

Kensington Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 07617966004808

County: Contra Costa

District (Local Educational Agency): West Contra Costa Unified

School: Kensington Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 485 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Kensington School is a K–6 elementary school located in Kensington, California. The town of Kensington is in the hills just north of Berkeley, but the school is part of a large, urban district spanning an area that includes cities and unincorporated areas of West Contra Costa County. As part of this unified district, Kensington draws students from the surrounding neighborhood as well as from the larger district and surrounding districts. Our current enrollment is 475 students, which includes many transfer students. The demographic data for our school population is 60% White, 6% African American, 10% Hispanic, 13% Asian, and 3% Filipino/Pacific Islander; 8% are 2 or more races. Approximately 8% of our students are ELs, 8% are Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, and 8% are students with disabilities. Our students speak approximately eight primary languages. This rich and complex mix of backgrounds unites us in a common goal: a distinguished education for all students.

All of our classroom teachers are experienced and fully credentialed. We have had a strong, stable site administrator for the past ten years. Our average class size is 24 students (K–3) and 28 students (4–6). Our active parent community provides funding for

enrichment classes including science lab, art, computer lab, music, PE, reading and math intervention, math enrichment and library skills.

Kensington School has three teams of educators dedicated to improving outcomes for all students. Our active ILT, representing teachers from every grade level, meets monthly to review progress on SMART goals, plan school-wide activities, analyze instructional needs, and coordinate PD. Our collaborative grade-level teams meet weekly to analyze data, review progress in implementing CCSS, and share best practices. Our collaborative intervention team, which consists of our RSP teachers, reading intervention teacher, speech pathologist, Full Inclusion teacher, School Psychologist, OT, and ELA/ELD and math intervention teachers, meets both formally and informally as needed to ensure that each student is progressing to meet goals.

We have three parent organizations: PTA, Dads' Club, and Kensington Education Foundation. Our PTA is the main service group for the school, planning and staffing many school programs and activities. Our Dads' Club enhances the physical plant and supports fundraising activities, working with the other parent groups to further the goal of a quality education and nurturing environment for all of our students. The Kensington Education Foundation is the fundraising arm of the school community; funds provide needed reading and math intervention and enrichment classes that are available to all students in the school, enabling them to meet academic proficiency goals in an engaging and motivating environment. In addition, the KEF supports classroom teachers by providing grants for classroom materials and funding released time to attend professional development.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Collaborative Intervention Model

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Professional Development, 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, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

High academic achievement for all students is the hallmark of Kensington School. Our community believes that we have an obligation to meet the academic and social/emotional needs of all students; out of that commitment grew the Collaborative Intervention Model.

A team of intervention teachers and other staff meet regularly to review data and plan interventions to address the unique needs of each student. Classroom teachers and our site administrator are part of the team, as are individual students' parents.

Collaborative Intervention begins each year as soon as school starts. A team assesses all first-grade students using the Basic Phonics Skills Test (BPST) to assess readiness for reading instruction. All students are assessed using the STAR reading assessment to identify those who are not meeting standards at their grade level. The team also reviews SBAC scores; all students who did not meet or exceed grade level expectations are assigned to an intervention group for ELA or math. Students who exceed standards in math in grades 4–6 are considered for enrichment opportunities in mathematics with their teachers' recommendation.

Intervention groups are organized within the first few weeks of school; scheduling is done collaboratively to ensure that students do not miss out on core instruction. Our team meets to review ongoing benchmark assessments, classroom data, and intervention monitoring. Students move in and out of intervention groupings as they make progress in reaching grade-level standards.

PD is focused on the Teachers College Writing Project adopted during our move to the California Standards. Parent funding provided the Units of Study for Teaching Writing for every teacher as well as release time for collaboration and consultant support. Playworks and Toolbox trainings for staff focus on increasing students' capacity to avoid and resolve conflict which directly affects school climate and results in improved classroom performance for all.

We appreciate the involvement and engagement of our parent community that provides funding to support this model. Our LCFF funding pays for one day of our ELA/ELD intervention teacher who serves approximately 40 students; parent funding pays for the second day. The CIM is the result of our staff's commitment to all students' success combined with our parent community's commitment to fund all students' needs.

Our Model was designed with the needs of our ELs, low income, and minority populations in mind, along with students who are not meeting standards. Our classroom instruction is geared toward our predominately high-achieving students and we scaffold and differentiate for students who need additional support to allow them to meet instructional objectives. As we have discovered at Kensington, all students are able to benefit from this high level of instruction when the needs of unique groups are met, making rigorous learning accessible to all.

Implementation and Monitoring

The implementation process of our model is collaborative in nature. Everyone involved in supporting students' success is part of the team and meets frequently to set up programs and schedules, and monitor their efficacy. We ensure that all students are being served and that core instructional time is preserved. We have approximately 50 students attending small, short-term, skills-based math intervention groups each week and 70 students attending ongoing reading/phonics intervention groups each day, 3–4 days a week. Over the course of a year approximately 100 students are seen in the 1st–6th grade reading intervention groups. We also serve over 100 students weekly in our math enrichment groups (Math Olympiads). Our RSP/Learning Center teacher sees approximately 30 students in small groups each week for intervention.

Monitoring the effectiveness of interventions is also a collaborative process. Using benchmark assessments, STAR literacy assessments, CELDT scores, intervention monitoring, and classroom data, groups of teachers and specialists meet during their collaboration time, and as Student Success Teams formed to support individual student interventions. Parents are an important part of the process and our robust SST process invites and includes parents as part of the intervention team.

As the intervention model could not exist without the fundraising efforts of our parent community, parent input and support are valued and solicited. Parent volunteers are critical to the success of our intervention and enrichment programs, providing needed support to small groups of children during direct instruction. There is buy-in from the community to financially support programs that serve only some of our students because the entire community understands the value to the school as a whole to have the needs of all students met. Our many enrichment classes also supported through parent and community donations are available to all students, providing art, music, physical education, science lab, computer lab, and library skills programs to every student in the school.

During the past year 20 of our 29 EL students made at least one year of growth on the CELDT performance levels. The students who did not make one year of growth have been targeted by our team for additional intervention. We make similar modifications to our intervention schedule when we monitor the progress of our Low Income and African American students.

A variety of communication tools are used to inform the Kensington community about our model. Our comprehensive school website provides information about our intervention and enrichment opportunities; our weekly Thursday Packet highlights specific programs available for students and their families; SST meetings, IEP meetings, and conferences provide opportunities for parents to meet with teams of professionals to be active participants in their children's interventions.

Results and Outcomes

The results of our Model, along with the data on the CA School Dashboard, demonstrate that success is a universal experience regardless of circumstance or subgroup.

The majority of our students meet or exceed standards in ELA and Math due to curricular supports that we have adopted in our Model. ELA indicator status is 83.1 points above Level 3 on the SBAC (Met Standard), reflecting an increase of 6.6 points from 15–16 to 16–17. Math indicator status is 61.8 points above Level 3 on the SBAC, reflecting an increase of 5.1 points from 15–16 to 16–17. We have had steady increases in math over the last three years, moving from 45.9 points above level 3 to 61.8 points above in 2017. Our EL progress status is 91.3%, reflecting an increase of 11.8%. We currently have no Long-Term English Learners.

The universal supports of the Teachers College Writing Project have led to improved writing scores, along with an increase in the reclassification rate of our ELs; our intervention team has provided targeted support to effectively supplement this work, ensuring that students make adequate progress toward proficiency.

We have seen a significant decrease in our office referral rate; in 2013–14, 32 students were referred during the first four months of the year. In 2017–18, three students were referred during the same period of time. We credit the focus on our social/emotional curricula for that change. Caring School Community, Welcoming Schools, Playworks, and Toolbox have all played a part in helping students learn to resolve conflicts peacefully and regulate their own behavior. Our suspension rate status is very low at 0.2%. We have been able to maintain this low level for Fall 2017.

We analyzed the data from our reading intervention program by looking at the 25 children who scored lowest on the STAR reading and BPST assessment at the beginning of first grade in 2015. We monitored those students three times each year for the past three years. When tested on the STAR reading in January 2018, as third graders, 60% of them were reading above grade level, 20% were reading at grade level, and 20% were reading below grade level. Two of the students reading below grade level have been diagnosed with a language-based learning disability, and all except one student are scoring within a few months of their grade-level proficiency. All have had SSTs and are being monitored by our team.

Results from the LCAP staff survey indicate that our staff is increasingly focused on our school-wide and District-wide goals. 100% of teachers report that they have opportunities to be involved in decision-making; the percentage of teachers who report that they focus collaboration time on looking at data increased from 28% in 2014–15 to 59% in 2016–17. 100% of our teachers say that they are proud to work at Kensington School, that the school is a safe place for students, and that teachers participate in the development and implementation of the school plan.