

Bostonia Language Academy Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 37679916037576

County: San Diego

District (Local Educational Agency): Cajon Valley Union

School: Bostonia Language Academy

Demographics

Enrollment: 515 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Our school is an outstanding product of the work of educators coming together for a shared purpose: academic excellence in multiple languages. We strive to break free from the traditional elementary school model through innovation, thereby becoming a model of excellence at all levels.

Bostonia Language Academy is a dual language immersion school that aligns instruction to the California Common Core State Standards distinguished by the implementation of the Bostonia Global Readiness (BGR) practice. BGR was developed in direct response to the needs of our community, reliance on evidence-based practices, and knowledge of career readiness trends. In 2014, Cajon Valley Union School District upgraded the focus for Bostonia from a traditional English-only emphasis to a multilingual, multiliteracy, and multicultural magnet school. Stakeholders representing various groups interested in making this program a success developed a shared mission and vision. This shared mission and vision is the foundation for the school's

success. Our pledge “We are a community” guides all of our work and is evident in the day-to-day lives of our students.

Bostonia serves 515 students from Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through fifth grade. With a focus on language development, global competencies, and community connections, our distinguished program benefits from a diverse student population, speaking any of nine different languages. About 42% of students are English Learners, while 83% qualify for Title I. Our guiding principles form the core of our work:

- “As a multilingual, multiliterate, and multicultural community we:
- help others become successful and responsible citizens of the world,
- nurture diverse skills and personalities,
- welcome and inspire creative ideas,
- work as a team to innovate and solve real world problems,
- exhibit positive attitudes and high expectations, and
- promote the development and pride of competencies for all.”

Our staff is invested in these six principles to guide all aspects of our work. In addition to mastering Spanish and English, our students acquire Computer Science as a third language. In 2015, a White House Press Release recognized Bostonia as the 1st school in the country to teach Computer Science in Spanish.

“Language education not only contributes to students’ career and college readiness, it also helps develop the individual as language learners take on a new and more invigorating view of the world... it is only through knowing the language of others that we can truly understand how they view the world. And this is what makes the language student a 21st Century skilled learner!” (ACTFL, 2016)

Further evidence of our effective strategies are found in the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) Framework which views multilingualism and coding as essential skills for students to thrive in our rapidly-changing world.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Bostonia’s Global Readiness (BGR) practice focuses on creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration as essential skills of 21st century learning. BGR features dual language, Computer Science, blended and personalized learning through 1:1

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Professional Development, Use of Technology

Target Population(s): Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners

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

To prepare our students to compete globally, three years ago our staff launched the ambitious Bostonia Global Readiness (BGR) practice, tailored to the particular needs of our community. Today our school continues to ensure rigorous standards-based instruction through exemplary practices. Our BGR 90/10, Two-Way Program has become a model for other schools from within and outside San Diego County. Visitors to our campus see BGR as an exemplary model for global competencies and relevance for future readiness.

Initial implementation required the hiring of bilingual certificated and classified staff. The district provided a startup grant and core content area materials in both languages. San Diego State University's College of Education Dual Language and International Studies Education Program provided targeted professional development on dual language and global studies. Code to the Future provides support for Computer Science. Our goals and anticipated outcomes correctly predicted outstanding student achievement.

Our learning environment promotes high levels of collaboration and across-content area connections that expand oracy, literacy, mathematical, and metacognitive abilities. A blended learning model allows for differentiated instruction based on assessed needs. Students work on global competencies as they prepare bilingual presentations for authentic audiences, practicing Presentation Literacy Skills through lessons from TED-Ed. These skills enhance students' abilities to communicate, thereby increasing their confidence and self-esteem. Computer Science is supported schoolwide, with students progressing systematically in coding, project management and digital literacy skills. This practice incorporates Scratch, Minecraft, and LEGO robotics. Students use G Suite, Screencastify, and SeeSaw to post and collaborate on projects. With an emphasis on developing students' global awareness, every class embodies a different Spanish-speaking country. Students deepen their understanding of the nations they represent and perceive themselves as global citizens with an important role to play in their world. The American International Academy Chinese student exchange program enhances the multicultural aspects of our practice, bringing the world to our school.

To ensure all students have a personalized and globally-connected learning experience, daily Advisory provides frequent, safe forums to discuss real issues they confront. Advisory enhances reflection, listening, and growing as a community through active conversations that challenge perspectives. With the support of a school counselor, professional development and instructional resources are available for students, parents and community.

A growth-mindset permeates Bostonia. This ethos is celebrated and taught daily, formally and informally, throughout our learning community. Students and families feel connected to school, resulting in absenteeism rates lower than district, county and state.

Implementation and Monitoring

Every day families play an integral role at Bostonia. Our distinguished Bostonia Global Readiness (BGR) practice honors and incorporates the life experiences of all of our families. We maintain a positive, nurturing school climate fostering strong peer-peer, teacher-student, and school-home relationships. Students have active roles as learners and experts, providing a rich context in which students are willing to take risks and learn from their mistakes. All stakeholders recognize the need to partner to meet mutual goals for student success, as we hold each other accountable for refining our practices.

To communicate to all segments of our learning community, we rely on student exhibitions of work, social media, and traditional lines of communication. We operate in multiple languages continuously, reinforcing the focus on global competencies and community connectivity. We regularly assess and monitor the effectiveness of our practices. Surveys, community forums, and interviews inform school leadership.

The P21 Framework and the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education (Center for Applied Linguistics) determine the evidence-basis for the implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement of our program.

Teachers model collaborative connectivity by networking via social media and professional partnerships. Upon reflection of their teaching, they refine their instructional practice, and expand their use of technology. Systematic, ongoing teamwork takes place during teacher release time, staff and grade level meetings. To inform and accelerate multiliteracy development, data is collected on local and state measures, formative and summative assessments, and focused walkthroughs. Home-school communication is strengthened via: opportunities to understand grade level expectations; family training on 1:1 technology and adaptable supplemental programs; outreach by the parent liaison; Parent University; Coffee with the Principal; Blackboard Connect and other internet programs; and English or Spanish as Second Language classes.

We leverage strong family relationships and a data-enriched approach to accelerate learning. Students and parents are provided with timely, relevant data and are intimately involved in developing goals. Teachers provide parents interim reports that outline focus areas, interventions, next steps, and resources. Students present their learning to families each grading period, with showcase events, coding fairs, and other exhibitions. Student work is authentically relevant when audiences are connected to the meaningful work. Parents are active participants in students' TED talks, volunteer in classrooms, provide feedback for project work, and serve as experts for career exploration. On any given week, parents are actively involved in the daily operations of our school in our distinctively interconnected community. We are a distinguished community, working together to develop global competencies.

Results and Outcomes

The success of Bostonia's Global Readiness (BGR) practice is evident in the level of student excitement, quality of their work, and community engagement. Dual Language, Computer Science, blended and personalized learning, and Presentation Literacy enable students to see their diverse histories as richly interwoven into an interconnected world they can enhance.

Students are held to the highest standards and expectations for achievement; with a balance between innovation and rigor. CAASPP data reveal students' academic performance as consistently exceeding or matching district scores, while our students are additionally multilingual. For the 2016–17 school year, the percentage of all students who met or exceeded ELA and Math standards were 50% and 51.83% respectively. The Low SES subgroup, our largest student group, reached a high level of academic proficiency with 50% meeting or exceeding standards in ELA and 51.85% meeting or exceeding standards in Math. ELL academic proficiency levels for both ELA and Math exceeded district performance. The percentage of students at each level of academic performance remains positive, with upward movement in all bands. Professional learning centers on growth areas identified by data.

To illustrate the impact of BGR, consider our student Josue. His story is uniquely his own, but one felt deeply by many of our students. As an economic refugee facing the current negative political climate, Josue selected deportation as a topic for his TEDx speech. Supported by active learning strategies including Socratic questioning, discussion, and debate, Josue worked diligently to establish a well-informed opinion on his topic. Teachers coached him in research, idea refinement, and compelling storytelling. Peer rubrics aided both impromptu and formal presentations as he worked on his public speaking. A rubric guided growth in his presence, contact, voice and posture, and the quality of his message.

Josue found himself motivated by opportunity in a school that more than values his voice; he is empowered by educational opportunities to exercise his right for public dialogue and free speech, before peers and an audience of adults who will evaluate and react to his persuasive argument. The normally shy ten-year-old is cast in the limelight through one of many moments where his eloquence truly matters, when his words are especially meaningful, and where speaking formally in each language and his learning counts. This level of rigor and exploration are uniquely powerful in our distinguished program.

All of our schools' efforts to assure his readiness to lead, to instill confidence in his capacity to learn in any language, to enable him to program devices to follow his instructions, to master all subjects, and to be a positive citizen of the world: are all realized as he elucidates. Every day we see in the eyes of our students the impact of our work rendering us proud to share our distinguished program with the world.