

Vista del Valle Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19643946012223

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): Claremont Unified

School: Vista del Valle

Demographics

Enrollment: 330 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Many trees and seven local colleges. Vista is unique in that it is a small school that serves 330 K–6th grade students, hosts a state pre-school program that serves 50 students, and a special day preschool class. While large areas of Claremont are highly educated, upper middle class families, Vista del Valle is a Title I school that serves a diverse population, of which 78% of the students are on the free or reduced lunch program and 18% are English Learners.

Vista del Valle Elementary School provides a warm, stimulating environment where students are actively involved in learning academics, as well as becoming global citizens that are college and career ready. Students receive a standards-based, challenging curriculum from a staff that is committed to providing the best educational program possible.

Our signature practices include Response to Intervention (RTI), Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Positive

Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Thinking Maps, Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures, meaningful use of technology to enhance critical thinking and extend teaching and learning, as well as provide remedial support to students. The success behind these programs is a highly dedicated staff that believes all students will be successful and actively pursue ways to increase student achievement. Our mission statement captures the dedication of the staff and community to our children:

At Vista del Valle, we inspire a community of leaders and learners to achieve their highest potential in an academically rigorous and joyful learning environment that celebrates our cultural diversity.

Vista del Valle staff has always been committed to the community and looking for ways to help students succeed. In 2009, the faculty began learning about PLCs as a way to focus their time, energy and resources. As grade level teams disaggregated student assessments results, it became apparent that a multi-tiered system of support was necessary to meet the needs of our diverse student population. As a result, Vista staff designed a school-wide RTI framework that would allow for targeted small group instruction. This program includes professional development for all staff members and times for faculty to meet in PLC teams to plan and communicate student progress in a continuous improvement process.

There are three essential PLC questions used to focus our work, plan instruction, curriculum, and professional development:

1. What do we want our students to learn?
2. How will we know that they have learned it?
3. What will we do for those students that have not learned it and for the students that have?

Through the use of these essential questions and a school-wide RTI framework, Vista staff is able to support and enhance all student learning.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Response to Intervention

Length of Model Program/Practice: 8+ years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Professional Development, Use of Technology

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

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

Description

At Vista, we are committed to academic growth and excellence for all of our students. Our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a systemic, continuous improvement framework, that includes data-based problem-solving and decision making and is practiced across all grade levels. This framework allows us to utilize high quality evidence-based instruction, intervention, and assessment practices to ensure that every student receives the appropriate level of support to be successful.

Small group instruction is the cornerstone of our RTI program. A schedule has been developed so the TOSA and paraprofessionals work with 1st through 6th grade students to ensure that targeted support is being provided to meet different student needs. Kindergarten students receive all ELA and Math instruction in small groups through developmentally appropriate activities in a highly structured format that is both rigorous and engaging.

Recognizing that this is time intensive work, we have designed our monthly meeting times to include a staff meeting for information and professional development, team meetings divided by upper grade and primary grades to focus on student instructional needs, a vertical articulation, divided into ELA and Math teams, and grade level team times. The teachers have worked creatively to develop a schedule that allows for additional grade level collaboration during the school day. Supporting this process is a TOSA that organizes and disaggregates assessment results, plans small group instruction, and provides professional development.

To ensure that our first instruction is of high quality, Vista's professional development plan consists of programs to address school-wide curriculum and instruction and positive behavior interventions, discipline and expectations. Our professional development program includes all faculty and paraprofessionals and is extended to our parent outreach programs. As a K-6 AVID school, we utilize strategies that stress writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading (WICOR). The use of Thinking Maps is institutionalized throughout the school, with the goal that students will be able to identify what map to apply in different learning situations. Training in the use of technology to support inquiry, higher level thinking, and individualized learning programs are part of our technology plan. To ensure student mastery of 21st Century skills, students use iPads and chrome books for skill building and a variety of classroom assignments designed to enhance and extend learning.

Vista's committed staff makes RTI a success. They hold themselves to a continuous learning cycle and are always seeking out new methods to improve their curriculum and instructional practices. Focusing on the essential PLC questions, they hold each other accountable, and strive to meet the needs of every student.

Implementation and Monitoring

Vista begins the first week of each school year with a universal screening of all students. Using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment, teachers and paraprofessionals assess each student. Additionally, to these district-wide assessments, Vista students are also assessed using i-Ready, an adaptive diagnostic test that assists teachers to identify learning gaps in language arts and math. This software guides the student on an individual computerized instructional program based on these assessment results. When the assessments are completed, each grade level develops instructional groups based on skills that students need to learn.

Students are then put into small learning groups based on these specific needs. Examples of these groups would be phonics and word work using materials such as Words Their Way, literature circles for enrichment, and strategies for comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and expanding vocabulary development (CAFE). To increase the opportunities for small group instruction, Daily 5, a reading management framework, allows students to select from five independent reading or writing choices, while the teacher meets with students for small group or individual conferences with children. Upper grade students are provided additional support to scaffold instruction.

Small group instruction is extended beyond the school day with our after school intervention program. Students that need additional support are encouraged to stay after school two days a week for additional targeted assistance. Currently, students in first through sixth grade, English language learners, and special education students attend two days a week. Other enrichment opportunities for students include, Math Olympiad and after school tennis, environmental education, and Saturday STEM classes.

In addition to the CUSD progress monitoring scheduled every trimester, Vista faculty assess students every two weeks in kindergarten and every six to eight weeks in first through sixth grade. Frequent monitoring ensures that skills are being developed and that students are self-motivated to move between groups that provide challenging and appropriate skill/concepts. School-wide writing progress is measured each trimester through grade level writing prompts. Results of each writing prompt are discussed in K–6 vertical meetings, and teachers discuss strengths and skills students have acquired as well as areas of improvement for future instruction.

Results and Outcomes

The desired outcome for Vista is that all students are successful. With high-quality first instruction, RTI, and after school intervention, we will continue to help our students achieve success. Current assessments show we are on the right path. Our DIBELS assessment of reading shows that all students increased their reading fluency by a range of 6–79 points. Students in RTI fluency reading groups increased the most, with a range of 21–77 points. School-wide comprehension and vocabulary as measured by the Daze assessment have also increased. This range of improvement is between 2–22

points, with the students in a RTI comprehension or vocabulary groups improving between 5–16 points.

This year's i-Ready assessment results for Window 1 identified 60 students for Tier 3 intervention, and 172 students for Tier 2 intervention, and 100 students at or above grade level. The assessment results for Window 2 identified 38 students for tier 3 intervention, 150 students for Tier 2 intervention, and 131 students at or above grade level. These results are comparable to the results we saw for the 2016–2017 school year.

After analyzing our first and second school-wide writing responses, teachers realized that the writing process, and utilizing Thinking Maps, was difficult and required additional teaching. Students lacked the stamina to complete a comprehensive writing task in one sitting. To address these concerns, teachers increased modeling of writing from a Thinking Map and completed additional writing tasks over the next trimester. As a result, most students were able to write from their Thinking Map and stay focused on the second writing task. After analyzing the second writing task, teachers agreed to increase their modeling of using details and citing text evidence. This reflective PLC process contributes to our ability to challenge students and support their academic growth.

It is rewarding to see the remarkable success our students have made over the years. In 2015, Vista exited Program Improvement and between 2015 and 2017, our results on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) have increased 11.2% in ELA with 63.5% of the students meeting standards, and a 12.5% increase in Mathematics with 49.7% of the students meeting standards. In addition, our target sub groups have made significant advances. English Learners increased 38% in ELA and 16.6% in Math. Our economically disadvantaged students have increased 9.1% in ELA and 8.3% in Math, our Hispanic population increased 10.2% in ELA and 11.9% in Math and our African American population has increased 15.8% in ELA and 8.3% in Math. We have also seen that our white population has decreased 13.1% in ELA and 6.3% in Math. However, we are continuing to monitor all of our students and placing them into RTI groups to address these needs. This is our commitment to our students and to each other as members of a professional learning community.