

## **Cesar Chavez Magnet Elementary School Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 15633216111900

County: Kern

District (Local Educational Agency): Bakersfield City

School: Cesar Chavez Magnet Elementary School

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 630 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

Located on the northeast side of Bakersfield, Cesar E. Chavez Science Magnet School was built in 1994 and is one of 43 schools in the Bakersfield City School District. We offer an extended day program with a strong emphasis on science and reading. Enrollment consists of 630 students in grades TK–6th, with 335 students who stay to attend extended day Magnet classes until 5:00 p.m. Over one-third of our student body is bused from outside of the Chavez School boundaries. Our student demographics consist of 62% Hispanic, 26% White, 4% Asian, 3% Black or African American with 5% consisting of two or more races and the poverty rate is 44%.

Additionally, we are a District identified site for 40 students with autism in grades K–6. Students are mainstreamed not only in extracurricular activities, but also in daily core academic classes. Our students with autism have the opportunity for extended activities after school, whether they participate in our Magnet activities or in a self-contained program. Having students with autism is a benefit to all on campus. Through daily

personal interactions, these experiences teach our students to go into adult life with open minds and it gives them the ability to see the world from many views. Not only does this shape them with compassion, empathy, and acceptance of differences, our students can become real thinkers who see beyond face value, as well as diplomats who can navigate and reconcile conflicting points of view.

Recognized by the state of California as a Distinguished School in 2002 and the Title I Academic Achievement Award in both 2001 and 2011, Chavez is a community of excellence. We are a family who strive daily to provide an enriched, challenging learning environment that encourages and supports high standards for academic scholarship, integrity, leadership, and responsible citizenship for every child, while promoting individual differences and learning styles. This is due to the dedication of our teaching and support staff, who have high expectations and work as an effective collaborative team. Chavez teachers are committed to the process of a Professional Learning Community in order to meet the needs of all students on campus: • What do students need to know and be able to do? • How will we know when they have learned it? • What will we do when they have not learned it? • What will we do when they do know it? To answer these questions, teachers are released early every Wednesday to work in teams to discuss and understand standards, plan learning experiences with success criteria, analyze student work and data (student samples and CFA's), and select best practices. In addition, teachers are provided professional development monthly for two hours on campus before school starts. PD is systematic and planned for the year, in order to build teacher capacity. This commitment to continuous improvement is imperative as we work to enable students to be confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Literacy Support Block- "Morning Read"

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

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

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

Strategies Used: School Climate, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Professional Development

## **Description**

Our goal is that every student entering the third grade will read on grade level. Chavez School's Literacy Support Block- "Morning Read" is our program that ensures that this will occur. Considering the changes to Common Core State Standards and its shifts in ELA/Literacy, it was clear that our students needed to be able to read, write, and think

critically about different kinds of texts. Stunned that over 51% of our students did not meet school wide grade level standards on the Smarter Balanced Assessment in ELA, it was obvious that our students needed to be better readers of informational text. In order to achieve this, it required quality literacy instruction.

We planned our next steps around the first of two goals: 1.) Students will leave each grade reading with comprehension AT or ABOVE grade level, and 2.) Teachers will receive ongoing training in guided reading. In order to avoid the literacy gap developing in the first place, we chose to begin this program in kindergarten, first, and second grades.

Every student in grades K–2 receives daily customized reading support. Modeled after the research of Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell in their book, “Guided Reading: Responsive Teaching Across the Grades,” our program is designed to give struggling and below grade level readers one-on-one reading support from a trained teacher or paraprofessional for 10 minutes daily at least 4 days per week. The neediest students work with the teachers. Each K–2 grade class has an uninterrupted 30–40 minute time block daily for this purpose.

This program utilizes classroom teachers, our reading teacher, our Academic Program Leader (APL), Community Readers (volunteers trained by the County Superintendent’s office), and a minimum of 4 parent volunteers per kindergarten class, 3 days each week. Additionally, teams of 6th grade peer tutors are deployed 2 days per week. The materials used are the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) 1 and 2, the handbook- “Guided Reading: Responsive Teaching Across the Grades” by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, running records, and data used from the STAR reading assessment. Every classroom has an extensive leveled library. Site and District LCAP funds, as well as, Booster Club purchase additional books on informational text for all kindergarten classes.

When “Morning Read” began almost 4 years ago, only one teacher was trained on guided reading and running records. In order to meet our goals, the whole staff, including the principal, needed this training. At first, our master teacher trained teachers after school and we used LCAP funds to support this. Due to personal schedules, not everyone could stay after their duty time. Last year, our District provided a series of guided reading trainings on Saturdays and during the summer, which then allowed all of the teachers to attend. Currently, every staff member has received this training and are implementing the skills and strategies daily.

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

Parents and family members play a key role in the success of this program. At Kindergarten Orientation in May, an overview and description of our “Morning Read” program is presented (including handbook) to all parents of incoming kinder students. All are invited to volunteer for 1 or more days a week, and parents and family members are solicited at this time. A trained, experienced Reading Recovery teacher and our Family and Community Engagement (FACE) liaison provide monthly training for all

volunteers. We train all kindergarten and any new, interested 1st grade parents with our “Guide for Observing and Noting Reading Behaviors.” Participants complete a survey at the end of trainings so that we can refine areas or provide more support. However, many parents cannot volunteer at school, so we ask them to commit to spending a minimum of 15 minutes nightly with their child and give them a typed protocol. We ask them to encourage and celebrate each milestone their child makes at home and at school, and record this in their child’s traveling “Morning Read” folder. Even when parents can’t come to school to volunteer, we ask for their attendance at our quarterly reading awards assembly to celebrate student reading growth.

Our need to train our parent support did not overshadow our own need for quality literacy PD, primarily in guided reading. Few teachers, including the principal, had the necessary knowledge to implement guided reading so we were learning bits and pieces on our own and from a fellow highly skilled teacher. Shortly after the start of our own “Morning Read” program, our District began to provide this needed PD after school from 3:30–5:30 pm and on Saturdays for all teachers and principals during the school year. With the addition of Guided Reading 2.0 and 3.0, differentiated trainings by the District continued over the summer for teachers who completed the three original sessions of Guided Reading 1.0. As a result, what started with one highly skilled teacher at Chavez has grown and equipped all of our primary teachers to use their knowledge and skills to support our students to become strategic readers. From this original group, three of them are considered “experts” and are called upon by the District to provide training to other teachers and school sites. Additionally, they also are available to provide new teacher or parent training at any time on site.

As such, program surveys for the practitioners, daily observation and actionable feedback given by administration and site teacher training are all key strategies provided to teachers who lead our “Morning Read” program. During their PLC collaboration, teachers analyze the BAS and STAR results in order to inform next steps of instruction. Through collaborative efforts, along with the goal of strengthening teacher skills, we are ensuring the fidelity of our core standards, so that every child is reading on or above grade level.

## **Results and Outcomes**

Since the implementation of our “Morning Read” program in 2014–2015, Chavez continues to see a decrease in the number of our students who did not meet standards on the Smarter Balanced Assessment in Reading/ELA. By focusing our efforts to ensure that all students were reading AT or ABOVE grade level by third grade, the ELA scores went up, and those not meeting proficiency standards went down from 51% in 2014–2015, to 40% Not Met in 2015–2016, down to 36% Not Met in 2016–2017. By creating a solid, literacy instruction method that is utilized in “Morning Read” for grades K, 1, and 2, the gap of students not meeting standards in reading is closing.

Using STAR data (Renaissance Learning), our end of year average reading level for below grade level students in grade 1 increased from 0.5 in 2014, to 1.3 in 2017. The Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT) results for students who started the “Morning Read”

program as second graders without prior benefit of our “Morning Read” program also showed improvement. For 2015–2016 (the first year of implementation for 2nd grade), twenty-four students were placed in the “Morning Read” program, with the average reading level of the students entering the program at 1.36 (1st grade, 3rd month). Over an 8-month period (September 2015 to May 2016) post-test scores showed average student growth at 2.85 (2nd grade, 8 month), making them only slightly behind their AT or ABOVE grade level classmates. For 2016–2017, nineteen students participated with average scores of 1.21 (1st grade, 2 month). They ended the program with average scores of 2.67 (2nd grade, 6 month), again, making solid growth.

Due to the rigor ushered in by Common Core, Kindergarten went from letter-sound identification to reading and comprehending books, which normally didn’t start until the first grade. Now that we are in our 4th year of this practice, a culture of reading has permeated and embedded itself all over campus. It is a school-wide expectation that every student knows their book level (Fountas and Pinnell), ZPD level (Zone of Proximal Development), their quarterly goals, and their current status. Conversations with students about reading and books are part of our natural interactions. Students are excited to share what they are reading, and the library is the place to be at recess. Our younger students look forward to being able to participate in “Battle of the Books,” which we are now implementing for our second graders.

Because of the use of “Morning Read”, we can assure parents that their child will receive a guaranteed and viable reading program, regardless of which teacher they receive. Our program, its purpose, and our reading goals are stated and published in our “Morning Read” handbook for parents. This supports a collaborative culture, not just with teachers but also with parents, which is what every school should strive to have.