

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

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 43696906049175

County: Santa Clara

District (Local Educational Agency): Sunnyvale

School: Cumberland Elementary School

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 770 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

### **Overview**

Cumberland is a K–5 Elementary School in the city of Sunnyvale. Located approximately 40 miles south of San Francisco and just 12 miles north of San Jose, Cumberland is in the heart of Silicon Valley. Cumberland was originally built in 1964 and since then it has had a rich history of excellence in education marked by high achievement and tremendous community support and engagement. If you come to Cumberland on any given day, you will see parents and community volunteers working in close collaboration with the school and its staff to support student learning at all levels.

Our district and school use the Seven Correlates of Effective Schools to frame all of our work. The Seven Correlates are: Safe and orderly environment, Climate of high expectations, Strong instructional leadership, Clear and focused mission, Opportunity to learn/student time on task, Frequent monitoring of student progress, and Home-school relations. These correlates inform everything we do from visioning and goal setting to the evaluation of our schools and leaders. Programs are chosen, implemented and evaluated based on how closely they are tied to and support specific correlates. From

this focus comes our work as a professional learning community, our school wide discipline plan and all of our systems that serve to ensure the success of all.

Currently, Cumberland proudly serves a diverse group of 770 students consisting of 35% White, 42% Asian, 4% Hispanic, 13% Two or more races. Our student population speaks 31 different languages. 16% of our student population is comprised of students identified as English Language Learners, 7% are considered Socioeconomically Disadvantaged and 8% qualify for Special Education services. Cumberland truly epitomizes the term "Community School". Our school cultivates meaningful partnerships with the families we serve. Out of these relationships come over 10,000 volunteer hours, numerous enrichment programs, a collaborative education program as well as essential funding. Some examples of the programs that showcase the collaboration between our community and our school include: Project Cornerstone, Read Naturally, Gardening, and FAME.

Our school could not function the way it does without our PTA support. Every year the PTA sponsors one fundraiser, our annual Walkathon that raises over \$250,000 annually. The PTA uses these funds to pay for numerous enrichment opportunities, field trips, arts programs, and new technology.

These programs and partnerships are just a few ways that our community is actively involved in the co-education of our students. Our reflective and ever improving staff works diligently and intentionally to foster a positive school culture focused on student success; to promote strong relationships between our school, the district, and the greater community; to deliver rigorous and relevant learning experiences and an ongoing cycle of professional inquiry and reflection.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Project Based Learning Leveraging Parent Engagement and Technology

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, Use of Technology

Target Population(s): American Indian, 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, 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**

Starting in 2012, the Cumberland staff and parent community began to deepen our understanding of the demands of the Common Core Standards. We realized that in order to effectively meet the demands of the Common Core State Standards and to ensure students' college and career readiness, we needed to upgrade our instructional practices. Thus, we began our journey to incorporate Project Based Learning (PBL) and vastly expand our use of technology as the vehicle to help us redesign the learning experiences of our students.

We asked all of our stakeholders what they valued about their learning experience at Cumberland. Students, parents, and staff agreed on high academic expectations, developing interpersonal skills, fostering creativity, parent involvement, global awareness, and passion for learning. These conversations led to the development of Cumberland's mission: to develop globally aware learners who are compassionate problem solvers and leaders; it has guided and informed our decision to adopt and launch the PBL and schoolwide technology initiatives. We partnered with the Santa Clara County Office of Education to provide all staff training and ongoing support. Staff participated in a two-day iPad 101 Academy and bi-monthly coaching support, followed by an intense 3 day Project Based Learning training with the Buck Institute.

Teachers and the site administrator have attended conferences and workshops such as CUE, Google for Educators, and Leading Edge Certification to further develop their skills and confidence with technology. Site based professional development is dedicated to giving teachers time to collaboratively refine and create new PBL units and explore how to incorporate technology into the curriculum that augments and redefines the learning experience. Our goal is for teachers to design rigorous and relevant curriculum that engages our students with real world problems; empowers them to use their voice and actions to positively impact our world; and enables them to expand their learning beyond the boundaries of our campus through the use of technology.

All students have benefited from the many notable projects that have emerged since year one. One class joined in a global Skype conversation about water conservation with students in France, Turkey and Greece. Students researched water usage and created public service announcement tag lines. They learned graphic design and designed posters promoting water conservation. Another class of 4th and 5th graders, after reading *Crenshaw* by K. Applegate, researched child hunger. They were compelled to organize a food drive, producing informational posters and presentations in order to get the word out. Students collected over 300 pounds of food to donate to a local food bank, learning they can have a positive impact on their communities and can work together to help solve real world problems.

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

In 2012, we systematically began to inform parents about the new Common Core State Standards and the role and integration of technology through parent education events, newsletters, our website and Twitter feed. We created a 5-year plan to increase our

ratio of devices from 6 per grade level to 1:1 devices in grades K–5. This goal was accomplished using district technology funds and over \$250,000 raised through our PTA Walkathons. We host PBL Showcase events, and over 90% of parents attend. A PTA technology committee whose membership includes teachers, parents and the principal was established to guide the acquisition, deployment, and management of our devices. An ad hoc teacher leader committee was established to create the scope and sequence of skills and knowledge for both students and teachers. All documents are housed in our Google Drive folder for easy reference and are systematically shared with staff by the committee and updated throughout the year. As we evolve, teachers serve as a resource to each other. For example, to ensure all staff are competent with base line teacher skills identified by our Ad Hoc Tech Committee, we hosted a “Genius Bar” led by teachers.

In order to support our PBL implementation, ninety percent of staff voluntarily attended 3 summer days of PBL training by the Buck Institute and produced their first PBL grade level units. Staff continue to utilize the BIE website for additional support. We sent a team to Buck Institute PBL World Conference in 2016. Our parents are active participants in most of our PBL units. They serve as content experts, assist with small groups, accompany students on field research excursions, and provide students feedback on their project presentations. During our PTA meetings, parents gain a sense of skill progression across the grade levels when students share how they have been using the iPads in their classrooms in connection with their PBL unit.

Teachers are released twice a year to work in grade level teams to design high quality project based learning experiences aligned to the Common Cores Standards. Additional time is allocated during our scheduled professional development days throughout the year to review student work and refine and design new PBL units. Teachers meet twice a month to monitor student achievement by analyzing data and planning instruction. They utilize peer assessment, self-reflection and rubrics to assess students’ content, presentation and process skills in addition to assessing and refining their units. Local district performance assessments include STAR Reading and Math and performance tasks in math and writing. The Academic Review Team (principal, resource specialist, and ELD teacher leader) meets with every teacher twice a year to review ELD progress and academic performance of each student based on assessment data, student work, and teacher observations.

## **Results and Outcomes**

Our students consistently demonstrate a high level of achievement on both district and state benchmark assessments. Our 2017 CAASPP scores showed 82% exceeded or met standards in English Language Arts/Literacy and 87% of our students exceeded or met standards in math. Given that the CAASPP assessment was designed as a performance task and assesses skills directly aligned to those supported by PBL, we believe that PBL has contributed in part to these results.

Overall student progress is monitored regularly through district benchmark assessments administered each trimester. These include STAR Reading and Math, Writing and Math

Performance tasks. Overall, the percent of students who met proficiency standard on STAR are trending upward. We believe that PBL experiences, in addition to our strong Response to Intervention (RTI) systems, are contributing to these trends. Site administrators meet 3 times a year with district cabinet members to review data, evaluate allocation of resources and discuss modifications for program improvement.

Our students maintained at the highest performance category for English Language Arts and Mathematics, according to the Fall 2017 California School Dashboard. Suspensions maintained at the very low category at zero percent. English Learners progress maintained in the high performance category at 84.8%.

Reviewing our data led us to emphasize instruction more on writing. As a result, we saw our greatest gains moving from near standard to above standard through our focus on writing tasks and communicating reasoning in math.

Students outcomes also told us students struggled with what Carol Dweck out of Stanford University would term a “fixed mindset.” They needed to learn how to persevere through multiple iterations of the problem solving process. As a site, we have worked to leverage several partner initiatives in order to help teach our students such risk taking and problem solving strategies. We hold a school wide assembly at the beginning of each year to review growth mindset and the 16 Habits of Mind. During our monthly Cool Cougar Assemblies, students are recognized for demonstrating one or more of these traits. We have a parent led Project Cornerstone program that focuses on reinforcing positive character traits. All adults on campus consistently reinforce and help students resolve conflicts utilizing our Cougar Code: Be respectful, Be responsible, and Make good choices.

We believe these programs contribute to the positive climate of our school and work reciprocally with PBL through which our students work to develop and apply their skills in collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving. As evidence of our positive climate, we have virtually zero office referrals during academic work periods because students are excited and actively engaged in their learning. With a student body of 770 students, we have fewer than four office referrals a week during recess periods.