

## **Marguerita Elementary School Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 19757136011050

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): Alhambra Unified

School: Marguerita Elementary School

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 750 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

Marguerita Elementary School is a Title I TK–8th grade school located in Alhambra in the West San Gabriel Valley of Los Angeles County, about eight miles from the downtown Los Angeles Civic Center. It is a school that celebrates racial and cultural diversity, serving a student population of 750 students, 261 of whom are English Learners, and 125 who are in the Mandarin Dual Immersion Program. The student population is 44% Hispanic, 51.2% Asian, and 4.8% other, consisting of White, Black, and students registered as two or more races. Set in a predominantly medium to low socioeconomic community, within the Alhambra Unified School District, 68% of the students receive free/reduced lunch.

The school's diverse staff consists of highly-qualified, credentialed teachers and professionals that provide opportunities for students to develop critical thinking through a variety of teaching strategies.

In ELA, strategies to support both reading and writing guided by higher order thinking questions include, and are not limited to, close reading strategies, Thinking Maps, annotation, Socratic Seminars, Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies, and reflective journals.

In both ELA and math, students build listening and speaking skills through student-led discourse, and work collaboratively to problem solve, build solutions and answer essential questions. Through these well-established practices, students apply critical thinking skills across the curriculum.

Students have been given the opportunity to participate in visual and performing arts through after school activities such as various dance classes, drama club, art class, filmmaking, photography, and set design. These enrichment experiences create a positive school climate that promotes student and parent engagement.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: STREAM-lined Strategies for Student Success

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Prevention, Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Professional Development, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, Use of Technology, Visual and Performing A

Target Population(s): Asian, Hispanic, Two or More Races

Strategies Used: School Climate, Data-Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Professional Development

## **Description**

Through the STREAM (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art, and Math) model, Marguerita Elementary School has established a highly effective educational environment which promotes student success.

Science lessons are taught using (DOK) Depth of Knowledge questioning techniques and are taught in Mandarin in select Dual Immersion classrooms. Using LCAP funding, a teacher was hired to teach hands-on, inquiry-based lessons in a designated science lab. GLAD(Guided Language Acquisition Design) teaching strategies also enhance the school's science curriculum.

Students have access to the use of iPads, tablets, and chromebooks as tools to enhance learning. Educational technology resources such as Google Apps,

presentation applications, reading programs, and online math activities are integrated into daily lessons.

Some of the reading strategies used to bolster student comprehension and participation are close reading, Socratic Seminars, GLAD strategies, and DOK questions. Additionally, interactive read-alouds develop comprehension, critical thinking and listening skills through the use of narrative and informational texts.

Various engineering activities are offered, which raise the level of student engagement. Many students learn coding during the regular school day. In an effort to close the achievement gap, our target student populations are invited to participate in several LCAP-funded programs in Vex Robotics, Dots and Dash (primary robotics/coding program), and project based learning.

To provide opportunities for creativity, communication, and collaboration, Marguerita has developed its visual and performing arts program over the past several years. Students can participate in a drama club, as well as music, dance, and a variety of visual arts classes.

The students in our drama club put on a production of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” by Shakespeare in 2015, and “The Little Mermaid” in 2016. Students performed musical pieces led by our music teachers, and dances choreographed by our dance teachers. Other students collaborated on production design for these plays through their elective art classes. Marguerita parents helped create props and sew costumes for the productions. Students also opt to take photography, art, filmmaking, and Lion Dance classes offered after school.

With the adoption of a new Math curriculum across grades TK–8th, teachers implement the Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP) in their classrooms. Specifically in the primary grades, 10 frames and number bonds are used to help students problem solve, reason abstractly and provide proof. In all classes, manipulatives are used to build comprehension of mathematical concepts. Teachers provide opportunities for collaboration and discourse and encourage students to construct viable arguments and explain their reasoning. Using ACELLUS, an online program, 6th–8th students are provided with intervention in the area of math, as well as reading.

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

Professional development for teachers has supported the implementation of our STREAM-lined strategies. Student discourse with emphasis on accountable talk and Bloom’s Taxonomy/DOK were subjects of trainings at Marguerita School. The strategies gained were implemented across the curriculum to build critical thinking in students. Student discourse in the form of Partner Talk and Socratic Seminar, among other strategies, is widely implemented. Also, training in Interactive Read Aloud provided teachers with another means to promote student engagement while building critical thinking skills. Another professional development focus was Standards for Mathematical Practices, which highlighted ways to build mathematical reasoning and problem solving.

Finally, Marguerita staff has received extensive training on the use of GLAD strategies. These techniques are used to help students access content through visual support and group collaboration. Students are actively engaged lessons and are held accountable for their learning.

Follow-up of professional development is provided for at staff meetings where teachers are able to share results and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies being implemented. In some cases, gallery walks allow teachers to learn from each other and further apply the techniques to modify their own lessons. Teachers also review SBAC data and district interim assessments to modify instruction.

Parents play an active role in their children's education at Marguerita School. Parent workshops, parenting classes, monthly parent meetings with the principal, PTA events, school carnivals, ASB fundraising, family picnics, and classroom volunteers are some of the many ways that parents are involved in the school community.

A distinguishing factor that makes Marguerita School unique is its Dual Immersion Mandarin program, referred to in LCAP Goal 2. Beginning in the 2016–2017 school year, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes were filled with students and families committed to dual-immersion education. Following the 50/50 Dual-Immersion model, students receive language arts instruction in both English and Mandarin. Additionally, immersion students learn science content in Mandarin. These students have exposed the school community to Chinese culture and built a multicultural awareness through the performances shared with the entire school.

Many extracurricular STEM-based activities are provided to extend and enrich student learning, while building interest and engagement. We believe that participation in the visual and performing arts has also helped our students have increased motivation and confidence, and has created a more positive school climate.

## **Results and Outcomes**

Ongoing progress monitoring occurs through grade level common assessments. Teacher leaders and administrators provide guiding questions to focus collaboration on student needs. Through ongoing qualitative and quantitative monitoring and assessment, teachers analyze, identify, and target areas of need related to critical thinking and problem solving.

In the 2015–2016 school year, overall ELA SBAC data shows that 55.4% of our students met or exceeded standards, which is a 2.8% gain from the previous year. The overall Math SBAC data shows that 47.2% of our students met or exceeded standards, a 3.2% gain from the previous year. In the 2016–2017 school year the overall ELA SBAC data shows that 57.17% of Marguerita students met or exceeded standards, which is a 1.7% gain from the previous year and 8.61% higher than the overall state average. The overall Math SBAC data show that 50.85% of our students met or exceeded standards, a 3.7% gain from the previous year and 13.29% higher than the overall state average. Our Hispanic subgroup student population, considered a local

priority in Goal 2 of the LCAP, made an ELA gain of 4.4% and a Math gain of 2.4% on the 2015–2016 SBAC. The following year, this subgroup made a 2.0% gain in ELA and a 3.4% gain in Math. Marguerita has outperformed the California state overall student achievement in both ELA and Math.

Attendance reports for 2016–2017 indicate a Chronic Absenteeism rate of 3.4%, which is half that of the Alhambra District rate of 6.9%. Our Gateway to Success Intervention Advisor has led a campaign to increase the attendance rates at Marguerita. These activities include attendance incentives and certificates, class contests, an interactive bulletin board, raffles, motivational classroom presentations, and community partnerships to reward students for coming to school.

Our school supports the social/emotional health of our students through counseling services that provide students with one-on-one sessions and social skills groups. Counselors work actively on campus to provide classroom presentations that address bullying, communication, and empathy. Eligible students have regularly scheduled individual counseling sessions but all students have the option to seek out counselors independently for support and academic guidance.

At Marguerita School, we provide a unique learning environment that challenges students to be creative problem-solvers and critical thinkers while raising the level of student motivation and engagement. With student-centered learning, parent involvement, and teacher collaboration, combined with the implementation of STREAM-lined strategies, students gain the necessary skills to be collaborative yet competitive in an ever-changing world. Our STREAM-lined program distinguishes Marguerita School as a model in the district and guides our students forward toward becoming college and career ready global citizens who make impactful contributions to society.