

Gardner Bullis Elementary Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 43695186047427

County: Santa Clara

District (Local Educational Agency): Los Altos Elementary

School: Gardner Bullis Elementary

Demographics

Enrollment: 345 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Gardner Bullis Elementary is a small school nestled in the Hills of Los Altos, California. We may be small in comparison to other schools, with only 345 K–6th grade learners and 20 certified staff, but we are deeply committed to each student on our campus.

Our mission is to personalize learning and to engage all students through creative and innovative experiences. Through this individualized approach to education, we endeavor to foster an environment where lifelong learning, global citizenship, and a growth mindset take precedence. With the support of our diverse community, we strive to provide a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment in order for our students to be creative and grow as social individuals. We accomplish this through open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect both on campus and within the community. Our mission is a living and breathing part of who we are and focuses us as we aim for the success of every student.

Our GB team consists of 20 certified staff including the principal, one full-time school psychologist, one full-time special education professional, and one part-time speech

pathologist. We have 12 support staff members who believe in our mission and partner with teachers to help all students succeed and excel. We have a Guiding Coalition team that meets monthly to make school-wide decisions regarding curriculum and instruction and a Leadership Team that also meets monthly to discuss any school-wide decisions impacting students. Also unique to our school is our CARE Team, which meets weekly. The CARE Team focuses on referred students, and coordinates respective programs and services to promote student academic success.

Demographically, our population consists of 60% White, 20% Asian, 13% identifying as two or more races, and 2.6% Hispanic or Latino. On record, 8% of our students are English Learners, 7% are Students with Disabilities, and 1% are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Across the board, whether our students need intervention or enrichment, our model program "G-Time" (Growth Time) is designed to serve all students and to ensure that every child succeeds at high levels.

In 2016–17, our CAASPP results reflected the result of our mission, with 86% of students meeting or exceeding grade level expectations in English Language Arts. In Mathematics, 89% were meeting or exceeding grade level expectations. While the high percentage of students meeting or exceeding grade level expectations is something we work for, it is the consistent 12% to 15% of our students not meeting those expectations that drove the design and implementation of "G-Time." This unique intervention and extension program is data-driven and supported by our district-wide model of Professional Learning Community (PLC). Together these two programs support all students but with a specific focus on our struggling students in the subgroups of Asian, White, Two or More Races, and English Language Learners.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: G-Time (Growth-Time) Intervention and Extension

Length of Model Program/Practice: Less than 2 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports

Target Population(s): Asian, Hispanic, White, Two or More Races, 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

Through implementation of G-Time, we have specifically targeted multiple student populations including: Asian, English Learners (ELs), students who identify as Two or More Races, students who are scoring below benchmark in literacy, and our students

who are already performing at high levels. Through G-Time's design of frequent progress monitoring, individualized instruction, and increased small group instruction time, we are addressing our district's LCAP goal #1, "to meet the individual learning needs of all students". For our EL population, this is achieved through extra opportunities to develop language skills and to increase proficiency in an academic environment. This environment not only helps EL students and students with special needs develop confidence in their skills, but reassures all students that they will receive appropriately challenging material to help them develop relevant skills.

Additionally, through G-Time, we work towards our district's LCAP Goal #4 "to pursue new and effective learning methodologies for implementation in our schools that acknowledge the rapidly changing world in which our students live." Not only are we incorporating research-based curriculum into this intervention time, we are utilizing technology to both monitor student achievement and report achievement to parents and the greater community.

By taking 90 minutes of protected PLC time each week, we are addressing Los Altos' LCAP goal #2, "to support teachers in their design of relevant learning experiences for all students," which directly connects to state priority goals #1, #2, and #5. We do this by giving teachers the resources and time to adapt instruction based on academic data. During PLC, teachers have the opportunity to collaborate and share best practices, successful instructional strategies, and discuss academic and social-emotional needs of our students. By creating an emotionally and socially safe learning environment, students are better able to work on their academic needs. While not a significant concern for our population, G-Time ability groups also inherently address the needs of students who fall behind benchmark due to chronic absenteeism. If students are absent for any reason, they will be rotated through intervention groups for targeted instruction, enabling us to close the achievement gap that occurs when traditional class time is missed.

In addition, we have an extremely dedicated PTA, who support us in ways that stretch beyond the classroom. Our PTA has helped raise funds for staff trainings and conferences and have helped purchase social-emotional curriculums and programs. We believe our parent community is essential in the program we have created here at Gardner Bullis, and our parents always go above and beyond in numerous ways from volunteering their time in the classroom, helping promote social-emotional resilience with students during lunch, donating in various ways to give back programs, causes and fundraising events.

Implementation and Monitoring

Due to our 100% teacher participation in both the G-Time and the PLC process, we are in a constant state of self-assessment, reflection and monitoring these programs. At the teacher and administration level, this leads to changes being made by grade levels or school-wide as needs arise. At the community level, this process helps us to be in consistent communication with timely program updates. Assessment and growth

evidence for each student is sent home regularly and parents have the option to monitor progress through online tools such as Power School, SeeSaw, and Google Classroom.

At an administrative level, our principal reports to the district, PTA, and greater community through regularly scheduled meetings such as Parent Coffees, PTA executive meetings, and principal meetings. We are able to gauge interest, understanding, and buy-in of the parent community in an anecdotal way during these meetings. Parents are involved in their individual student's progress through Student Success Team (SST) meetings, Parent-Teacher Conferences, and regular communication with the classroom teacher. Students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) are also supported through G-Time and parents are updated regularly via the case manager and/or IEP meetings.

To implement our model G-Time program and its processes, capacity building activities occurred during staff meetings -- both this school year and last -- where teachers were trained on LLI curriculum and logistics of the model. Together, staff discussed on the best way to incorporate G-Time school-wide and agreed on the protected time of Mondays and Tuesdays from 10:30am–11:00am. Additional meetings were held with classified staff to ensure their level of comfort and engagement in the program. "Professional Learning Plan" time is available to teachers to familiarize themselves with curriculum and PLC time is used to analyze data and share information with other grade levels. Our Guiding Coalition and Leadership teams also met many times to finalize the schedule, select intervention curriculum, prepare presentations for the staff, and build capacity with support staff.

To meet the needs of our students, teachers collaborate to create pre-assessments and/or analyze data that will guide student groupings and instructional focuses for the week. Data examples include anecdotal teacher observations, one-on-one conferences, progress-monitoring tasks, and pre and post-assessments. Assessment tools include ESGI, Fountas and Pinnell (F & P), phonics assessments, LLI curriculum, and specific literacy skills assessments.

Results and Outcomes

Constant progress monitoring and reflection are crucial to the PLC framework and success of G-Time. Student data is reported on a living, school-wide document available to all teachers and staff. This document includes data concerning the specific assessments and instructional methods used at each grade level and the number of students entering or exiting our targeted intervention groups. We monitor extension activities, literacy skills, and students needing "Tier 3" support.

Based on the collective data, so far this year alone -nearly all students have benefited from G-Time instruction:

1. Teacher-noted improvement in reading skills including comprehension, fluency, main idea, and vocabulary work

2. 18 students in K–2 have been moved out of “Tier 2” ELA intervention and into extension activities
3. 5 students in 3rd–6th have moved out of “Tier 2” ELA intervention and into extension activities
4. F & P scores have increased across all grade levels

As a staff, we are committed to improve our G-Time program. Based on the progress we've seen so far, some teachers have opted to extend the protected time allotted for G-Time on Mondays and Tuesdays to 45 minutes, while other teachers have added additional days to four days a week. Through PLC discussions, we also determined the need for a higher standard of enrichment opportunities for students who have meet standards. Our Guiding Coalition addressed this need by providing additional professional development opportunities concerning enrichment in G-Time, and because of this, a few students have extended beyond their own grade level and receive extended instruction to better meet their needs.

As we move forward, we will continue to look at our program through a critical lense for growth opportunities as we pursue our goal of reaching the individual needs of all students at Gardner Bullis. With this commitment, we look forward to continued measurable success including an increase in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on this year's state assessment but also on our standards-based grading.