

## **Hancock Elementary School Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 37683386096051

County: San Diego

District (Local Educational Agency): San Diego Unified

School: Hancock Elementary School

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 638 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

Hancock Elementary School is located within the Lincoln Military Housing Community in what is known as the Murphy Canyon Area of San Diego. Lincoln Military Housing is the largest military housing in the world, and our students come from various military bases throughout the United States and abroad. Often one or both parents students are deployed and/or at extended-trainings, and our families relocate every two to three years. Over 70% of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Most Hancock parents live in San Diego without the support of extended family members, and access to jobs for spouses at home is limited due to few post-high school educational experiences. Our student enrollment is 48% white, 10% African American, 27% Hispanic, 12% multicultural and 3% other. Due to the proximity of Naval Medical Center San Diego, Lincoln Military Housing has also been designated as the Exceptional Family Member (EFM) housing area for military families, and nearly 20% of our students have an Individualized Education Plan. Hancock staff offers all these students equal access to an excellent education. Our mission is to provide a challenging learning

environment, holding high expectations for success for all students through differentiated instruction and equal educational opportunities for all. We offer instruction that is consistent across the grade level, bolstered with multiple scaffolds to assist children in accessing it. All Hancock teachers, paraprofessionals, office staff and building crew are highly committed to serving the families who serve our country. We are fortunate to also be undergoing a multi-year facility and safety renovation project funded by the Department of Defense. Hancock students enjoy library, arts, physical education and wellness activities. All students receive music instruction, YMCA Play coaching and weekly library time. We offer an after-school Honors Choir program and Ukulele running club, and students receive fine arts instruction from a poet in residence and guest art teacher. An additional grant funds our school garden, nutrition and cooking program, and we practice mindfulness through our partnership with the district's Nursing and Wellness Division. Families anticipate the principal's Sunday evening call and email, and the school website and Facebook pages are active. The monthly Principal Meet and Greet is live on Facebook. We host a parent book club and our weekly Dad's Corps program supports fathers in improving their parenting skills. Navy and military liaisons assist parents during times of transition to or from our site. The School Site Council (SSC), School Governance Team (SGT) and Parent Teacher Foundation (PTF) meet regularly to strengthen programs designed to ensure equal access to an excellent education for children.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Equal Access to an Excellent Education

Length of Model Program/Practice: Less than 2 years

Target Area(s): Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Prevention, Closing the Achievement Gap, Nutrition and Physical Activity/Education, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Professional Development, Use of Technology

Target Population(s): Black or African American, Hispanic, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities

Strategies Used: School Climate, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Health Support, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

## **Description**

Most teachers at Hancock have spent one or more decades at the school site due to their commitment military students; yet in 2015, inconsistent school leadership, an unstable office staff and lack of curriculum aligned to the new Common Core Standards had resulted in dramatic declines in student enrollment and low California Assessment

of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) performance. Teachers, parents and community members met with the district to express their desire that Hancock provide equal access to an excellent education for all students, despite the many challenges inherent in the highly mobile, diverse and limited-income student body. The Instructional Leadership Team offered a fresh version of the school's mission statement, and staff members eagerly aligned themselves with this manifesto: "Hancock Elementary School provides a challenging learning environment, holding high expectations for success for all students through differentiated instruction and equal educational opportunities for all..." To achieve this goal, teachers focused efforts in three areas: (1) strong Tier 1, 2 and 3 instruction; (2) ensuring students' emotional and social needs were met; and (3) increasing student attendance. Essential resources included funding for teacher professional development (PD) and teacher planning time, along with consistent office personnel and stable school administration. Grants from the Department of Defense provided for teacher growth and collaboration time, and SSC decided to fund an attendance assistant. Teachers and administrators anticipated the focus on Tier 1 instruction would yield clear year-long, standards-driven plans for each grade level; identification and analysis of Focus Students; pre and post assessments for writing and math; consistent monitoring of reading levels; PD opportunities based on staff-identified needs; and regular student-focused PLCs. It was hoped the Response to Instruction (RTI) process would be meaningful, data-driven instruction for Tier 2 students; and the special education department desired a clear, data-driven Tier 3 referral process, quality IEP meetings and effective training and scheduling of paraprofessionals. Achievement of program goals (2) and (3) would ensure students were emotionally and physically present to receive Tier 1, 2 and/or 3 instruction. Central to our school goals was increasing parent and community confidence in the efficacy of our practice. These models have affected school wide academic achievement as evidenced in our school increase in students meeting or exceeding standard in English Language Arts (ELA) and math: 45% (2015) to 55.25% (2017) in ELA and 32% (2015) to 50.81% (2017) in math. Results were equally pronounced for unique student groups, as described in the outcome section. Attendance has also improved by nearly one percentage point. The average daily attendance in month one of the 2014–2015 school year was 96.98%, and in 2017–2018 this figure was 97.93%.

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

Hancock stakeholders are engaged in the increasing viability of the Tier 1, 2 and 3 instructional plans. Parent and community educational opportunities include Back to School Night, Common Core instructional workshops, literacy trainings and math and science nights. Hancock distinguishes itself from the district model in that it has created a Reading Level guide for Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA), Cognitive Reading Assessment (CRA) and Lexile scores that includes expectations for not met, nearly met, met and exceeds standards per trimester, in all grades TK–5. This scale was vetted by ILT, SSC, SGT and grade-level PLCs and is included in the sharing of reading level data with parents six times a school year. In addition, Hancock has used its Title I funds to purchase the research-driven literacy programs Achieve 3000, Smarty Ants and Raz Kids, and students record their use and/or "just right" text reading for 20–30 minutes nightly, depending on grade level. Hancock's attendance campaign is also founded on

the partnership with parents and community members; in order for students to have equal access to an excellent education, we must address any barriers preventing students from coming to school on time and every day. Our attendance team, consisting of the school nurse, counselor, attendance assistant, principal and district attendance liaison, work together to educate parents both about the correlation between attendance and student success via fliers, Facebook page, email, and School Attendance Review Team (SART) meetings including both the attendance team, parents and student. We maintain a welcoming, non-judgmental communication style, Hancock also offers a Saturday School program. Twice per month students, especially those students with frequent absences or tardies, are encouraged to participate; on average, 50–70 students attend Saturday School. We also offer individual, classroom and school-wide incentives and activities to increase attendance, and we track our attendance data across our neighborhood and district schools. In the past year, Hancock’s attendance average has risen from eighth to second place out of nine neighborhood schools. In the 2017 Healthy Kids Survey, 92% of parents surveyed agree or strongly agree with the statement “the school keeps me well-informed about activities,” and 99% of parents surveyed agree or strongly agree with the statement “the school promptly responds to my phone calls, messages, or emails.” Over 95% of parents strongly agree or agree that they “feel welcome to participate at this school.” To increase school efficacy in instructional strength, emotional support services and attendance programming, teachers and paraprofessionals are encouraged to attend professional conferences. We study the work of Jo Boaler, John Hattie and Robert Marzano’s Collaborative Teams that Transform Schools, and the principal use Google forms to survey staff and receive feedback.

## **Results and Outcomes**

Hancock teacher-researchers are driven by the question, “What is my impact on student success?” PLCs and PDs are student-centered and data-driven. Instruction is planned backward, based on student rubrics and expectations for the end of the curricular unit. When observing, administration records student voice with a focus on the articulation of metacognitive processes. For example, when asked what he was learning and why it was important, a fifth-grader remarked, “I am summarizing two chapters and comparing the problems the characters went through. I am listening to what they are going through in order to write my answers...I respond thoughtfully. If you don’t learn it, you don’t do all the steps, your answer will be out of wack with the others.” A comparison of 2015 and 2017 (15–17) all-school CAASPP data shows increases in the percentage of students scoring “meets or exceeds standards” of 10.25% in ELA and 18.81% in math. Student group data also relays Hancock practice is effective. For example, the percentage gain of SWD who met or exceeded standards from 15–17 was 28.72% in ELA and 27.48% in math. The percentage gain of LI students who met or exceeded standards from 15–17 was 12.67% in ELA and 12.66% in math. The percentage gain of H/L students who met or exceeded standards from 15–17 was 24.45% in ELA and 13.27% in math. Finally, the percentage gain of B/AA students who met or exceeded standards from 15–17 was 1.53% in math. We saw a decline in the percentage of B/AA student who met or exceeded standards from 15–17; this data has informed the 2017–2018 Single Plan for Student Achievement goal: “By 6/20/2018, the percentage of B/AA

students who meet or exceed standards in ELA will increase from 44% to 65%.” Hancock pursues equal access to an excellent education for all students relentlessly. Our analysis beginning to end of year reading level data informs next steps. In TK, K, 1, 2 and 3, the number of students meeting or exceeding grade level expectations across the school year increases or stays the same, but in grades 4 and 5, fewer students meet or exceed standards as performance level expectations increase. What is happening at grades 2 and 3 such that these percentages stagnate and at grades 4 and 5 such that these percentages decline? To accelerate the impact for student successes, Hancock has applied for additional grants for after-school tutoring and seeks after-school reading partnerships with neighborhood middle and high school students, along with military and church groups. To amplify the impact of our RTI intervention program, the site has developed a parent-teacher-student contract wherein responsibility for reading appropriate-leveled books at home for specific minutes of time of is compulsory for students receiving Tier 2 support. We are eager to continue this work to ensure all students receive equal access to an excellent education.