

Garfield Elementary Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 37683386039655

County: San Diego

District (Local Educational Agency): San Diego Unified

School: Garfield Elementary

Demographics

Enrollment: 244 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Year-Round

Charter: No

Overview

Garfield Elementary is one of 117 elementary schools in San Diego Unified School District. Our school was opened in 1999 and was built as an overflow school and is located in a diverse urban setting. Many families have been priced out of this area, but still choose to live in. Much of our population consists of multiple generations/families living under the same roof. Although our neighborhood is in transition, due to climbing housing prices, we continue to effectively serve this community as their neighborhood school.

We are a Title I school and currently serve 244 students in grades TK through 5th grade. In addition, we serve 32 students enrolled in our Preschool program. Garfield has a linguistically diverse student population with up to ten primary languages other than English spoken at home. Fifty-one percent of our student population are classified as English Language Learners. Our student ethnicity breakdown is as follows; 6.8% White, 68% Hispanic/Latino, 18% percent African American, Filipino 1%, Indochinese

1%, Pacific Islander 1%, Two or More Races 4%. Eighty-eight percent% of our students are considered of limited income and are meal eligible. Therefore, 100% of our students, receive free lunch. Students with disabilities compose 14.5% of our overall student population and receive specialized academic instruction and supplemental services.

The majority of our teaching staff have served our school community for over eighteen years and have an average of 18–25 years' experience. Sixty percent of our certificated teachers also have a master's degrees, one is Nationally Board Certified, and 25% have their Gifted and Talented (GATE) certification. In addition, some of teachers have been selected as runners up for District Teacher of the Year recognition.

The vision at Garfield focuses on a model of continual improvement to close the achievement gap for all learners through data-driven decision making, professional development, and professional learning communities. We want to help our students develop into highly successful, well rounded, contributing citizens of the 21st century. Garfield warmly welcomes all community members. Our doors are open and we are a true center for teaching and learning. We host Leadership Walkthroughs and District PDs. We prepare student teachers from various universities who are eager to come and learn from our highly effective teachers. Our school strives to provide an enriching learning community both inside and outside of the classrooms. Thinking about educating the whole child, we also promote artistic literacy, innovation, and creativity through our Title 1 Arts Grant and our partnership with the San Diego Civic Youth Ballet. Our school welcomes our families and community members with enthusiasm and a sense of belonging. A recent visitor commented, "At Garfield, your programs provide something for everyone!"

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Professional Development, Professional Learning Community, Data Analysis using Writing

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Professional Development

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

Strategies Used: Small Learning Communities, Data-Driven Decision Making, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

As a learning community, we evaluated the current reality of our site. Based on student results, we determined that curricular and pedagogical shifts needed to take place to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and close the achievement gap for all learners. As a school, the model we created was directly aligned to the SDUSD 2020 LCAP (2017–18). The district implementation of these goals were through the Four Learning Cycles (LC): 1. Purpose/Engagement, 2. Classroom Environment, 3. Curriculum & Pedagogy, and 4. Agency. Garfield's emphasis was on academics was on LC3.

At Garfield, district programs were being followed at each grade level, and still our data was clear that our students needed more to be successful. Data indicated a gap in achievement for all subgroups in the area of Language Arts. In the 2014–2015, our Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) baseline data was the following: Only 33% of our overall student population (OSP) met ELA, SBAC. This meant that 67% of our OSP were failing. Closer analysis determined the following: Only 9% of our ELs were meeting SBAC expectations in ELA; 11% of our students with disabilities; Hispanic subgroup in ELA scored at 29%; African American 33%; and White subgroup was 33%. We clearly needed to change.

Our smart goal for the following academic year was a 20% growth in ELA. Our school made the instructional decision to focus on writing because students needed to meet the high demands the CCCS in writing and across all curricular areas. Our reality was the following: writing was driven by teacher decisions and preference, the writer's workshop model was non-existent, response to literature in whole group dominated writing instruction, students perceived writing as an activity versus a process, writing instruction was not transferring into independent practice, and writing across the curriculum and genres was not implemented. We wanted to provide a learning environment that would align with 21st Century Learning, and prepare students for rigorous expectations of the CCCS. Our district's LC 3, Curriculum and Pedagogy, was used as a catalyst for this change. Through our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), school-wide PD, and PLC's we analyzed data, curriculum and adjusted pedagogical practices to provide equitable education for all and realized that we needed K–5 writing supports. Our ILT surveyed their colleagues to see what CCCS programs were being utilized for writing. Based on these survey results, the ILT concluded that our school needed to invest our Title 1 funds to purchase a school wide writing program. We discussed and researched an effective writing program that would prepare our students for the high stakes CCCS SBAC and close the achievement gap. At this time we were the only school to purchase, and implement the new CCCS, Lucy Calkins, Writing Units. We implemented this program with fidelity and the expectation that this will give us the expected results.

Implementation and Monitoring

The methods utilized was Professional Development (PD), Professional Learning Communities (PLC's), and Data Analysis. After analyzing our student data, and looking at our current reality in the area of writing, it was evident that extensive PD was

necessary. It was crucial for all staff to have uniform training on the Common Core Standards (CCCS) Aligned Lucy Calkins (LC) Units and we purchased them with Title 1 funds. We began rolling out the LC Units School wide. Teachers and staff were immersed in these units through PD, small group lesson modeling, individual coaching, and PLC's. Teachers created lessons with their grade level colleagues calibrating student work samples, and utilizing writing rubrics. In addition, they strengthening the mini lesson in the areas of independent practice, conferring, and share out.

We used the backwards design model of the standards and implemented them between and across the grade levels during our PLCs. Vertical alignment was used during PLCs to strengthen every component of the Writer's Workshop Model and provide a writing continuum for all learners. We used our expert teacher leaders to build capacity within and across grade levels and used upper grade teachers to visit lower grade teachers, during writer's workshop. These visits were primarily for teachers to observe how their work directly impacted the long-term writing outcomes for all students. In order to build a solid foundation and close the achievement gap.

During our PLC's teachers closely analyzed the writing units. In addition we built teacher capacity across all staff including our special ed. staff. There was common writing language when analyzing student work. During this process teachers participated in lesson studies and created writing lessons which modeled for each and provided feedback that helped adjust their instruction.

Through our PLC's, student data was collected and monitored school wide. Teachers brought both their pre and post writing assessments, this data was calibrated to guide instruction. As student data was analyzed from 2015/2016 to 2016/2017 positive student performance was observed. These areas were in writing claims; Narrative, Opinion, and Information. In Narrative Unit 1 students increased from 40% to 50%, Narrative Unit 2 48% to 54%, Informational Unit from 33% to 53%, Opinion Unit from 41% to 60%. Once this LC units were implemented, classrooms visit data was collected during writing instruction with the goal of finding common areas of need across the grade levels. This data was utilized to prepare PD to strengthen teaching practices and improve learning outcomes.

All stakeholders were involved in this school reform. The principal informed parents about parent informational meetings and result in the writing implementation. We wanted to ensure that parents were familiar with the curriculum and their child's learning.

Results and Outcomes

Garfield focused on a model of continual improvement to close the achievement gap through PD and PLC's in the area of writing was successful and is evident in our data.

In 2014–2015, our baseline indicated the following results on the first year of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). Only 33% of all overall student population, met the English Language Arts Smarter Balanced

Assessment (SBAC). Unfortunately, 9% of our EL's were meeting SBAC expectations in ELA, and only 11% of our students with disabilities were meeting them. The overall percentage of our ELs with Disabilities meeting ELA expectations was 0%. Our Hispanic subgroup in ELA scored at 29% meeting ELA SBAC expectations. Our African American subgroup was 33%, our White subgroup was 33%.

Our 2014–2015 to 2015–2016 work in PLC's and PD's to strengthen writing instruction began to yield results on the CAASPP. Our instructional Smart goal for ELA was to increase by levels by 20%. We surpassed this expectation from 33% to 54% in overall student performance. Our EL subgroups increased from 9% to 25%. Students with disabilities subgroup made a 1% gain. The overall performance in ELA for ELs with Special Education (SE) needs went from 0% to 12%. Our Hispanic subgroup (HS) increased from 29% to 52%. Our African American (AA) subgroup increased from 33% to 44%, and our White subgroup from 33% to 50%.

Results continued momentum 2014–2015 to 2016–2017. Our teachers have extensive training in writing instruction through PD and PLCs. In addition, our teacher leaders help built capacity and the level of expertise has increased across our school. The implementation of our program had a positive impact on engagement, attendance and student agency. Students have a voice in selecting the topics they want to write, are empowered and are mini-teachers with their peers.

Garfield's 2016–2017 CAASPP results demonstrated that our model further resulted in making academic gains and closing the achievement gap for all of our learners in ELA. Our overall student population proficiency level on the CAASPP English Language Arts moved from 33% to 54% to 64%. Our EL subgroup jumped from 25% to 49%. Our Student with Disabilities from 1% to 11%. Our HS from 52% to 62%. Our AA moved from 44% to 50%, White from 50% to 67%.

We had positive impact in mathematics, as well. Evidence of these gains from our 2014–2015, 2015–2016, and 2016–2017 CAASPP mathematics results moved from 27% to 37%, then up to 54%. Our EL proficiency subgroup moved 12% to 23% to 43%. Students with disabilities moved from 11% to 16% to 22%. Our Hispanic subgroup moved from 22% to 28% to 48%. Our African American subgroup from 33% to 44% to 46%. Lastly, our White subgroup from 49% to 50% to 67%. Our program was effective resulting in academics gains for all our students. Our model of continual improvement via PD, PLCs, and our laser like Data Analysis was instrumental in closing the achievement gap.