

Joseph M. Simas Elementary Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 16639176118798

County: Kings

District (Local Educational Agency): Hanford Elementary

School: Joseph M. Simas Elementary

Demographics

Enrollment: 542 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Joseph M. Simas Elementary School is located in Hanford, California. Hanford is in the heart of California's San Joaquin Valley where services, government, and farming are the primary industries. Hanford residents make approximately \$8,000 less than the state's median earnings, with 20.5% of the population living below the poverty line. Joseph M. Simas is one of nine elementary schools in the Hanford Elementary School District. Simas school was established in 2001 and serves students in grades TK–6.

Joseph M. Simas has an enrollment of 542 students. Sixty percent of the of the students are "Unduplicated" (low-income, English learner, or foster youth). The ethnic composition of the school is 55% Hispanic, 28.3% White, 4.8% African American, 3% Filipino, 2.8% Asian, and 5.1% two or more races. Ten percent of the student population are receiving special education services that may include a special day class placement, resource support, and/or speech services. Eleven students are either foster youth or are homeless.

There are seven languages other than English spoken by students at Simas with 15% of enrollment identified as English Language Learners.

Parent education levels have a wide range. 25% of parents have a college degree, 65% have a high school education, and 10% have less than a high school education.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Standards, Supports, Progress Monitoring

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

Description

Simas School has made strides in closing the achievement gap by maintaining a clear focus on the California standards, by providing systems of support for all students including English learners and struggling students, and by implementing a system of progress monitoring at both the program and individual student level.

Standards

Simas School has made strides in closing the achievement gap by maintaining a clear, consistent focus on the Common Core State Standards. Although instruction across the district is aligned to the state standards, Simas school is distinguished for the level of implementation across all instructional areas, for the depth of knowledge of the standards maintained by the teaching staff, and by the staff's continuous growth through reflection and analysis of student achievement data.

Systems of Support

Simas School has made strides in closing the achievement gap by implementing systems that provide targeted supports for students, especially students who are English learners and students who may struggle. Simas School is distinguished because of the thoughtful consistent implementation of these systems and for the teaching staff's commitment to ensuring that all students achieve at high levels.

Progress Monitoring

Simas School has made strides in closing the achievement gap through ongoing, thoughtful progress monitoring at the student, grade, and school wide levels. Simas School is distinguished by its sustained efforts at progress monitoring, and the use of information to inform instructional planning, student supports, and professional development.

Implementation and Monitoring

A Focus on Standards

Simas teachers carefully study the state standards and have a deep understanding of the content that students are expected to master in each grade level. Teachers plan their lessons with the end result in mind, considering what students will be expected know and do. After studying the content and standards for an upcoming unit of study, grade level teams develop assessments for students. Teams then develop a series of lessons, using the state adopted and supplemental instructional materials. As students take the assessments, the results are analyzed and additional lesson planning, including supports for struggling students, are developed and implemented. While the District provides teachers with minimum day each week for collaboration, Simas school is distinguished by using this time to implement this cyclic process which provides teachers with deeper understanding of standards, provides students with a course of study that is carefully aligned with the standards, and provides real-time identification of, and support for struggling students.

Systems of Support for Students

English learners are provided with supports throughout the instructional day that are specifically designed to ensure they master the state adopted content standards even though they may not yet be proficient in the English language. These supports consist of auditory and visual supports including technology enhanced supports and additional individualized or small-group time with the teacher where content is previewed or reviewed before or after the main lessons.

Struggling students are identified early. Teachers continually observe students, analyze their work, and study the results of assessments. Struggling students are provided additional small group instruction both during and after school. Because interventions are developed through the analysis of formative assessment data, and delivered to students in small groups, a high degree of individualization is possible. This instruction is designed to begin at the student's current level, then rapidly rise to the rigor of the standard.

Progress Monitoring

In addition to weekly grade level collaboration, each teacher meets regularly with the school site leadership to discuss the "Status of the Class." During these meetings, using achievement data from current and prior school years, the progress if individual students is carefully reviewed. During these meetings, goals are set for the classroom

and for individual students. The progress of struggling students is reviewed. For newly identified students, support plans are developed and materials are gathered. For students who continue to struggle, the implementation of supports is reviewed, adjustments are made, and additional services are considered. This systematic progress monitoring enables school leadership to identify grade-level or school wide instructional implications and professional development needs.

Results and Outcomes

The statistics below, from the California School Dashboard, demonstrate that model practices at Joseph M. Simas Elementary School have had a significant impact on closing the achievement gap in academic performance. This information demonstrates that while achievement is rising across the entire school, achievement for our targeted subgroups is rising at an even greater rate.

On the Fall 2017 California School Dashboard English Language Arts indicator, “All Students” received a score of green. (This is up a level from “Yellow” on the previous year’s indicator.) Moreover, every student subgroup “Increased” on the dashboard. The Hispanic subgroup scored in the “Yellow” category in Spring of 2017 and increased to “Green,” in the Fall of 2017. Although the Socioeconomically Disadvantaged subgroup remained in the “Yellow” category from Spring 2017 to Fall of 2017, the subgroup increased 11.6 points. The English Learner subgroup scored in the “Green” category on both the Spring and Fall 2017 indicators. Students with Disabilities scored in the “Red” in Spring of 2017 and moved up to “Orange” in Fall of 2017.

In mathematics, it is evident that both “All Students” and all of the subgroups made significant gains in student achievement. Of the six student groups (to include “All Students”) five “Increased Significantly” and one “Increased.”

The Hispanic subgroup scored “Yellow” in Spring of 2017 and increased to “Green” in the Fall of 2017. The Socioeconomically Disadvantaged subgroup scored in the “Yellow” in Spring of 2017 and increased to “Green” in the Fall of 2017. The English Learner subgroup moved from “Yellow” in Spring of 2017 to “Blue” in Fall of 2017, which is an impressive result. Students with Disabilities scored in the “Orange” category on the Spring 2017 dashboard and moved up to “Yellow” in Fall of 2017. When looking at school-wide data (all students) the dashboard shows “Yellow” in Spring of 2017 and significant movement to “Green” in our most recent reporting of Fall 2017.

Joseph M. Simas School’s focus on high standards for student learning, standards-aligned instruction, systems of support for students, and effective progress monitoring have delivered positive results and are leading to sustained growth in academic performance. Joseph M. Simas Elementary will continue to work to provide students a learning environment that has high expectations with successful outcomes.