

Jefferson Charter Academy Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 16639176010391

County: Kings

District (Local Educational Agency): Hanford Elementary

School: Jefferson Charter Academy

Demographics

Enrollment: 464 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: Yes

Overview

Jefferson Charter Academy is a dependent charter school established in August 2014 operated by the Hanford Elementary School District. Jefferson began as a charter with 330 students and has increased enrollment to 465 with a racial and ethnic make-up of 72% Hispanic, 22% White, and 2% Black. Jefferson has 49% of students that are socioeconomically disadvantaged. According to DataQuest, more than 4 different languages are spoken by the families of students attending Jefferson. Other than English, Spanish is the second largest language spoken, followed by Hungarian, Filipino, and other non-English languages. We currently have 40% of our students identified as English Learners and Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (R-FEP). Students with disabilities is 3%. Jefferson's demographics reflect those of Kings County where there are a high number of students living in poverty, increasing cases of students with chronic health concerns, and county wide academic performance below established expectations.

Jefferson has a wide range of education levels for parents. Jefferson parents that graduated college is 20%, attended some college is 27%, and those that completed high school is 23%.

Jefferson has a fully credentialed staff with 1 full time credentialed single subject music teacher. Jefferson has 12 teachers with a BCLAD (Bilingual, Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development) authorization to provide instruction in Spanish. The remaining staff is working towards the BCLAD authorization. Our core instructional staff has an average of 13 years of teaching experience in Kindergarten to 8th grade classrooms. The student to teacher ratio in Kindergarten–3rd grade is 24 to 1 while 4th through 8th grade has an average of 30 to 1. A high percentage of certificated and classified staff are bilingual and communicate with students in Spanish in the classrooms, cafeteria, playground, and afterschool enrichment programs.

The curricular focus for Jefferson Charter Academy hinges on the belief that a bilingual education with a rigorous science program will prepare students for future STEM studies and careers which is essential to our economic growth.

With a small school environment, engaging and challenging curriculum, and a positive school culture, Jefferson Charter Academy has become a popular school of choice for families in the Hanford Elementary School District, as well as other surrounding districts.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Dual Language Immersion with Emphasis on Science

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Professional Development, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, Use of Technology

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

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

Description

Jefferson Charter Academy has exceptional student achievement by providing a rigorous dual language immersion program with an integration in science. Spanish and science are taught by highly qualified teachers, in diverse classrooms with English Learners, as part of an integrated multidisciplinary learning experience. Instruction and achievement in the core curricular areas is augmented by exposure to enrichment classes offered by Jefferson staff to expand learning opportunities for all students.

Dual Immersion Model

The curriculum is taught through a dual language immersion acquisition model (90/10). Students reach high levels of functional and academic proficiency in English and Spanish and appreciate and understand the cultural nuances of the language studied. In primary grades, instruction is primarily delivered in Spanish with English instruction increasing as students progress through the grade levels. By the end of the 8th grade students are fluent in both languages (speaking, reading, writing).

Focus on Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core State Standards

To provide a well-rounded interdisciplinary curriculum taught in both languages, we utilize Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core State Standards to define the skills, knowledge, and abilities students are expected to master. Our teachers articulate and integrate science across disciplines at each grade level. Utilizing the state standards, teachers have established units, lessons, and hands-on projects across grade levels that are relevant to students' experiences and community. Students focus on overarching questions or problems that have multiple solutions that are real, purposeful, and useful to them. As students work on a common science theme across the curriculum, they develop a better understanding of common elements among topics and disciplines. During lessons, teachers use a variety of instructional strategies including inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning, direct instruction, and team teaching to teach key concepts and skills.

Extended Learning Opportunities

Our after school READY program and enrichment classes have a central focus on supporting second language acquisition and mastery of core academic concepts. Enrichment provides our students the opportunity to incorporate science, engineering practices, and project-based learning. Students play an active role in their community and look for ways that benefit, support, and build partnerships with local schools, businesses, and organizations. Students participate in various enrichment classes where they engage in inquiry, research, collaboration, and reflection with peers. For example, our bike class repairs and donates bikes and helmets to students in local elementary schools. They also provide bike repair services to students and parents in the community free of charge.

Implementation and Monitoring

Professional Development focused on NGSS and Common Core State Standards

For the past 5 years Jefferson has been working with a science consultant providing professional development to teachers and administration on the Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core State Standards, engineering practices, and on interdisciplinary teaching. With the support of the science consultant, grade levels meet to increase their understanding of state standards, plan units of study in science integrating ELA and Math standards, discuss effective teaching practices, model

lessons, and provide feedback on instruction. Administration attends all the professional development days with the science consultant to support, maintain, and sustain standards based lessons in the classroom. In addition, teachers attend workshops and conferences to expand their knowledge and understanding of state standards, bilingual education, and extended learning opportunities for students.

Beginning and veteran teachers receive ongoing professional development and support from our math, literacy, and technology coaches on planning standards based lessons and delivery of instruction that meet our teachers' diverse needs. All the support and professional development for teachers align with our school goals.

Monitoring Progress of Core Program and Extended Learning opportunities through Collaboration

Collaboration days are scheduled throughout the year for administration to meet with all grade levels to analyze assessment results, student work, identify needs of at-risk students, discuss academic goals, identify instructional strategies, plan standards based lessons for reteach, and share student progress with staff. In addition, teachers develop their curriculum guides, assessments, and a timeline to deliver standards based lessons and hands-on projects.

Administration meets with individual teachers during the "Status of the Class" twice a year to discuss students and English Learners who are at-risk academically and socially. The team determines the progress, interventions and next instructional steps, and resources or professional development needed based on the data and classroom observations.

Monitoring Progress of Core Program and Extended Learning opportunities through Focus Walks

Our leadership team plays an important role in monitoring the core program and extended learning opportunities at Jefferson. Administration conducts daily focus walks to observe classrooms to provide feedback and next instructional steps for the core program and extended learning opportunities. Based on the need, administration collaborates, models, co-teaches, and provides direct interventions with students. Every effort is made to minimize classroom interruptions and to ensure that administration is available to conduct focus walks.

Administration revisits the school vision and plan to ensure that the professional development, collaborations, and focus walks are aligned to the goals.

Results and Outcomes

Jefferson Charter Academy has demonstrated exceptional growth on the California Smarter Balanced Assessments and California School Dashboard since opening in 2014. All of the Jefferson students including subgroups have exceeded and performed well above the state average in English language arts and mathematics. On the 2017 English language arts assessments, 76% of all students met and exceeded state

standards with 91% of Whites, 72% of Hispanics, 71% of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students, and 68% of English Learners performing at remarkable levels of achievement. In mathematics, 67% of all students met and exceeded state standards with 86% of Whites, 61% of Hispanics, 59% of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students, and 60% of English Learners accomplishing strong results on state assessments.

In the California School Dashboard, Jefferson reached and met the highest performance level of 5 (Blue) on all state and local indicators. In English language arts, all students including Whites achieved the highest performance level of 5 (Blue) while Hispanics, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students, and English Learners received a performance level of 4 (Green). In mathematics, all students including Whites and English Learners reached performance level 5 (Blue) while Hispanics and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students received a performance level of 4 (Green). In the last two years, English Learners have made steady progress from level 4 (Green) to performance level 5 (Blue).

Our suspension rate for all students and subgroups (Hispanics, White, English Learners, and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students) is very low at 0% with a performance level of 5 (Blue). No students have been suspended at Jefferson in the last 4 years. Our discipline and student interruptions are minimal while our attendance is maintained at a 97% or higher.

Our English Learners have increased their proficiency on the CELDT and have reclassified before reaching the upper grades. Every year 20% of our English Learners are reclassified to Fluent English Proficient. Students that have been reclassified, 97% met and exceeded standards in ELA and 82% met and exceeded standards in mathematics on the Smarter Balance Assessment.

In 2016, Jefferson received the Honor Roll School Award for educational excellence given by Educational Results Partnership. In 2017 and 2018 our Science Olympiad team won the regional competition and competed at the state level. Students who have gone through our dual immersion program receive the Seal of Bi-literacy from their high school. During the year, schools and districts visit our classrooms seeking ideas and suggestions in an effort to launch their own program.

Our state test results and outcomes are a testament that our dual immersion program with an integration in science, professional development, collaboration, and focus walks are effective in increasing and maintaining high levels of achievement for all students.