

## **W.J.C. Trapp Elementary School Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 36678506036693

County: San Bernardino

District (Local Educational Agency): Rialto Unified

School: W.J.C. Trapp Elementary School

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 440 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Modified

Charter: No

### **Overview**

Nestled at the foot of the San Bernardino Mountains, W.J.C. Trapp Elementary School can best be described as “Leading the Pack.” Trapp has been the top performing school in Rialto Unified School District for the last three years. The school opened in 1964 and is located in the northern portion of Rialto. Trapp Timber Wolves gather as a pack every Friday morning for a principal led “Pack Howl,” with students, staff, and community members joining together to celebrate our students’ achievements. We continually renew our commitment as a pack. “Awooo!”

The “Pack Howl” reminds everyone of our Mission:

The mission of Trapp Elementary School, the den where Timber Wolves lead the pack with strength and integrity, is to ignite and instill purpose in each student to build a foundation that leads to academic achievement, as well as intellectual, social, and emotional growth, through a system distinguished by:

- high academic expectations
- safe and secure school community
- active family participation
- community partnerships
- respect for diversity

Trapp's relatively small pack size of 440 students, facilitates a family-like culture which promotes community engagement and maximizes student achievement. Our diverse pack is composed of the following ethnic groups: African American, 14.09%; Asian, 0.22%; Hispanic, 78.2%; White, 3.6% and American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.5%.

This intimate learning environment is coupled with a strong mission focus and careful attention to continuous program improvement through the implementation of Professional Learning Communities. Data analysis drives instruction for all students and for continuous program improvement. The results led to a focus on increased rigor with high expectations and targeted instruction for all students, based on student needs. Changes include Gifted and Talented Education enrichment, targeted intervention, a safe school culture through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, and collaboration between the Resource Specialist and teachers resulting in an inclusion model for students with disabilities.

Our Wolf Pack encompasses the community as evidenced by high parent engagement in school activities including family technology, literacy, and STEAM nights, as well as movie nights and after-school dances. Trapp's "Bring Your Parent to School Day" had an enormous turnout that included parents, site and District staff, Rialto Police Department, and Sunrise Church members coming together to sit down with individual students to analyze data and set targeted goals for each student. These school events have increased student ownership in their learning and in taking charge of their future.

Trapp Elementary is committed to "Leading the Pack" by providing educational experiences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. We promote rigorous academics through differentiated instruction and personal responsibility for learning. We are excited to share our journey to excellence. "Awooo!"

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

Target Area(s): Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Prevention, 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, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

#### **Description**

Trapp Elementary has a focus on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), "...an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve." (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, Learning by Doing 2010, p. 11).

The teachers use PLCs for data analysis to ensure all students meet or exceed the Common Core State Standards. Our PLC teams are comprised of general and special education teachers, the Instructional Strategist, and administration. These teams meet regularly to focus on improving student achievement and academic programs utilizing Google Drive to share PLC templates to guide their discussions. They bring assessment data to share, discuss, and analyze, and then utilize that information to plan and differentiate instruction for all students including specific subgroups such as English Learners and students with special needs. This process is essential as it increases their instructional efficacy and helps them maintain a consistent focus on the needs of their students. Moreover, it helps diminish the gaps in learning and in instructional practices and provides the teachers the opportunity to work together to refine lessons to address Response to Intervention (RtI). Lesson studies are held by grade levels to focus on instructional practices to improve teaching and desired student outcomes. As an added benefit, several teachers loop with their students from 4th to 5th grade providing an additional layer of consistency in instruction. Teachers readily share materials and ideas within and across grade levels thereby reinforcing the collaborative culture that continues to grow and thrive at Trapp.

The team approach to PLCs focuses on chronic absenteeism, as well as addresses the social-emotional needs of the students working to reduce suspensions and expulsions. PLCs discuss Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) practices. The staff collaborates to identify students who need support in building leadership skills, and students are rewarded for positive behaviors. Student attendance is encouraged and incentivized with a monthly perfect attendance recess, as well as trimester and end-of-the-year awards.

Additional outcomes of PLCs include an increase in student achievement by partnering with our community to provide engagement activities, such as family nights. A supportive partnership with a local church has been established to provide resources, facilities, and character building lessons. Additionally, committees have been formed that include staff, administrators, parents and community members to develop our site Strategic Plan.

Our commitment to collaboration within the PLC model has resulted in strong and continuous improvement for all students. Our teachers are a collegial and cohesive team that makes Trapp Elementary a model for collaborative success.

### **Implementation and Monitoring**

The PLC process at Trapp Elementary has evolved from informal collaboration between teachers to a more organized and focused system encompassing the formal PLC components. The PLC process was originally adopted as a component of our Response to Intervention (RtI) and to transition to the Common Core State Standards. In 2015, four staff members participated in six days of PLC training with a consultant from Solution Tree and returned to train their colleagues. As a continued effort to refine the PLC process and its effectiveness, two additional teachers and the Principal attended the Solution Tree PLCs at Work Institute in 2017–18 and shared learnings with the staff. An additional eight teachers will attend the same Institute in June 2018.

The biggest challenge in implementing the PLC model has been finding “sacred” time for weekly collaboration. Initially, Trapp teachers met bi-monthly after school. In an effort to increase PLC time, Trapp’s leadership team developed an innovative schedule that allows the PLC meetings to occur during the instructional day. Teachers partner with other grade levels to teach physical education (PE) as grade levels for 45 minutes weekly. This allows grade level teachers to meet in PLCs while the partner grade level teaches PE. The grade levels are invested in the process and meet informally before school, during lunch, and after school. For the 2018–19 school year, teachers have developed a modified schedule to allow one minimum day per week for PLC meetings.

Rick DuFour’s third “Big Idea” of a PLC, is the focus on results, which continues to drive the progress of Trapp teachers. Several monitoring and assessment methods are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the grade level PLCs. Notes and a feedback form are submitted via Google Documents by grade-level teams. Data analysis of Common Formative Assessments, including i-Ready benchmarks, Accelerated Reader, chapter tests, and writing prompts are examined to determine instructional effectiveness. Also, our annual parent survey provides qualitative data for staff to reflect on successful teaching practices.

Our collaborative culture extends to an inclusion model for students with disabilities, which provides in-class support of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals through co-teaching by the general education teacher and Resource Specialist. The PLC process was evident in the development of our site Strategic Plan. Certificated and Classified staff, parents, and community members held meetings to discuss three key goals: Addressing the diverse learning needs of our students, building a united culture where every individual is valued, and building a culture of perseverance in students. In these meetings we identified methods to accomplish the goals, determined what materials would be needed, and established a timeline based on the PLC process as a vital step for implementation.

## Results and Outcomes

The PLC process has led to honest discussion, rather than contrived collegiality, in order to fine tune instruction and support student achievement. The goal of creating a collaborative culture is evidenced by students, teachers and families engaging in these types of positive conversations. Rick DuFour's "Three Big Ideas" of the PLC are alive and thriving at Trapp. "Bring Your Parent to School Day" was affirmation of PLCs at work as the community came together to focus student achievement.

We use quantitative and qualitative data to determine the success of our PLC program. PLC templates are used to analyze and summarize data. California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) results, Common Formative Assessments, attendance, report card grades, and chapter tests are some examples. Supplemental programs such as i-Ready, are used to assess students' reading and math skills and design instruction addressing the students' unique needs. The Systematic Instruction in Phonological awareness, Phonics and Sight words (SIPPS) program gives data on the fluency levels of students and provides a lesson format that regularly assess these targeted skills. The First in Math program assesses and provides practice for students in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts. Accelerated Reader (AR) monitors reading comprehension through online tests with a target goal of 85% to 95% accuracy.

The collaborative culture at Trapp, formal and informal, has led to an increase in scores on the CAASPP tests. In 2014–15, the first CAASPP test, showed 41% of the students were considered proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) and 28% were proficient in mathematics. By the 2015–16 school year, 55% of the students were meeting or exceeding standards in ELA, a 14% increase over the prior year. For the same year, 39% of the students were meeting or exceeding standards in math, an 11% increase. For the 2016–2017 school year, Trapp maintained 55% of students exceeding ELA standards while math scores grew to 44% proficient. The Fall 2017 California Data Dashboard showed all students were "Green" in ELA and math, an increase in math from Spring 2017, which was "Yellow." Since 2015, English Learners increased 32.8 points in ELA and 39.2 points in math. Trapp's attendance rates were over 96% during the last two years, while suspension rates have consistently been below 2% of the student population.

To further accelerate reading and math scores of all students this year, Trapp adopted the i-Ready assessment and online instructional tool. After reviewing the first i-Ready benchmarks in grade level PLCs, Trapp teachers discussed ways to improve student results. Students showed positive growth in reading from 23% to 45% at grade level or above. There was substantial improvement in math where students grew from 13% to 33% at grade level or above.

Trapp is committed to implementing the PLC model as a best practice to improve student achievement.