

Killian Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19734526022305

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): Rowland Unified

School: Killian Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 584 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Killian Elementary School, built in 1964, is nestled in the suburban community of Rowland Heights and is one of nineteen schools in the Rowland Unified School District. There are approximately 584 students served from Transitional Kindergarten through Sixth Grade. All primary classes have a 22:1 student to teacher ratio. A culturally rich community surrounds Killian contributing to a student population of 38% Asian, 36% Hispanic, 14% White, 3% African American, and 9% Filipino. English Language Learners are 28% of the student population and 56% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

The staff at Killian have a collective commitment to create an environment where all students achieve academic and behavioral success. Killian faculty is dedicated to providing student-centered and Common Core Standards-based instruction. Killian Elementary School's mission is: Commitment to excellence for all and by all students and staff, through our dedication to provide a strong support system for students; and provide a rigorous instructional program delivered with high expectations for academic achievement.

Parent and community volunteers actively participate by serving on the School Site Council (SSC), and English Language Advisory Community (ELAC). Killian works in partnership with the American Chinese School (ACS), which is on campus, to support language development in Mandarin and enhance cultural understanding. Enrichment programs are offered after school such as Chess Masters, Young Rembrandts, Mad Science, cheer/dance and athletics.

Through a collaborative process, the staff at Killian selected Reading as the instructional focus and committed to a three year plan to implement Reading Workshop in every classroom. Other schools in the district have different instructional focuses. In an effort to develop a strategic and systematic plan of approach, the first practice that is being targeted is Small Group Reading Instruction in every classroom. In combination to the instructional focus, we are also developing connections to reading across the school for students, parents and community. You can find literacy events that the entire family can participate in, such as “Scary Spooky Story Night” around Halloween time and “Reading on the Green” during springtime where the focus is on reading. Students have become active participants in the efforts to promote reading by creating a school-wide program, Book Exchange, that is completely created and managed by students. The 5th grade students who created the Book Exchange took the idea from the “Do Good Challenge,” an initiative at the University of Maryland, which is the adopted university for that class (all classes have a wide variety of adopted universities).

All of the work at Killian is focused on developing strong reading foundations for all students. The professional development plan and financial and human resources are connected to one single vision: reading success for every student.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Small Group Reading Instruction

Length of Model Program/Practice: Less than 2 years

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

Target Population(s): Hispanic, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners

Strategies Used: Data-Driven Decision Making, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

Killian Elementary’s model practice is Small Group Reading Instruction at all grade levels (TK–6). All teachers implement Small Group Reading Instruction in order to provide students with targeted instruction such as concepts of print, decoding, fluency, and comprehension strategies. While the focus is on small group instruction, teachers

also provide opportunities to develop positive reading behaviors such as building stamina, goal setting, and teaching students how to select books based on level and interest.

In the classroom, teachers get to know students as readers and learners. They utilize reading inventories to understand students' interests, experiences, likes/dislikes, culture, connections to text and language proficiency. This information along with assessments such as Running Records, anecdotal records, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), STAR Reading and California Assessment of Student Performance (CAASP) help provide teachers with a reading profile for each student.

If a student's reading need is significantly delayed and beyond what can be done in a small group in the classroom, the student is referred to work with the reading Teacher On Special Assignment (TOSA). The reading intervention program is focused on targeted foundational skills to help struggling readers. Pre and post data are collected for each student using Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Students are placed in a small group and meet three times a week for thirty minutes. Each intervention cycle lasts for seven weeks and progress monitoring data are collected on an on-going basis to make sure students are making adequate progress.

The instructional focus of reading is unique to Killian and one other school in the district. For professional development Killian collaborates with the other identified reading school to bring professional experts to work with the faculties three times a year during district-wide pupil free days. However, our professional development plan includes components that are tailored to meet the needs of Killian students and teachers. In addition, we have a full time Instructional Coach who is dedicated strictly to coaching and providing instructional support for teachers. Teachers have the opportunity to participate in coaching cycles. Other elements of professional development utilized include "lab days." During "lab days," teachers have the opportunity to preview a lesson, observe a demo conducted by a colleague or the instructional coach, and debrief the lesson. Teachers have worked on designing units of study for reading that incorporate Common Core State Standards, integrates adopted curriculum and supplemental materials and utilizes components of balanced literacy. This customized professional development opportunities are offered to staff as part of the continuous study of Small Group Reading Instruction.

Implementation and Monitoring

The implementation of Small Group Reading Instruction began with professional development around structures and procedures, classroom environment, student reading behaviors, materials, and family connections. It required analysis of a variety of student data in order to place students in small groups. There are two types of small group instruction which includes Guided Reading and Strategy Groups. Guided reading groups are established based on students' reading level which is provided by STAR and Early STAR Literacy Assessments as well as Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) results. Strategy groups are flexible and fluid. Students may be placed based on teacher observation, anecdotal records or other formative assessments.

In order to monitor the implementation of Small Group Reading Instruction, the leadership team developed a walkthrough tool for gathering data. The form includes behaviors that are expected to be seen in the classroom from students such as:

- Building enthusiasm and stamina for reading
- Meeting in small groups, with the teacher, to learn new strategies to develop as individual readers
- Practicing new skills and strategies to develop as independent readers
- Reading self-selected books every day and being able to share what they are reading with others
- Showing progress in their reading
- We also look for the following teacher behaviors in the classroom:
 - Determining student needs to pull small groups for reading instruction
 - Doing something different with each group based on the readers in the group
 - Trying out new strategies with small groups of students
 - Observing readers as learners to determine next steps
 - Observing and documenting students' reading growth

Currently, the administrators capture this data through regular walkthroughs of classrooms. In the future, the goal is to have all teachers utilize the data collection tool as we begin Learning Walks/Instructional Rounds focused on small group instruction.

The professional development plan for Small Group Reading Instruction consist of the following elements:

- Three full days of learning with professional experts
- One full day at the beginning of the year facilitated by admin/instructional coach
- Lab days throughout the year
- Coaching Cycle Model (analyze data, plan, teach, debrief)
- Monthly professional development meetings for ninety minute (early release Mondays)

In addition, teachers have grade level collaboration time on a weekly basis for a period of fifty minutes during the school day. Once a month, teachers meet with their grade

level for a period of ninety minutes. The Instructional Coach helps to plan next steps, guides implementation, identifies resources and materials and helps teachers reflect on their practice.

Results and Outcomes

The Killian Staff has continually received positive results on all assessment indicators in reading and we attribute that to the work done in Small Group Reading Instruction. Our school-wide STAR assessment results from Fall 2017, show that approximately half or more of students are in the 50th percentile or higher in reading skills. The breakdown is as follows:

- 1st grade - 93%
- 2nd grade - 80%
- 3rd grade - 64%
- 4th grade - 59%
- 5th grade - 56%
- 6th grade - 49%

Early STAR Literacy, an early literacy assessment, is administered three times a year. It provides an important indicator as to the percent of students that will be in the “probable reader” range by the end of 3rd grade. The results from the beginning of the 2017–2018 school year indicate that only 11% of Kindergarten students qualified as “probable readers.” However, the percent of “probable readers” increases as students progress through the primary grades.

- 1st grade - 62%
- 2nd grade - 85%
- 3rd grade - 95%

Other measures such as Rowland Unified School District (RUSD) Interim Assessments and California Assessment of Student Progress (CAASP) results indicate a high level of achievement in the area of English Language Arts. Killian Elementary consistently outperforms District and County results.

Rowland Unified School District Fall (2017) Interim Assessments Results

Percent of Students that Mastered Skills (ELA):

Killian Results:

- TK/Kindergarten - 64% (mastered)
- 1st grade - 62% (mastered)
- Grade 2 does not test ELA for interim assessment
- Grade 3 - 24% (above standard), 43% (at/near standard)
- Grade 4 - 35% (above standard), 55% (at/near standard)
- Grade 5 - 42% (above standard), 42% (at/near standard)

- Grade 6 - 41% (above standard), 44% (at/near standard)

Continuous progress monitoring of students in reading intervention groups is essential. During the 2016–2017 school year, 82% of students participating in intervention demonstrated progress in reading fluency and comprehension. Throughout the school year, approximately fifty to sixty students participated in intervention and 95% demonstrated growth as measured by pre and post assessments conducted by the reading TOSA.

Killian's goal is to actively promote student engagement and academic achievement for all students. In order to achieve this goal, we provide targeted instruction in reading and support the growth, development and joy of reading.