

San Elijo Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 37737910111468

County: San Diego

District (Local Educational Agency): San Marcos Unified

School: San Elijo Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 1,084 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Working together as a learning community, San Elijo Elementary School (SEES) strives to provide every child with the tools necessary to meet the intellectual, social, emotional and physical challenges of the twenty-first century. Our school motto utilizes the acronym SOAR which reflects our school community's commitment to Seizing Opportunities, Achieve Results.

We are a community located in one of San Diego's fastest growing areas in the city of San Marcos. This community includes single family homes as well as 274 low-income apartments. Our student population of 1084 students represents 70% white, 21% Hispanic and 9% other ethnicities. Our subgroups are Limited Income (13%) and English Language Learners (9%) while our Students with Disability is at 8%.

As a community based school, we are fortunate to have the continual support of the parents through numerous volunteer opportunities and our Parent Teacher Organization. Our parents collaborated to create our mission statement, vision and school philosophy. Their goal to support the school has provided our students with

supplemental academic support via instructional aides in addition to providing art, drama, music, science and computers in the classroom. Our parent volunteers provide family activities along with daily academic support in our primary classrooms, garden lessons, and library support. At any time on our campus, you will find our volunteers hard at work providing supplemental educational opportunities for our students.

Our staff consists of 51 highly qualified certificated teachers in addition to 32 support staff, who embrace the spirit of “Whatever it Takes” to support student academic and behavioral needs. Working as professional learning communities, our staff provides students with a guaranteed and viable curriculum that entails common instructional timelines and formative assessments.

San Elijo Elementary’s dedication to our motto of “when together we SOAR, we all achieve more” supports our students, who are not yet proficient, receive additional instructional opportunities in math, reading, supplemental support for our English Language Learners, and behavior support via weekly small groups with our school social worker. In 2009, SEES was recognized for our academic gains with Honor Roll recognition with the California Business for Education Excellence.

San Elijo Elementary’s entire school community (including parents, teachers, administration and paraprofessionals) continuously strive to provide an outstanding educational experience with high expectations for all. Students of San Elijo Elementary are motivated and dedicated to achieving their own personal best.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Rigorous Reading for All

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

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

Target Population(s): Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

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

Description

Our rigorous reading program is a result of a variety of actions that are aimed at challenging our students to increase their reading proficiency through rigorous classroom instruction, ongoing monitoring of all students’ reading levels and consistent structured reading intervention.

Due to the high socio economic demographic of our school and the strong parent involvement, we wanted to ensure that we consistently challenge our students in the area of reading. Our staff recognized that challenging our students needed to include rigorous complex texts with just the right amount of scaffolds so students could persevere. At the beginning of the year, less than 20 percent of our kindergarten students enter with the skills to meet grade level standards and our students in grades 1–5 experience a 20% drop in their reading due to the summer slide.

The first action to support this model is regularly assessing students utilizing two different reading assessments. All students in grades 2–5 take the STAR reading assessment to provide staff with the students' Lexile level. Additionally students in kindergarten, first grade and all struggling students in grades 2–5 are assessed with the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessment. Teachers utilize this knowledge of students reading level to match student with the just right text. Teachers received professional development to support their knowledge of both of these assessments.

In 2015, our district funded a full time intervention specialist. Our site funds three instructional aides to provide reading intervention support for all of our students not meeting grade level expectations. Our intervention team utilizes Leveled Literacy Intervention Program along with Orton Gillingham Program while utilizing structured lesson plan by Jan Richardson for each of our targeted groups. Our EL students are our top priority in ensuring that we provided an additional double dose in reading. In 2017–2018 school year, 50 percent of our ELs in grades 3–5 grew their lexile level by 150 or more points within the first 6 months of school with support of our intervention team.

Our teachers professional development in reading instruction has spanned the past 3 years. It has included professional readings, developing teacher knowledge on assessments, understanding online programs and deepening their knowledge in successful reading groups. Our goal was for our teachers to increase their knowledge of reading instruction to specifically challenge our students at the correct level of difficulty.

SEES Rigorous Reading for All has resulted in our school maintaining an 80% or higher proficiency rate for the past two years in our CAASPP in the area of ELA. Additionally, 55% percent of our students are exceeding expectations for their grade level. In the past two years our ELLs have grown over 40 points while our Limited Income, Students with Disabilities and Hispanic groups all have grown by 25 points each.

Implementation and Monitoring

Rigorous Reading for All has the foundation for success due to regularly monitoring all students reading levels throughout the school year in addition to strong daily reading instruction. Our students consistently demonstrate significant growth throughout the year with increasing number of students at proficiency and even increasing the number of students exceeding proficiency on these assessments.

Parents receive individual information about their child's reading level at our parent conferences in the fall. Parents then receive further information at report card time via

an electronic newsletter from administration. This information includes an updated reading level on the report card, resources to support parents' knowledge of reading levels, information about text complexity along with resources to assist parents in finding just the right books to match their child's reading level. Parents have received this information for the past two years consistently. This information is developing parents' understanding of reading levels and that reading levels have a correlation on a students' CAASPP results. In regular conversation with parents via IEPs, multiple parent advisory groups and conversations with volunteers, administration consistently receives clarification that parents' knowledge on this topic is growing.

Throughout the year, students participate in our Accelerated Reader incentive program. This program allows students to be recognized every month for their reading success while sending a positive message to parents that our students' daily reading and understanding of their reading is important to their child's success. Parents attend our monthly awards ceremony to celebrate students' successes and understand the importance on reading on a regular basis.

Ongoing professional development, classroom observations and regular grade level leadership team conversations will be necessary throughout the next few years to ensure that Rigorous Reading for All is occurring on a daily basis in our classrooms. Teachers will need to look at the instructional day to make adjustments to allocate appropriate times to meet daily with all readers especially our struggling readers. Our students are assessed at the beginning of the year which has resulted in our teachers recognizing that our students reading levels drop dramatically during the summer. This summer drop shows that our summer reading programs have not resulted in success. This coming summer we will be sharing this information with parents regarding the significant impact that limited summer reading has on their child's reading success at the beginning of the year. These results have already been shared with both our LCAP stakeholder groups along with our School Site Council Group. Both of these groups responded that different actions will need to be taken to educate parents and provide students with additional opportunities for engaged summer reading.

Results and Outcomes

San Elijo Elementary is now in year three of implementing Rigorous Reading for All students. The ongoing monitoring of students reading levels, semester grades along with CAASSP and CELDT scores all contribute to the success of this program. Students are evaluated individually for their growth along with looking at overall data and trends.

At the end of 2016–2017 year, the number of students entering the school year meeting grade level benchmarks compared to the number of students at the end of the year meeting grade level benchmarks in all grade levels increased between 11–64%. For example, 19% of our students entered kindergarten at grade level benchmark. By the end of the year 83% of our kindergarten students were at benchmark. Additionally, 51% of these kindergarten students are ending the year above the grade level expectations. These percentage points are similar to the results that we are seeing with our school

wide ELA CAASPP scores. Over 50% of our students score exceeding standards on our state assessments in ELA.

The mid year results for the 2017–2018 year show that kindergarten, first grade and second grade all currently have more students reading at grade level at the mid year mark than in past years. The number of students reading at or above grade level compared to the beginning of the year has grown on average 16% at each grade level within the first six months of school. Additionally, 47% of our kindergarten students have been released from our reading intervention program after only receiving 3 months of intervention which indicates that our classroom instruction along with targeted intervention groups resulted in these students meeting grade level benchmark expectations. At this time, 50 percent of our ELs in grades 3–5 grew their lexile level by at least 150 points within the first 6 months of school with support of our intervention team. Students with disabilities on average have grown their lexile levels by 150 points with 35% growing 200 points or more.

Closing the achievement gap and preparing students for higher education with strong reading skills is the main goal for our Rigorous Reading for All. Our ELLs and our Students with Disabilities continue to need strong rigorous targeted instruction. Continuing classroom observations and sharing of overall and individual data with teachers and stakeholders will continue to support the success of this program. Our biggest modification to accelerate this program will be the work we are planning on doing with parents to support summer reading for all of our students. This work will include engaging students with reading opportunities along with sharing schoolwide data with parents.