

Condor Elementary Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 36677776109615

County: San Bernardino

District (Local Educational Agency): Morongo Unified

School: Condor Elementary

Demographics

Enrollment: 538 students

Location Description: Rural

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Condor Elementary School was established in December 10, 1990 aboard the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. The Marine Corps base spans 998 square miles and hosts training missions for military members from all over the world. We are a K–6 school serving approximately 550 students. Condor is located adjacent to the town of Twentynine Palms in San Bernardino County. The community of Twentynine Palms is close-knit with a rich history. Despite its small size, the community offers a wealth of resources for supporting students and their families. The Mojave Desert, Joshua Tree National Park, and surrounding mountain ranges of the Morongo Basin provide a rugged yet spectacular backdrop for our campus.

Our students face a unique set of challenges due to the transient nature of their parents' military service. Not only are our students expected to assimilate to new schools frequently, many of them experience significant gaps in their learning because of the inconsistency of academic expectations at different duty stations. Students often

struggle with the emotions connected with the deployment of one or more parents for extended periods of time and changes in family dynamics. Condor's student population is diverse, with representation from multiple ethnic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds. 7% of our students are English Language Learners. Our socioeconomically disadvantaged students make up approximately 45% of our student population. Students with disabilities account for 11% of our current enrollment, including a program serving students with autism.

Teachers at Condor share the vision "Educate All Students". Condor educators have developed a reputation for excellence in education. Teachers have high expectations for each student and master scheduling allows for differentiated instruction in all grade levels. The Multi-Tiered System of Support Team (MTSS), Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports Team (PBIS), Special Education Team, and School Attendance Review Team (SART) all closely collaborate to form "Condor Connections". This collaborative community works to provide academic, behavioral, and social support to all students. The teams coordinate to match students or families in need with the appropriate resources available through the school and community in order to maintain an environment where students can focus on learning.

Our non-teaching support staff helps to connect Condor with our families and community and are an essential factor in cultivating our school climate. Office staff, custodians, nutritional services, instructional assistants, health services, and special education support staff maintain a positive attitude and work diligently to keep students' needs their top priority. The non-teaching staff is essential in supporting the Condor Connections collaborative community. Our team works together to create a learning community that focuses on the well-being of the whole child.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Condor Connections

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

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

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

Condor Connections is the close cross-departmental collaboration between multiple site teams, parents, and the community. Our program combines the three tiered MTSS and PBIS models. Our collaborative team of departments that customarily work in isolation is the distinguishing feature of our program.

Because of the challenges our students face as military dependents, our staff recognized the need to adopt practices to support their emotional well-being and academic growth.

The Condor Connections team consists of the principal, resource specialist, Multi-Tier System of Support coordinator (MTSS), school psychologist, Speech and Language Pathologist, teachers, Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports team (PBIS), Military Family Life Counselors (MFLC), parents, and community resources. Two part-time teachers are paid out of site funds to facilitate small group intervention. Supplemental instructional materials are provided as needed.

The anticipated outcome of this program is a sustained learning community that focuses on the well-being of the whole child. The team has led staff development in MTSS, PBIS, Restorative Practices, and Active Supervision.

Condor Connections' goal is to unite parents, students, and the community in order to provide the resources necessary to ensure student success. We strive to build trust and strong partnerships with our families.

Unlike previous programs that exclusively serviced at-risk students, Condor Connections promotes school-wide achievement by supporting all students. Each student is monitored through Universal Screening, academic and behavioral data analysis, and staff communication.

Our learning community is unique. Military students often experience academic, emotional, and behavioral difficulties. Offering social/emotional support to meet students' basic needs allows students to work to their full potential, as demonstrated by our consistently high performance on standardized assessment and district benchmarks.

Our student's social/emotional and behavioral needs are met through collaboration with the PBIS team, MFLC, and other community resources. Our program coordinators work together to analyze data and match appropriate services with students.

MUSD's LCAP Goal #2 is to utilize data analysis to make instructional decisions for students. The team analyzes data weekly to monitor the behavioral and academic student progress. The team also analyzes universal screening data to ensure that all students are supported.

Condor experiences a low rate of absenteeism, suspension, and expulsion. Attendance rates are steady at 98%. Supporting engaging classrooms, forming strong relationships,

and facilitating extra-curricular activities helps contribute to our high attendance rate. Suspensions and expulsions decreased from 1.2 % to .4% the last two years. The team's philosophy is rooted in finding the function of the behavior and implementing interventions before pursuing punitive measures.

Implementation and Monitoring

A key element of the Condor Connections' success is involving stakeholders in the tiered process. All stakeholders are invited to attend team meetings via email, letters home, phone calls, text messages, and in-person. Parents are strongly encouraged to provide input regarding their child's instructional or behavioral plan. We experience a high rate of parent participation.

The model is communicated to all teachers through staff development, informational exchanges during staff meetings, and grade level collaboration time. Email updates are sent regularly when new information is available. Committees frequently host parent information nights to relay helpful information to parents and staff members in attendance. Information is posted on the school's website, and flyers are sent home regularly advertising parent involvement opportunities. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) hosts a Facebook group that provides information to our community daily.

Our Condor Connections model encourages parents to be active participants and equal partners in their child's education. Parent engagement is monitored through the volunteer sign in log, parent survey results, event attendance, LCAP participation, parent/teacher conference attendance, PTO participation, and sign in sheets from parent information nights. Our school welcomes an average of 50 parent volunteers a day.

Capacity building activities are offered to teachers and administrators throughout the school year. Recent training opportunities include Restorative Practices, Active Supervision, PBIS, MTSS, Smarter Balanced Assessments, Next Generation Science Standards, and working with children with autism. Our "Teacher Share" during staff meetings allows teachers to share strategies and resources that have been successful in their classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to observe their more experienced peers facilitating differentiated instruction during the school day. Military Family Life Counselors work with teachers to team teach and provide support and training in social/emotional learning. Non-instructional staff also attends PBIS training so that the program can be supported in all areas of the school. Administration engages in professional learning as well, with our principal receiving training in PBIS, Illuminate data, Cognitive Behavioral Techniques for Educators, Developmental Assets, Working with Students with Emotional and Behavioral Challenges, and Communication Strategies.

The effectiveness of our instructional learning activities is continuously monitored through a variety of academic and non-academic assessments including district benchmarks, state testing, diagnostic testing, universal screening, administrator

evaluation, attendance rates, behavioral data, and surveys. These assessments provide the Condor Connections team with data they can use to evaluate the effectiveness of the model and teacher practices.

Results and Outcomes

The Condor Connections team uses quantitative and qualitative data to determine students' progress towards academic and behavioral goals. The team collects and analyzes data during weekly meetings and instructional or behavioral plans are revised as necessary. Grade levels set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals during collaboration time and the team assists in providing instruction and resources to help students meet the desired outcome. This is especially evident during Universal Access (UA) time, where students receive extra pull-out instruction by team members in support of the learning goals.

Quantitative data that supports positive academic student outcomes include state test scores, benchmarks, placement tests, universal screening, and diagnostic data. The behavior data analyzed includes the number of minor incident reports, office referrals, attendance rate, and points earned through our mentoring program. Classroom observations, work samples, teacher feedback, interviews, and surveys provide qualitative data that assists the team in making decisions to support student success.

Our quantitative data analysis shows that our students continue to outperform district, county, and state averages on the Smarter Balanced Assessment in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math. In ELA, 43% more Condor students met or exceeded grade level standards compared to the state, county, and district average. In math, 31% more students met or exceeded grade level standards. District benchmarks show an increase of 18% in ELA scores and 5% in math between the 15–16 and 16–17 school year. Our students scored 20.7% higher than the rest of MUSD in ELA and 21% higher in math in 16–17. Behavior data shows that the suspension rate from the 15–16 to 16–17 school year fell from 1.2% to 0.4% and the expulsion rate was consistent at 0%. Our attendance rate has risen steadily to 96.38% and continues to be the highest average actual attendance in our district. One set of qualitative data, collected via survey, shows that teachers feel like significant family and community members are involved in team decisions, student behavior is monitored and feedback is provided regularly, and teachers have opportunities for access to assistance.

Both our socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) target group and non-target groups showed a measure of success in ELA. Data analysis shows that the percentage of SED 4th graders who exceeded standards increased 15% while non SED also increased by 6%. SED 5th graders who exceeded standards increased by 16% and non-SED students who met the standard increased by 30%. Our SED 6th graders who exceeded standards increased by 4%, while their non-SED peers increased by 5%.

Condor's ability to utilize members of multiple teams to analyze data help us to plan staff development that is customized to our specific needs, track effectiveness of interventions, and monitor the growth of all students.