

## **Mission Elementary School Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 36678430123851

County: San Bernardino

District (Local Educational Agency): Redlands Unified

School: Mission Elementary School

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 569 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Modified

Charter: No

### **Overview**

Mission Elementary School was "revitalized" in 2011, after nearly two decades of being closed as an elementary school. The school initially opened around 1851 as a one-room schoolhouse. A second school was built in 1881, with a third being constructed in 1904. The current campus has three buildings containing twenty classrooms, a library, and large multipurpose room.

Mission Elementary School believes that all students deserve the opportunity to be educated in a way that prepares them for college, and this preparation can begin as early as kindergarten. It is this belief that has fueled the school's college preparation focus where staff is committed to creating a school that knows no limits to the academic success of each student. Every child is taught with equitable practices to ensure they all have a chance to reach higher education. Staff recognizes the potential challenges students may face, and excuses are not allowed as a barrier to their success.

“Building Better Futures...No Excuses” is not only Mission’s motto, but how each staff member greets each day. Mission Elementary School is a vibrant, engaging community of teachers and learners. It is a place where high expectations are set for all students; and where every student, without exception or excuse, will be proficient in English Language Arts and Math. Much energy has been spent building this belief by nurturing a culture of universal student achievement, collaborating regularly as a school community to strengthen the alignment of standards, assessment of the standards being taught, and managing the data from the assessments. This systematic approach allows for the necessary information needed to offer meaningful interventions to students.

Visitors to Mission Elementary quickly get a sense of a college-focused environment that is adorned with college symbolism. Staff and students alike can be seen sporting college shirts, and the campus is bursting with college flags, banners, and bulletin boards. Parents are visible in classrooms and around campus, partnering with students and staff.

Additionally, community partners have rallied behind the school’s “Building Better Futures...No Excuses” college-focused endeavor, and continue to contribute to student achievement. The University of Redlands, YMCA Crosswalk Church, Azusa Pacific University, Assistance League of Redlands, Kiwanis Club of Redlands, Redlands Rotary, Redlands Educational Partnership(REP), The Grove School, Frugal Frigate Book Store, and Shakey’s Pizza all serve students in various capacities.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Building Better Futures...No Excuses!

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

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

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

Strategies Used: School Climate, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Professional Development

## **Description**

Mission Elementary School is proud of its “Building Better Futures...No Excuses” model practice, which is a pledge to provide a college and career ready environment for its students; where all students are engaged in a rigorous academic program that prepares them for college and career success. This model embodies six exceptional systems that focus on the critical aspects of a school. The six exceptional systems focused on are

collaboration, standards alignment, assessment, data management, intervention, and a culture of universal achievement; the belief that all students can go to college.

One of the goals aligned to the Common Core State Standards is becoming college and/or career ready through increased rigor. Two years ago, Mission Elementary staff and parents agreed there was a need to instill a college and career focus on campus, which would support students in aiming high for their future beyond high school, to include college attendance. Mission serves a student population of which 71% qualifies for free and reduced lunch. Many of these students face adversity and come from homes where academic and college expectations are not part of their culture. Most of these families have not experienced a culture of college attendance or even high school graduation, hence the need to expose students to the possibility.

PeaceBuilder character education is a school-wide support that contributes to behavior expectations to meet social, emotional, and behavioral needs, complimented by the recent implementation of Positive Behaviors and Intervention Supports (PBIS). A school counselor provides additional support through individual counseling, group counseling, and class lessons to support students with identified social and behavioral needs, which in turn contributes to academic and school success and a greater potential for a college future.

School attendance directly affects student success and achievement. Creating a school culture with the “Building Better Futures...No Excuses” focus provides an environment with high expectations where students want to come to school every day. Students feel supported by staff. They believe in themselves, and believe that coming to school is important. The importance of attendance is communicated through phone calls, letters, and home visits to ensure parents feel supported as well.

Mission’s model practice of “Building Better Futures...No Excuses” is aligned to the district’s LCAP through the implementation and use of resources which support the six exceptional systems. These systems support school wide achievement and set the foundation for college readiness. Funding to support all aspects of the exceptional systems within this model is included in Mission’s Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), and includes Title 1 and LCAP funding.

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

Mission’s College and Career Advisory Committee and parents have led the charge in initiating and maintaining the “Building Better Futures...No Excuses” model practice. In addition, the Leadership Team, Intervention Team, and teachers collaborate regularly on behalf of this college-focused model.

On a daily basis, Mission’s school community exposes students to college symbolism. Each classroom has adopted a college or university, college boards are visible in each classroom, and college banners are displayed all over campus. On a weekly basis, all students chant college songs and wear college shirts. Students who may have otherwise not seen themselves as being college-bound now have a better

understanding of what college is and what it takes to prepare for it. With the six exceptional systems in place through the “Building Better Futures...No Excuses” model, college is now a reality for them, regardless of the challenges they may face.

All staff has been involved in professional development offered by the No Excuses University (NEU) network, either at school or by attending a NEU institute over the last two years. This training has influenced a school climate whereby students, parents, and staff have embraced implementing the six exceptional systems with fidelity. In addition, all staff has participated in a book study of *Building Bridges*, by Tina Schuler. This book focuses on classroom management with positive support systems and setting high expectations for student behavior and achievement, which supports the school wide focus of PBIS. Finally, staff collaborates around the six exceptional systems monthly, refining them as needed.

Parents are provided opportunities to participate and provide input in many capacities such as PTA, School Site Council, English Learner Advisory Council (ELAC), Coffee with the Principal, Flag and Award assemblies, fieldtrips, classroom volunteers, family nights, and the annual College and Career Fair. Regular communication is made via the school website, automated calls home, social media, newsletters, and parent-teacher conferences.

All students participate in a monthly forty-five minute “Future Friday” opportunity led by the principal and school counselor. Students focus on goal setting, academic behavior, challenges, success equation, and more. The book, *College Conversations*, by Emily Devor, guides these lessons. In addition to community partnerships, parents support our college-focused endeavor by participating in school activities, parent workshops, and parent conferences.

Program effectiveness is regularly monitored and assessed by the collection of feedback from stakeholders via conversations, surveys, and sign-in sheets. Feedback is shared at parent, community, and staff meetings. Monthly staff collaboration meetings center on student academic and behavior achievement which drives program goals and adjustments, both short and long term, as well as options for professional development.

## **Results and Outcomes**

Student achievement data is analyzed on an ongoing basis by individual teachers and shared with students and parents. Every six weeks, grade level data teams meet to review district assessments. These results drive instruction and dictate the need for re-teaching, student grouping, interventions, and acceleration. Attendance and discipline data is regularly analyzed, and decisions regarding levels of support are made based on that data.

Mission celebrates continual improvement of student achievement. The last two years, the overall increase in achievement on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments (SBAC) for English Language Arts (ELA) where students are meeting or exceeding standards has increased over 18%. The following Claims have shown steady increases

from 2015–2017. Students achieving “Near” and “At or Above Standard” has increased in all areas: Reading (+13.9 %), Writing (12.9%), Listening (+9.11%), and Research/Inquiry (+9.53%).

Math achievement has shown an overall increase of students meeting and exceeding standards as reflected by the SBAC data with an 8% growth over the same time period, with an increase in student achievement in all three Claim areas: Concepts and Procedures (+6.7%), Problem Solving and Model/Data Analysis (+9.82%), and Communicating Reasoning (+1.56%).

Mission attributes the achievement in part to the belief that all students can meet the goals of high expectations; the believers being staff, students, and parents. A parent shared, “My son wants to go to college and I am glad since I never went. His future will be better than mine.”

The SBAC data indicates that targeted groups continue to experience increased academic achievement. The following increase in met or exceeded standards was seen over the last two years in ELA: (SES +8%), (SPED + 2%), (Hispanic+14%), (African American+14%), (Filipino+16%), (Aisan+2%), (White+8%).

Also, Chronic Absenteeism rate continues to improve with 1.5% less chronically absent students than the district average.

The “Building Better Futures...No Excuses” model practice has created a culture of universal achievement where all stakeholders BELIEVE all students can experience success and a college future, no excuses. Mrs. Whitfield, Third grade teacher at Mission Elementary, shared, “I had never heard students of this age talking about going to college, but that is now part of everyday conversations here at Mission Elementary School. They are inspired and so am I!” Mission Elementary is a school that knows no limits to the academic success of each student; therefore the students believe this also.