

Holly Avenue Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19642616011175

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): Arcadia Unified

School: Holly Avenue Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 734 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: Targeted Assistance

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Holly Avenue is on the cutting edge of education. We develop programs which are rich in content, educate the whole child, and provide tools for success.

We were the first elementary school in our district to adopt AVID. Its strategies help students take ownership of their learning and become global learners who are college and career ready. We are always in pursuit of new opportunities for our students. Classes collaborate with others around the world, fifth graders are empowered to interact with their AVID middle school buddies, and as professional leaders, we support other schools with the implementation of AVID, including hosting an AVID Showcase. We are also proud of our Grad Run idea which has now been implemented at all AUSD elementary sites.

Innovation is the norm at Holly Avenue rather than the exception. After careful research and thoughtful planning, innovative pedagogy ideas are encouraged and successfully implemented. Countless hours are given willingly to after-school activities such as

drama & garden clubs, family nights, music & art classes, Latino Literacy, parenting classes, student-led conferences, and staff development.

We constantly reflect on our programs to better target our diverse population using the principles of Universal Design for Learning. We are the largest elementary school in our district, supporting a substantial population of students with Title 1, ELD and Special Education supports. Along with our ELD and Intervention programs, the use of 1:1 devices supports student learning. To refine our programs, we have weekly collaboration time and coach support. Goal directed learning is an essential component of our program. By recording student goals, teachers and students reflect on progress made while at Holly Avenue.

Creating student leaders is important. We adopted Leader in Me to allot leadership opportunities to all students. Monthly student-led assemblies and embedded 7 Habits language drive student agency and student voice. Mission statements are posted in every class to remind us of the school's purpose.

Social-emotional well-being is vital. Our teachers have been trained in Restorative Practices to ensure a safe learning environment. Additionally, we have a therapy dog that helps support our students in need and promotes empathy.

High value is placed on the role of parents as partners. Since we started offering childcare services and hosting guest speakers at our PTA meetings, we quadrupled our parent participation. Our supportive PTA donates thousands of hours and offers many valuable activities for our families.

Holly Avenue staff is dedicated to providing the finest quality education available, to empowering our budding leaders, and to nurturing students to become pacesetters who think critically about how to succeed in a rapidly changing world. We strive to raise self-assessing, self-motivated, lifelong learners who set and modify goals, and who go on to be productive members of society.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Making Mathematical Practices Accessible to All

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

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

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

Description

At Holly Avenue we've embraced the idea that math should be fun, and we believe that developing a strong foundation in number sense is the key to student success in mathematics. In order to build number sense, students participate in a variety of instructional practices such as classroom number talks, morning number sense activities, and focused math camps. Students are encouraged to create and share their own ways of solving problems and to focus on the process rather than the product. Beginning in kindergarten, every student engages in conversations about math and is encouraged to make sense of what they are doing.

We understand that a hallmark of mathematical understanding is the ability to justify one's thinking. For this reason, number talks are taking place in all our classrooms. During Number Talks, teachers listen to students justify their thinking and record it in the form of visual models and written representations. Through this instructional practice, student thinking is uncovered and students come to see that there are many different ways to approach a problem. We strive for our students to develop a deep and conceptual understanding of math concepts. Number Talks support this by relying heavily upon visual modeling and the use of oral language. Through Number Talks, students are taught to use what they know to solve problems and to become flexible in their thinking and problem solving strategies. Other key benefits of our Number Talks include encouraging students to become academic risk-takers and fostering collaborative and safe learning environments. In our classrooms, we've minimized the importance of working quickly, we celebrate all strategies, regardless of how efficient they are, and we put a higher emphasis on explaining one's thinking than on getting a correct answer. Furthermore, because our school has embraced the concept of growth mindset, students have come to appreciate "productive struggle" and view mistakes as proof of learning. Number Talks are an effective means of reinforcing these beliefs.

In addition to number talks, we've developed an intervention program that we call Math Camp. Math Camp targets the needs of students who either have not yet solidified their number sense or who have one or more identified gaps in their knowledge base. Math Camp is designed to be a personalized and uninterrupted 3-hour experience where campers are in a fun, camp-like atmosphere with fellow students who understand what it feels like to struggle in math. The sense of community they experience creates an environment where students feel safe to learn, take risks, and ask questions. Campers gain confidence as they work to close their individual gaps and reinforce foundational knowledge. Each camp session is organized around one of the following Number Sense Categories: early number sense, place value, properties of operations, or fractional reasoning.

Implementation and Monitoring

Our math intervention programs began with teachers taking a close look at the standards by domain rather than by grade level. They identified the K–5 standards that were critical to number sense development and then arranged them into vertically aligned strands that we refer to as number sense categories (counting & early number

sense, place value, add/subtract, multiply/divide, and fractions). Next, they developed a series of quick assessments (or question prompts) that could be used to identify students who would benefit most from further instruction in number sense.

Holly Avenue supports a variety of intervention programs. Morning Number Talks and Math Camps are two math programs that are unique to us. Morning Number Talks are offered 4 days a week and camps are offered on a monthly basis. Numerous camps and talks are offered simultaneously to address knowledge gaps. Prior to inviting students, they are assessed by their teacher using different data points including question prompts.

Morning Number Talks is a before school program designed to help students increase math fluency. It aims to build number sense and is based on research that shows once students strengthen their sense of number, fluency with the facts will follow. Students learn to derive facts through discussion, counting circles, and other high-engagement, hands-on and collaborative number sense activities. Students spend time working with manipulatives and visual models and participate in activities that build mathematical relationships.

Math Camp is another intervention program unique to Holly Avenue. Its goal is to develop a deep, conceptual understanding of mathematics in our students. Each 3-hour camp session targets one specific number sense category and establishes a shared oral language. With each subsequent camp session, campers return to and build off previously explored ideas and their shared language. Instructional practices are designed using the CRA intervention model, and provide the most amount of time at the concrete level of understanding.

Math Camp always concludes with game time. Students rotate through self-selected games. They're encouraged to practice the strategies they've learned, to challenge themselves, and to play games that look interesting to them. Games are led by teachers, instructional coaches, intervention specialists, parent volunteers, and selected peer leaders. Each game is designed to reinforce specific skills and is easily modified to meet the needs of a wide range of learners. Through game play, we are able to monitor student progress as well as re-mediate student misunderstandings. Camp sessions are designed to be engaging and language rich. Campers are provided with lots of hands-on opportunities, and we always let the students guide our instruction. The key to success is the fun, camp-like environment. We achieve this by embedding much of our instruction in game play and strategy.

Results and Outcomes

According to the California Schools Dashboard Fall 2017 release (mathematics academic indicator), Holly Avenue had an overall increase in student performance in mathematics. Holly Avenue's Number Talks and Math Camp program has directly contributed to increased academic success. Our school's CAASPP scores increased by 6.8 points above level 3 in mathematics; exceeding the district increase by double. This

is truly remarkable because Holly Avenue has the largest ELD, Title 1 and Special Education population out of all the elementary schools in our district.

All of our significant subgroups increased their scores. Hispanic students increased significantly, improving 21.1 points. Students with disabilities increased 9.4 points. Our English Learners increased by 5.4 points, and our Socio-economically disadvantaged increased by 4.2 points. Asian students increased slightly, maintaining their very high level of performance and are 78.1 points above level 3. Our Caucasian students also have a very high status, and were able to increase by 5.5 points. We are very proud of the strides made by all students and sub-groups. There is a direct correlation between the increase in performance and our Number Talks, as the students that improved were in our intervention programs.

Although math has been our primary focus, an indirect effect of these unique programs has been the notable improvement in our students' English Language Arts performance. As students spend time talking about numbers and discussing thought processes, the improvement has expanded into other areas. The act of talking and writing about the math strategies utilized in problem solving helps with the critical thinking, comprehension and justification across curriculum. As a result, our students improved by 13.5 points according to the English Language Arts dashboard.

Our Number Talks and Math Camp program are unique to our school and are not emulated in any other schools in the district. We believe these programs combined with our other intervention programs, Leader in Me, Restorative Practices, and AVID have created a positive environment for all students to achieve, excel and thrive. Holly Avenue is a school where students imagine, inquire and inspire.