

Richard Henry Lee Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 30739246029078

County: Orange

District (Local Educational Agency): Los Alamitos Unified

School: Richard Henry Lee Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 644 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Richard Henry Lee Elementary is A National Blue Ribbon and California Gold Ribbon School that has earned an enviable reputation as a top ranked school in the state and nation. Lee Elementary has high expectations and standards for both staff and students. The focus on best first instruction in every classroom, the commitment of the parent community, and devotion of our students to always do their best is what makes Lee Elementary School extraordinary.

Lee Elementary is a TK–5 school located in the community of Rossmoor within the Los Alamitos Unified School District (LAUSD). The teachers at Lee work diligently to meet the varying needs of all students. The student population is diverse in all areas, from the ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds of students to the wide continuum of learners it serves. Lee teachers focus on differentiation to meet the needs of English learners, students requiring individualized instruction to access curriculum, and students who are identified as gifted and talented. The dedication of both teachers and students led to 88% of students meeting or exceeding ELA standards on the 2017 California

Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), ranking Lee as the 3rd highest performing school in Orange County.

Lee Elementary School is committed to high achievement for every student through a balanced, rigorous and integrated educational experience. Lee provides a positive learning environment which allows each child the opportunity to learn at his or her own pace and to excel in an environment of high expectations for all. At Lee we strive to assure that students acquire the skills needed to be successful, life-long learners, prepared to accept the challenges of a culturally diverse society.

At Lee our mission statement is reviewed yearly by the School Site Council, teachers and principal. It reflects our belief that systems of assessment and accountability keep us reflective and responsive in meeting the needs of all students. We believe through appropriate enrichment and interventions, all students can meet or exceed standards.

The parent community at Lee strives to provide students with relevant technology and access to unlimited educational opportunities. Lee's education foundation, Project LEAP, funds a part-time, credentialed media center teacher to focus on 21st century learning skills. Project LEAP also works to outfit classrooms with document cameras, projectors, printers, and devices. Our PTA works tirelessly to build community within our school, affectionately called the "FamiLee."

Lee is supported by a district that believes all children deserve to learn from expert teachers who value teaching and learning and believe in connecting with children. LAUSD's motto is "Igniting Unlimited Possibilities" and helps set the vision for Lee. Through the Reading Workshop model of instruction and our on-site Intensive Reading Lab (IRL), we provide children with access to engaging, meaningful instruction.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Reading Workshop and Intensive Reading Lab

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

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

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

Research supports providing students with the time to read and build stamina. Student engagement is critical to reading success when focusing on independence. Engagement increases when students have the option to choose their own high-interest and instructionally appropriate books. Learning to read develops with prescriptive instruction, teacher demonstration, supported practice, and on-going student assessment. For readers to flourish, students need to read text in which they can find success, validating the continual assessment of students as being critical to providing targeted instruction in reading.

For students to continue to move on the reading continuum, they must use skills and strategies with increased complexity. Each teacher creates small groups, working on targeted strategies based on needs taken from students' own work samples.

At Lee Reading Workshop is implemented school-wide which leads to instructional time being spent each year setting up the protocols and norms of the model. Students routinely retrieve their self-chosen, appropriately leveled book to work from and automatically begin the task at hand. They have been coached on how to "stop and jot" as well as share thoughts, feelings, and ideas about reading with their partner. Additionally, a teacher-student reading conference often provides the material for the small-group strategy lessons and the mini-lessons he/she later teaches. Students capture thinking on post-its or journals. Student thinking is shared in the middle of the lesson and again at the end to engage students in provocative thinking, making readers more responsive, critical thinkers.

Having skilled and well-trained teachers is another critical piece to our model. LAUSD provides intensive training sessions focused on the "Reading Foundations of the Common Core," which is instruction in phonemic awareness, fluency and comprehension. Teachers are released from classrooms to observe model lessons, collaborate with district reading specialists, and prepare scaffolded lessons which support literacy in all content areas. Though our school district offers professional development opportunities throughout the school year, teachers at Lee learn best from one another. Every month the staff meets together for a reading inquiry meeting. Teachers come prepared to discuss strategies that are working in their classrooms, sharing student examples, anchor charts, and teacher generated workshop forms. Additionally, teams of teachers use release time to collaborate and refine curricular practices. Together, these teams observe our site's mentor teachers implementing the workshop model of instruction in new and creative ways. Teachers debrief and work together to bring the innovation back to their own classrooms.

Implementation and Monitoring

Each year the School Site Council, made up of staff and parents, analyze data to determine where funds should be used to support academic growth. The Council recommended spending our Local Control Formula Funds (LCFF) on professional development, intervention, and resources to implement Reading Workshop and the IRL.

Parents were informed of our practices and initiatives by classroom teachers at Back to School Night and through parent education nights as well as parent book clubs. Parents are notified of progress and concerns of all students in the area of reading.

Reading Workshop has greatly impacted the culture of our school and has become sacred at Lee. Our master schedule is developed annually to ensure students are provided large doses of uninterrupted time dedicated to reading instruction. To fully implement Reader's Workshop, our students need to have access to unlimited high-interest, leveled books. Lee strives to find ways to bring books to our students. Thanks to grant opportunities, parent donations, and monies appropriated by our parent groups, we continue to build classroom libraries with books to support the workshop model and our students' appetites for reading.

Our schedule also prioritized common planning time for each grade level to facilitate team planning and data analysis. Each week grade level teams are released to compare data, build intervention groups, and plan instruction. Teams collaborate on lesson design and work together to create strategy groups intended to increase student knowledge and decrease reading deficits.

Students are monitored by the classroom teacher on a daily basis using multiple methods for checking for understanding and questioning. When teachers pull small strategy groups, they make anecdotal notes on student progress, and plan instruction according to identified needs. Teachers assess fluency, comprehension, and phonemic awareness weekly as they work closely with individual students. Students participating in the IRL are more thoroughly reassessed every 7 weeks. Those who reach grade level standards are exited from the IRL and monitored in their classroom. After reassessment is complete, instruction is designed around the particular needs of the students remaining in the IRL.

As noted earlier, instruction in the IRL is a second dose of targeted instruction. Students join small groups with similar skill deficits. Students do not attend the IRL during English language arts or mathematics blocks.

Professional development intended to improve reading instruction is determined at the beginning of the school year. Monthly reading inquiry meetings are placed on the calendar. However, the focus of each meeting is not determined until the school year is underway. We fine-tune our goals after teachers determine the needs of their students.

Results and Outcomes

In the beginning of the 2016–17 school year, the IRL was servicing 19 kindergarten students, 38 first grade students, and 13 second grade students. Approximately 77% of the primary student population did not required intervention services. By the end of the school year, 85% of primary students met standards and did not need further intervention services.

Kindergarten Success

- 8 weeks of intervention: 77% increase in letter name and sound recognition.
- 16 weeks of intervention: 85% proficiency of phonemic awareness skills.
- End of the year: 55% increase in reading CVC words, 100% of students met or exceeded independent grade level reading standards based on running records, and 84% of the group exited the program.
- First Grade Success.
- 8 weeks: 32% increase in phonics skill proficiency, 48% of round one students were dismissed from program.
- 16 weeks: 38% increase in phonics skill proficiency, 51% of round two students were dismissed from the program.
- End of the year: 100% increase in independent reading levels, 43% average increase of phonics skill proficiency, and 85% of the students were dismissed from the program.

Second Grade Success

- 12 weeks: 100% of students passed initial phonics skills assessment, 25% increase in higher level phonics and decoding skills, 100% of students made gains in independent reading levels, 77% met or exceeded grade level reading expectations based on running records.
- End of the year: 92% of the students were dismissed from the program.

By the end of the 2016–2017 school year, 92% of all 3rd graders were reading at or above grade level expectations. This group of students is particularly significant because they have benefited from the workshop model and IRL instruction since they began at Lee as kindergarten students.

The 2017 administration of CAASPP shows impressive student outcomes for Lee students compared to county and state results.

Percent of Students who Met or Exceeded Achievement Standards in ELA:

- 3rd Grade-83% Lee, 51% Orange County, 44% State of CA
- 4th Grade-93% Lee, 52% Orange County, 45% State of CA
- 5th Grade-88% Lee, 55% Orange County, 47% State of CA

Lee Elementary School's school-wide use of the Reading Workshop model and the services provided in the IRL directly impact student achievement. As evident from the data, our instructional program has directly contributed to students' academic success. In conjunction with intense, meaningful professional development and teacher

collaboration, teaching and learning is at its highest at Lee and students are destined for college and career success.