

## **Bryn Mawr Elementary School Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 36678436111132

County: San Bernardino

District (Local Educational Agency): Redlands Unified

School: Bryn Mawr Elementary School

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 667 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Modified

Charter: No

### **Overview**

Bryn Mawr Elementary School, built in the city of Loma Linda in 1993, serves a diverse student population in grades TK–5. It is one of the largest elementary schools in the Redlands Unified School District with a population of almost 700 students. Loma Linda University Medical Center acts as an international magnet for employees, medical students, and patients, and, as a result, Bryn Mawr Elementary is comprised of a richly diverse student population, originating from each U.S. region and almost thirty countries.

The school's mission is to develop and maintain high academic standards, immersing all students in a curriculum that will enable them to grow intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially. To that end, teachers have implemented several research-driven school-wide teaching strategies that enable students to reach the highest levels of academic success. Thinking Maps, Write from the Beginning, Lexia Reading, and TenMarks Math are used in conjunction with the district's Houghton-Mifflin Common

Core State Standards (CCSS) curriculum/scope and sequence to provide a solid foundation of learning in reading, writing, and mathematics.

The teaching and support staff partner with parents to provide quality, standards-based instruction for all students within an educational environment where caring for kids is paramount. Students receive character education through participation in the PeaceBuilder program, and by all staff members modeling appropriate, dignity-building interactions with students. Parent involvement is also critical to the positive environment on campus. Parents are often seen volunteering in classrooms, on field trips, or taking part in many activities organized by the school's strong PTA.

The staff believes in educating the whole child and collectively offers their individual talents and strengths to augment the academic program with activities in music, art, drama, and dance. Fine arts assemblies made possible by PTA and Redlands Educational Partnership, TV broadcast productions, an annual variety show, field trips, and science activities are just a few of the opportunities and experiences that students receive.

Bryn Mawr is fortunate to have community partners that support its students and families. The Boys & Girls Club of Redlands provides onsite child care before and after school, while organizations such as Family Services Association, South Coast Counseling, Operation School Bell, Loma Linda Firefighters' Association, and the Redlands Rotary provide resources to families in need of supports and services. Companies like Shakey's Pizza and Barnes & Noble support the student reading program, and the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department conducts a KidzWatch program to educate 4th and 5th grade students about safety and responsibility.

One needs only to walk the halls of Bryn Mawr Elementary to see and experience the accepting, loving, and supportive culture and climate the school has built with its students.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Reading Intervention Program

Length of Model Program/Practice: 8+ years

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

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

Strategies Used: Data-Driven Decision Making

## Description

The teaching staff at Bryn Mawr is committed to students meeting or exceeding grade level standards in reading. In addition to state-adopted core materials that provide a strong foundation in reading instruction, assessments helped teachers determine there was still student need for intervention and support. As a result, the school program was designed to support students struggling to meet minimum proficiency in Common Core State Standards for reading (specifically in reading comprehension and fluency).

Each year, the DIBELS reading assessment is given to all students in 1st–3rd grades. The assessment is given to 4th and 5th grade students by teacher request. Based on this and other assessments, such as Houghton-Mifflin, Rigby Running Record, and Lexia Reading, students demonstrating a need for reading intervention qualify for additional instruction with one of three reading interventionists. These credentialed teachers are hired hourly and specialize in providing small-group reading instruction to students. Materials used to instruct groups of 4–6 students include Houghton-Mifflin “Journeys” intervention materials, 95% Group and “Early Success” reading materials. Weekly progress monitoring allows interventionists to chart student growth. At the end of each trimester, classroom teachers use collaboration time to meet with interventionists to review student growth and exit students from the program as appropriate.

The goal of the reading intervention program is for students to improve reading skills, sufficiently enabling them to succeed in the regular classroom core reading curriculum. As skills are strengthened, students are able to access the reading materials in the general classroom more readily, participate and collaborate with peers in the general classroom reading program, and share their reading success with parents.

The benefit to students in this program is significant. By striving to ensure all students are reading at grade level, the student group as a whole is able to make greater progress. As part of the focus in Common Core College and Career Readiness standards, students are able to collaborate in reading critically to identify solutions to problems.

The English Learner (EL) population in particular has demonstrated tremendous growth as a result of the reading intervention program. Data shows EL students in the small group environment are more engaged, participate with fewer stigmas about doing well compared to English-only peers in a whole group, and make more rapid gains as a result.

The improvement in reading ability benefits not only student academic growth, but also has significant impact on students’ socio-emotional growth. Students who show growth from participating in the reading intervention are able to perform better academically, interact more easily with peers, and feel a greater sense of achievement when grade reports show their strengths in areas that were once areas of weakness.

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

The reading intervention program at Bryn Mawr begins with three intervention teachers (interventionists) conducting benchmark assessment of all 1st through 3rd grade students using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment. Students in grades 4 and 5 are assessed based on classroom teacher recommendation. Once assessment is complete, the interventionists share the findings with classroom teachers. Small groups of 4–6 students are then organized according to particular skills that are the focus of targeted instruction over the next 8–10 weeks.

Students are released from general education English/Language Arts instruction to attend a 30-minute session 4 days each week during which interventionists work on focused reading skill activities. Targeted instruction might include using alphabet letter/sound cards to support phonemic awareness, 95% Group materials to improve blending skills, nonsense word practice cards to improve C-V-C skills, practicing sight words, and leveled reading books to increase fluency. Over the 8–10 week course of time, student progress is monitored weekly with DIBELS assessments to track growth. Students who are identified as English Learners with ability ranging from beginner to intermediate are also supported with designated English Language development instruction. Students work with Houghton-Mifflin “Journeys” English language development materials to build vocabulary skills, practice blending and build sight words. In some cases, English Learners with greater needs “double-dip” by attending both reading intervention and English Language development sessions to provide the greatest opportunity for growth in reading and language skills.

At the end of each trimester, interventionists meet with classroom teachers over the course of two days to review results. Students who have reached grade-level expectations are exited from their intervention groups. For students who have not made sufficient growth, plans are made to either continue them in the reading intervention program or refer them to an Intervention Support Team (IST) process where further interventions within the classroom can be developed, or considerations can be made for special education assessment. Classroom teachers and interventionists share progress information with parents along the way through meetings or phone calls, and at the end of each trimester, ensuring that parents are not only aware of their child’s abilities, but can also support their child’s reading development with activities provided for use at home.

## **Results and Outcomes**

Annual review of student data shows targeted, small group approach to reading intervention has provided students the opportunity to close gaps in their reading skills, and has helped develop vocabulary and reading fluency. Within the smaller setting, students are able to focus on practicing skills they need to improve without the distractions of the larger class.

For students participating in the reading intervention program over the past three years (2014–2017), the data has shown positive results. For each of the past three years,

approximately half (49%) of first grade students exit the program by the end of their first grade year. Of the first grade students who continue in the program the following year, 43% exit within that second year. In second and third grades, approximately 41% of students (on average) exit the program within their first year, while 43% more exit within their second year. For fourth and fifth grades, the average percentages of students exiting the program within the first year are 45% and 55%, respectively.

The program also has significant impact on the English Learner (EL) subgroup. For participating students identified as ELs, a comparison was made between the scale scores in the Reading section of the CELDT between the 2015 and 2016 administrations. The analysis revealed that, on average, student scale scores increased 49 points, the highest being an increase of 91 points. 100% of the EL students increased their Reading scale scores year-over-year.

The program also helped identify those students needing greater support through special education. Of the students who were referred to the Intervention Support Team (IST) by interventionists, 68% of students who were ultimately assessed by the school psychologist qualified for special education support.

Staff continues to analyze data each trimester each year, and looks for ways to increase student growth. The 95% Group reading support materials and training were recently added as additional resources for interventionists to use to help increase student reading skills. After 8 years, Bryn Mawr continues to strive toward all students gaining grade level reading skills by 3rd grade, which research suggests greatly contributes to a student's academic success.