

Colfax Charter Elementary Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19647336016562

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): Los Angeles Unified

School: Colfax Charter Elementary

Demographics

Enrollment: 655 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: Yes

Overview

From the moment you walk onto the Colfax Charter Elementary campus, you can feel the vibrant pulse of 655 students eagerly engaged in learning. Colfax is a friendly, welcoming place in Valley Village, a community with a passion for public education.

If you visit Colfax Charter on any given day, you will discover an energetic environment that reflects dedication to academic excellence with an emphasis on the Arts, Technology, and Green Initiatives. You will find skilled faculty, classified staff, parent volunteers, and knowledgeable community members committed to developing a school that will awaken the innate artist in every child so that they can solve problems creatively, become critical thinkers, and develop the capacity to view the world from multiple perspectives.

A typical day will see students engaged in rigorous standards-based instruction. They are visible in the Science Lab - exploring and hypothesizing the outcomes of their hands-on experiments. And they are working in the Computer Lab, expanding their grasp of technology on a state-of-the-art digital platform. When you enter classrooms

you will hear music, laughter, rich interactive discussions, and student presentations. As a full-inclusion school, each class is a mix of children with special needs, as well as the gifted and general education students. You may see children participating in small group activities, working with the special education staff to reinforce, introduce or review concepts presented by the general education teacher during the week. The arts curriculum allows students to experience and develop arts appreciation through beginning Suzuki violin, Ballroom Dance, and Drama. We also give students access to Music Education, Chorus, and Orchestra. And the whole school receives visual arts for at least one semester a year, culminating in an Open House where the classrooms display samples showcasing the artistic development of our children as they progress through the grades.

You will observe dedicated parents who volunteer or visit the school daily. You will hear the grunts of Charlotte and Buddy, the school pigs, and a bleating of the two sheep in the farm. Throughout the property you will notice various vegetable/flower beds and our large Urban Garden where students are taught eco-friendly practices to aide in the wellness of our environment. And when you leave our campus at the end of the day, the memory of what you have seen will remind you that Colfax Charter Elementary is what a public school should be like. Supported by strong parent involvement, dedicated teachers and staff, and sustained by a community that takes pride in an enriched education, Colfax Charter will continue to flourish and grow as we are, "Rooted in Education and We Reach for the Stars!"

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Engaging Students in the 21st Century

Length of Model Program/Practice: 8+ years

Target Area(s): Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Use of Technology, Visual and Performing Arts

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

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

Description

Colfax Charter's model, Engaging Students in the 21st Century, is a program of high quality standards-based instruction, targeted intervention, technology, learning through the arts, and education through our green program.

The first component of our model is high quality standards-based instruction. Each teacher at Colfax Charter is highly qualified and provides effective Tier 1 instruction. Teachers consistently utilize data to plan instruction and meet with colleagues weekly to discuss lessons, assessments, and data, all to drive instruction. Teachers participate in Professional Development on various curricular topics based on data. Most recently, our data showed the need for a comprehensive TK–5 writing program. Colfax Charter distinguished themselves from LAUSD by purchasing Write From the Beginning, a curriculum where teachers utilize modeled writing, improvement rubrics, and focused mini lessons to establish a foundation in the writing process.

Targeted intervention is another key component of our successful program. It starts with our first and second grade students utilizing the Early Literacy and Language Program. All students are grouped according to needs in their foundational reading skills and identified students are given the opportunity to work on RAZ kids and Read Naturally, 2 programs that target fluency and comprehension. Another opportunity for our socioeconomically disadvantaged 4th and 5th grade students is being paired for homework assistance once a week with students from the local high school's highly gifted magnet.

Third, the use of technology is evident in all classrooms. This year, Colfax Charter increased our technology significantly. Kindergarten through 2nd grade each share 2 ipad carts. In grades 3–5, students have a 1:1 ratio of device. The devices vary from Macbooks to Chromebooks, allowing for diverse platforms. This year, we implemented a full technology curriculum with ComputerWise kids, teaching students technology skills ranging from keyboarding to coding.

The fourth component of our model is a full TK–5 arts program. All students take one semester of visual arts, with our professional arts expert. Students in grades K and 1 also take one semester of Violin with our Suzuki violin instructor. Students in grades 2–5 take one semester of vocal music to learn rhythm, beats, note reading and a variety of instruments. Students in grades 3–5 also have the opportunity to participate in orchestra and chorus.

Finally, our green initiative is evident throughout the students' day. Our urban garden, is filled with student-grown plants, vegetables, and fruits, and the children learn what it takes to cultivate crops and plan for a sustainable source of food. The Colfax farm, in addition to building awareness of agriculture and animal care, enhances our eco-programming. Students are also responsible for our recycling program that involves weekly collection of recyclables.

Implementation and Monitoring

Colfax Charter Elementary has implemented this model since it became an Affiliated Charter school in 2008. Through our charter, Colfax developed the model in order to educate the whole child. Over the past ten years, stakeholders have been involved in monitoring the programs that support our model.

In our standards-based instruction, teachers routinely deliver and implement professional development practices. These trainings are provided both by the District and the school itself. Teachers give feedback and have input into their professional development topics. Each year they evaluate the effectiveness of their PD program by participating in feedback forms and surveys. The leadership team meets monthly to discuss professional development and best instructional practices.

In targeted intervention, data is utilized to determine how to best meet the needs of the students. This year, based on DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills) data, first and second grades have been targeting early literacy skills. Beginning of the Year data was used initially to form skill specific groups. Teachers routinely progress monitor using DIBELS data and regroup as students advance in their skills. Groups are fluid as students demonstrate mastery.

Our technology initiative began with a program called Beyond Technology, where teachers participated in a yearlong Professional Development geared toward bringing technology into the school. As technology has changed over the years, so has our model. This year, we have moved to additional devices, with our 3rd–5th grade students having 1:1 access. In addition, we have added another component of technology instruction by contracting with ComputerWise Kids. This program engages students in weekly technology tasks ranging from identifying parts of the computer, to creating online presentations, to coding. Students generate a digital portfolio of work that they have completed throughout the school year. Teachers routinely meet with the computer instructor to tie projects into their daily curriculum.

Our arts and green programs also began with the development of our charter. Teachers and parents routinely monitor our TK–5 arts and green programs for effectiveness, and consistently re-evaluate innovative ways to bring supplemental arts and sustainable programs to our students.

Through stakeholder surveys, teachers and parents regularly review all of our programs. Teachers and administration consistently evaluate data to ensure that standards are being met and students are performing. The wealth of data collected allows us to further identify instructional priorities and to differentiate instruction to match student levels beyond the District's current expectations.

Results and Outcomes

Over the past few years, Colfax Charter Elementary has seen consistent results on statewide, District and school based assessments. According the California School Dashboard, the overall scores in our equity report are all in the “blue” category. In our status and change report, all categories are also “blue” and have either maintained or increased.

In our SBAC Data, Colfax Charter ranks 20th in all of LAUSD (excluding magnets) and 17th in Math. We have gained points steadily since the beginning of the SBAC data. In 2014–2015, our ELA scores were 75% overall. We gained 5 points the following year to

80% and continued to maintain that 80% in 2016–2017. For mathematics, in 2014–2015, our scores were 73% overall. We increased to 75% in 2015–2016 and then to 78% in 2016–2017. These scores are directly attributed to our 5-pronged model.

Our Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) scores also continually rise. Just this year, our first grade students have increased their scores from 55% proficiency at the beginning of the year (BOY) to 77% proficiency at the middle of the year (MOY). In second grade where 86% of our students were proficient on BOY DIBELS, that increased to 90% at the middle of the year. These results are directly correlated with our high quality standards based instruction and targeted intervention.

For the 2017–2018 school year, our reclassification rate of English Language Learners is 55%. This is an increase from our 2016–2017 rate of 26%. This far exceeds the District target rate of 22%.

In the last 2 years, Colfax Charter has increased the percentage of parents completing the School Experience Survey by 25%. In 2017, we achieved a 75% completion rate. In order to determine whether Colfax Charter has met the performance standards for the performance indicators concerning parent engagement, the responses to various questions on the School Experience Survey were analyzed. In order to assess whether parents felt that the school sought input from them in decision-making and promoted their participation in programs, the following questions were reviewed: (percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing is noted next to the question)

1. I am a partner with this school in decisions made about my child's education. (81%)
2. I feel welcome to participate in this school. (97%)
3. This school encourages me to participate in organized parent groups (councils/committees/parent organizations, etc.). (96%)
4. This school provides opportunities to help me support my child's learning. (91%)

These percentages, including participation rate, exceed the District average.

Finally, all stakeholders complete an online survey yearly to review our arts, green, and technology programs. Based on this data, both teachers and parents agree that these programs contribute to the school's culture and academic success.