

Riley Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19647256015598

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): Long Beach Unified

School: Riley Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 381 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

James Whitcomb Riley Elementary School is nestled in a quiet, single family residential area within the city of Lakewood, California, and has been welcoming students and families for over seven decades. The Riley family currently serves 381 kindergarten through fifth grade students, who represent various backgrounds and languages: 51% Hispanic, 17% African American, 10% White, 7% Asian, 3% Filipino, 2% Pacific Islander, 1% Native American, 8% two or more races, 14% English Learners, and 63% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged. The diverse student population is seen by both staff and parents as our school's single most important resource in providing young children with a powerfully rich multicultural learning experience.

Riley's school environment encourages strong, positive interactions among students, staff, parents, and community members, thereby ensuring the educational success of all students. The school's vision is "All staff and parents will work as partners to set and achieve high academic and behavioral standards that result in safe, civil, and productive students". The entire Riley Community is dedicated to having a Growth Mindset and

portraying our ABC's of Success daily (A-Arrive on Time, B-Be Kind and Respectful, C-Come Prepared to Learn, D-Dress for Success, and E-Exercise Your Mind).

At Riley, the daily mission is to prepare students for the 21st century by ensuring that they are college and career ready by the end of 12th grade. The Riley team has embraced the College and Career ready focus at Riley. This is evident in the high level of participation in college T-shirt Fridays, PTA college T-shirt reward coupons, college research by grade levels, college banners posted in classrooms, college-bound posters with student photos throughout the campus, and the knowledge of college entrance year by all students (class of...). This is also demonstrated in the use of technology to support the curriculum. All students use Chromebooks daily to access instructional materials, practice reading and math skills, conduct research and/or complete instructional tasks/activities.

The involvement and engagement of parents is vital to Riley's success and participate regularly in our school environment. On each school day, parents are observed volunteering in classrooms, helping with school events, serving on committees like School Site Council and English Learner Advisory Committee, and planning PTA sponsored activities. Visitors to the school site often comment about the amount of parents seen working in the school and being partners in their child's education.

Riley is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is both rigorous and nurturing. Teachers are committed to ongoing professional development, collaboration, positive relationships with parents, and high expectations for student achievement. Riley's educators are determined to close the achievement gap and ensure academic excellence for ALL learners.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Differentiated Workshop Push-In Model (DWP-I)

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Prevention, 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, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

Upon reviewing SBAC and district assessment data at the 2015 opening meeting, Riley teachers realized that there was a need to better meet the needs of underperforming students. Riley also saw the importance of having schoolwide common practices and instructional strategies. The teachers asked themselves, “What instructional practices could we put in place that will better meet student’s academic needs?” Over the next two years, using the Embedded Formative Assessment by Dylan Wiliam and Better Learning Through Structured Teaching by Fisher & Frey as resources, teachers and staff implemented the following: success criteria, exit slips, teacher to student feedback and Focused & Guided Instruction across grade levels. These practices were effective in increasing teachers’ pedagogical skills as well as raising student achievement. Riley continued to strive to ensure instructional equity for ALL learners, which led the current focus: Differentiation of Instruction in Language Arts Workshop. Riley’s Theory of Action is “If we implement a differentiated workshop, including small group instruction, based on ongoing assessments with aligned TOSA support, then student achievement will increase for all sub-groups.”

During DWP-I, TOSAs work directly in class delivering small group instruction along with the classroom teacher. Students are grouped during this 30 minute block by instructional level and receive instruction based on their needs as determined by language arts assessment results. What distinguishes DWP-I from other models is the high level of planning and collaboration between the classroom teacher and TOSA. The teacher and TOSA share a common weekly planning tool that outlines the differentiated instruction by small group in the following ways: learning target, DOK (Depth of Knowledge) Level, Materials, and Instructional Task. During this time, “Riley’s Essential Skills” are taught, which are a common sets of skills taught K–5 to strengthen students’ reading comprehension.

Upon entering any Riley classroom, you will observe engaging learning environments that have two areas for small group instruction (teacher/TOSA) and area for engaging in independent work. Workshop Rules have established student behavior norms and expectations. The Differentiated Workshop Plan and posted Learning Targets clearly define learning goals. To measure goal attainment, a variety of formative and interim assessments give teachers timely data to analyze. Each teacher monitors a fluid and flexible Data Wall for the four proficiency levels (Exceeded, Met, Nearly Met, Not Met). Names are highlighted for delineation, green for growth and red for decline; focus subgroups are starred (ELL and African American.) Enrichment and intervention plans are created based on needs for each student. Data Analysis occurs in a variety of meeting structures which include, staff, TOSA, Intervention Team and 1:1 principal/teacher data meetings.

Implementation and Monitoring

DWP-I serves to build instructional equity for every student at Riley. The DWP-I is distinguished from LBUSD’s model because our TOSAs push-in support 80% of the school day and pull-out students 20% of the day. “Our DWP-I model no longer pulls-out

to serve the few; we push-in to serve the many, which strengthens the core program.” This vision statement was expressed to our community at Riley’s Back-to-School Night. TOSAs were introduced, DWP-I was explained, as was district funding for our model. Parent volunteers also support students in K–1 during DWP-I. Technology use in every classroom was shared with parents and a parent “Tech Team” was established. “Tech Teas” are regularly scheduled to share Google Suite and innovative uses in Google Classroom with teachers. The principal hosts “Coffee with the Principal” monthly to keep lines of communication open with our Riley community.

Communication between home and school and within the school is another Riley common practice. Throughout the year, conferences are held for each student to communicate expectations and academic results with parents/guardians. TOSAs and teachers regularly communicate intervention strategies through letters, emails, and phone calls. Also, TOSAs regularly communicate assessment results from pull-out clinics.

Using our ongoing formative and district interim assessment results, each teacher and TOSA form four SBAC leveled groups, ensuring these groups are fluid and flexible. Teacher collaboration led to the creation of Riley’s “Differentiated Workshop Planner.” Through weekly collaboration with this tool, the teacher and TOSA set learning targets for each student group, purposeful differentiation is determined, specific content and materials are chosen, and success criteria are set for aligned accountability activities.

Riley’s DWP-I is a Response to Intervention (RTI) Tier 1 support for students who are not yet proficient in ELA standards. As importantly, DWP-I ensures we maintain the high level of rigor for students who have met or exceeded the learning targets. Through intentional planning, technology is integrated into our independent and small group activities. For example, Google Classroom assignments are specifically created to address the instructional level of each student by assigning differentiated content and product expectations.

As an additional resource, TOSAs deliver RTI Tier 2 support through “Reading Clinics.” Daily, TOSAs meet with groups of students to give added practice and support to develop not yet proficient ELA skills. These groups are based on district’s FRSA assessments, reading benchmark assessments, and ELA online assessments. Using the District’s online intervention tracking system, students’ baseline data is compared to subsequent post-test data. Also, the intervention team meets to discuss RTI Tier 2 and 3 needs monthly. Through leveled support and ongoing monitoring, we are building instructional equity in ELA for all students.

Results and Outcomes

Another “Riley Essential” is the continuous practice of monitoring and reflecting on data results in relation to student achievement. The following quantitative data reflects Riley’s achievement on SBAC for the past three years as well as current ELA district assessments.

Overall SBAC ELA results for “Met/Exceeded” levels at Riley Elementary for grades 3–5: 2014–15, site was 43%; for all elementary, the district 38%; 2015–16, site was 48%; the district 43%; 2016–17, site was 51%; the district 48%. Overall total growth for Riley was 8%.

Reflecting on a specific cohort of students’ SBAC ELA results for “Met/Exceeded”:
2014–2015, as 3rd graders, 40%; 2015–16, as 4th graders 61%; and 2016–17, as 5th graders 63%. Total growth for this specific group of students at Riley was 23% over three years.

Riley’s formative assessments and the districts interim assessments suggest DWP-I positively impacts student achievement in ELA. These assessments include district FRSA K–2 and district ELA Unit assessments 3–5. The overall FRSA progress to date reflects that Riley exceeds district averages of students scoring Met/Exceeded in most categories (print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition). In the current ELA unit assessments, students in grades 3–5 have made gains ranging from 20%–30% from unit 1 to unit 2. Since these assessments are SBAC aligned, this is a strong indicator that students are making great progress toward achievement of the California State Standards.

CORE Culture/Climate survey results showed 92% of students, 96% of teacher/staff, and 93% of families agreed Riley school climate supports academic learning. This data gives direct feedback on teacher and DWP-I impact on student learning.

During our District Collaborative Inquiry Visit, Riley received the following feedback: “Riley’s focus on data and their subgroups is commendable.” “We’ll be using your school-wide planning tool at our site.” “Kudos on the parent involvement in the classroom!” “100% of students were engaged and on task.”

Since implementation of the DWP-I model, Riley decreased chronic absenteeism by 2% and the suspension/expulsion rate continues to be at 0%. According to the CORE survey over 92% of students, teacher/staff, and families agrees the school climate supports the academic learning.

Administration of formative assessments and analysis of student progress is continual and has been a consistent practice at Riley. With continuous collaborative analysis of student work, assessment results, and Data Walls, another Riley common practice, teachers are effective at setting next step action plans for DWP-I. The DWP-I at Riley is crucial to building instructional equity and success for all students. The DWP-I model is not only aligned to the district’s LCAP, but has proven results.