

Rancho Romero Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 07618046005136

County: Contra Costa

District (Local Educational Agency): San Ramon Valley Unified

School: Rancho Romero Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 494 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Rancho Romero Elementary School is located in Contra Costa County. Our school is one of twenty-two elementary schools in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District, one of the highest performing large school districts in the state. Rancho Romero opened in 1959, with twelve classrooms, kindergarten through sixth grade. The culture of our neighborhood school began with teachers, parents, and community members coming together as partners and has remained that way over the past five decades. For many of our students, prior generations of their family attended Rancho Romero. This personal connection adds to the sense of pride and inclusiveness that helps make the school very unique.

The school has grown from its humble beginnings and today twenty classroom teachers serve 500 students in TK–5. Additional staff includes two science lab specialists, two physical education specialists, a Reading Specialist, a Technology Teacher, an Instrumental Band Teacher, general art and music teachers, a librarian, a Resource Teacher, a Speech and Language Pathologist, and a part-time psychologist.

Our student enrollment by ethnicity is 72.8% white, 8.6% Asian, 8.6% Hispanic or Latino, 8.6% two or more races and .8% African American. Three percent (3.3%) of students are designated English Language Learner. Families served by the school are college educated and are middle to upper-middle class socioeconomically. Education is valued and parents have high educational expectations for their children. Parent support for school programs and services through the Rancho Romero Education Fund and PTA is strong. Parent voluntary donations are used for a variety of programs and positions such as technology, art, music, reading intervention, classroom para-educators, library, social skills intervention, and noontime sports.

Providing a rigorous and meaningful curriculum to our students is a priority. The school community is committed to ensuring positive, challenging, and rewarding academic and social experiences. The 2017 CAASPP test results revealed a school-wide average in the 3rd–5th grade of 77% proficient and above in ELA and 78% in mathematics.

Teachers, during the last five years, worked diligently to make significant curriculum, instruction, and program changes to align with California State Math, ELA/Literacy, and Next Generation Science Standards. These include: New York Reading and Writing Units of Study, Eureka Math, Next Generation Science Standards, Wilson Foundations Language Basics, STEM, Response to Intervention, Cultural and Linguistic strategies, and inclusion of students with special needs.

Students and teachers at Rancho Romero will tell you that our school not only cultivates learning, but also creativity, friendship, strength of character, and a sense of community and leadership. Our students excel at academic rigor, social stability and emotional strength because of our school's dedication to academic and social/emotional supports.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Response to Intervention/Snapshot

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports

Target Population(s): Asian, Black or African American, Filipino, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

Strategies Used: Small Learning Communities, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

The best way to ensure high levels of learning for both students and educators is for Rancho Romero to function as a professional learning community (PLC). A PLC is the foundation of our approach to Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI is as much a way of thinking as it is a process of doing. Rancho Romero has been flexible in implementing RTI practices to best meet the needs of our students. Additionally, Rancho Romero works within the laws and regulations of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District and the State's LCAP.

Rancho Romero adopted RTI practices three years ago to meet the needs of all learners. Our school's core mission is not simply to ensure that all students are taught but also that they actually learn. This shift in thinking allowed our PLC's to identify students who were not learning essential standards (we call them, "got to know" standards). This commitment to ensure student learning united us as a staff and served as our school's "north star" when making decisions. Our ongoing question is "Will this help more students learn at higher level?"

Rancho Romero's teachers and administrators embrace professional development as their commitment to creating a collaborative culture. Our teachers recognize they do not possess all the knowledge, skills, time, and resources needed to ensure high levels of learning for all of their students. Our staff attends RTI conferences and workshops as teacher teams funded by our site. Additionally, most interventions are in the classroom, administration requested our district's funded specialists to coach and lead staff in learning effective Tier 1 Interventions. Our teachers understand to systematically respond to student's needs, the need to take collective responsibility for student success. Collective responsibility does not happen by chance; instead, frequent collaboration time is embedded into Rancho Romero's contractual week.

RTI benefits our unique subgroups such as: Hispanic/Latino, Students with a Learning Disability. Additionally, RTI supports student social emotional and behavioral needs. Identified on the 2016–2017 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), our students in special education performed significantly below standard for Math and ELA when compared to students without a disability. Our RTI serves students by providing both Tier 2 (targeted intervention) with Tier 3 (individualized remediation). Students who struggle with emotional and/or social needs benefit from RTI because of the Tier 2 interventions such as Rainbow Program (a one on one or small group using play) and SCIP (MFT Intern working with 10 student caseload). Although Rancho Romero does not have a chronic absenteeism or suspension issue, our RTI model would support students by first identifying them, determining their need, and finding support of the student and family. In conclusion, the RTI model at Rancho Romero benefits all students and affects school wide achievement.

Implementation and Monitoring

Our parent community is integral in our student's success. They are fully engaged and knowledgeable of our response to intervention (RTI) program. PTA, Rancho Romero Education Fund, and School Site Council represent our three parent stakeholder groups. Official CAASPP results are presented to the school site council. The data is analyzed, focused on subgroups which fall below standard performance in Math and English Language Arts. Consequently, discussion ensues related to the most effective course of action to support struggling learners, as well as, the resources available to support the intervention and remediation programs. Annually, stakeholders review the LCAP budget with an emphasis on the distribution of funds available for general education. Stakeholders participate in the planning of LCAP Priorities.

Rancho Romero identifies struggling students and determines Prevention (Tier 1), Intervention (Tier 2), and Remediation (Tier 3), through our Snapshot systematic process. Snapshot brings the grade level PLC's together with the principal, intervention specialists, special education teacher, and counselor, school psych and district support staff. Snapshot meetings take place every eight weeks. The objective, of meeting the needs of all students, is met by: discussion of student's deficit as measured by learning targets, essential grade level behavior, and overall social/emotional wellbeing.

Tier 1 (Prevention) takes place in the student's classroom. Our highly trained teachers, early in the year, participate in professional development of reviewing interventions, learning new strategies, and obtaining relevant materials that help support students in their classroom. Tier 1 interventions are progress monitored over 6–8 weeks. At Snapshot meetings, student's progress is discussed and new students are identified. If the team decides more is needed, an SST (student support team) is scheduled to discuss next steps.

Tier 2 (Intervention) responsibilities fall on teacher and schoolwide teams. Progress monitored for 2–3 months. Tier 2 students struggle in school because of a skill or will deficit. Skill interventions target students who have not mastered specific academic essentials:

- Reading Intervention (credentialed teacher four days a week) using Barton, Read Naturally, Fountas and Pinnell, TC Leveled Literacy
- Math Intervention ("just right" groups); support by 10 highly trained para-educators
- Word Work ("just right" groups) working on targeted standards.

Will interventions target students who have or could have mastered the essential academic standard but lack the essential behaviors - the will- to master it:

- Rainbow (serves, on average, 25 students a year)
- SCIP counseling

Tier 3 (Intervention/Remediation) responsibilities fall on both the school's leadership and intervention team. Our teams use information gathered to craft an individualized plan. Intervention and remediation are used simultaneously.

Results and Outcomes

Monitoring and assessment results are used to evaluate RTI in relation to student outcomes by using data collected from CAASPP, student movement through the multi-tiered RTI services, overall performance on report cards, and a fifth-grade connectivity survey. In 2017, Students with Disability and Hispanic or Latino were targeted subgroups of concern. Per CAASPP ELA results for 2015, 2016, 2017: Hispanic or Latino students 57%, 60%, 74% were at standard. Per CAASPP Math results for 2015, 2016, 2017: Hispanic or Latino students 57%, 40%, 68% were at standard. Per CAASPP Math results for 2015, 2016, 2017: Students with Disability: 29%, 42% and 46% were at standard. Although students within the mentioned subgroups made growth on their CAASPP scores, they pale in comparison to our school's overall results and those of the SRVUSD. Our school mission/philosophy is to ensure all students learn at high levels; however, data does not lie. We still have great strides to go to accomplish our mission.

Our Snapshot meetings produce measurable data for our RTI leadership and teacher teams. Each student and his/her interventions are recorded in a Google document. Data is analyzed by grade, teacher, intervention, duration of intervention, and effectiveness. Because we meet four times a year, the Google doc, using analytics, breaks down data into understandable, relevant information that assists decision making as to where to put our resources. For example, the RTI and teacher teams noticed there were three first grade students significantly behind in reading. Although these students were in our Tier 2 reading intervention program, their growth was insignificant. Our teacher team and administrator moved them into the Reading Recovery program. (Tier 3). Consequently, the three students were receiving Tier 2 and 3 interventions. After four months of intensive remediation, the three students were measured to be at grade level. Our RTI/Snapshot model has allowed our teams to move students forward with greater ability and to successfully transition from grade to grade.

Our RTI team collects and analyzes quantitative and qualitative data to ensure students are learning at high levels and feel emotionally/socially safe while on campus. Approximately 10% of our student body is in the Snapshot system. At our RTI/Intervention Team meeting, we discuss and plan for students who are in: Rainbow, SCIP, and students receiving Psych services. Our school's Rainbow counselor not only meets with students in the RTI system, but also supervises our school lunches. She provides support on the playground, as well as reports to the administrator when she observes a student of concern. Through a school survey, students report they feel safe and connected when they see supervisors at lunch. In response, our Site Council funds a four day a week. Additionally, four noontime supervisors were hired. Students responded favorably to the additional supervision.