Cielo Vista Charter
Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 33671736032411

County: Riverside

District (Local Educational Agency): Palm Springs Unified

School: Cielo Vista Charter

Demographics

Enrollment: 938 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Modified

Charter: Yes

Overview

From the first "hello" as students enter in the morning, to the nurturing, supportive environments in the classrooms, to the strong parent and community involvement, the caring and familial unity of Cielo Vista Charter (CVC) is key to the scholastic success of students. CVC has distinguished itself by establishing high standards of success while" educating "the child as a whole", through consistently focusing on the social, emotional, physical and academic development of each child.

CVC builds students of strong character who are challenged to strive for their individual best. Character Counts! provides the building blocks for good character, while the "No Excuses" philosophy drives individual success through a positive, rigorous work ethic, and high expectations, within a nurturing environment. These are the philosophical foundations, integrated with collaborative, data-driven decision making, that produce student centered academic achievement.

The CVC community includes faculty, students, parents, and community members working together to meet the diverse needs of the community while promoting the

development of the whole child. The student population includes 73.5% SED, 73.2% Hispanic, and 38.2% English Language Learners. Community involvement is evidenced in high parental involvement in school activities and frequent, caring communication between teachers and the home. The community works together to promote the development of the child as a whole by delivering exemplary music, art, nutrition and physical education programs.

Team planning and communication to develop strategies and delivery is a commitment of all CVC teachers. The highly qualified staff provides a challenging data-driven curriculum for all students focusing on the development of critical thinking skills. The needs of the 21st century learner are furthered through a 1-to-1 technology program coupled with teachers trained in using technology to enhance the curriculum and the learning experience of diverse learners. Instruction is differentiated and teaching strategies are revised throughout the year based on data analysis to meet the individual needs of all students while maintaining the rigor of the content standards. CVC provides an understanding and positive setting where students not only acquire and practice essential Common Core standards, but are challenged with a rigorous curriculum and supported through diverse instructional practices. Students are encouraged to take risks and work cooperatively as they tackle each goal. The CVC professional learning community and data-driven decision continues to be a recognized model of excellence constantly evolving to meet the educational needs of all students.

The definitive picture of Cielo Vista Charter is a committed community working together to provide a challenging and engaging learning environment which promotes social, emotional, physical and academic achievement for all students.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: University Achievement Through Educating the Child
                                          as a Whole

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Nutrition and
                      Physical Activity/Education, Parent, Family, and Community
                      Involvement

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, Data-Driven Decision Making,
                      Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support

Description

In order to meet the educational needs of our students, we feel it is important to address the social, emotional, and behavioral development of each child. Through our high expectations and our no excuses philosophy we have created systems that provide a learning atmosphere where students are consistently growing in each area.

Student development of social skills are essential for future successful citizens. Three years ago we transitioned to a structured recess model using the Playworks program that emphasizes student participation, cooperation, and use of positive language in a group setting. Whereas, cross-curricular, grade level book buddies and peer tutors influence positive student relationships across campus. Individual social skills are enhanced through lunch bunch groups who meet with the counselor, life skills presentations for grades 4th and 5th, and individual class meetings. Each learning opportunity is designed to be a safe space to develop and implement critical social skills.

It is essential to have a full-time counselor and staff that is constantly forming relationships to effectively meet emotional needs of students. School climate is assessed twice a year through an online survey for 3rd–8th grade students. Results are analyzed and identified needs are addressed. Classroom presentations, as well as anti-bullying and student safety programs, were initiated based on past survey data. We also have an online system for individual referrals through Google classroom for confidential referrals. An online referral system allows all time-sensitive and critical needs to be identified and tracked through a comprehensive system. All students and staff are trained at the beginning of the year on how to access the referral system and how to use it for themselves or as an upstander for someone else.

No Excuses University and Character Counts! frame the high expectations for behavior in school and within the community. Behavioral development is restorative in nature focusing on the pillars of character that have been broken, and addressing the harm/need created while learning from mistakes. To support developing skills we have 50+ trained peer mediators that are accessible to all students. Peer mediators are upper grade leaders who are trained in conflict mediation as part of a tiered support system. Tiered behavior support also includes: goal setting, class meetings, peer mediation, counseling and familial support. However, behavior support goes beyond the boundaries of social discipline and includes positive healthy lifestyle choices through an exemplary PE & Nutrition program and positive engagement strategies through active educational technology, Whole Brain Teaching and implementation of GATE strategies for all students whether or not they are officially designated.

CVC is consistently defined as a school where parents feel that their students are safe and secure, physically, emotionally, socially and academically.

Implementation and Monitoring

Parents and community members are an essential part of the school community as we provide an exemplary education. Our PTG works closely with staff to support the needs of students, while connecting home and school. Parents are encouraged to engage in their children's education through a robust classroom volunteering program, parent engagement classes, parent led ELAC committee meetings, and family fun nights. Our CVC governing board is comprised of outside community members who provide direction, guiding principles and vision for the school community.

We have established communication systems to create a sense of unity between family, school, and community. Weekly folders, electronic and technology based communication forums, TeleParent, PeachJar and monthly home-school connection newsletters are used for school wide communication of school activities.

Staff, students, family and community member participate in annual surveys that assess the effectiveness of our systems from a variety of stakeholder perspectives. Professional development, parent engagement opportunities and changes in instructional programs and policy are made based on collected data. Programs implemented based on collected data include: Student safety (including cyber-safety), anti-bullying systems and academic achievement through growth mindset approaches. In the past two years we have also initiated community outreach programs promoting opportunities for students to volunteer and work with community members on a variety of projects to enhance student perception of being valued.

Our standard of maintaining high-quality expectations for all students and staff sets us apart from other schools. Teachers model growth mindset through participation in professional development that enhances their ability to meet the individual needs of students and provide an equitable instructional program. For example, all teachers are trained in GATE strategies that the implement for all students, not just identified students in order to meet a variety of learning needs. No Excuses University, Project Based Learning, and Playworks structured recess integrate different learning modalities that assure our students are learning to their fullest potential and receive support in and out of the classroom.

Successful implementation of programs and instructional models, is monitored through PLC data-based approaches. A 2-1-2 schedule allows for collaborative data analysis & instructional planning at grade level and within vertical teams. Teacher created assessments are used to track student growth and implementation of systems. Common data analysis allow continuity between teachers and grade levels that promote ongoing collaboration and planning. These worksheets allow for individualized growth goals, instructional goals that meet a variety of modalities, and data based analysis of effectiveness.

Results and Outcomes

The social/emotional and behavioral needs of our students were first assessed using a survey created from the 40 Developmental Assets in 2015–16. It evaluated student perception of internal and external qualities that lead to student success. Results provided insight into the social/emotional and behavioral well being of our students while identifying areas needing improvement. Collaborative discussion of findings added insight into student interactions and drove the development of individual and group systems for development. Weekly class meetings, peer mediation, student leadership, and community outreach were implemented to address student needs.

In 2017 we introduced the nationally normed Panorama survey to give a broader sense of overall school climate from the student, staff and parent perspective. Results from the fall 2017 Panorama survey, showed a significant positive school culture within the elementary level. Students' closeness to people at school was 8% over the district average. Safety at school was scored 89%. 72% of students responded favorably that they were treated fairly when they did need to be disciplined at school. In each area we were scoring higher than the district average and exceptional on the national average. The survey allowed us to analyze the needs of target groups within our student population: English language learners (ELL 45%), socially and economically disadvantaged (SED 80%), and African-American population (AA 3%). In response to safety at school, each group responded higher than the school average: ELL 91% favorably, SED 89%, and AA 100%. When asked if treated fairly and with respect by adults on campus the overall population responded 95% favorably. In comparison, ELLs answered 95% favorably, SED 96%, and AA 88%. This demonstrated room for improvement within varying subgroups.

The programs and services provided to the students at Cielo Vista are constantly monitored and modified to meet the needs of our population. The monitoring of growth has been continued through ongoing informal conversations, collaborative think tanks, formal committees and ongoing surveys. Input is used to adjust and modify programs and activities for the school community based on current needs and systems.

Recent analysis of results from the Panorama survey showed a difference in perceptions of school culture between elementary and secondary students. As a K–8 school, it is important to have a unified culture where all students feel valued and respected. To address this need, staff has participated in professional development and collaboration on building relationships and addressing behavior through restorative practices. Staff and students have actively connected with groups and individuals outside their comfort group to create a more unified culture. Monitoring through student think tank, leadership and individual counseling/discussion has already shown a significant positive shift in perception.