

Deer Canyon Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 36675956101786

County: San Bernardino

District (Local Educational Agency): Alta Loma Elementary

School: Deer Canyon Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 638 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: Targeted Assistance

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Deer Canyon School is a place where all students SOAR. Soaring is reflective of our school mascot, an eagle, which inspires students to be safe, organized, achieve excellence, and be respectful. At Deer Canyon, students, parents, and staff contribute to the development of our school culture where all students are valued and supported to gain a solid foundation in the skills necessary to enrich their lives, now and in the future. Teachers collaborate to present core subjects of mathematics, reading, language arts, science and social studies, which are enriched by exposure to fine arts, computer literacy, and physical education. Deer Canyon Elementary takes active measures to ensure that all students learn and thrive in a safe environment.

Our school philosophy is focused on providing all students with the opportunity to achieve academically, socially and emotionally. We accommodate and celebrate individual learning styles while maintaining high, obtainable expectations for all students.

Deer Canyon Elementary School is located in the central region of Alta Loma and serves students in grades kindergarten through sixth following a traditional calendar. At the beginning of the 2016–2017 school year, 618 students were enrolled, including 7.9% in special education, 5.3% qualifying for English Language Learner support, and 42.9% qualifying for free or reduced price lunch. The Deer Canyon Eagles have consistently demonstrated strength in Language Arts. We currently have 61% of our students scoring proficient or advanced school-wide. Math achievement significantly increased last year, with 50% of students scoring in the proficient or advanced bands. This is an increase of 6% over the previous year. Science achievement continues to be a strength with 72% meeting or exceeding the state standards in 2015–2016.

As the standards for achievement increase, Deer Canyon is a school that continually strives to monitor its program, adjust for the expectations, and meet the needs of all learners. This year, Title 1 funds are utilized to provide intervention through a Learning Lab to service Title 1 students. Funding supports one general education teacher and four instructional aides. This program serves approximately 85 identified students three days a week in the area of reading and language arts. An additional 85 students are supported two days a week in mathematics. Instructional assessment data provides the direction of intervention for individual students and progress is consistently monitored as students enter and exit the program.

In the classroom, teachers create small group instruction, remediation, and review opportunities for students who have not mastered standards. Enrichment opportunities are also provided for students who are exceeding expectations. Deer Canyon has a history of teamwork. It is this focus that has allowed teachers to build a sound instructional program through data driven collaboration to ensure learning for all is taking place.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: SOARing Eagles

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Prevention, Civic Education Awareness, Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Professional Development, Use of Technology

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, Small Learning Communities, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support,

Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards
Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

As 21st century learning skills emerged, our staff proactively updated our practices to focus on the goals and expectations outlined in the LCAP. SOARing Eagles at Deer Canyon take pride in being safe, organized, achieving excellence, and accepting responsibility. Through the acronym SOAR students are held to expectations for behavior and success in all areas of the school.

Our adopted curriculum is aligned with state academic standards and provides differentiated resources to meet the needs of our diverse students. This reflects the embodiment of an organized, cohesive program as it is utilized uniformly. Our Pearson Envision math and Journeys language arts curricula are respectful of individual student learning styles and needs. They provide a variety of differentiated lessons and resources to address the individual needs of our scholars. Our staff is able to help students achieve excellence in meeting their learning targets by providing best first instruction, intervention, extension and allowing students to learn through inquiry.

To support the implementation of state academic standards, staff members engage in professional development across core subjects. Staff have been trained in Thinking Maps (Response to Text), Core Math instructional strategies, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), Google Apps for Education, Next Generation Science Standards, and technology tools to boost student engagement. We emphasize active visual learning and taking students on a learning QUEST where scholars Question, Unlock prior knowledge, Engage in active visible learning, Share student voice, choice, and reflection, and Transfer and apply their new learning in a variety of contexts.

Our school offers a variety of academic options for students to achieve excellence by learning at their own pace. We excel by offering Learning Lab, English Language Learning classes, Gifted And Talented Education program (GATE), art and music classes, and field trips that provide student immersion in first hand experiences. These experiences extend learning beyond the Common Core structure. Outside of school hours we offer no cost before school computer-based enrichment and after-school state test preparation classes for students in need of support. We offer low cost after school programs in Chess Club, Science Club, and Kids Theater. In addition, students have opportunities to collaborate in philanthropic outreach programs to raise funds to support populations in need.

Safety is top priority at Deer Canyon. Our school actively participates in the PBIS program (Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems) which introduces, models, and reinforces positive behavior expectations. Staff and students participate in active trainings so that they are well prepared in case of emergency. Our school has a community outreach program, Watch DOGS (Dads Of Great Students), which involves positive male role models volunteering with supervision and participation in classroom activities.

Implementation and Monitoring

Deer Canyon engages all community members in our SOARing goals. Our dynamic volunteer workroom includes a Volunteer Coordinator who organizes projects and works closely with our active Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Together, they encourage family participation in our many activities including a pancake breakfast, monthly family nights at local restaurants, evening events on campus, and our annual jog-a-thon fundraiser. Volunteers are recognized through Honorary Service Awards.

At Deer Canyon we have unique methods of communication that are tailored to keep conversations open between all stakeholders. Through ClassDojo and Remind 101, teachers keep parents abreast of student progress, assignments and upcoming events. Blackboard Connect, Principal's Monthly Newsletter, the school website, Marquee, and Instagram are the venues used by administration to share important information and schedules. Facebook connects families with PTA. We elicit program surveys from all stakeholders to gain feedback and insight to ensure inclusion in the decision making processes of our school.

Deer Canyon fosters professional development through trainings and classes for both certificated and classified staff. Within our staff, we take advantage of individuals' skills, expertise, and knowledge to inform, educate, and train our peers. Staff is utilized to lead in school and district trainings and present at Parent University, which is offered to the community. Staff voluntarily attend outside trainings to stay informed of the latest educational practices.

Our school understands the importance of data driven instruction. Multiple measures are used in evaluating the effectiveness of instructional learning activities. Teachers use input and evaluations to gain knowledge of students' abilities and growth. Throughout the year assessments are given using Front Row Ed, STAR tests, and Accelerated Reader. Data is gathered from the reports generated by these programs guiding teachers in the structure of their curriculum. Beyond differentiating in the classroom, teachers have access to pathways to ensure success including before and after school enrichment programs, Learning Lab, Individual Education Plans (IEP) and GATE.

Our GATE program engages stakeholders, particularly parents, and is a model to surrounding schools. We have successfully personalized our enrichment program to the unique interests and curiosities of our gifted learners. Our thematic planning approach provides a continuum of learning for students to progress through annually. Parents are included in this program through family interaction events. Our annual GATE Family Mystery Dinner welcomes parents to engage in learning with their students as they utilize critical thinking and collaboration. Our STEM Showcase allows students to creatively engage with the engineering design process to develop solutions to real world problems and communicate their findings to peers.

Results and Outcomes

Our mission is to provide all students a broad and enriching education that reaches beyond the core. Our proactive staff targets students within specific subgroups and bands of proficiency to increase achievement. Based on data, these subgroups have made significant gains in their proficiency levels.

With Title 1 funds we pioneered an innovative program called the Learning Lab. Students are identified and progress toward skills mastery is monitored using Front Row Ed, STAR tests, Accelerated Reader and teacher input. Students needing additional support are quickly referred to our Student Study Team to elicit additional personalized interventions. At the highest level of support, we have the Resource Specialist Program. Through Resource, students on Individualized Education Plans work toward specific learning goals. With these innovative practices in place, we have seen steady gains. In 2016–2017, 51% of our socioeconomically disadvantaged students met or exceeded the ELA standards and 41% of these same students met or exceeded the standards for math.

Within our English Language Learning program, our students benefited from the strategic support provided with 53% meeting or exceeded the state standards in English Language Arts and 57% meeting or exceeded the state standards in Mathematics. They are achieving academic excellence through the standards-based instruction, provided by our model program which is rigorous and engaging. Our emphasis on our Hispanic subgroup was successful with 58% meeting or exceeded the state standards in English Language Arts and 46% meeting or exceeded the state standards in Mathematics.

Overall, an impressive 57% of all Deer Canyon students in grades 3–6 met or exceeded the ELA standards. This reveals an increase of 5% over 2015–2016. In mathematics, 51% of Deer Canyon students in grades 3–6 met or exceeded the Mathematics standards. This extraordinary 16% increase over our scores in 2015–2016 are something we are very proud of.

Our students are provided with a safe, orderly, engaging, and enriching learning environment. As such, we maintain a high level of student involvement by increasing attendance using our monthly SOARing Eagle Attendance Award as well as decreasing disciplinary rates using PBIS. The 2016–2017 attendance rates remain high at 96.3%, while suspension rates are consistently low with 1.8% suspensions and 0% expulsions. Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior is an important step of a student's educational experience. The Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports program we have in place teaches and reinforces school-wide behavioral expectations.

What distinguishes Deer Canyon is the way we SOAR in all that we do. Our school takes pride in the distinguished nature of the programs offered by our highly trained, progressive, and innovative educational trailblazers who have created an environment where our scholars are able to SOAR in their academic endeavors.