

Thomas Paine Elementary Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 30665226028807

County: Orange

District (Local Educational Agency): Garden Grove Unified

School: Thomas Paine Elementary

Demographics

Enrollment: 481 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Thomas Paine Elementary is in the Garden Grove Unified School District (GGUSD), located in Orange County, California. We serve grades K–6 from the cities of Garden Grove, Fountain Valley, Santa Ana, and Westminster. Population demographics are balanced with Asian American (47%), Latino (43%), White (4%) and other sub-groups. We currently have 481 students in typical classrooms, including 32 Resource and Mild/Moderate students, and 35 students in a self-contained Moderate Severe program. We currently bus approximately half of our students from neighboring supplements.

Thomas Paine Elementary consists of a professional learning environment of dedicated staff, parents and students. All stake-holders work together to ensure success and focus on the bigger mission of providing a safe learning environment. Our community understands the importance of ensuring academic success through research-based instruction. Our vision is to guarantee appropriate curriculum and instruction will be

provided to all students. Standards-based programs utilizes assessments on an ongoing basis to provide accountability for staff, teachers, and students.

We follow the GGUSD strategic plan that develops academic and personal skills to support the lifelong success of our scholars. Paine students are challenged through a rigorous academic program that meets the diverse needs of the various learners who attend our school. In addition, we support student achievement by providing opportunities in the arts and academic intervention. Our students have access to academic intervention to bridge any academic achievement gap. Credentialed teachers provide targeted academic focus to streamline the needed support. Our students also participate in enrichment programs including Student Council, Academic Pentathlon, and Coding . We also have weekly music, chorus (K–6), and instrumental music (4–6).

In addition, we focus on social skills and provide opportunities for ALL of our students to collaborate. We have partnered with the Special Olympics organization and have developed a program that promotes Physical Education and inclusion for our General Education and Special Education students. The program aligns with our site's larger goal of developing empathy for all students, allowing a climate of belonging, and fostering socio-emotional well-being.

Paine students, staff and parents model positive attitudes and good citizenship. All members of our staff, which includes classroom aides, noon duty supervisors, cafeteria workers, school custodians, teachers, principal, and school volunteers, know the importance of positive reinforcement to ensure student success.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Collaboration Driven Best Practices

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

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

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

Description

GGUSD's philosophy is to promote the highest level of academic student achievement through authentic collaboration among both teachers and students. To this end,

Thomas Paine Elementary School has a deliberate model practice of Collaboration that we use to promote a learning community that works and learns together. This model practice allows teachers to align standards and ensure academic rigor as well as encourage meaningful student collaboration in the classroom.

Paine's collaborative learning community begins with an ILT team that consists of one representative from each grade level. These experienced teachers meet regularly to work jointly with one another to develop and refine unified instructional goals to focus on school-wide. Goals are vertically aligned across all grade levels and incorporates collaboration with our special education teachers. Grade-level ILT representatives then share these objective with their grade-level team at their weekly collaboration meetings. Last year, Paine's ILT focus was reading comprehension and this year, the school has chosen writing. Regardless of content, the collaborative model of ILT ensures that all teachers work together to plan, develop, analyze, and reflect on lessons using essential standards to drive the rigor of instruction.

Another predominant way in which Paine promotes a collaborative community is through the co-plan/co-teach model. Through professional development, teachers determine a standards-based focus and collectively plan and deliver instruction in a classroom. Through debriefing, the lesson is then refined and retaught. This experience allows teachers to reflect on best instructional practices and build upon their own teaching expertise as they work with one another. Insights gained from these co-plan/co-teach experiences allows both our general education and special education teachers to better meet the needs of all students through rigorous, standards-aligned lessons.

At Paine, collaboration is a two-way street. Not only do teachers value collaboration but student collaboration is a cornerstone of our effective instruction. Cooperative learning structures such as Think-Pair-Share, Heads Together, Table Talks, Expert Groups, and Lines of Communication are embedded within classroom lessons. They promote academic discourse and encourage all learners to actively listen, participate, and engage in their learning. Students gain insights from their peers as well as their teacher and view themselves as an integral part of the learning community. Through grade-level planning in the ILT process, teachers work together as they intentionally embed these cooperative learning structures to promote critical thinking and problem solving.

Our fundamental belief that everyone is a learner and the collaborative spirit of our teachers and students at Paine through ILT, co-planning and co-teaching, and cooperative learning structures has led to positive student growth.

Implementation and Monitoring

Garden Grove Unified School District has implemented Collaboration as a distinctive feature in our schools, and the teachers and students at Thomas Paine Elementary School have had several opportunities to develop and strengthen this practice. For teachers, professional development workshops have allowed them to calibrate and align their collaboration process using the model of Plan, Do, Analyze, and Reflect (PDAR).

Teachers are then supported as they collaborate and plan standards-aligned lessons across subject areas.

While the district provides a very structured format to the PDAR process of ILT, Paine allows for more flexibility and fluidity during this process in order to meet the needs of all students including our EL and Special Education students. The focus becomes less about formalized documents and more about meaningful teacher discourse relevant to student progress that then translates into powerful classroom teaching. For example, within writing lessons, teachers utilize student interest and writing samples to drive thoughtful instructional conversations and create rigorous standards-aligned lessons that meet specific student needs. This collaborative teacher practice increases engagement and mastery for all students.

Paine also expands upon Collaboration through its use of the co-plan/co-teach model. All general education teachers participate in collaboratively planning and teach a lesson. They then engage in in-depth discourse around their reflections and its instructional implications. At Paine, this collaborative experience is also extended to our Special Education teachers. For example, our Moderate/Severe special education teachers collaboratively plan and teach lessons together in order to refine instruction, provide differentiation, and meet the needs and IEP goals of their students. This collaborative co-plan/co-teach model further engages the students in the learning process.

The students at Paine are well versed in cooperative learning structures. Embedded throughout the instructional day students have numerous opportunities to collaborate together through Think-Pair-Share, Heads Together, Table Talks, Expert Groups, and Lines of Communication. Teachers prepare thoughtfully embedded and challenging questions as they engage in those interactive structures. This practice invites rich conversation among students that leads to a deeper understanding of content across the curriculum. Our collaboration model at Paine is embraced by the students and is evident in their academic discourse, critical thinking skills and mastery of content.

Results and Outcomes

The outcomes of implementing Collaboration at Paine are evident in the collaborative ILT planning of rigorous, standards-aligned lessons, the reflective teaching that occurs during co-planning and co-teaching, and the purposeful use of cooperative learning structures to engage and deepen student learning. The quality of lesson delivery and student mastery has grown tremendously over time. The model practice of Collaboration has given both students and teachers the tools necessary to be active, engaged lifelong learners.

Also promising is the level of ownership students have taken of their own learning. Teachers at Paine have observed the quality and depth of student collaboration, its growth over time, and its consequential positive impact for our students. Students are able to effectively engage in rich, productive, academic discourse that continues to lead them to success. This ability to articulate and collaborate throughout instruction has

enriched student discourse and improved student achievement on performance tasks, district benchmark tests, and SBAC scores. Our 2017 SBAC scores show that 68.56% of Paine students meet or exceed ELA standards as compared to 57.39% of Orange County and 48.56% statewide. In math, 62.88% of Paine students meet or exceed Math standards compared to 48.26% of Orange County and 37.56% statewide.

This positive student growth is directly correlated to Paine's emphasis on collaboratively planning and delivering rigorous, standards-aligned lessons that embed deliberate opportunities for our students to collaborate, think critically, and defend their thinking in order to deepen student understanding. Our collaborative culture, fostered for both teachers and students, has created a dynamic learning environment that not only engages learners in a powerful and meaningful way, but promotes an exciting and infectious school climate. At Paine, all shareholders take pride and ownership of the school and its success.