

Edison Language Academy Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19649806022545

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): Santa Monica-Malibu Unified

School: Edison Language Academy

Demographics

Enrollment: 470 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Edison Language Academy is a Pre-K–5 school on the eastern edge of the small urban city of Santa Monica. A public school in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD), Edison uses a schoolwide 90–10 Dual Immersion (DI) program and is one of two “schools of choice” in SMMUSD. Interested families attend a DI seminar, visit classrooms, and apply for admission, which is split evenly between Spanish and English speakers. Students are selected based on a set of sibling, pathway, and residence preferences established by SMMUSD. Edison is allowed to accept intra- and inter-district attendance permits to achieve language diversity. Our student body is approximately three-quarters Latino, a third English Learners (EL), and about half from Socially-Economically Disadvantaged (SED) families. Edison is a schoolwide Title I school. Both our instructional model and demographics are very different from other SMMUSD elementary schools. In the 1980s, SMMUSD had planned to close the small neighborhood school that was Edison Elementary due to declining enrollment, low test scores, and concerns about racial isolation. Instead, the community persuaded

SMMUSD to convert the school into Edison Language Academy -- a schoolwide DI modified magnet – and to grow the program, one grade at a time, to Grade 12. Our first decade as a DI school was about establishing and growing the program, recruiting staff and students, acquiring materials, and developing good DI instructional practices. In the next two decades, we moved to standards-based instruction, established systems for monitoring, assessment, and collaborative inquiry, and strengthened parent involvement. We added a strong Response to Instruction and Intervention program (RTI2), strengthened our social/emotional and multicultural learning, and committed to using research-based best practices for all instruction. With a stable program and experienced staff, we took advantage of resources available to Title I schools and began integrating the arts (music, theater and visual arts in Spanish) into instruction PreK–5. We have been supported by a district that embraces cutting-edge practices and equity, supports the arts, and provides high-quality professional development. SMMUSD provided the “extra” curriculum and assessments DI programs need, and allows enough variation from standard practices to make things work in a DI setting. SMMUSD built us a new campus in 2014 with more room to house our growing population, and space for enrichment programs, a Pre-K and TK. With these systems and practices, district support, and unflagging effort, achievement scores have climbed steadily for all groups. This year we celebrate our 31st anniversary as Edison Language Academy. Our once low-performing school slated for closure has more than doubled in size, has far more applicants than can be admitted, has won a National Blue Ribbon, and has now qualified to apply for a California Distinguished School Award!

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Dual Immersion Program

Length of Model Program/Practice: 8+ years

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

Target Population(s): Hispanic, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, 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

Program Description: Schoolwide 90/10 Dual Immersion (DI) program. 90% of instruction K–1 in Spanish; English increases 10% each year until 5th grade. All students learn to read first in Spanish; English reading begins in 2nd grade. The program was designed to turn around a low-achieving neighborhood school of

predominately low-income, Spanish-speaking, Latino students. The modified magnet DI program gives a priority to neighborhood students but also allows admission via inter- and intra-district permits to create a language balance. Edison initially received federal Title VII grants for curriculum and materials, training staff and recruiting students. Core costs for the program are now borne by SMMUSD. Professional Development (PD) is provided through the district's LCAP plan and site resources. It is supplemented by topics related to best practices in DI with the goals that all teachers be able to skillfully implement best DI practices, effectively use PLCs, and work collaboratively to increase achievement. Teachers and principal benefit from collaboration with other DI schools and organizations. There are three equally important goals in DI programs 1. ALL students become proficient in English and Spanish; 2. ALL students master other core subjects; and 3) Students develop multi-cultural skills and cultural competence. Anticipated outcomes are bilingualism, high achievement for all, student engagement, diminished achievement gaps and effective parent involvement. DI programs benefit all students by building bilingualism, giving equal status to both languages and groups, teaching an appreciation for diverse cultures.. DI programs hold particular promise for students who are often under-served by other programs. Understanding and meeting the needs of low-income and EL students (most of whom at Edison are Latinos) is the lens used to organize instruction; language and cultural skills are seen as assets, not deficits. To meet student's social-emotional and behavioral needs we use Cool Tools, Olweus Anti-Bullying Program, the Leader In Me, Mindfulness and class meetings. Edison's DI program aligns with district LCAP goals: 1) Preparing all students for college and careers (At Edison in two languages); 2) Providing EL students with rigorous instruction and access to the core (At Edison via good ELD, 2nd language acquisition techniques, and core content taught in Spanish); and 3) Operating safe, engaging and family-friendly schools (Edison has a slightly more robust focus on these areas). While the methods may vary slightly, overarching goals are the same. To reduce chronic absenteeism we share research on absence impact and facts on attendance policies, confer with families, and send our congratulatory or warning letters.. To minimize behaviors that might lead to suspension, we use a progressive discipline system, social emotional curriculum, counseling and social skills groups, and positive behavior reinforcement.

Implementation and Monitoring

Edison involves all stakeholders. For staff, the following is provided: on-going professional development (PD), time to analyze achievement data, involvement in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and site curriculum development committees, as well as governing opportunities via the School Leadership Team (SLT) and Site Council. For families, this includes frequent communication of the DI model and achievement data, parent involvement in giving feedback, designing events, volunteering and participating in governance and leadership. Parents and staff have input on site goals, site budgets, and hiring committees and collaborate on school cultural and community-building events. We use a variety of bilingual communication strategies to engage stakeholders. For parents: formal and informal meetings, briefings, classes, a bilingual parent handbook, a weekly newsletter, volunteer trainings, eBlasts and automated phone calls. For staff: a weekly staff bulletin, banked time meetings,

summer pre-service meetings, classroom walk-throughs, committee and team meetings, and coaching. Monitoring and Assessment of the Effectiveness of Parent Engagement is done by the Principal, Community Liaison, and Site Council – the latter providing oversight of our annual parent engagement goal in the SPSA and conducting an annual Edison parent survey. Capacity-building activities related to Professional Learning for teachers, administrators, and non-instructional staff are detailed in the SPSA – with input from the SLT, the PD Committee and PLCs. The master schedule provides common planning time by grade level and the site plan provides resources to support PLCs. Other PD opportunities are provided through banked time, summer institutes (for both instructional and non-instructional staff) and planning meetings. The Literacy Coach and Interventionists develop the capacity of the Bilingual Instructional Assistants. The Effectiveness of Instructional Learning Activities is Monitored and Evaluated by the Principal, SLT, PD Committee and Site Council. Some methods to monitor program implementation mirror those detailed in SMMUSD’s LCAP (stakeholder surveys, walk-throughs, documenting involvement and input). However, the District LCAP does not assume that all parent engagement work must occur in Spanish and English and must always account for families that have wide variance in literacy skills and experience with the US educational system. So parent engagement can require different strategies, require more time and resources, and incorporate more informal measures. Professional Learning in a DI model also includes some things that may not be contemplated in a monolingual program (i.e., additional standards, teaching for transference, curriculum integration of ELD strategies, etc.).

Results and Outcomes

Edison monitors DI implementation and uses assessment results to evaluate student outcomes. We disaggregate and analyze student data on a quarterly basis. The information informs differentiated classroom instruction for students, and helps match students to intervention programs. Teachers use the data to develop individual Academic Improvement Plans. Edison’s monitoring and assessment plans differ slightly from the District LCAP because the DI model requires us to assess in Spanish K–1 and in both languages in grades 2–5. Since students are learning to read and learning a second language at the same time, we also feel the need to monitor reading progress more frequently, identify reading gaps earlier, and provide more targeted interventions. So, we supplement district funds with resources from our site plan. Qualitative and quantitative data demonstrate positive results for student outcomes. Edison attendance and discipline data show that chronic absence and suspension rates are lower than state averages and that rates for targeted groups are proportionate to our population. Lead reading data from Fountas & Pinnell and WRAP show a steady reduction with each passing grade in the percentage of students who are far below grade level in reading. Reclassification data show that by 5th grade, nearly all Edison EL students meet criteria for reclassification. Summaries of lead data are shared with PLCs, the SLT, and Site Council each quarter. Analyses of findings from lag data (SBAC results and year-end reading, math and writing assessments) are shared with Faculty, Site Council and the families in written analyses and briefings. Results show that Edison students’ academic outcomes now outpace Statewide results and compare favorably with our high achieving district elementary school averages. As Edison added data

teams and PLCs and established a strong RTI2 program, student achievement has grown steadily, with a 175 point gain over 11 years with the CST and growth each year with the SBAC. Data for targeted groups of students also indicate that Edison is closing achievement gaps. 2016–2017 SBAC results showed that all significant subgroups at Edison had higher achievement in English and Math and made more academic progress between grade levels than did other similar students in the State of California and in SMMUSD. Even with the caveat that comparing Edison to district-wide averages is not an “apples to apples” comparison because the DI program is so different, Edison achievement scores are now among the highest in the district. Systems to support cycles of inquiry in PLCs help us use data for continual program improvement. Part of our cycle of inquiry is to use quantitative and qualitative data to find patterns of strengths and weaknesses, craft goals for school improvement, develop strategies to carry out goals, and allocate resources to implement them.