

## **Lone Star Elementary Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 10624146007173

County: Fresno

District (Local Educational Agency): Sanger Unified

School: Lone Star Elementary

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 437 students

Location Description: Rural

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

Lone Star Elementary is dedicated to the relentless pursuit of superior academic instruction to improve student performance and develop productive, life long learners. Lone Star has a rich history, dating back to 1882, when volunteers built the first school. The founding principal, John Wash, focused on meeting the needs of the individual student and on staff development, which remains at the heart of our vision of educational success.

Over the years, growth and development in the attendance area has helped to develop an ethnically rich student population. This has resulted in a 437-member student family, in which children from 11 different ethnicities, speaking 7 different languages are welcomed from all over the world. With a current demographic population of 31.3% Asian, .5% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 2% Black or African American, 12.5% White, 52% Hispanic or Latino, and 1.7% two or more races, Lone Star is a radiant example of a tapestry of cultural and ethnic diversity.

One key to Lone Star's overall success comes from the intense focus on teamwork, or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), where students, teachers, staff, parents, district, and the community collaborate to promote and support the pursuit of academic excellence for all students. Our students are taught in heterogeneous classrooms and are involved in a variety of academic programs including general education, Resource Specialist Program (RSP), English Language Development (ELD), and the Gifted and Talented Program (GATE). Rigorous, standards-based instruction drives all core curricular areas as well as our Community of Caring character education program. Bolstering our Effective Instruction (EI) and PLCs is our Response to Intervention (RTI) program including both academic and behavioral systems.

Lone Star's academic RTI is a multi-layered prevention system that meets struggling students' literacy needs at their own personal level. Built into RTI is universal screening, use of evidenced-based interventions, continuous progress monitoring, and data-based decision making that ensures that children are receiving the literacy instruction that is needed. Our 3-tier model, provides early interventions to struggling readers and is used as a process to identify students with possible learning disabilities. Lone Star utilizes Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) throughout the school, which is a proactive system with clearly defined rules and expectations that improves behavior school-wide and increases academic engagement. We are multi-award winning school: Bonner Character in Education Award, CA Gold Ribbon School, CA Distinguished School, Title I Academic Achievement School and maintain a 97% attendance rate. Lone Star's strong system of supports exemplifies Sanger Unified's vision of "all students have the options to demonstrate what they learn and the opportunities to be successful and achieve their dreams."

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Response to Intervention (Literacy)

Length of Model Program/Practice: 8+ years

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

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: Small Learning Communities, Data-Driven Decision Making, Professional Development

## **Description**

Lone Star's Response to Intervention (RTI) was established to address the significant literacy deficits that were resulting in achievement gaps among our students in 2007. To overcome these barriers and ensure success for all students, a school-wide, systematic

approach to quickly intervene was implemented to address the diverse needs of our students in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The teachers were initially trained and supported in effective reading interventions and assessment over a three year period with assistance of Effective Reading Intervention Academy (ERIA) through Cal Stat. Since the transition to Common Core Standards, teachers have received additional training in effective literacy instruction, guided reading, and assessment at the district level.

Lone Star's RTI program allows us to identify and support every struggling student's individual literacy needs proactively in a small group setting. We offer high quality, research proven intervention programs matched to students' specific needs based upon data gathered from Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Next, District Progress Assessments (DPAs), Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), common formative assessments and other diagnostic program placement assessments. Students' literacy needs are met with a deployment-based, 4 days per week, 30 minutes per session, 6–8-week long blocks of instruction. Lone Star's RTI Team consists of a Resource Specialist (RSP), RSP aide, Curriculum Support Provider (CSP), Literacy Specialist Teacher (LST), Intervention Teachers (ITs), and Principal who work interdependently to provide systematic, literacy-based instruction to Lone Star students to enable them to access core content standards. We systematically monitor students' academic needs and progress with DIBELS Next, DPAs, Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), and common formative assessments in order to ensure that every child is successful. Our staff is able to utilize data gathered during our RTI instructional blocks to guide instruction and make sound educational decisions for each student.

Our RTI system allows us to accelerate learning and support students who are performing below grade level. It benefits English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students, and any other students who may need additional time and support to accelerate their learning and close the achievement gap. Through RTI, students achieve the literacy skills and confidence to access standards-based, core instruction in the classroom and achieve at higher levels.

Since 2008, Lone Star's RTI Program has distinguished itself as a model and resource for other schools seeking to implement effective literacy intervention programs by taking a team approach and following intervention protocols with fidelity, resulting in the longest running and most successful RTI program in the district based on data.

### **Implementation and Monitoring**

Lone Star's Response to Intervention (RTI) is a three-tiered pyramid. Tier 1, our initial tier for classroom intervention, addresses the effective instruction of essential literacy standards to students who demonstrate a need for additional support and also extends the learning for students who achieve mastery of the standard being taught. Based on checking for understanding (CFU) during the lesson, teachers instantly identify those students who are in need of Tier 1 support within the classroom. Students are pulled into a small group and are retaught using another approach that might be more conducive to their individual needs.

Tier 2, or WINGS (When Individual Needs Get Supported) addresses the literacy needs of our intensive students and low strategic students if space allows. Students are identified by our RTI Team using results from our universal screener, the DIBELS Next Benchmark assessment. Students are then given individual program placement assessments to determine their specific skill area of need. Based on these results, intensive students are deployed for 30 minutes, 4 times a week. All of the RTI programs are research proven and support students in phonemic awareness, phonics, multisyllabic words, and fluency. Programs that are in place include: Peer-Assisted Literacy Strategies (PALS), Phonics for Reading, Rewards, and Read Naturally. All students placed in Tiers 2 and 3 are progress monitored utilizing DIBELS Next assessments. Tier 2 students are assessed every week during intervention instruction to ensure that they are making progress. Tier 2 is very fluid in that students can move in and out of a specific literacy program or tier based on the 8 data points collected during one 6–8 week block of RTI. Results are discussed at the end of each block with the RTI Team at Student Success Meetings and in consultation with Grade Level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to determine if a student shows a lack of realistic growth as compared to a typical peer or if the student has progressed and is ready to move back to Tier 1.

If the student has not made realistic growth on the DIBELS Next assessment in Tier 2, then he or she could qualify for a Tier 3 intensive intervention in a very small group of students with a group ratio of no more than 5 students to 1 staff member. Students spend 45 minutes a day, 5 days a week receiving intensive literacy development. If realistic progress has been made according to weekly progress monitoring, RTI team members review the data and determine the next appropriate placement for the student. If a student has not made adequate growth and demonstrates a pattern of progress monitoring scores below the 10th percentile, this student may be considered for further assessment to determine the possible presence of a learning disability.

Lone Star's student data is accurately compiled and maintained in PowerSchool and in yellow intervention folders in each student's cum.

## **Results and Outcomes**

The results and outcomes of Lone Star's RTI program and the increase in student performance on the ELA portion of the CAASPP are what distinguishes our site most from others implementing this model in our district. Student outcomes are systematically monitored and assessed throughout all phases of the practice at Lone Star. Beginning in Tier 1, immediate results from checking for understanding responses are utilized to make adjustments during instruction based on student feedback and to identify students who need additional time and support at the conclusion of the lesson. Evidence of instructional adjustments is observed during classroom focus walks and formal lesson observations. Analysis of common assessments provides the PLCs with additional information to determine who needs re-teaching and reassessing on any given standard. DPAs and BAS assessments also benchmark student progress in English Language Arts multiple times throughout school year. PLCs utilize the data derived from

these assessments to make pacing or instructional adjustments as necessary to guarantee the successful mastery of the essential grade level standards.

In Tiers 2 and 3, multiple DIBELS Next assessments and other ongoing literacy assessments, are administered to chart student progress in the areas of reading fluency, decoding, and reading comprehension. The results from these assessments are interpreted and discussed by the administering teacher and RTI Team. Communication regarding progress occurs frequently among staff members in PLCs during intervention coordination and placement meetings. Growth is measured and analyzed to determine if students are making adequate progress and are placed properly or are ready to advance to the next level. Weekly progress monitoring in Tier 2 allows the staff to respond quickly and efficiently to the intervention needs of each student.

Lone Star's achievement data clearly demonstrates the success of our RTI program and illustrates that the achievement gap is narrowing. From 2015 to 2017, the percentage of core and strategic students at Lone Star at the end of the year as measured by DIBELS Next increased from 86% to 92%. In contrast, Sanger Unified's district percentage of core and strategic students increased only 2% from 76% to 78%. Lone Star's continued commitment to increasing the literacy skills of students through the effective implementation of RTI with fidelity has allowed students greater access to the standards than ever before. Our students' ELA Distance from 3 score in Grades 3–8 improved from -15.7 in 2015 to +7.4 in 2017. The English Learner subgroup increased by +6.8 points, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students increased by +11.6 points, and Students with Disabilities increased significantly by +32.3 points. We are extremely proud to have All Students Performance levels on State Indicators in green and blue and to have increased the percentage of students meeting/exceeding standards by 2%.