demonstrates the successes we are experiencing due to our diligent collaborative planning and ongoing professional development model that has opened our doors to a growth mindset and a deprivatization of our classrooms.

Our CAASPP data indicates high levels of achievement. With 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades respectively scoring 90%, 91%, and 96% meeting and exceeding standards in ELA, and 93%, 88%, and 84% meeting and exceeding standards in Math, we continue focus on improvement. Our Students with Disabilities showed an increase of 9.3%. This could be attributed to the collaborative process of drilling down into the scores, analyzing them for any place for improvement, and the constant work we do to meet the needs of all learners and to continue to learn and grow together.

Del Rey starts each year with data analysis. We work to extrapolate data from CAASPP and district assessments, and analyze what changes are necessary in order to help students increase their achievement. We engage in long range planning sessions twice yearly with our grade level team, district coaches, intervention supports, and the principal. We study student work together targeting our significant subgroup of students with disabilities, to inform our practice, to calibrate class to class and grade to grade, and to drive instruction. By conducting pre and post- tests, and creating flexible grouping models we engage and support all students to reach and even exceed their potential.

As we embrace Common Core State Standards and the NGSS, we study outcome objectives and establish best practices in delivering curriculum on an ongoing basis. Working together we establish great teaching practices, consistent curriculum, calibrated assessments, and vertical alignment. We open our doors to the community and enjoy a partnership that offers all students the opportunity to be successful. We serve the educational community by providing opportunities to learn about our practices and to grow theirs. Through collaboration and deprivatization we have raised the level of teacher expertise and student achievement.