

Dr. Sammy Lee Medical and Health Science Magnet Elementary Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19647330128710

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): Los Angeles Unified

School: Dr. Sammy Lee Medical and Health Science Magnet Elementary

Demographics

Enrollment: 644 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Lee Medical/Health Science Magnet Elementary School is the first medical and health theme elementary school in Los Angeles Unified and opened in the 2013–2014 school year. The school's mission is to provide a high-quality collaborative learning environment with an emphasis on medical and health science that support the development of lifelong learners. The school was established to provide students with alternate educational options and to relieve neighboring schools such as Del Olmo Elementary, and Cahuenga Elementary both of which were on a year round calendar. Our school demographics: African American 3.8%, Asian 28%, Filipino 6.8%, Latino 57.6%, White 1.7%, Gifted 19%, Students with Disabilities 4.9%, English Learners 39.4%, Reclassified Students 21%, and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged 89%.

Some of the special features of Lee Medical/Health Science Magnet include a theme based instructional program focusing on life science. All grades, using a inquiry based

learning approach, learn about the biological systems: skeletal system, circulatory system, nervous system, digestive system, muscular system, respiratory system, and excretory system. Students gain a deeper understanding of these human systems and expand their learning in the upper grades on pathological research and diagnosis as they progress through the grade levels.

The school has established a partnership with Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles. The medical/health curriculum includes as a real world approach component to learning the human systems and health issues taught by the resident doctors of Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles. Doctors also provide in-service to teachers at the school about the medical/health topics students are learning.

Another differentiating variable is the end of year culminating Spring Health Fair that includes the school community, the neighboring community and surrounding elementary and middle schools. Neighboring hospitals and health organizations are invited to provide a variety of health information and health procedures to our students, parents and community members. All classes display medical and health science projects they have developed throughout the school year to showcase at the fair.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Universal Design for Learning

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

Target Area(s): Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Prevention, Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, Use of Technology

Target Population(s): Asian, Black or African American, Filipino, Hispanic, White, Two or More Races, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

Strategies Used: School Climate, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

Our district has chosen Universal Design for Learning(UDL) as a learning model for the students. The rationale behind the model is best summed up by the site udlcenter.org:

“The goal of education in the 21st century is not simply the mastery of content knowledge or use of new technologies. It is the mastery of the learning process. Education should help turn novice learners into expert learners—individuals who want to learn, who know how to learn strategically, and who, in their own highly individual and

flexible ways, are well prepared for a lifetime of learning. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) helps educators meet this goal by providing a framework for understanding how to create curricula that meets the needs of all learners from the start.”

UDL has three guiding principles:

- Provide Multiple means of engagement.
- Provide multiple means of representation
- Provide multiple means of action & expression.

Based on these principals, the district has design a curriculum that focuses on conversation norms and puts an emphasis on peer collaboration and changes the role of teacher to one of facilitator with a philosophy of gradual release. Carefully crafted lessons and a culture of academia is of utmost importance to the successful implementation of UDL.

As a magnet school, Dr. Sammy Lee Elementary is adeptly equipped to create an engaging environment, as we take advantage of our particular theme of health science. Visitors are immediately taken in by the fact that children are exposed to such a topic at such a young age. A skeleton can be found in our office (and several classrooms) along with various poster of human body systems such as the digestive and respiratory systems. This environment also create the expectation of a culture of academia as students natural inquiry for self discovery are ignited by the such sights and knowing that they are members of this culture.

Another impetus for choosing UDL as a model was the districts goal for having all students college ready by the time they finish high school. In our school our expectation that our student will go to college is shown through the posters we put up in key locations outlining the requirements for graduating and showing where the teachers have gone for higher education.

At Dr. Sammy Lee Medical and Health Science Magnet it is our mission to empower students with a high-quality collaborative learning environment with an emphasis on medicine and health science that supports the development of lifelong learners.

Implementation and Monitoring

Provide multiple means of engagement by providing options for self-regulation. In our lower grade classrooms, there is a uniform practice of displaying a color chart that represents the status of students decision making. Students are expected to be aware of what kinds of decisions lead to better outcomes and how to cope when personal expectations aren't met. In upper grades there are more diverse forms for reinforcing student expectation, from online tools like Classdojo to the traditional self-reflection form.

Also through our partnership with Children's Hospital Los Angeles , student and teacher are learning to implement “Mindfulness” strategy. These are strategies that teach

students to calm themselves when frustrated and to consider other venues for letting out aggression. The doctors give monthly workshops that teach being aware of your feelings and taking the time to be grounded.

Finally as a Restorative Justice District, our school practices keeping all of our students safe , both victims and aggressors. We create platform where parents, students and faculty come together to find solutions for the wellbeing of all students; where all involved are active participants and have voice in the outcomes.

Another part of providing multiple means of engagement is to provide options for recruiting interest where students have autonomy and choice and the learning is both relevant and authentic. To that end teachers have an inquiry-based project on health science and medicine that is displayed in the annual health fair. Students are given the option to choose from various human systems or medicine, to work in groups or individually and many times a choice on how to display their findings.

Providing multiple means of representation is another aspect of UDL and through district sponsored sites and school invested ones our students are exposed to authentic, standard-based lessons. Every classroom is equipped with an LCD projector and speakers so that teachers can take advantage of the plethora of resources at their disposal. We have also applied for a grant that would make us a one-to-one school, where each student would have their own device to access online tools. Our school has invested in Safari Montage - a site that brings together hundreds of vetted science lessons and apps. Here students can manipulate a 3d model of the human body, delving into the entrails and analyzing system parts so that these ideas don't remain abstract.

The last principle of UDL is to provide multiple means of action and expression so that student learn to become strategic, goal-directed learners. Through a data-driven selection process, struggling students meet with our resource counselor weekly, where they are taught to set goals and how to monitor their progress. Also after school intervention is given twice a year that target students who are just shy of reaching district goals, like re-designation or scoring proficient on state exams.

Results and Outcomes

As a result of our implementation of UDL, Dr. Sammy Lee Elementary has enjoyed a significant growth in academic performance with all our targeted subgroups except for one(where there was still an increase), according to the California school dashboard. Mainly the English Language Learners increased by 17.6 points in ELA and by 14.5 point in Math. Also the Socioeconomically Disadvantaged increase by 16.6 in ELA and 15.7 points in Math.

Other proof of our successful implementation can be seen in SBAC results, specifically when interpreting the change over time. 19.5% of last year 5th graders exceeded the standard, compare to only 14% when they were 4th graders and 8% when they were in third grade. This is truly impressive when considering that our student population has

experience a proportional growth in population among our subcategories every year since the school started. In fact our population has nearly double in size from when we began in 2013.

Not only are we experience growth in exceeds category but we are shrinking in the Not Met category. When comparing the same group of 5th graders in 3rd grade 38% of students had not met standard, decreasing to 35% in their 4th grade year to 24% in 5th grade.

Another result of UDL strategy is to see an increase in English Language Learner redesignation. We have one of the highest in our district and the second highest in our local district.

Test scores aside, Our school is also benefiting from parent involvement. Parent our attending ELAC and SSC meeting increasingly, helping to make decision on their child's education. They also help manage our schools health fair and other events, putting up decoration and getting involved in school spirit.