

Riverview Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 10622656006837

County: Fresno

District (Local Educational Agency): Kings Canyon Joint Unified

School: Riverview Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 473 students

Location Description: Rural

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Riverview Elementary School (RES), home of the Beavers, came into existence around 1921 after the unification of two schools: Riverbend and Riverside. Riverview, located on the outskirts of Reedley and surrounded by vast agricultural farmland, was named due to its proximity to the nearby Kings River. We have a picturesque view of the mountainous landscape of the Sierra Nevada foothills as our natural backdrop. We serve grades Kindergarten–8th at Riverview with a total population of 473 students. The student demographics include 72% Hispanic, 52% socio-economically disadvantaged, and 30% English Learners (EL and RFEP). Due to Riverview Elementary School's rural location, most of the student population is bussed to school. The staff is composed of 19 full time teachers, 4 part time teachers, 5 full time support staff, and 11 part time support staff.

Riverview Elementary School is one of 22 schools in Kings Canyon Joint Unified School District (KCUSD), whose mission is "To provide a broad spectrum of educational and

co-curricular activities for all students so they can attain their highest potential.” The parents, staff, and students of Riverview form a collaborative partnership in an effort to achieve the mission of both KCUSD and RES. Our mission statement provides a common focus that unifies all stakeholders (administrators, teaching and support staff, parents, and students) in a pursuit of continuous school improvement. The mission of Riverview Elementary School is to “Provide excellence in education to a diverse community through exemplary programs, services, and activities that foster a life-long commitment to academic and character development.”

In keeping with our mission the staff at Riverview is dedicated to ensuring the academic success of every student and providing a safe and productive learning environment for all. Curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development are focused on assisting students in mastering the common core standards, as well as increasing the overall student achievement of all student subgroups.

It is not uncommon for past alumni to have their sons and daughters attend our elementary school. We hear from families with regard to the great memories and experiences they had as students at Riverview and they are happy that their children have the same opportunity to create those same everlasting memories and experiences. Riverview offers a small, close knit family atmosphere that is unique to our school.

Riverview offers many parent-student events such as Back to School Night, PIQE, Latino Family Literacy, and Open House. We also have a Parent Teacher Club that supports activities for our students and their families. Students have the opportunity to be involved in Band, GATE, Good News Club, Oral Interpretation, sports, Battle of the Books, and an After School Program. In addition, Riverview has implemented PBIS and has earned the GOLD model school award from Fresno County the last 3 years.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Foundational Skills Deployment Across Grade Levels

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

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

Target Population(s): Hispanic, White, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

Strategies Used: Small Learning Communities, Data-Driven Decision Making, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

Our foundational skills program contains two levels of instruction. Initial (Tier 1), which occurs in all K–3 classrooms from 8:15–9:15, and Targeted (Tier 2) that occurs throughout the day. Both stages begin with assessment utilizing the Basic Phonics Skills Test (BPST) and/or the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) depending on the grade level. Students in K–3 are administered the BPST which assesses a broad range of phonics skills beginning with consonant sounds normally taught in kindergarten and ending with polysyllabic word patterns encountered in 3rd and 4th grade. In addition to the BPST, students in 2–5 are assessed on the SRI to determine their overall reading level which encompasses comprehension requiring the application of foundational skills. Once these assessments are complete, the process of disaggregating data begins.

For Tier 1, students in grades K–3, are deployed across grade levels and provided differentiated small group instruction targeted to their foundational skills instructional needs. Each teacher is responsible for providing differentiated instruction to small groups of students and supporting activities that match the specific skills they are learning. By deploying students to other rooms, teachers are able to effectively target the wide variety of needs of students that would be nearly impossible to meet within one classroom. Students are placed in these groups according to their assessment results. The groups are based on a progression of skills that are taught in a specified scope and sequence. Proficiency for each level is based on the end of unit assessments.

Our Targeted (Tier 2) intervention provides additional foundational skills instruction for students in grades K–5. End of unit assessments are used as entrance criteria for students in K–1 while the SRI is used as both a technology based universal screening tool and progress monitoring tool for students in 2–5. Once assessments are completed, the data is utilized to strategically pull struggling readers for small group instructions based on their individual needs. Students that qualify receive an additional forty minutes of reading skills and comprehension based instruction two days a week in a small group setting in lieu of VAPA. K–3 students receive phonics skills instruction using lessons and activities from the Assessment and Remediation Guide (ARG) and Reading A–Z books and other skills related resources. Students in 3–5 receive reading and writing instruction based on close reading strategies, and foundational skills needs. Our intervention teacher monitors students' progress using end of unit assessments in the ARG, STAR reading assessment, SRI, BPST, and writing samples. The teacher works closely with our instructional coach discussing the students' strengths and weaknesses, strategies for improvement and ways to best address students' needs. Acquiring these skills enables students to independently meet the rigorous language demands of CCSS.

Implementation and Monitoring

In the fall of 2013, the administrative team began looking at our site's current practices to accurately assess the literacy needs of students, and create a vision of literacy instruction spanning grades K–8. To begin our journey of implementing a foundational skills based literacy program, we first developed our understanding of sound researched

based teaching practices that drive academic achievement. Teaching staff and administration focused our research around the California ELA/ELD Framework which showed us that just providing foundational skills to our students' was not enough, we needed to differentiate the instruction based on our students needs. The framework states "In spite of a well-organized curriculum and excellent instruction, some children experience difficulty acquiring foundational skills. These children need...highly targeted instruction. Teachers organize the school day to meet with children in small groups to ensure all children receive the instruction they need to advance their skills." Beginning in 2014, district wide, the teachers were trained to utilize foundational skills assessments to determine the instructional needs of their students. With on-going training and support, RES kindergarten teachers made the decision to deploy in order to better meet the needs of their students. By the fall of 2015, first and second grade teachers witnessed the success of this decision and they too began utilizing the BPST as a tool to help determine instructional needs in foundational skills and the decision was made to deploy within grade levels. In the fall of 2016, the teams made the decision to deploy across grades K–3, something no other school in our district does. Our teams realized that in order to meet the needs of all students, they needed to take a step above what the rest of the district was doing.

This deployment across grade levels required all K–3 teachers to meet much more often to discuss student progress and has led to much greater collaboration. Teachers now meet every Wednesday to evaluate student progress and discuss where students should deploy to based on their current levels. They discuss and track student movement using both a shared google folder, as well as, a hard copy. Although students' deployment does not change every week, this time is spent evaluating skills activities and sharing teaching strategies to improve instruction. This group of instructors have become a model PLC for others.

In the fall of 2015, the instructional coach presented the rationale for deployment to parents during PTC and School Site Council meetings, providing them with grade level standards in foundational skills and other information from the ELA/ELD Framework. Parents quickly embraced the idea that their student would receive instruction based on their need, not restricted by the levels of other students in the class. With this buy in from parents and staff, implementation proceeded efficiently.

Results and Outcomes

At the end of the 2016–2017 school year, our teachers conducted the final round of SRI testing for the school year. The results of this assessment, conducted after several months of instruction, revealed that our initiative to provide foundational skills across grade levels was showing great progress. In comparing the data from the fall to the spring of the 2016–2017 school year, we saw that every grade level had shown significant growth. The overall average student growth on the SRI for students enrolled in our foundational skills program was 215 points. This is significantly higher than the expected average growth on SRI and the growth of many of our other schools. We attribute this increase in growth to our foundational skills deployment across grade levels. Students receiving Targeted instruction grew on average one full grade level

from September to January, of this year, based on their STAR lexile results. This progress shows the effectiveness of our targeted foundational skills intervention and that these students are making improvements above and beyond others in our district. In evaluating student writing, teachers recorded significantly higher percentages of students writing at or above grade level, as evaluated by site created writing rubrics based on SBAC writing rubrics. These results are again shown on our growth on the Reading claim tested on the SBAC. In 15–16, 26.3% of students scored “below standard” on the reading claim, which was reduced to 20.2% the following year. This nearly 6% improvement in one year shows that our literacy program is working. We also believe that the improvement in students’ reading has greatly impacted our math scores as well. In 15–16, we saw a 7% increase in the number of student scoring “meets” or “exceeds” standards on the SBAC math assessment. We believe this improvement is based on the fact that our students can better read and comprehend the complex texts of the math questions in this portion of the test.

While Kings Canyon Unified included basic intervention funding within goals 1, 2, and 3 of its LCAP, Riverview takes it one step further by providing intensive foundational skills instruction, through deployment across grade levels, that specifically meets the needs of each student. Within the ELA/ELD framework we found statements such as “It is crucial that educators understand the importance of the foundational skills and act on that knowledge by closely monitoring students’ skill development and providing excellent, differentiated instruction.” Our results on local and state assessments show that we are providing this for our students. The collective commitment from all teachers, parent involvement, and ongoing site-specific collaboration around foundational skills set us apart. With our model implementation and collective commitment we will continue to reach towards our goal of ALL students becoming proficient readers by the end of their educational careers at Riverview.