

Russell Ranch Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 34673300113621

County: Sacramento

District (Local Educational Agency): Folsom-Cordova Unified

School: Russell Ranch Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 649 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Russell Ranch Elementary School, in partnership with the parents and community of the Folsom Cordova Unified School District, is dedicated to creating a safe, nurturing environment conducive to learning for all students. Through the application of standards-based instruction, students will achieve the National Common Core Standards with opportunities to develop independent learning skills, creative problem solving strategies and a sense of responsibility while respecting the diversity of others.

Our school is nestled in the foothills of Northern California with approximately 660 students. We currently have 24 general education classrooms, kindergarten through grade five, and four classes of students with autism, preschool through grade five.

Talented teams of teachers work together to plan lessons, review data to identify student needs and utilize best instructional practices. Our school is proud to implement a daily intervention/enrichment period grounded in the MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) philosophy at each grade level. This time allows all students to receive data-driven and individualized assistance needed during the school day. A credentialed

Intervention Specialist works with all teachers and students to model lessons using varied teaching techniques which promote active learning strategies.

Updated technology has been infused into each classroom. SMARTboard technology, Apple TV and projection capabilities are being utilized and students use iPads and Google Chromebooks to reinforce skills, conduct research and complete classroom assignments. Teachers access online applications using a variety of software to enhance their teaching, create hands-on virtual lessons and search for educational videos that correlate with content. Each student has his/her own Google Chromebook for the length of the school day.

Teachers and students use various educational websites to assist students in mastering skills in language arts literacy and mathematics. All grade levels utilize i-Ready adaptive Diagnostic, which combines a valid, reliable growth measure and individualized instruction. It pinpoints student needs to the sub-skill level, and ongoing progress monitoring shows whether students are on track to achieve end-of-year targets. The results are analyzed to drive instruction and monitor student growth throughout the school year.

In order to assure that our students feel safe, staff has taken a proactive approach to ensure that bullying is not tolerated. Classroom lessons are completed at all grade levels to teach students the procedures to identify, report and prevent harassment, intimidation and bullying. Kindness is emphasized along with our four behavior agreements to be respectful, responsible, friendly and safe.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support)

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

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

Target Population(s): Asian, Black or African American, White, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

Strategies Used: School Climate, Data-Driven Decision Making, Professional Development

Description

Upon opening its doors in 2007, Russell Ranch Elementary School built its daily schedule and foundation around the practice of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). MTSS is an integrated framework that aligns academic, behavioral and social-emotional learning in a fully blended system of support that benefits all students. MTSS involves educators working together to provide an opportunity for all students to

succeed. Kindergarten through fifth grade students receive intensive instruction based on individual needs without missing core curriculum. We at Russell Ranch know that not all students learn in the same way or at the same rate. To make sure all students receive the supports they need, from intensive intervention to enrichment, we created daily time that is not sacrificed. During this sacred time, students are grouped accordingly; however groups change frequently based on progress monitoring assessments. This practice supports all learners with scaffolding, remediation and acceleration and does not replace first instruction from the classroom teacher.

Students identified as needing Tier 3 instruction receive support during this time from the specialized academic instructor, support personnel and Intervention teacher. Tier 2 students receive targeted group instruction in a smaller group setting. Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) identified students receive enrichment instruction from a GATE certificated teacher in grades 3–5. Students are placed into groups based on their individual needs derived from intense school wide common assessments.

We at Russell Ranch adhere to the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) philosophy throughout the year to improve performance in staff as well as student learning. We have a growth mindset, allowing for stretching and challenging our practices. Every Child by Name (ECBN) meetings are held three times a year to focus and identify every child on campus. Teachers bring information and data gathered to identify academic strengths and areas of need with ongoing conversation and assessment analysis. One staff meeting a month is dedicated to guided Grade Level Collaboration for teachers to collaborate on curriculum, supports and MTSS grouping needs. Educator Effectiveness Grant SB103 release days were used to improve teacher effectiveness and allow all grades to collaborate on essential standards for English language arts.

The adopted MTSS model benefits all Russell Ranch Elementary School students. The strategic grouping of students allows for all students, including Special Education, English Language Learners and students at risk of not meeting grade level standards to have multiple interactions with teachers and other students throughout the day. Student and teacher contacts are increased dramatically, providing more connections and the feeling of being noticed and valued, in addition to a truly friendlier and communicative place to teach and learn each day.

Implementation and Monitoring

Russell Ranch Elementary School firmly believes in the benefits of parental engagement and has put forth policies and plans to promote student's academic success. All stakeholders share in decision making and determination of goals and outcomes. District level activities include Parent Summit, community outreach, District Advisory Committee, District English Learner Advisory Committee and parenting workshops. School Site Council, PTA, volunteer opportunities, report card conferences, weekly school newsletters, school website and Friday Folder two-way communication between home and school are implemented at the site level.

To communicate the methods of the MTSS program across the learning community, three key practices are used. After initial assessments are conducted, an Every Child By Name meeting (ECBN) is held. Every grade level meets with the administrator and support staff to discuss each child's academic and behavioral needs. Conversations are driven by the data received in assessments as well as teacher observations. From there, homogeneous groups are formed. This process is repeated at the beginning of every new trimester. A final ECBN meeting reflects on the overall growth of every student versus target growth, anticipates placements for the following year or generates recommendation for summer school or extended school year programs.

Teams participate in dedicated grade level collaboration and goal setting sessions, reflecting on teaching and reviewing RTI (Response to Intervention/Instruction) practices. The integrity of grouping criteria and instructional needs to support the Common Core State Standards are addressed. Vertical articulation across grade levels ensures continuity of curriculum and affirms a solid foundation of instruction in preparation for the students' next grade.

Professional learning opportunities for teachers, administrators, and non-instructional staff include a district-wide designed Professional Learning Community (PLC), ongoing curriculum and instruction development courses, professional development workshops, curriculum lead teachers and site-level coaches.

The monitoring and assessment methods used to evaluate the effectiveness of the MTSS program are outlined following district leaders' recommendation and staff input. Students are assessed in the first weeks of instruction and systematically assessed at the end of each grading period. Varied common assessments are used as evidence of student learning fueling the continuous improvement of the program. Formal and informal assessments include: Mathematics (enVision Math Placement Test; FCUSD Math Fact Fluency Test; i-Ready Math Diagnostic; enVision Math Performance Task) and English Language Arts (Systematic Instruction in Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Skills (SIPPS); Benchmark Advance Oral Reading Passages; Spelling Inventory; Writing Samples; i-Ready Reading Diagnostic Grades; Renaissance Place STAR Reading Test; Benchmark Advance Performance Task).

Results and Outcomes

The distinguished MTSS model at Russell Ranch has proven to be successful for all students. Russell Ranch has shown growth in academic achievement in all areas of CAASPP. Analyzing data during ECBN meetings helps each grade level create a focus area and group students by ability level. Teachers at every grade level have a common understanding of expectations for student learning. Assessment results are monitored to ensure students are receiving appropriate support and student placements are adjusted as needed.

Russell Ranch student success is measured by a multitude of assessments throughout the year. In conjunction with a variety of other assessments teachers, administrators and the intervention teacher rely on i-Ready as a common assessment to help

determine grade-level focused instruction. Our site credentialed Intervention teacher oversees progress in student learning on an ongoing basis. The following data has been collected from grades K–5 and is just one example of our sites success. The samples were taken from i-Ready reading and math program last year from August 2016 to May 2017. In reading, the number of students identified in Tier 3 decreased from 23 to 13 and Tier 2 decreased from 230 to 58. In math, the number of students identified in Tier 3 decreased from 28 to 3 and Tier 2 decreased from 268 to 46. By the end of the year 89% of our students were at Tier 1 in reading and 92% were at Tier 1 in math, showing ongoing evaluation and movement of students to specific learning groups has been successful.

Small group environments have proven to be beneficial for students who struggle, lack confidence or have levels of test anxiety. Our MTSS model gives students another opportunity to engage in a positive learning environment. Students who are not performing at grade level feel successful in small group environments due to the modified curriculum designed to fit his/her academic needs. MTSS meets the social and emotional needs of those students who struggle in a large classroom setting, giving him/her an opportunity to be heard.

Our focus on progress monitoring, flexible grouping and data driven instruction has shown steady growth in all areas over the past two years on the CAASPP test. Since 2016, our site has grown 15.1 points in ELA and 12.1 points in Math. Our current practice of leveling groups in ECBN meetings, using data from multiple sources to meet all student's needs is key. MTSS gives us the opportunity to meet the needs of our GATE students by providing them with enriched, accelerated curriculum. It also gives us the opportunity to focus on our ELL population, IEP students, and at risk students. MTSS allows all students to receive appropriate lessons to strengthen math, language, and vocabulary skills. MTSS has been successful and continues to grow by evaluating, planning and implementing the best practices available for our staff and students at Russell Ranch Elementary.