

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

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 30664986094635

County: Orange

District (Local Educational Agency): Fountain Valley Elementary

School: Courreges Elementary School

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 652 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

Fountain Valley School District is comprised of seven elementary schools and three middle schools. Courreges Elementary School is located in the southwestern section of Fountain Valley. It has a middle class population of students from a predominantly professional community. Strong parent involvement is evident and supports the vital partnership between the home and school. Currently in the 2017–2018 school year, Courreges serves 652 students in grades kindergarten through five on a traditional calendar schedule. The chart below displays school enrollment broken down by ethnicity.

Demographics (significant groups only):

- White - 49%
- Asian - 34%
- Hispanic - 12%
- Socio-economically disadvantaged - 15%
- English Learners - 13%

- Special Education - 10%

"Strive for Excellence" is the common vision that drives all members of the Courreges community. Courreges is committed to providing a safe and challenging environment for ALL students. It is the expectation that students will succeed in the acquisition of basic skills, become life-long learners, and quality citizens. Guided by knowledgeable, highly trained teachers, support staff, the administrator, and active parents, students strive for academic, social, and emotional excellence. The results of this labor are evidenced through strong student achievement. Teachers, staff, and the administrator continue to act on the principle that students come first. The educational programs at the school are tailored to meet the specific needs of the entire school population. Continued professional development is a priority for teachers, support staff, classified personnel, as well as the principal. Courreges provides families with parent education opportunities and a variety of ways to be involved in the students' educational experience. Courreges is dedicated to ensuring the academic success of every student, providing them with a comprehensive educational experience that becomes an integral part of their lives.

In recent years, Courreges has made tremendous progress in meeting the academic needs of ALL students, by focusing on differentiation, innovation and technology. This focus is highlighted in detail within this CA Distinguished Schools application. In addition to this model practice, Courreges is proud of its PBIS character education program named, "Paw Power," which is our campus-wide character program that helps guide students to become responsible, respectful, and safe young citizens.

Courreges teachers have also received extensive professional development and training in the areas of balanced literacy, Fountas & Pinnell (F & P) reading assessments, and Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) in math; each district-wide signature practices in the areas of reading and mathematics.

The Courreges staff is extremely dedicated and proud of its recent accomplishments in student achievement and excited at the prospect of being selected as a 2018 California Distinguished School.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: "Educating ALL Students Through Differentiation, Innovation, and Technology"

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

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

Courreges Elementary School has a model practice of meeting the needs of ALL students through its focus on differentiation, innovation, and technology. Courreges is a school with a diverse student population with a wide spectrum of academic needs. There are three to four classes per grade level of general education, GATE, English Learner (EL), and special education students in each class. In addition, Courreges is home to two SDC (i.e. behavior-focused) classes: one K–2 class and one 3–5 class. The Courreges staff has long embraced differentiation and educational innovation as essential practices to allow all students to reach their highest potential. Technology has also played a vital role in not only engaging students in the learning process, but providing students with unique learning opportunities to expand their thinking and learn in different modalities.

Courreges' high level of differentiation and focus on student achievement has contributed to our academic success, as evidenced by our recent Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC) scores; where 76% of our students are proficient in the area of English Language Arts (ELA) and 81% of our students are proficient in the area of mathematics. Additionally, Courreges' commitment to increasing student access to technology, has resulted in our school reaching a 1:1 student to Chromebook ratio in grades 3–5 grade and acquiring ample iPads for each of our K–2 classrooms to fully promote the instructional program and allow 1:1 student to iPad ratios for each classroom rotation center.

Our teachers recognize the importance of differentiation, innovation, and technology as key components to student success. As Courreges has evolved into a school with increasingly diverse needs, it has become clear that differentiation in all subject areas is essential to accommodate all students, including GATE, English Learner (EL), Low Income (LI), and students with special needs. With Courreges' evolving degree of student diversity, teachers have modified their teaching practices by transitioning from whole group instruction to a teaching model of direct instruction with small flexible grouping. This enables teachers to meet with students, on an individual level and in small groups, on a daily basis.

Educational innovation takes place throughout the school where teachers are constantly thinking "outside-the-box" to try new strategies and find ways to connect with students' interests and strengths. For example, Ms. Ruck (5th grade teacher and district science coordinator), recently received a \$5,000 grant from the Education Foundation to purchased 32 Spheros Spark + robots. These are "code-able" robots that incorporate

robotics and technology into collaborative STEAM activities that engage students in learning. In 4th grade, Mrs. Guess' GATE class performs a play in the spring based on social studies curriculum from California history. This performance highlights the events of the Gold Rush in 1849.

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

In recent years, the Fountain Valley School District began the journey of adopting a district-wide focus on small group differentiation. Teachers and administrators were given extensive training and staff development in the area of differentiation. Differentiation at Courreges is strategic and purposeful. Teachers gather data from F & P reading assessments, ELA theme skills tests, weekly assessments, district benchmarks, pre-assessments, SRI (grade 5), and anecdotal notes. Using the results from data analysis, teachers are able to form small flexible groups with a definitive purpose. Instead of whole-group instruction, teachers differentiate their instructional strategies to meet the varied needs of the students. Furthermore, improving writing skills remains a specific target goal separate from the reading program, where mini-lessons are taught to all students and specific focus is provided to those who have weaknesses in areas of writing.

Another component specific to Courreges is how intervention is offered on campus. All forms of intervention are executed with Tier 1 intervention being done daily in the classroom with small flexible groups and/or one-on-one instruction. Tier 2 interventions are conducted by our Resource Specialist, RSP aides, or during in-school/after-school tutoring sessions made available by our site prevention team. This year, Courreges has piloted a new reading intervention program, where students in grades 1–3 are receiving a double dose of reading support by one of two credentialed reading intervention teachers. The intervention teachers are using the F & P Leveled Literacy Intervention kits to guide students through reading lessons four times per week.

It should also be noted that Courreges teachers collaborate weekly (three Fridays per month). They plan differentiated lessons, create supplementary materials, share successful strategies, and meet in vertical teams to understand the alignment of the standards at each grade level and the requirements for acceleration and achievement at all grade levels.

At Courreges, a significant transformation in the use of educational technology has taken place over the course of the past 7 years. In addition to accessing the computer lab several times per week (as in prior years), students are now using technology daily to enhance their learning. Daily access to iPads, Chromebooks, and technology applications has added a whole new level of engagement in the classroom. During rotations, teachers have created technology centers, so students can work on ST Math, access the internet for research, complete Accelerated Reader (AR) or Raz-Kids tests, practice keyboarding skills, practice reading and math skills with educational applications, and produce dynamic presentations.

In addition to the individual classroom technology usage, all students in grades 1–5 have participated in the Google Expeditions Augmented Reality program and the annual "Hour-of-Code" each year.

## Results and Outcomes

Courreges teachers have fully embraced differentiation and technology usage across all grade levels K–5. Courreges teachers are constantly improving, innovating, and evolving their teaching practices to meet the needs of all our students. Additionally, our school has embraced students with special needs by implementing programs such as Social Skills and full inclusion for all students in our SDC programs. Our school also enhances student interaction by working together to form reading buddies at various grade levels, allowing our younger students to be positively influenced by their older peers.

The results of our practice have been evident since 2013, as we continue to see steady growth in student performance on the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC); where 76% of our students are proficient in the area of English Language Arts (ELA) and 81% of our students are proficient in the area of mathematics. Additionally, Courreges continues to out-perform county-wide and district-wide averages in ELA and mathematics.

Beyond test scores, student engagement at Courreges has been more evident than ever since the adoption of our school-wide focus on differentiation. Students are eager to learn and the ability for teachers to have face-to-face interaction with each of their students on a daily basis is one of the premier benefits of differentiation. Technology has also had a profound effect on the level of engagement with all of our students; including our special education and EL students. The commitment from our PTA, teacher grants, and district for increasing technology has been a collective and successful effort. The technology now available to teachers and students in 2018 includes:

- Document camera & LCD projector (ceiling-mounted for every classroom)
- 7–10 student iPads per classroom (K–2)
- Mobile Chromebook carts (1:1 Chromebook/student ratio 3rd–5th grades)
- AppleTV in all classrooms for wireless connectivity
- Desktop computer lab (K–2 Jiji access)
- Campus-wide wireless internet access
- Accelerated Reader program (3rd–5th grades) / Raz-Kids program (K–2)
- Typing Training, Brain Pop, and Brain Pop Jr. site licenses
- Mounted LCD projector in the campus multi-purpose room & computer lab
- Lightspeed microphone system in all classrooms

The Courreges staff is proud of its accomplishments and is committed to sustaining ongoing growth in student achievement. Teachers will continue to modify their practices, refine their craft, innovate new ideas and differentiate instruction so that all of Courreges

students will reach their highest potential and become lifelong learners in this new digital era.