

W.L. Valentine Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19649646022529

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): San Marino Unified

School: W.L. Valentine Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 584 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

The mission of William L. Valentine Elementary School, in partnership with parents and community, is to provide students with an academically focused program in a positive and caring learning environment. We strive to empower our students for future success by promoting student self-worth, social responsibility, and respect for individual differences.

“Every child is the heart of Valentine” is the key to our Valentine Elementary School vision. From planning to implementation, from culture to programs, this theme is our hallmark. This single-mindedness is intertwined with several highlights unique to Valentine.

Our school enjoys a beloved spot in the life of the small, picturesque San Marino community in Los Angeles county. Historically, many families are attracted to our city by their desire to participate in our excellent school programs. Our high academic standards and challenging educational programs are supported by our continued desire to improve. Our district’s and school’s academic reputation is rewarded by the

overwhelming support of our parents and community. Our Schools Foundation annually provides a substantial contribution to our general fund to support district positions and special programs. We also enjoy phenomenal community partnerships with the San Marino Chinese Club, the City Rotary, local city officials and our police and fire departments.

Our Valentine PTA is a critical partner in the success of our educational program. PTA supports many programs and positions at our site. PTA annually allocates funds for our Art Specialist, STEM and Music teachers, and Library Media Specialist; classroom and playground aides; and budgets for many programs including cultural arts assemblies, technology, choir, music instruments, and playground equipment. This parent group is also generous with its time, logging over 42,000 volunteer hours last year facilitating learning activities in the classroom, assisting with supervision on our many field trips, providing assistance in our art & STEM labs, organizing special events, maintaining our beautiful gardens and planning many highly successful “fun and fund-raising” activities. Our PTA leadership is broad based, representing many parts of our school community. The PTA Board is composed of eighteen board members and forty-five committee chairs. Another unique element of our culture is long-term commitment. Many families are second or third generation Valentine Vikings. Several of our full-time faculty members attended school in San Marino and have chosen to return to our district to teach. Our beautiful campus reflects our community’s commitment to education. Our school is fortunate to have a large grass playground, classrooms with updated technology, an Art Room, STEM lab, Music Room, Library, Kindergarten Playground and beautiful gardens.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: C.A.R.E Team Response to Intervention

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Professional Development

Target Population(s): English Learners, Students with Disabilities

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

Description

Our Valentine C.A.R.E. Intervention Model is a multi-tiered intervention approach that utilizes an RTI (Response to Intervention) Model. Our school has a special education program but we do not receive either state or district funds for a Title 1 or Remediation

Program to provide intervention services for students at-risk of not meeting grade level standards in English Language Arts or Mathematics.

The first step in developing our own building intervention program was to identify assessment measures to monitor the progress of our kindergarten and first grade students in acquiring foundational reading skills in phonics and phonemic awareness. Our data for students referred for special education services indicated that students were lacking basic phonics skills that should have been acquired in kindergarten and first grade. Instead of providing special education services for students to acquire beginning reading skills in later primary grades, we designed a reading intervention program for kindergarten and first grade that included the implementation of a research-based systematic phonics program for small group instruction in the classroom and a reading intervention teacher to provide a double-dose of daily phonics instruction for those students identified by our school wide assessment measure as at-risk for meeting grade level expectations.

Our C.A.R.E. team was also created to implement a multi-tier approach for academic interventions for students at all grades prior to a referral for special education assessment. Our past practice provided only for an SST meeting to be scheduled by a teacher with parents, our administrator and counselor to review interventions and determine whether a student would be referred for assessment. Our C.A.R.E. team process provides the opportunity for teachers to refer a student to our team as soon as a student is identified with an academic concern. The team includes our school counselor, principal, school psychologist, speech & language teacher and other specialists depending upon the identified areas of concern. The C.A.R.E. team meets with the teacher, reviews records, observes and collects data in the classroom, offers suggestions for strategies, gathers resources & materials, and develops a plan with the teacher that includes the identification of data that will be collected to monitor a student's progress. Our C.A.R.E. team meets weekly to review the progress of all of our referred students. Each student is assigned one C.A.R.E. team member as a case manager to communicate with the teacher and coordinate the implementation of the intervention plan. Our C.A.R.E. team provides frequent professional development for our staff on effective intervention strategies for students, how to differentiate instruction for all students & how to involve parents as partners in supporting their child's academic success at school.

Implementation and Monitoring

Professional development was an important first step for the implementation of our model. We provided at the building level initial training for our staff in the C.A.R.E. team process, the Response to Intervention Model (RTI), special education laws for referral and qualification of students, intervention strategies for students, data collection to document the effectiveness of intervention strategies, research-based instructional practices for beginning reading instruction, teaching with fidelity in a systematic phonics program, and practices to effectively work as teams to analyze student data. On-going professional development continues during staff meetings & professional development

days in all of the above-listed topics as we continue to refine our process and deepen our instructional practice knowledge.

Our C.A.R.E. team was established with current staff members including our principal, school psychologist, counselor, speech and language teacher, and occupational therapist. Our team created a referral document and outline of the process and determined roles and responsibilities for each team member. Our process has evolved over time including the addition of an initial intake meeting with the referring staff member and the C.A.R.E. team to answer questions, assign a case manager and develop the first steps in the intervention plan. Throughout the C.A.R.E. team process, classroom teachers maintain frequent communication with each student's parents. C.A.R.E. team meetings with the entire team, parents, additional support staff and the classroom teacher are scheduled as needed.

An essential component to the implementation of our beginning reading intervention program was to establish an assessment plan for all of our kindergarten and first grade students. Our plan included the identification of our assessment tool, frequency of school-wide assessment, criteria for selection of students to the program, how student progress would be monitored, and criteria for successful graduation from our intervention program. We chose the S.I.P.P.S. program for instruction and assessment. All of our kindergarten and first grade students are assessed at the beginning & end of the school year and at a midpoint in January. Progress monitoring assessments in the S.I.P.P.S. program are used with fidelity and data is carefully monitored by our reading intervention teacher, classroom teachers and principal using a shared GoogleDoc.

Results and Outcomes

We started our C.A.R.E. team model five years ago. Our goals were: (1) to reduce the number of students qualifying for special education by providing early intervention for beginning reading skills and increasing classroom interventions prior to referral for special education assessment; (2) to reduce the number of SST meetings requested for the purpose of referral for special education assessment (3) to increase our general education teacher's knowledge of research based interventions (4) to increase support from specialists and administrator for classroom teachers working with at-risk students in their classrooms and (4) to increase access for all students to our rigorous, engaging general education classroom instruction.

During the five years our C.A.R.E. team has been in existence, the number of special education students at Valentine ES receiving Specialized Academic Instruction services has decreased by fifty percent from 40 students to 19 students. Students who have been referred to the C.A.R.E. team consistently score level 3 in ELA and Mathematics on the CAASPP in the 3rd, 4th & 5th grades. The number of SST meetings held each year for the purpose of determining whether a student will be referred for special education testing has been reduced by sixty percent.

The implementation of the research-based phonics program & Reading Intervention teacher for kindergarten and first grade students has made a significant difference in the

percentage of students entering first grade with below grade level beginning reading skills. The Beginning levels in the S.I.P.P.S. program are identified as appropriate for kindergarten. Our expectation at Valentine ES is that all of our students will exit the Beginning level at the end of kindergarten although the S.I.P.P.S program identifies Beginning level 41 as beginning of first grade. The data below compares the assessed levels of first grade students at the start of our program (in parenthesis) and first grade students in the fall of 2017. Beginning level 1: (12%) 1%; Beginning level 11: (2%) 0%; Beginning level 21 (15%) 5%; Beginning level 31: 8%; Beginning level 41 (9%) 11%; At or above grade level (36%) 60% using Valentine criteria for at grade level. Using the criteria from the S.I.P.P.S. program the increase in students at grade level would be from 45% to 88%. We collect data throughout the school year on the progress of our students with the percentage of students meeting grade level phonics skills by the end of first grade increasing significantly each year.