

San Jose Charter Academy Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19650946023527

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): West Covina Unified

School: San Jose Charter Academy

Demographics

Enrollment: 1,246 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: Yes

Overview

San Jose Charter Academy is a wonderful place for students to learn. Located in West Covina, San Jose Charter Academy (SJCA) has a Transition Kindergarten (TK) through 8th grade enrollment of 1246 students with approximately 2400 students on the waiting list. Established as a charter school in 1998, SJCA has worked intentionally and purposefully in providing students with an education that prepares them for their learning careers.

At SJCA, we create an environment in which all students are expected to achieve at their optimal potential. We strive to foster a well-rounded student who knows how to access, analyze and use information to the best of their ability. In order to achieve this, we have to ensure our program provides a positive, hands-on approach to learning.

While the delivery of purposeful and intentional instruction is certainly an important part of what we do, addressing our students' social-emotional and executive functioning needs are important to us as well. We understand that learning best occurs when

children are known and understood as individuals. We believe that each child's learning journey needs to start from the individual's starting point, including the learner's existing knowledge, socio-economic background, and cultural heritage.

Strong character building, goal setting, and healthy lifestyles balance our high academic standards, as we try to prepare our students to thrive in the global community. Our eight Core Values, Wisdom, Justice, Courage, Compassion, Hope, Respect, Responsibility, and Integrity are taught throughout the year. There is a monthly focus for each core value, which is addressed through character education lessons, discussions, activities, and individual reflections.

Leadership matters. We are also very excited about the implementation of the FranklinCovey Education "The Leader In Me" program, involving all TK–8th grade students. In our second year, this program empowers our community through the teachings of life and leadership skills that everyone can be a leader.

Parents are very supportive of our efforts and continue to show their appreciation through their ongoing support, volunteerism and participation in a variety of school activities. We have formed strong partnerships with the city of West Covina and local service clubs, encouraging a reciprocal relationship and enhanced community engagement.

SJCA has been twice selected as a 2009 and 2016 National Blue Ribbon School and a California Distinguished School for 2004, 2008, and 2012. In addition, we have been awarded the Title 1 Achieving school award numerous times. While we are truly honored by these recognitions, SJCA continues to have a growth mindset of a school in continuous improvement.

Our dedicated and knowledgeable staff, supportive parents, and involved community members all work collaboratively for the sole purpose of providing a world-class education to all San Jose Charter Academy students.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Data Driven Professional Development

Length of Model Program/Practice: 8+ years

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

Target Population(s): American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Filipino, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

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

Description

Teaching and learning are paramount at SJCA. This learning culture embraces reciprocal practices amongst stakeholders, most notably, our students and teachers. Teachers and learners benefit from the cycle of instruction: direct instruction, guided/independent practice, assessment and reflection.

With respect to adult learners, SJCA has considered Malcolm Knowles' five principles: involvement in planning and evaluating content, experience roots the learning activities, relevance to the environment, and learning is "problem-centered" rather than "content-oriented".

As such, the Data-Driven Professional Development Model Program at SJCA is based upon student achievement results and performance, teacher reflection, and input. SJCA is committed to providing PD in an on-going, cyclical nature. This process continues to foster a culture that supports and promotes achievement for on-time, needs-based, and strategic, long-term PD goals.

The PD framework includes:

New Teacher Training: This is provided for all new teaching staff, despite previous teaching experience, to ensure the robust and rigorous learning experience for students. Calibration and articulation of teaching and learning strategies are beneficial to our range of learners.

Preservice Training: All staff engage in four days of preservice PD depending upon the identified needs of standards, curriculum, student and teacher needs from the aforementioned data sources.

On-going Weekly PD: a 50-minute block of time WITHIN the daily teacher workday gives staff the common time for timely PD to strengthen teaching and learning needs. Each day is dedicated to a specific topic: RTI/MTSS intervention, data analysis, literacy/technology, curricular planning and team governance.

Monthly School-wide PD: Staff meetings are integral to a whole-school approach where grade levels can share in the camaraderie and vertical (TK–8) development of our teaching and learning goals. Curriculum rotations are led by our teacher leaders designated as curriculum coordinators. They are provided opportunities to observe teachers and develop PD based on identified opportunities, best practices or next steps in program implementation.

Reflective PD Planning: All teams engage in reflective feedback to ensure PD is effective and beneficial to our community. There are identified days throughout the

school year when grade level teams, leadership and administrative teams are meet to assess, reflect and refine PD plans.

PD sessions are led by various leaders, teachers, staff members and contracted providers. PD is a valued, integral part of our school design because all stakeholders have a role in making it successful. The commitment to data analysis at all levels and reflective conversation anchors the topics and direction for discussions, decisions, and practice.

Implementation and Monitoring

First and foremost, our school offers all students a balanced, comprehensive, standards-aligned core curriculum. This serves as the foundation for teaching and learning success.

Equally, we honor the professional workday by ensuring the allocation of COMMON time is set for daily PD is set for teachers to collaborate. As mentioned, the topics for teams are consistent across the day, week and month for all staff. This allows support staff to help lead, guide, and monitor the outcomes of the PD time. There are two teachers on special assignment whose focus is to enhance digital literacy, technology and data analysis. They are able to present the most relevant, updated techniques in enhancing learning in these high need domains.

SJCA is a highly collaborative environment. We strongly feel that collaboration across the community to include parents, teachers, students, and administration, is a necessary ingredient for building and sustaining a positive culture.

As mentioned in the previous section, the sustainable quality of our program is also rooted in the opportunity for stakeholder input and feedback. Specialized staff development programs provide proactive instructional leadership. When teachers are given the tools they need to be at their best, their efficacy rises, as well as their perceptions of themselves as educators.

Gathering reported data and more importantly, its analysis is critical to setting the pace, depth and rigor of teaching and learning. It establishes the purpose and intention of daily work, pacing guides, and sustained learning throughout the school year. The SJCA Leadership Team created a systematic method and timeline that utilizes the most current tools, principles and practice in synthesizing and disaggregating data that can be used universally throughout the school. This practice is duplicated with student assessments/outcomes and PD alike.

We have evaluated all types of data to reflect and revise our PD plans. One example is behavioral data in identifying root causes. When social-emotional needs and gaps in executive function were identified, PD was planned to support teachers. Another example is related to understanding the structure of the Smarter Balanced Assessment. While our teachers were acquainted with the CA standards and our local curricula, the refined understanding of the SBAC was critical. Over time we have studied and shared

the technical language related to the SBAC blueprint, the reporting formats, and related tools.

The resources and programs outlined in our LCAP do require implementation monitoring. This process has enhanced our ability to track the progress towards our identified goals. In addition to monitoring the progress towards LCAP goals, timely reflecting and reporting to our stakeholder groups (School Site Council, Board of Directors, Leadership Team, etc.) require the ongoing monitoring of our implementation plan.

Results and Outcomes

SJCA embraces a unique and comprehensive school design and organizational structure that provides a professional work environment emphasizing collegial interaction and ongoing professional development while empowering a greater role in school decision making. Teachers, both veteran and fledgling, can interact and experience support and growth at the pace and depth they need to engage positive student outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to focus on themed instructional practice based on foci determined by student achievement data and professional needs assessment. Teachers are also encouraged to share from their own professional focus to contribute from their learning passions, or best practices, as well. As said by a teacher now with us for four years, “The fact that the school gives me these opportunities and has the faith in me to report back was a great confidence booster and the things I learned at these conferences has directly impacted my practice.”

Teacher capacity is at the center of the SJCA’s PD model. It is understood that when a teacher’s ability is increased, that will more than likely directly impact positive student outcomes. A large component of the PLC development is daily collaboration around data, instruction, and culture. A first year teacher shares, “Collaborating with other teachers has been my biggest source of support because not only have not only been able to gain advice, but I have also been able to learn about the incredible spirit that SJCA has as a whole. I had the opportunity to meet with one elementary teacher in particular, to gain support and strategies regarding classroom management. After observing her classroom management strategies, I was able to talk with her and apply these strategies to my own class, which were extremely helpful! Overall, the amount of support I’ve received throughout my first year here has been immense. “

Along with teachers becoming more capable, students also can connect their improvement based on the improving practice of their teachers. And 8th grader states about the recent shift in formative assessment, “ I feel that this (feedback) helps me do the best I can. It tells me what I need to know to master and understand the concept.” Consequently, students benefit from the micro-adjustments teachers implement as they make meaning, calibrate, and share best practices within and across teams.

Professional Development enables us to maintain a student-focused vision. Our school has made a serious investment in PD for teachers, administrators, and school staff. We believe it is an ongoing activity, one that must be site-based and intensive. Over time,

the impact both continues to be, and has been profound, as reflected in overall achievement data and community-based surveys and reflections. Operating with this mindset allows us to work to realize our vision, “to inspire children to create, innovate, and imagine limitless possibilities....to dream, to do, to change!”