

## **John Muir Fundamental Elementary Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 30666706098552

County: Orange

District (Local Educational Agency): Santa Ana Unified

School: John Muir Fundamental Elementary

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 924 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

John Muir Fundamental School (Muir), within the large urban district of Santa Ana, serves approximately 48,000 students in the county of Orange in Southern California. Muir first opened its doors nearly 39 years ago as a neighborhood school. To meet community demand for a school of choice based on the values of parent involvement and high expectations, Muir became the district's first fundamental school, drawing pupils from across the city, the following year via a lottery system. Muir serves a student population that includes 94% Latino and 6% from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

At the core of Muir's fundamental philosophy, parents sign a parental-agreement which emphasizes a school-wide accountability plan for attendance, homework and discipline with clear expectations for parents, students and staff that are consistent in all classrooms. Parents are welcomed as true partners in the education of their children supporting the school's focus on rigorous academics and student achievement. Our fundamental program focuses on rigorous curriculum and instruction coupled with a

commitment to develop student responsibility and citizenship. As the community it serves has changed, Muir has changed and we are proud of our commitment to adapt to the needs of our students and families.

Muir's 21st Century Scholars Model Program (21CSM) integrates 21st Century Skills within an instructional program so that students acquire the knowledge and skills to become independent learners, creative and critical thinkers, with the cultural understanding and civic values needed to be global citizens in the society of the future. The success of Muir's 21CSM is based on a continuum of learning experiences that address the necessary skills and attributes to be competitive in our global society. The 21CSM has been developed over the past four years. As a certified AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) Elementary School, Muir students benefit from direct instruction and practice of metacognitive and organizational skills that will better prepare them for college and careers. For the last 2 years, Muir has created a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) pathway through the implementation of Project Lead the Way. Muir has taken advantage of the installation of 1:1 Chromebooks to provide students with 24/7 technology access at home and at school.

The litmus test for a school's true quality is the universal rhetorical question: Would you enroll your own child in the same school where you work? At Muir, the answer is a resounding, "Yes!" Many teachers and staff currently or previously have had their own children or grandchildren enrolled at Muir. The generational legacy at Muir of students sending their own children is a powerful testimony to the quality of Muir's educational program.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: 21st Century Scholars Model (21CSM)

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

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

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

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

## **Description**

John Muir Fundamental School's model program, the 21st Century Scholars Model Program (21CSM), was designed to inspire, engage, and transform students into college bound, lifelong learners. Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the increased rigor of the Common Core aligned assessment (SBAC) was the catalyst for

21CSM. 2014–15 SBAC results showed a significant decrease in the percentage of students scoring at or above grade level as compared to those students who were proficient or advanced on the 2013–14 CA Standards Test. This created a sense of urgency to increase rigor. Muir's 21CSM focuses on 21st Century Skills so that students acquire the knowledge and capacity to become creative, critical thinkers with the cultural understanding and civic values needed to be responsible global citizens. Site administration, teachers, and support staff have been trained on the pertinent responsibilities of each of the 21CSM components. Key components include:

#### Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM)

Project Lead the Way (PLTW), an integrated STEM model, engages students in problem-based learning through Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), engineering practices and technology applications that explore robotics, coding, life science, and physical science. Mystery Science lessons and articles also reinforce STEM and NGSS. In 2014, Muir put technology into the hands of students. Today 1st–5th grade students have a device. Technology resources include reading and mathematics intervention programs, Accelerated Reader, Google Classroom, and Digital Notebooks to support research, intervention, enrichment, and acceleration.

#### Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

During Summer Institutes and AVID workshops, teachers have been trained on best practices, identifying instructional strategies with the highest probability of enhancing student achievement for all students. AVID practices center around organizing thoughts, interaction with peers, and articulation of learning.

#### Integrated Differentiated Literacy (IDL)

Aligned with the CCSS in English Language Arts (ELA), effective comprehension and communication are emphasized as teachers integrate literacy instruction with content area instruction while using technology. Muir teachers are highly trained and pull from a wide variety of resources to engage students in meaningful and rigorous cross-content reading. Muir's 21CSM integrates curriculum and acts as a bridge to increase student achievement, deeper learning, and engagement through the use of collaborative academic conversations, academic language, Socratic Seminars, and Document Based Questions.

#### Inclusive Positive School Climate (IPSC)

As a PBIS Gold Ribbon School, staff has created a supportive environment where students and staff are respectful, responsible, and safe. All students including Special Education, English learners, at risk, and GATE thrive and grow as 21st Century Scholars.

## Implementation and Monitoring

Effective parent communication is a cornerstone to Muir's success. This strong partnership and its positive communications benefit all students. In addition to standard communication procedures (i.e. conferences, general meetings, and school website), Muir strives to communicate, assess, and monitor parent/community engagement. Monthly "Coffee with the Principal" meetings provide parents and community members with the opportunity to share ideas and provide input. Parents interpret report cards and mid-trimester reports, utilize weekly student work folders to build student accountability, and support AVID, PLTW, and 1:1 technology device access at home. Parents see how AVID and PLTW expose students to STEM and prepare them for 21st Century skills. Muir's teachers continually reflect on their students' learning and growth. They use data to modify their instruction to target student needs. Teachers understand that time is of the essence and use grade level collaboration time to immediately refine instruction school-wide through the sharing of data and best practices.

Parent leadership and input into 21CSM is developed through involvement in a variety of organizations and/or committees like the Parent Faculty Organization (PFO), English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC), and School Site Council. Parent LCAP meetings help to inform parents of new initiatives and goals and provide a forum for parent feedback. Parent efficacy is supported throughout the year via curriculum and/or family nights. The effectiveness of parent community engagement is measured via the 2016–17 site LCAP community forum and CA Healthy Kids and Panorama socio-emotional learning surveys. Favorable parent responses regarding the school climate, rules and norms, safety, and school connectedness, ranged from 94% to 98%. Muir parents, utilizing the Let's Talk Web-based program, have given Muir a satisfaction rating of 96%.

Muir teachers have been highly trained and have both the resources and the tools to support the 21CSM. Teachers infuse learning from their trainings into daily practices in a variety of ways. Grade level meetings and collaboration opportunities provide a venue for teachers to delve deeper into best practices to evaluate program effectiveness. They make individualized adjustments based on peer feedback and suggestions. Regular data chats allow teachers to look closely at the data to target students needing reteaching/intervention and to drive instruction. Administrators monitor and expect to find evidence in classrooms of these trainings on bulletin boards, in student note-taking/notebooks, and during instruction.

## Results and Outcomes

The power of the 21CSM is shown by the student outcomes from NWEA's Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), nationally normed reading and math tests, CA English Language Development Test (CELDT), CA Standards Test (CST) Science, CA Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) and annual EL reclassification data. Latino (95.3%), socio-economically disadvantaged (SED) (71.8%) and EL (25.9%) subgroups were selected as the target groups as they make up the highest percentages in the student population. Muir analyzes student data for target

groups to identify student achievement, progress and intervention/acceleration needs. 21CSM components ensure that students experience high levels of academic success and meet or exceed the rigorous state content standards in the areas of language arts, mathematics, and science.

PLTW immerses students in science and engineering, academic knowledge, and vocabulary while promoting scholarly discourse through collaborative problem solving. AVID note-taking strategies support writing proficiency. IDL supports strong literacy skills. Teachers and staff reflect on student learning and growth to continually improve the 21CSM program to maximize student success. Data is reviewed weekly, by trimester, yearly, discussed at grade level meetings, and used to modify instruction to target student needs. Grade level collaboration supports refinement of teaching, shared best practices, monitoring the program impact on student achievement, and program refinement based upon input.

Muir's average MAP reading level percentile between 2015 and 2018 went from the 35th to 65th for 3rd grade, 49th to 78th for 4th grade, and 38th to 72nd for 5th grade. Muir's average MAP math level percentile between 2015 and 2018 went from the 45th to 57th for 3rd grade, 54th to 65th for 4th grade, and 50th to 72nd for 5th grade. The percent of students meeting or exceeding standards on the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC) increased in both English Language Arts (ELA) and Math with 48% of all students in 2015 to 53.49% in 2017 in ELA and from 43% in 2015 and 46.71% in 2017 in Math. Similarly, 47% of SED students in 2015 increased to 50.9% in 2017 in ELA and 42% in 2015 increased to 45.78% in 2017 in math. Muir has reduced the achievement gap between sub-groups and all learners. As Latinos make up over 95% and SED students almost 3/4th of the student population, the school-wide results demonstrate a measure of success for targeted student groups.

As ELs make up 25.9% of the population, the following outcome data is provided to demonstrate a measure of success. From 2014–15 to 2016–17, Muir has seen a 14.7% increase in the annual EL reclassification rate. Muir's 2017 reclassification rate of 30.5% exceeded the SAUSD rate by 15% and the CA rate by 17.2%. Nearly 97% of Muir's ELs reclassified within five years. Muir increased the percentage of students at or above proficiency on the 5th grade CST-Science test from 57% in 2016 to 74% in 2017.