

Harding Street Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19647336017479

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): Los Angeles Unified

School: Harding Street Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 416 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Proud home of the Bulldogs, Harding Street Elementary is devoted to ensure that ALL students are meeting grade level standards, and that they are prepared for the 21st century. Staff works collaboratively to ensure that all students' academic needs are met across the curriculum and through our model practices. Our staff has been at Harding for the majority of their career and strongly believes that ALL children can learn and become College Prepared and Career Ready! We provide a safe environment that engages all students intellectually and socially in becoming responsible, contributing citizens in a diverse society.

Harding Street Elementary is a Kindergarten through 5th grade with an Expanded Transitional Kindergarten program and a Transitional Kindergarten program. There are three Special Education classes that include an Autism Class (Moderate/Severe) K–2, Autism Class (Moderate/Severe) Grades 3–5, and a High Functioning Autism Class K–5. There is one Resource Specialist Program that serves K–5.

Our current school enrollment is 416 students. 15 students are enrolled in Expanded Transitional Kindergarten and 6 students are enrolled in Transitional Kindergarten, 71 are enrolled in Kindergarten, 67 in First Grade, 64 in Second Grade, 54 in Third Grade, 57 in Fourth Grade and 57 in Fifth Grade. Our special education enrollment is 25 students.

We are a School Wide Title I school with 76.44% being identified as low-income and/or Socioeconomically Disadvantaged for 2017–18. Approximately 305 students qualify for Free/Reduced priced meals and our school is ranked 615 on the LAUSD Title I Ranking list for 2017–18. Our students have demonstrated positive growths in our 2017 Smarter Balanced Summative results with about 55% of our third through fifth grade students scoring standard met and exceeded in English Language Arts and 40% scoring standard met and exceeded in Mathematics. The California School Dashboard shows that Harding Elementary has shown an increase in performance levels for all students on state indicators.

As a staff we have ensured that all our students are valued and contribute to a successful foundation for learning that really focuses on the academic, social and emotional development of the “whole child”. We have not only implemented, but also taken Restorative Justice practices to a deeper level, to help our school community build strong and positive relationships that ultimately promote a healthy school culture and climate of academic success.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Success through Academic Rigor and Kindness

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Target Population(s): American Indian, Black or African American, Filipino, Hispanic, White, 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

One of the distinguishing characteristics at Harding is that we embrace ideologies that empower students to understand their world more profoundly. Number Talks and Problem Solving Fridays have become school-wide implemented strategies. Students are given new ways to see numbers, and to share their thinking. This provides opportunities for analyzing, giving peer-to-peer feedback, exposing students to different

ways of approaching problems, and allows time to correct mistakes. Math Problem Solving Fridays allow students to work collaboratively, use higher level thinking, and apply their knowledge of the math practices, especially perseverance and precision to various mathematical challenges. The District annual target for math for LAUSD, as reported by the LCAP Scorecard, was 28%. As a result of the aforementioned practices, 40% of Harding students met and/or exceeded the standards, as reported by the Spring 2017 SBAC Assessment. (2.1)

Close Reading with annotations has been common practice at Harding for several years. We have adopted a school-wide set of annotation symbols, that students use consistently as they progress through the grade levels. We not only emphasize understanding main idea and details, we help our students to think in more nuanced ways, and to dig deeper into texts to get richer meanings from passages. The staff agreed to implement at least one Close Read lesson per ELA unit, which gives students numerous opportunities refine and practice these valuable skills. The District annual target for ELA for LAUSD, as reported by the LCAP Scorecard, was 33%. As a result of Close Reading practices, 55% of Harding students met and/or exceeded the standards, as reported by the Spring 2017 SBAC Assessment. (2.2)

Implementing a climate of kindness, community outreach, and promotion of diversity are achieved in numerous ways at Harding. We use the “Character Counts” program as our way to showcase those who make good choices based on the Pillars of Character. Staff members have also organized school-wide activities to promote kindness, and to appreciate differences by working in conjunction with a non-profit organization called, “Teach the Children Peace”, and a local police department to reinforce the idea to “Choose Kind” at every opportunity. Finally, through the implementation of Restorative Justice and Council in the classroom as stated in paragraph 1.2, Harding staff are building community relationships both in and out of the classroom. (2.3)

Other programs and clubs that set Harding apart in the way we show appreciation and respect for our community at large are: our annual Black History Month Program; Native American Club, an after-school Drama Club run by two TA’s on their own time, The Good News Club, International Day and Dance Festivals, College and Career Day, and a Talent Showcase where students, staff, and family members were given a platform to share their unique talents. (2.4)

Implementation and Monitoring

While LAUSD requires academic monitoring of student progress several times a year, Harding teachers monitor students on a weekly basis in several ways, based on the dynamics and needs of their individual classes. Teachers use the data obtained to guide the instruction and student grouping for the week that follows, which results in a comprehensive, tailored program for the students in their care. (3.1)

Teachers use Close Reading strategies for both the District adopted Language Arts curriculum, as well as with teacher-selected texts that meet the standards for their grade levels. Modeling and supervision of the use of our school-adopted annotations gives

students an opportunity to practice, share, and justify their use of the symbols, as well as encourages the children to use higher-level thinking skills when they are asked to explain their thinking. This practice holds them accountable, and helps instructors target areas of strength and growth. (3.2)

In addition to the District's adopted Math program and pacing plan, Harding staff have been supplementing instruction with tools and strategies such as Math Journals, Math Talks, and Engage NY lessons. These have enhanced our math lessons and our students' understanding of concepts. Harding teachers use district-advised formative assessments and open-ended problem solving tasks to give ongoing feedback and guide student growth, based upon data. (3.3)

At the district level, Restorative Justice emphasizes community building and commits to restoring positive relationships. Here at Harding, our staff and students have fully embraced the practice of Restorative Justice. It is implemented school-wide in the classrooms, at staff development meetings, which include all members of our staff, not just teachers. We have also offered workshops for the families in our community to share the practices and philosophy being taught to our students, and parents are encouraged to visit classrooms to see Council practices first-hand. Restorative Justice is monitored through observations, discussions at grade level meetings, and through staff feedback. (3.4)

Results and Outcomes

Our staff is constantly working to improve instruction, as well as keeping in mind the well-being of our students. By seeing students as more than test scores, we show our children that who they are is just as important as what they can produce on paper. We are helping to form habits for academics as well as character for their time beyond their years at Harding. (4.1)

As a result of Close Reading with Annotation, students are showing a greater ability to understand what the main idea of a text is and what details support that main idea. Students are able to summarize a text with greater skill, and are encouraged to make greater connections to what they read, especially when they can annotate with emotional responses. (4.2)

Harding's weekly implementation of Math Problem Solving has resulted in students being able to persevere in solving problems. Our students take pride in presenting work to their classes and feel emotionally safe in doing so. Harding students understand that there are many different ways to solve one problem. They are able to successfully work in teams and respect one another's opinions. These problem solving skills carry over to real-life situations. As noted in paragraph 2.1, our scores show that this practice works. (4.3)

Restorative Justice is embedded in all facets of education and shows itself in various ways. Children are gaining conflict/resolution skills that result in less behavioral issues on the playground. They learn listening and social skills that are reflected in our

classrooms. There are fewer issues, resulting in more learning and less time handling incidences of negative behavior. Students initiate council discussions when they feel there is an issue that needs to be addressed. Rather than expecting school problems to be solved for them, students are proactive participants in the process. (4.4)

As a result of our climate of kindness, our community outreach, and the diversity programs we have created, Harding has become a close-knit community where students, staff, and community members feel valued and appreciated for their individuality. Students enjoy being at school and want to be here on a daily basis. Because they feel so comfortable at Harding, their minds are more open to learning, and that has been reflected in our growing test scores and scores that have remained stable for several years. (4.5)