

Chaparral Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 30664646118947

County: Orange

District (Local Educational Agency): Capistrano Unified

School: Chaparral Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 792 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Chaparral Elementary School

Home of the Champions, "Where Students are First!"

Recognized as a California Distinguished School in 2004, 2008 and 2014, Chaparral Elementary School sets high standards and expectations for all facets of the school community. Chaparral Elementary is home to 792 transitional kindergarten through fifth grade students, 29 teachers, two administrators and support staff. Chaparral is a high achieving academic performance school at both the district and state level. We believe in the importance of student acquisition of standards and skills, and the ability to use those skills in all subject areas to prepare students for college and career readiness in jobs that have yet to be created. Special emphasis is placed on reading, writing, listening, speaking grounded in evidence in all content areas. Critical thinking through real world problem-solving is also a priority to create opportunities for students to effectively communicate their knowledge to others.

Since opening Chaparral's school doors in 2001, the staff continues to put students first, academically and socially. Chaparral operates as a professional learning community (PLC) in which the teachers and administrators continually challenge themselves to learn through best practices and action research. Nearly half of our teachers are or have been staff development facilitators for the Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD) in the areas of literacy, math, science and technology. Chaparral teachers support the philosophy of learning by doing and embrace the learning of other teachers through reflective practices. Additionally, teachers are mentors for new teachers, master teachers for many local universities, curriculum pilot program instructors and Teachers on Special Assignment. Chaparral's collective commitment has and always will be to teach ourselves and our students more today than yesterday.

Chaparral teachers meet in teams regularly for curriculum planning and assessment analysis to improve student learning. As a result of this collaboration, Chaparral is featured in "The Power of Professional Learning Communities at Work," with the late PLC author Dr. Rick DuFour. The commitment to PLCs has become the driving force behind the staff developing mathematical practices and communication. Many years ago Chaparral began its research and exploration of Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI). This student centered approach facilitates equity in students' mathematical sense making. Chaparral has inspired the math focus districtwide to align the standards with the CGI philosophy.

In addition to high performing academics, Chaparral Elementary promotes strong parent, community and business involvement. This is evident with continual school-home communication, parent and community volunteers and a devoted PTA. In essence, Chaparral builds a strong sense of community, a place where everyone comes together to promote teaching and learning for a Championship education.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI)

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): Asian, Black or African American, Filipino, Hispanic, White, Two or More Races, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

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

Description

Chaparral is the distinguished model that influenced the district in 2016 to use a portion of their teacher effectiveness grant money to train all, approximately 900 elementary teachers in CGI. Chaparral's teachers are the key resource and provider of training for CUSD teachers in CGI.

For over ten years, Chaparral teachers have deepened their understanding that CGI is a student centered philosophy to teaching math through student sense making. It provides the opportunity for teachers to build upon students' existing conceptual understanding of math concepts and uses their misconceptions to guide instruction. The CGI approach encourages students to use their own invented strategies to make sense of mathematics. Communicating reasoning and constructing viable arguments is foundational to this approach and validates all students' learning styles.

Beginning in 2006, Chaparral teachers were trained extensively in the CGI philosophy and began their journey to support and change the way math instruction was implemented in their classrooms. Through the PTA, Orange County Department of Education, a partnership with University of California, Irvine and grants, Chaparral was able to secure funding and essential resources for teacher training and materials. Once Common Core was adopted, Chaparral was ahead of the curve in the area of depth and complexity and teaching for conceptual understanding. The community was included in this shift as staff encouraged parents to develop their understanding and value the conceptual process while learning alongside their child. For example, homework materials in some primary grades are developed for parents and children to share their math thinking together.

A CGI-based classroom addresses the needs of all students, including unique student populations such as English Learners (EL), students with disabilities and gifted students. It supports students in the 21st century skills of creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking. All teachers and administrators meet regularly for professional development to collaborate and support student progress and create common assessments. An analysis of common formative assessments and the continuous growth reflected in the yearly Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA), has proven CGI to be successful for all Chaparral learners.

Chaparral's focus on CGI has supported many components of Common Core practices, the district's LCAP focus and the interdisciplinary literacy model. Students use components of CGI in all academic areas with a tremendous benefit to their social-emotional growth. One of the most valuable components of CGI is the opportunity students are given to use parts of the science 5E model as they engage, explore, explain and extend their math understanding. The CGI model supports all academic areas and is particularly exciting as CUSD starts the initial roll out of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Implementation and Monitoring

The high caliber of the staff's knowledge and commitment to student success contributes to Chaparral's ability to implement and monitor equal access of CGI to all students. All teachers and administrators have embraced this philosophy and have been involved with capacity building through extensive training, book studies, article reviews, and CGI coaches working with grade level teams. This has enabled teachers to build their confidence and flexibility in thinking. Due to this commitment of years of learning and practicing, teachers are knowledgeable and able to explain math strategies with each other and the parent community.

Chaparral has included the parent community to ensure all stakeholders are involved in the philosophy of CGI. Teachers explain this philosophy at Back to School Night, where parents are encouraged to take pictures of anchor charts of student generated strategies. At conference time, developmental math strategies are discussed with parents. Progress reports and/or class work are sent home weekly, so that parents can monitor their child's math reasoning. Students are also encouraged to share their math thinking with their families. The strength of Chaparral's parent community includes having parent volunteers working one-on-one and with groups of students on math concepts.

An integral part of teaching and learning at Chaparral is our capacity building through collaboration. Professional Learning is part of the fabric of Chaparral and includes collaboration through grade level, inter-grade level articulation and staff development. Meetings are centered around articulation and improving student understanding. Teachers utilize these opportunities for identifying needs, establishing goals, receiving training in mathematical practices and evaluating and monitoring progress of student learning through common assessments, data analysis and anecdotal records. This is achieved by following the lesson study model of Plan, Do, Study, Act tied to GFI. The lesson study allows teachers to collaboratively choose or create a math task (PLAN) and teach the lesson in a classroom (DO). Teachers take the data from the lesson and discuss (STUDY). Finally, teachers can utilize the information as they plan the next steps for student learning (ACT). This process builds capacity and confidence in teachers to implement these practices in their own classrooms.

Ongoing assessment and analysis of student work drive the next steps in teacher planning for student understanding. Cross-grade level meetings provide the opportunity to study the coherence of the math standards, common academic language, and anchor lessons and charts. To help monitor student progress and the effectiveness of CGI, teachers examine exit tickets, common assessments, formative assessments, math journals, anecdotal records and observe student math models to guide the next steps to reach all students' learning styles and modalities.

Results and Outcomes

At Chaparral, student progress is monitored and assessment results are used to determine proficiency on CCSS. Teachers meet to reflect within grade levels; teams

and coaches follow the Plan, Do, Study, Act model. The model allows for continuous program improvement and differentiation of instruction to meet the needs of all student groups. The key strategies of GFI are included to ensure lessons embed learning goals, address student engagement, utilize teaching strategies and analyze assessments. The student centered approach of CGI is used to facilitate student understanding of math concepts. In the CGI model, students and teachers are actively engaged in critical thinking through consistent, daily use of student sense making in mathematics.

Instructional decisions are based on analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data from formative and summative assessments, student work and observations. When reflecting on the collected data, teachers focus around three essential questions: What do students need to know, understand and be able to do? How will it be determined if they have grasped this information? How will we support success for ALL through intervention and enrichment opportunities? The results are used for continuous program improvement and are documented to plan the next steps for instruction to meet all student needs.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) has been used for the past three years to measure overall achievement on CCSS. Chaparral and CUSD focuses on three student groups including all students, EL and Students with Disabilities (SWD). The quantitative indicators from this data show Chaparral demonstrating positive results overtime in students that met the math achievement standard. The scores in overall performance have increased 5% from 2014 to 2017. The claim performance shows an increase in the percent of students above the standard. Chaparral's growth in Concepts & Procedures is 9%, Problem Solving & Modeling/Data is 6.2% and Communicating Reasoning is 4.4%.

Additional SBA data from the Fall 2017 CA School Dashboard indicates Chaparral's students' average distance is 41.2 points above level 3, EL is 36 points above level 3 and SWD 0.8 points below level 3. The SBA data for the district showed all students 18.9 points above level 3, EL are 58.4 points below level 3 and SWD are 68.1 points below level 3. In comparison, Chaparral all student group is performing 22.3 points higher than the District average in math, Chaparral EL student group is performing 94.4 points higher than the District average in math and Chaparral SWD student group is performing 67.3 points higher than the District average in math.

Chaparral continues to study CGI and serve as leaders in CUSD in GFI in all academic areas. As our district begins to look at the role out of three-dimensional science learning in NGSS, what Chaparral knows and has learned with CGI will benefit the foundation and structure of the NGSS implementation.