

Camellia Elementary Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 34674396033823

County: Sacramento

District (Local Educational Agency): Sacramento City Unified

School: Camellia Elementary

Demographics

Enrollment: 472 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Camellia Elementary in Sacramento is an academic prep school that develops excellence in its diverse student body through an emphasis on a strong foundation in mastering academic standards and virtuous personal conduct. Camellia community, staff, parents, and students work as a team to create ideal conditions for student learning and high levels of achievement through two main programs: Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and the GATE cluster model.

Camellia provides a safe, caring place for children to enjoy learning, be intellectually challenged, and make lasting friendships, while mastering the state's academic standards of learning. Our school-wide class meeting model helps support our commitment to SEL, and as a result, Camellia students become outstanding citizens learning ethics, communication skills, and conflict resolution.

Our GATE cluster model program supports excellence by specifically addressing the needs of our gifted students, while at the same time combining these strategies and

curriculum with the CCSS of our regular education program. The result is a rigorous and in-depth learning experience that provides basic skills instruction, enrichment, differentiation, and acceleration for all students.

The goal of our credentialed and GATE-certified teaching staff is to provide engaging instruction with rigor and relevance to help our students become prepared, both academically and socially, for the challenges of tomorrow. Our students are provided with standards-based instruction in art, music, physical education, STEM education, and various other intervention and enrichment opportunities.

The south Sacramento neighborhood surrounding Camellia is extremely diverse with many different underrepresented groups residing nearby, including Chinese, Vietnamese, Hispanic, Hmong, Mien, Russian, Hindi, Punjabi, and African-American. About 30% of Camellia Students are English Learners, and 85% are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Camellia Elementary has a tradition of consistent academic achievement over the past 20 years. Our CAASPP results in both ELA and Math show an increase from the 2015–16 to 2016–17 school year from 47% to 54% of students meeting or exceeding state standards in both areas, which is well above the district and state average in both proficiency and growth.

At Camellia, we attribute our history of success to several factors. First, we regularly analyze assessment data to improve student performance, and provide a clear communication of this data to students, parents, and the community. Furthermore, we plan professional development opportunities to implement instructional methods in both ELA and math that are rigorous and engaging, focused on student achievement, and aligned to CCSS. Most importantly, we have a cohesive and dedicated staff of teachers, instructional assistants, and supportive parents working together to provide opportunities for all students to achieve at high standards.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Academic Prep

Length of Model Program/Practice: 8+ years

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

Target Population(s): Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic, Two or More Races, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners

Strategies Used: School Climate, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

The academic prep model at Camellia Elementary focuses on Social Emotional Learning (SEL), the GATE Cluster Model, community engagement, and intervention and enrichment programs.

Social Emotional Learning is a foundation of Sacramento City Unified School District's commitment to its students and families. Camellia not only supports and reinforces the district's SEL program, but enhances it through our use of monthly SEL awards and school-wide use of the class meeting model. This school-wide acknowledgment gives teachers the opportunity to recognize students for positive behaviors who might otherwise be overlooked. The objective of class meetings is for teachers and students to support and collaborate with one another to solve problems in a caring and mutually respectful atmosphere. Class meetings are a democratic problem solving strategy that gives students the opportunity to become self-disciplined, responsible individuals. Class meetings develop self-esteem, self-confidence and feelings of worth within each student, all of which fall in line with our district's SEL goals.

The GATE Cluster Model is another cornerstone of Camellia's academic prep model. This model was adopted in response to the community's desire for high quality, rigorous instruction for its students. Research on the cluster model has shown that it provides social, emotional, and academic advantages to all students. Additionally, teachers can focus instruction to better meet all students' academic needs, including underrepresented groups. (D. Brulles, NAGC 2010) Finally, through the use of differentiated instruction, the GATE cluster model enhances critical thinking, highlights Project-Based Learning, and allows students to be more creative and explore their own personal interests. This teaching methodology is aligned to our district's first goal of providing high quality instruction and learning supports, such as differentiated instruction and collaborative learning.

Parents, staff, and the Parent Teacher Student Organization collaborate to enhance the educational experience at Camellia through many community-based activities. Science and Art Nights, Camellia Carnival, and cultural days such as our Lunar New Year Celebration and Day of the Child all work to form a strong family/school connection. Our most important school-community program is the Home Visit Program. Parent-Teacher Home Visits build relationship skills, and engagement for families, educators, and students, all in support of our common goal - our students' success!

Finally, enrichment and intervention programs are a significant part of the success of the academic prep program at Camellia Elementary. Programs such as after-school tutoring, extended day kinder, sports teams, a community partnership with Soil Born Farms, and STEM clubs such as robotics, coding, and Math Olympiad all provide opportunities for excellence for our underrepresented groups on campus.

Implementation and Monitoring

Camellia Elementary recognizes parents as an essential part of our students' academic success. Camellia opens the door to parents in a variety of ways: parent/teacher conferences, cultural appreciation days, home visits, and parent information nights on academic topics such as science or Google classroom. Parent leadership is developed through the School Site Council (SSC), English Learner Advisory Council (ELAC), and Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO).

Camellia staff strives to remove barriers to effective home-school communication and partnership. Translation and childcare is provided for meetings. Camellia staff includes Spanish, Hmong, Vietnamese, Hindi, and Chinese speakers who help parents feel welcome and empowered. Many school wide events reflect our diverse cultures and are planned by parents, staff and include community participation. Last year's Pancake Breakfast carried an environmental theme and was supported by the Public Library, SMUD and the Sacramento Tree Foundation.

Camellia evaluates the effectiveness of these outreach and communication methods with meeting, event, and conference sign-in sheets, as well as the number of parent volunteer hours. Parent conference attendance rate is exemplary at over 98%, and last year recorded over 24,000 volunteer hours.

Staff has embraced the Home Visit Project as a way to connect with parents, build trusting relationships, and connect engagement to student learning. Voluntary home visits build relationships by asking parents their hopes and dreams for students. Sign ups for home visits allow teachers and staff to plan an appropriate time and place to meet as a collaborative team in the best interest of the student. Parents are provided with student data, are supported in setting a SMART goal, and then receive activities that they can practice with their child.

The staff at Camellia Elementary understands the impact of Professional Learning on student achievement, and is engaged in ongoing educational opportunities. Some examples of these opportunities are: The Write Tools, the Parent Teacher Home Visit program and using instructional technology. Ongoing GATE professional learning focuses on differentiated instruction and technology. The district's curriculum embedded training specialists coach ELA, Math, and Science and provide observation and resource support. During weekly collaborative time, teachers examine assessment data and student work to plan and modify tasks and instruction.

To evaluate the effectiveness of Professional Learning, teachers review and analyze data during academic conferences held each trimester and during weekly collaboration time. Funds allocated in the school plan support professional learning that meets student needs identified in these meetings.

Results and Outcomes

Camellia Elementary has consistently shown that our academic prep model has demonstrated positive results for student outcomes. Using the state CAASPP data as a measure, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards increased in both ELA and Math from 47% in 2016 to 54% in 2017. These results exceed the district's average and exceed the state's average growth.

The multiple measures reported on the California School Dashboard (Dashboard) show student success. The ELA Assessment Report shows that all students received a "green" performance level with 11.6 points growth. Both Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (SED) and Asian student groups also showed increases and received a high "green" student performance level. The African American population, while statistically small, increased significantly by 15.5 points in ELA.

The Math Assessment Report from the California School Dashboard shows that all students showed a "green" performance level with a high status and an increase of 9.2 points. All statistically-significant student groups showed increases and also received a high "green" student performance level.

In addition to our ELA and Math success, The Dashboard shows that the English Learner Progress Indicator score is high green. However, an analysis of EL student academic progress in ELA and Math without including reclassified indicates an area of need. EL students are targeted for intervention support in extended day. In addition, parents of ELs are targeted to participate in ELAC meetings and in annual meetings which provide tools for parents to help students reach academic goals.

The Suspension Rate Report shows that our overall suspension rate is extremely low at 0.4%, which earned a "blue" rating. Camellia is one of three schools to earn this high rating. When our "School Climate Survey" data becomes available, we will review the results to determine if any adjustments to our discipline/safety policy must be addressed.

The data clearly shows that Camellia Elementary is performing much better than district and state averages. Despite our success, we also recognize that there is always room for improvement, progress, and innovation. Therefore, we use collaborative meetings in a cycle of data inquiry to review student work, curriculum embedded assessments, and other artifacts to design and implement intervention. Each year, Camellia uses data such as this to evaluate our needs for the upcoming year, guide our subsequent instruction, and align economic resources in order to have the greatest impact on student learning. We focus on curricular areas and student groups that need the most improvement, while continuing to nurture those areas and groups that have been successful. The result is an academic prep program that develops excellence in its diverse student body through an emphasis on a strong foundation in mastering academic standards and virtuous personal conduct.