

Bollinger Canyon Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 07618046100952

County: Contra Costa

District (Local Educational Agency): San Ramon Valley Unified

School: Bollinger Canyon Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 577 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Bollinger Canyon Elementary is a suburban PreK–5 school nestled in the rolling hills of San Ramon Valley. Our community has grown from its rural roots to become headquarters for multinational corporations, many of whom partner with Bollinger Canyon to expand learning opportunities for our students. Our neighborhood is home to people who desire to live in a family-oriented community where recreation, team sports, citizenship, scouts, and academic excellence and school are pivotal. Our school has a deep commitment to its families reflected in a solid sense of community.

Our Mission is to provide a safe and effective learning environment where academic excellence and individual differences are valued and encouraged. Our motto is “Enhancing a Successful Learning Environment through CARE”– Collaboration, Achievement, Respect and Enthusiasm. Our goal is to promote collaboration between staff members, parents, and students to achieve personal and academic excellence nurtured by a sense of teamwork, respect and trust. Teachers, students, parents, and staff understand the need for all members of our school community to feel encouraged, valued, and admired. There is a fervent desire to provide a learning environment that is

conducive to developing the unique intellectual, social, physical and emotional potential of each child. Teachers and parents have a clear understanding of the school's academic targets from preschool through 5th grade. Teachers are professional and require rigor and stamina in their classrooms. They believe high expectations are the right of every child and not negotiable.

You will see evidence of higher level thinking in all classrooms in the areas of math and English language arts. Technology is incorporated throughout the school through the use of Chromebooks, iPads and two computer labs. Our Special Day Classes (SDC) utilize iPads and Smart Boards to enhance the language acquisition goals of those students with special needs. All classrooms are equipped with document cameras and LCD projectors. Recognizing the need to support safe and responsible technology use, our site was the first elementary school in the district to become a Digital Citizen School and we have maintained that status through ongoing professional development, student education and parent awareness.

A unique aspect of our school is our Intensive Collaborative Language and Social Skills (ICLASS) Program, consisting of Special Day Classes with children from preschool to grade 5 with severe cognitive and behavioral needs on the autistic spectrum. General education students receive empathy and disability awareness training that help them to engage positively and socially with this special group of students. This empathy awareness transfers into the general education classes and clearly has an impact on closing the Achievement Gap for all of our students. This program was a Signature practice for our 2014 Distinguished School Award and our 2016 Gold Ribbon Award.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Leading with Heart: The Rigor, Relevance and Relationships of Response to Intervention

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

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

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

Strategies Used: School Climate, Parent Engagement, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

Leading with Heart addresses the wide range of social/emotional needs of our students, with the premise that if children struggle with emotional roadblocks then successful

learning cannot take place. Creating a safe, nurturing, and effective learning environment where children want to come and learn, and develop socially and emotionally, is a goal of the entire Bollinger community. We strive to ensure that all students feel connected to and safe at school.

The basic structure of our practice lies in Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS). It was apparent several years ago that we lacked a systematic approach to provide a schoolwide program of support and a clear method of data collection for tracking behavior concerns to better inform our work, and to acknowledge appropriate behaviors. Therefore, we volunteered to pilot the implementation of PBIS. This two year training provided us tools to develop a systematic approach of school wide behavior supports for all students, and the ability to track positive and negative behaviors. District funding for PBIS was eliminated, however, the staff is passionate about continuing the program and maintaining the structures put in place. We developed binders and essential resources to build capacity around PBIS.

Other programs in Leading with Heart backed by an enthusiastic parent community are Book of the Month (books funded by site LCAP & PTA) focusing on character traits such as respect, fairness, etc. Scout troops lead a monthly community flag salute. PTA organizes activities and funds the materials for Red Ribbon/Words Matter Week, and Autism Awareness month. Our Boosterthon Fun Run focuses on character traits. PTA hosts parent ed nights such as Mindful Parenting, Learning Disorders, and Beyond Limit Setting.

As we identify students needing more support, we have programs such as Rainbow, an early mental health intervention, funded through district, Ed Fund, and site funds. For more intensive needs a Discovery counselor, provided through a partnership with a local counseling center is on site part time. We implemented WOW, a Wednesday lunchtime makerspace for 4th/5th grade students needing a break from recess. And we have a "Check in, Check Out" system, where teachers buddy up with students as non-judgmental mentors to support and connect with several times a week.

A favorite of Leading with Heart is our social skills class supporting our Intensive Special Day Class students. 4th/5th grade students model social skills and practice for special olympics. Our SDC students are buddied with general education classes for activities throughout the year.

Suspensions and behavior referrals are addressed through alternative means of discipline fostered by our work in PBIS and restorative practices. We increased attendance through personal contact with parents of students with chronic absenteeism and tardies to support them and to ensure their children are at school, on time, every day.

Implementation and Monitoring

The entire Bollinger community embraces professional development as a commitment to create a safe and effective learning environment for all children. Our initial PBIS team

consisted of administration, classroom and resource teachers, an autism specialist para, school psychologist, office manager and classroom para. This team researched and developed practices rolled out strategically school wide. The rules, "I Will Be Safe, Responsible, and Respectful," became a new motto. Lesson plans were created for all teachers outlining schoolwide expectations of behavior for all common areas. Each year begins with an assembly explaining PBIS rules, rewards and consequences. Routines and structures are practiced each trimester. The program is reviewed with all parents at Back to School night each year and reinforced in Principal Newsletters. Parent input is solicited through our Site Council as an integral component of our Comprehensive School Safety Plan.

Built into PBIS is a data collection protocol to collect data from office referrals and positive behavior rewards. Staff reviews this data with the intent that for every consequence (Bulldog Pawse) there should be at least ten recognitions of positive behavior. All staff, classified included, passes out Bulldog Bucks recognizing positive behavior. Recently we established a system of "Teacher Bucks" to reward teachers that are consistently acknowledging positive student behavior. This results in teacher rewards such as administration taking over a yard duty if teachers collect 10 bucks.

At staff meetings, we review our school programs and continuously seek out new ways to support Leading with Heart. This year administration introduced restorative practices as an alternative to negative consequences and suspensions. While this work is still new, practices are in place such as Self Reflection sheets for office referrals, and the practice of students writing and doing kind things for the student(s) they are in conflict with. This year all classes created kindness chains with sentence strips linked together and currently reach all the way around the interior of our MPR. We created kindness squares for a quilt that takes up one full wall of the MPR. Staff created a kindness quilt that covers a wall in our staff hallway. The efforts to Leading with Heart are endless.

Parent voices are an integral part of our various levels of support. In all Student Study Team meetings, which includes parents/guardians, an important component of all discussions is the social and emotional well being of the child. From that collaborative conversation, referrals to Rainbow or our Discovery Counselor are made if necessary. For students who require the most intense level of emotional support, an assessment plan is developed and an emotional component is included in the psycho educational assessment ensuring that all communication with parents is an empathetic and supportive approach to these intensely emotional issues.

Results and Outcomes

Some of the data that we feel is a direct reflection of Leading with Heart is the decrease in the number of suspensions from 10 in 2015/2016, to 3 the following year and none so far this current year. The overall number of office referrals this year is 11 compared to 45 last school year. We feel this is a direct reflection on our practice of Leading with Heart and the consistent message delivered school wide and at home for our PBIS rules. Restorative practices initiated by the teachers such as requiring students in conflict to write a letter to each other stating three kind things, and doing a kind deed for

each other, have minimized the need for referrals. Students with more intense or repetitive negative behaviors are given a homework sheet with self-reflective questions pertaining to school rules, including apology letters with three kind statements. This sheet is reviewed with and signed by parents. As we analyze additional data collected in the past few years since implementation of Leading with Heart, we have found some significant findings.

The Healthy Kids Data over the past few years specifically with respect to student connectedness is not significantly different. However, it hovers around 70% and drives our conversations with our staff and our site council for continuous improvement as we design action plans each year for our Comprehensive School Safety Plan and our Single Plan for Student Achievement.

Our attendance has gone up from 96.98% in 2014–2015 to 97.23% in the 2016–2017 school year (compared to 97.06% district average). Through close monitoring of tardies and absences, more consistent contact from administration to families, the importance of attending school has had an impact on some already high numbers! We know that our students want to come to school, as they feel safe and supported by our robust programs.

Providing a rigorous and relevant academic program along with Leading with Heart has resulted in steady academic growth. A two year overview of CAASPP scores show the following:

- ELA improved from 78% to 85% of students who met or exceeded standards.
- Math improved from 75% to 84% of students who met or exceeded standards.

We also closed the achievement gap with some of our subgroups over the same two year period:

- In ELA Students with disabilities improved from 21% to 60%! English Language Learners improved from 40% to 42%.
- In Math students with disabilities improved from 16% to 57%! English Language Learners were the only declining number over the same two year period from 60% to 50%. These numbers will be studied and reviewed to ascertain areas of support for this particular subgroup.

Such positive growth in our numbers is definitely rewarding for the entire Bollinger Community. However, the most impressive and rewarding anecdotal data is the joy of seeing children that love coming to their school, and if asked, they will tell you, “This is the BEST School EVER!”