

Veterans Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 37680230108662

County: San Diego

District (Local Educational Agency): Chula Vista Elementary

School: Veterans Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 919 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Year-Round

Charter: No

Overview

Veterans Elementary School's (Veterans) mission is to provide our students with a world-class education. We foster the continuous academic and social growth of all students by engaging them in challenging, enriching learning experiences that meet their individual needs. The building blocks of our progressive academic program are commitment, competency, communication, and collaboration. The 43rd elementary school in the Chula Vista Elementary School District, Veterans, opened in September 2005. Our beautiful campus is located on the corner of Santa Venetia Street and Magdalena Avenue, in the Otay Ranch Community.

Veterans has a diverse student population. Approximately 24% of our students are English Learners, 12% are GATE, 40% are Filipino, 40% are Hispanic and 22% of our students qualify for the free and reduced National School Lunch Program. Veterans teachers and staff celebrate this diversity through the implementation of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) program "No Place for Hate." Virtues (Kindness and Respect; Compassion and Honesty; Courage and Integrity; Acceptance and Fairness) are defined, discussed, and revisited throughout every quarter so students are familiar

with their meaning. The "No Place for Hate" promise is cited by students, and during quarterly assemblies, the Veterans' community recognizes students who have exemplified the virtues. "A virtuous life is a fulfilled life."

Veterans offers three Common Core-based instructional programs: Mainstream English, Structured English Immersion, and Dual Language Immersion (DI) in Spanish. The Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model and the Eight Mathematical Practice standards, in conjunction with collaborative conversations, student monitoring, and the use of technology, represents our model program at Veterans. This style of purposeful instruction results in an efficacious learner. Moreover, teacher instruction improves academic achievement across all grade levels and subgroups, including English Learner (EL), Students with Disabilities (SWD), Limited Income (LI), Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) students, Foster Youth, and ethnic groups, thus narrowing the achievement gap in ELA and Math.

Establishing a collaborative relationship between home, school, and the community has been a key to our school's success. At Veterans, parents volunteer in our classes and school, serve on our School Site Council (SSC), English Learner Advisory Council (ELAC), Technology Committee, and Safety and Emergency Procedures Committee, and are involved in our school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Throughout the school year, parents, families, and the community actively engage in the academic and social programs and events at our school. Veterans Elementary School is proud to have an interactive, vibrant learning community of students, parents, and staff.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Collaborative Conversations for Student Achievement in Mathematics

Length of Model Program/Practice: Less than 2 years

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

Target Population(s): Black or African American, 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

Veterans' model program is centered on collaborative conversations regarding student achievement. At the beginning of the year, teachers were provided with an ELA and Math Assessment blueprint. Staff collaborated to review student progress and created

action plans for achievement in the areas of ELA and Math. This narrative will describe the implementation of the model in Math, developed to address results from the CAASPP and District Local Measures Assessments. Because our staff agreed that the District Math adoption provided limited resources, we implemented an effective program by expanding the collaborative structures within the school. Staff reviewed assessment data to identify goals for students who have “Nearly Met” or “Not Met” standards. Our experienced staff worked together in grade level and vertical teams to plan instruction using best practices, including GRR, and the Eight Mathematical Practice standards. Goals were revisited at the end of a unit of study and instructional strategies and resources were adjusted as necessary. Staff participated in Math Professional Development to plan long-range assessments, lessons, and gather performance tasks.

Our model strengthens connections between our school and community. Family Nights and technology based parent workshops increase parent engagement. They learn about technology resources such as Khan Academy, Edmodo, IXL, and ClassDojo.

Our student-centered approach to learning encourages ALL students to develop a Mathematical mindset. After School tutoring is offered and GATE students receive additional instruction in Math. GATE students participated and placed in "Odyssey of the Mind" competitions. Target groups, including EL students, are closely monitored through small group instruction to ensure their success.

Veterans' community guarantees that the model program meets our students' social-emotional and behavioral needs as we recognize that we must go beyond teaching academics. Students receive services from our resource teacher, VAPA teachers, school psychologist, part time social workers, and volunteers from Southwestern College.

Absenteeism is addressed quarterly by staff. Administration meets with parents to discuss the root causes for the absences. If the negative pattern of attendance continues, the families are referred to the Student Attendance Review Board. As an incentive to reduce absenteeism, students participate in engaging activities including "Hour of Code" and hands on projects. Students who demonstrate quarterly perfect attendance are recognized in a drawing and receive gift cards from local businesses.

Our model program is linked to the District's LCAP Goal 2. Our emphasis on staff and student collaborative conversations, student monitoring, and technology has a positive impact on student progress, as evidenced in our success in narrowing the achievement gap, with 68.7% in 2016 and 75.7% in 2017 of students having MET or EXCEEDED standards in Math.

Implementation and Monitoring

Stakeholders, particularly parents, are involved in the model program in several ways. Parents gain familiarity with Math resources available to them through staff/parent communication. Curriculum nights, parent education programs, meetings/trainings, and

the use of parents as volunteers strengthen our stakeholders' understanding of, and need for, our program.

Veterans uses several methods to communicate our model program to segments of the learning community. Staff remains the primary source of information for parents regarding their child. Communication methods include: conferences, school and class newsletters, participation on committees, school workshops, PTA, Coffee with the Principal, awards assemblies, Winter Program, GATE meetings, YMCA, after school programs, and presentations at CVESD Board meetings. The community has access to our Single Plan for Student Achievement, School Accountability Report Card, and school handbook. In our effort to "go green," our school utilizes electronic communication to keep the community informed. These methods include the school website, PeachJar, emails, Edmodo, and weekly automated telephone messages and emails.

The model program addresses student needs and empowers parents to continue their involvement in their child's education. Parents and teacher representatives were presented with a plan at a School Site Council meeting for an After School Math tutoring program for students who were identified as scoring "Nearly Met" on the CAASPP. Tutoring begins in January and concludes in late April, prior to CAASPP testing. Continual monitoring of student data is shared with students, parents, and staff. Because students have been successful with the implementation of our After School Math tutoring program, the program itself has become part of the Veterans' fabric.

Veterans' staff participates in a six-school cohort that includes Los Altos, Heritage, Otay, Vista Square, and Hilltop Elementary. Teachers from each of the schools participate in a series of Mathematical trainings established by Veterans to assist the cohort in a number of ways. Math trainings include strengthening teachers' math understanding and implementation of standards. Part of the ongoing professional development includes revising assessments, selecting essential lessons for specific learning targets, and designing performance tasks to help prepare students for CAASPP testing.

The following are Math training dates:

- Grade 3 March 20, 2016
- Grade 4 March 21, 2016
- Grade 5 March 22, 2016
- Grade 6 March 23, 2016
- Grade 3 July 11, 2016
- Grade 4 July 12, 2016
- Grade 5 July 13, 2016
- Grade 6 July 14, 2016

Each quarter, teachers from the cohort meet at a school site. Data is reviewed for the effectiveness of the cohort created assessments. Student Math abilities are monitored

and if they do not meet the standards, they are invited to attend our After School Math tutoring program.

Results and Outcomes

Collaborative Conversations for Student Achievement in Mathematics has been key in narrowing our student achievement gap. Data derived from quarterly math assessments and District Local Measures, formal and informal assessments, drive the long and short-term objectives in math instruction for our students. Action plans are created to allow staff to closely monitor how students progress in the area of Math. Our ongoing school wide monitoring system goes above-and-beyond the practice of waiting for end-of-the-year test results.

Since the inception of our model program, student achievement in Math has increased. Our Math data reflects our student growth from 2016 to 2017. The data is the percent “Met” or “Exceeded” on the Math Assessment in grades 3rd through 6th. Our 2017 CAASPP data shows 75.7% of all students “Met” or “Exceeded” the Math standard. During the last two years Veterans CAASPP data for ALL students for Math showed a growth of 10.8 points in 2016 and a 22.2 point increase for 2017. EL performance levels increased significantly by 26.3 points in 2016 and 8.2 points in 2017. LI performance levels increased significantly by 16.8 points in 2016 and 18.3 points in 2017. African-American performance levels increased significantly by 33.1 points in 2016 and 22.7 points in 2017. SWD performance levels increased significantly by 32.8 points in 2016 and 37.8 points in 2017.

The culture of collaborative conversations at Veterans has impacted student outcomes significantly. For example, in 2016, 34 (33%) students were reclassified in grades 3rd through 6th. In 2017, 37 (42%) students were reclassified in grades 3rd–6th. This demonstrates that our model program had unintended consequences, namely the positive impact on student achievement in English Language Arts.

We foster the continuous academic and social growth of all students by engaging them in challenging, enriching learning experiences that meet their individual needs and prepare them for life in the 21st century.