

## **North Hillsborough Model Programs and Practices**

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 41689086043673

County: San Mateo

District (Local Educational Agency): Hillsborough City Elementary

School: North Hillsborough

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 321 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

North Hillsborough is a warm and welcoming place for students to learn and grow. A caring staff, supportive parents, and eager students work together to make the most of each day, and to make school a place where everyone is welcome. All members of our school community come together to provide a balanced experience for students, one that brings out the best in them academically, creatively, socially, and emotionally. We believe that it is both our duty and our passion to ensure that all students receive the best education possible in a safe and nurturing setting. This year, as an entire staff, we developed the following mission statement to let our community know what we stand for and what we are working towards for our students:

"The mission of North Hillsborough School is to collaborate with parents, staff, and the community to create a positive and caring environment where students feel safe and empowered to become active learners, grow from mistakes, develop their creativity, and reach their potential as global citizens of an ever-changing world."

This mission statement is more than words; it leads us to create actions and programs that ensure our goals will be met. We recognize that there is not one curriculum or program that can ensure student success, but only the true belief that we must all do whatever it takes to support our students. As DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker (2008) wrote: "We can achieve our fundamental purpose of high levels of learning for all students only if we work together. We cultivate a collaborative culture through the development of high-performing teams!". At North, we function as a team. Parents, teachers, and staff collaborate and innovate around a common vision, and look through the lens of "what is best for children" when making decisions. We realize that cooperation is the only way to help all our students reach their potential. School and district goals are in sync, and teachers are provided with opportunities to learn, collaborate with each other, align their practices, look at student data, and develop plans that support students as they strive to reach their academic and social-emotional goals.

At North we also incorporate parent, teacher and student voice in the decisions that we make. Parents are active volunteers in our school through various committees, such as the Parent Group, School Site Council, Recess Pals and the Service Learning Committee. Teachers are also given the opportunity to give input on how to move our school forward through the School Leadership Team, School Site Council, and the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics) Leadership Group. Finally, students also have the opportunity to have their voice heard through the Student Council and Character Team. North is a place where everyone can come together to create a positive place for children.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Multi-Tier Support System

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Education Supports

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

## **Description**

Our model practice at North is the implementation of a Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) to help students reach their full potential and therefore enable us to fulfill our mission statement and meet the district, LCAP, and school goals. It was implemented in order to refine and expand the existing RTI2 approach and ensure that everyone in the

school is on the same page and has the same knowledge about how to support students.

The Multi-tier Support Systems (MTSS), which is similar to Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI2), is a data-driven, multi-tiered approach to the early identification and support of all students. This is a school-wide process developed to ensure that all students learn through quality instruction and to identify interventions that are matched to students' needs. This framework begins with high-quality, culturally responsive differentiated instruction, the implementation of positive behavior systems, the routine use of universal screening, and rigorous data analysis of all student's learning in the classroom. It is a proactive approach instead of a reactive one. It is responsive to the question: "How are we going to respond when a child doesn't learn?" (Buffum, Mattos & Weber, 2010). According to the National Center on RTI, there are four essential components of response to intervention:

1. a school-wide, multi-level instructional and behavioral system for preventing school failure,
2. screening,
3. progress monitoring, and
4. data-based decision making for instruction, movement within the multi-level system, and disability identification (in accordance with state law).

Each component is essential in making the framework work properly. In MTSS, support and enrichment for gifted students is also provided.

Since MTSS applies to all students in the school, not just those needing extra support, it benefits everyone. It also helps support unique student populations beyond their standard interventions because of the coordination of services and the collaborative approach. The full resource team including counselor, psychologist, and all other support personnel are part of the process to help address the affective and social-emotional issues that impact learning. In essence, all members of the school have become resources for supporting students by developing and following new protocols, and through learning together and from each other. Although issues such as chronic absenteeism/suspension/ expulsion are rare at North, the MTSS approach helps deal with the underlying issues that lead to them, and hopefully can prevent their occurrence.

Although all schools in the district follow the common assessments and have developed their own ways of supporting students, North's MTSS approach is unique and was developed internally to fit the specific needs of the staff and students. It includes additional assessments, techniques, and protocols that are continually being reviewed and improved.

## Implementation and Monitoring

North School has a long history of being data-driven and using RTI, but as we began the process of revising the old RTI plan it was clear not everyone had the same understanding of what it was or how it worked. An explanatory document was drafted and shared with the resource team, classroom teachers, and staff so that we would all be on the same page. We also started a book club to build common background knowledge, reading the book *The Four Guiding Principles for RTI*. This helped us all understand what RTI is and how it is implemented across a school. This initial plan was then revised as an MTSS plan, incorporating support for gifted students as well as social-emotional screening.

All members of the school community are involved in the implementation of this model. Teachers participate in beginning and middle of the year MTSS meetings to discuss student needs and set next instructional and intervention steps. Teachers also participate in Instructional Support Team Meetings (IST's) to receive support from other team members as they devise the next steps for students for whom they have concerns.

Parent support for the process is essential, and Parent Education is provided through both meetings and the distribution of a parent MTSS brochure so that they can learn what MTSS is and how it is carried out in our school. During Child Support Team meetings (CST's), the school team also communicates to parents how the MTSS framework supports students.

Our MTSS program has also been shared with members of the larger district community. Progress on the development and implementation of the school's MTSS framework is communicated to principals and other district leaders and administrators at a variety of meetings by the site principal. The program is also published in the school's newsletter which goes out to a larger audience.

Monitoring and assessment of the program is ongoing. At the beginning of the year and at the end of every trimester, the school analyzes student assessment data in reading, math, and social emotional areas to determine who is making adequate progress and who needs additional support. Our progress and success is measured against the goals of the school, the goals of the district, and most importantly against the individual goals we have set for the students involved. This information is then shared with the school staff to inform future work.

The way in which our MTSS program uses very comprehensive data analysis every trimester is unique to North and beyond the standard district practice. We disaggregate the data by grade level and other demographic information and place it in a school-wide MTSS spreadsheet. We also include comments on the students so that the school team and teachers better understand the needs of students. This MTSS document is shared with our staff so that we can monitor the student progress on an ongoing basis. We are proud of the program's success and work to continually revise and improve it.

## Results and Outcomes

North school has seen very positive outcomes using MTSS. For example, we have reduced the number of students needing academic Tier 2 support by 50% and the number of students needing social-emotional support by 50% in one year.

Monitoring students and analyzing assessment results are both critical to the MTSS process. Four times a year student assessment data is reviewed to ensure all the supports designated as Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 are working properly. This year we saw that about 23% of students needed reading support. The school team worked with teachers to make sure small group reading instruction was happening frequently in the classroom (Tier 1) and that identified students also worked with our reading specialist (Tier 2). After a few months, most of these students were shown to have made great progress.

The quantitative/qualitative data used includes district identified assessments in math, reading and writing (eg. Fountas & Pinnell, Teachers College Writing Assessment, adopted program unit tests) and CAASPP results in math and ELA. Teacher observational data in academic and social-emotional areas and classroom observations are also used to document how the MTSS framework is working. Collected data is analyzed, summarized and presented during staff meetings. It has also been part of our Single Plan for Student Achievement report that is shared with parents and the school board.

Since MTSS involves all students, every child is part of our targeted group. Through implementation of the MTSS process we have been able to reduce the number of students needing literacy support by about 50% across the grades. There are similar results in the area of social-emotional growth. We do look at specific groups within the school as well, and it is clear that the MTSS approach has positively impacted our students with disabilities. For example, in grades 3–5, only 18% of our students with disabilities did not meet the ELA standards on the CAASPP assessment and only 6% of those students did not meet the CAASPP math standards. Our school does not have a significant enough number of ELs or low SES students for us to use comparative data, but these students' individual goals are reviewed for progress.

Student results lead us to improve the MTSS framework. For example, in response to literacy data, training was centered around balanced literacy to enable our teachers to provide support in the classroom through initial great instruction. Teachers also participated in inquiry cycles to analyze work from a few students, plan and implement supports in the classroom, and then measure outcomes, allowing them to target their instruction for these students.

The school site specific MTSS planning and learning, the breadth and depth of data analysis, and the collaborative nature of the team process all help create North's success in improving student outcomes by expanding on the already excellent expectations and programs of the district.