Hamlin Charter Academy
Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19647336017438

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): Los Angeles Unified

School: Hamlin Charter Academy

Demographics

Enrollment: 357 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: Targeted Assistance

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: Yes

Overview

Hamlin Charter Academy is a Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school located in West Hills. Identified gifted/talented learners make up 6% of our student population and 22% are in Special Education. Our student population of 378 is comprised of 29% Hispanic, 25% Asian, 24% White, 15% Black, and 6% Filipino. English Learners comprise 23% of our students representing 22 languages, including Hindi, Farsi, Spanish, and Russian. Approximately 50% qualify for free or reduced lunch.

When one walks onto Hamlin's campus you will see a wonderfully diverse student population. We have eagerly embraced our distinct community of learners and have implemented rigorous instructional programs that meet students' diverse needs - academically, emotionally and socially. Students who are new to the country are hard at work learning side by side with students who grew up in the United States.

At Hamlin, our diversity is an asset and having input from our various stakeholders is essential. As part of our Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), #3 Parent, Community and Student Engagement, we surveyed parents to obtain their input regarding their child's education. The educational program survey asked for parents input about the future direction of Hamlin's instructional program. Parents highly ranked their interest in having our educational focus on the technical sciences - math, science, technology and working collaboratively with universities.

In response, we developed a collaboration with the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) using Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) in Math and LAUSDs Division of Instruction with California Office of Reform Education (CORE) to focus on closing the achievement gap in math with students of color. We implemented a teacher led science lab and upgraded our technology in our computer lab. A Newcomers program was started for our English Language Learners to help them access the core curriculum through vocabulary development. In addition, all classrooms have access to two mobile iPad carts that are used by teachers to build specific student skills, guide students in research, and integrate technology skills in cross-curriculum designed lessons.

Our curriculum is designed to cultivate the talents, interests, and the scholastic aptitude of students through an interdisciplinary approach to study. Teachers and administration work together to set ambitious instructional goals with high expectations. Instruction is differentiated and learner-centered. Curricular content is academically rigorous and challenging, connected to students' interests, and experiences.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Molding Mathematical Minds

Length of Model Program/Practice: Less than 2 years

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

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

Strategies Used: School Climate, Data-Driven Decision Making, Professional Development

Description

To address our focus on problem solving and real world applications in math, as identified in LCAP #1, Proficiency for All, we altered our approach to teaching math from a teacher led model to a more student centered approach. Teachers received training on the implementation of Number Talks using a cognitively guided instructional format. CGI is a student-centered approach where students articulate their approach to solving

a problem while teachers build on what students already know to move them toward deeper levels of understanding. Students plan their own approach to solve problems in ways that make sense to them. Ultimately the goal is to uncover students' thinking and expand on their math understanding. CGI allows students to gain an understanding of the underlying concepts of performing operations, develop a strong number sense, and solve problems in more than one way.

Our math instruction has shifted from one solely based on computation and procedures to one centered around math discourse and problem solving. While we continue to utilize our district adopted math curriculum, it is supplemented with other techniques in order to balance math procedures and conceptual understanding. Grade levels meet to plan problems of the day which are aligned to instructional concepts covered in the text. Our math instruction is no longer lecture format where the teacher acts as the source of all answers but is now one that is student led and the teacher acts as a facilitator.

Teachers at Hamlin begin their daily math instruction with a 8-12 minute Number Talk routine to develop students' number sense. Use of Number Talks is an engaging process that provides access for all students to visualize standard algorithms as a concept. Students explain their approach in solving math problems while other students critique and add to their reasoning. Teachers capitalize on opportunities to embed math vocabulary into explanations shared by students. Number Talks are followed by a problem solving activity where teachers integrate strategies such as the Three Reads Protocol to increase the accessibility and comprehensibility for our English Learners.

Questioning is a critical component of our math instruction. While students articulate their approach to solving a problem, teachers and students ask clarifying questions. This allows for students to grapple with their own approach and revise their thinking as they are sharing their solution. When students explain their process, others ask questions to better understand them while being exposed to different strategies.

English Learners who excel in number sense, have shown a lack of proficiency in understanding how to tackle word problems. Support for these learners is provided during our Newcomers class. The Targeted Student Population (TSP) Advisor provides vocabulary instruction, phonemic awareness training, and exposure to common English terminology.

Implementation and Monitoring

Our Student Centered Approach Model has continued to evolve with much of our focus centered around Professional Development. We began by scheduling training on the implementation of Number Talks which led to our partnership with UCLA. To guide our implementation of CGI, a CGI expert meets with upper grade teachers monthly to conduct classroom observations and PD sessions in which questioning techniques were demonstrated. Training topics include Choral Counting, Number String, Which One Doesn’t Belong, and Photo Math. Co-teaching of Number Talks has occurred with teachers receiving immediate feedback. To support the implementation of these routines, a shared Google Drive folder was developed where teachers access various

resources and examples. Teachers also engage in solving a math task. Various solutions are strategically selected to share with the group and allow others to ask questions. These strategies allow for diverse responses and multiple entry points unique to the mathematician. The implementation cycle consists of training centered around CGI, analysis of student work samples, planning for instruction, and implementation.

Reviewing student work is a critical component. Work samples are collected and analyzed to inform teachers of their students' mathematical thinking, their ability to solve problems in more than one way, and their ability to explain their thinking orally and in written format. Teachers can identify student misconceptions and plan follow-up lessons to build on students' mathematical thinking and approaches.

Student observations are another essential component of our math program. Teachers gain insight into students' knowledge as they "talk aloud" their thought process and reasoning during problem solving. Teachers identify areas in need of remediation and plan where further instruction is required. The data is then used to guide teacher instruction and support student goal setting.

Hamlin administration and teachers frequently gather and analyze both formative and summative assessments centered around math instruction such as Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) and teacher created problems. Teachers compare the Claims where students scored below standard with the SBAC blueprints and determine areas in need of additional support. With the onset of the IAB reporting system, teachers can now generate a report of the various assessments and conduct an error analysis of each item to identify where students demonstrate low performance. Teachers discuss and solve the items with students. This allows students to identify their misconceptions and learn multiple solution paths.

Our staff is committed to the academic growth of our students where visitors will find differentiated instruction occurring daily in all classrooms. This is visible through small group instruction during Universal Access Time (UAT), our after-school Homework Club and Newcomers class.

Results and Outcomes

Hamlin's Student Centered Approach cycle begins and culminates with student assessment. At the end of each unit or predetermined time frame, Hamlin teachers gather the assessment data, analyze, and adapt their lessons, groupings, and pacing to meet the needs of every student.

During monthly ILT meetings, members analyze multiple assessment measures including SBAC assessment results, CAASPP IABs, student work samples, and curricular assessments. Analysis of formal and informal assessment results are used continuously to evaluate all areas and identify strengths and target weaknesses. Grade level teams meet regularly to identify the areas of need and plan targeted instruction.

As indicated on the 2016–2017 CAASPP Performance results, the overall number of Hamlin students scoring Exceeds Standard/Standard Met in ELA was 54% vs. 40% for LAUSD. In math, 46% of Hamlin students scored Exceeds Standards/Standard Met vs. 30% for LAUSD. In both areas, Hamlin students outperformed LAUSD students by double digits. Our Socio Economic Disadvantaged Students improved by 16%.

Increased SBAC results are due to the use of grade level planning to analyze data, diligent planning, and small group instruction based on student needs. At the school site, teachers develop: Data Walls, strategic flexible student groupings, and progress monitor. Student needs in phonological awareness and phonics are identified and planning is centered around deficits. This targeted data analysis, planning, and instruction increased student scores.

As a result of these practices, according to multiple assessment measures, the performance of Hamlin students reflect positive gains and students are well prepared to meet the expectations of the College and Career readiness requirements.