

Oster Elementary Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 43697086049415

County: Santa Clara

District (Local Educational Agency): Union Elementary

School: Oster Elementary

Demographics

Enrollment: 649 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: Targeted Assistance

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Oster Elementary is a Title I school in the Cambrian Park Community San Jose. Staff and parents work together to create an atmosphere that is committed to providing all children with a rigorous and enriched education that prepares them for 21st century learning.

Oster Elementary School embraces diversity, fosters collaboration, and cultivates a path toward lifelong learning. Oster nurtures and supports the whole child in preparation for the future. The school community encompasses students from a variety of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. In addition, Oster is home to the Santa Clara County Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program (DHOH). This unique blend represents a true microcosm of our society, creating a compassionate, caring environment meeting the needs of the whole child.

- Our school provides a safe learning environment where children are encouraged to explore, create, and thrive both academically and socially.
- Our school utilizes outside resources to enrich the educational climate and create close connections with the community through guest speakers, field trips, enrichment programs, and a positive partnership with the Xilinx corporation.
- Our teachers provide rigorous, academic instruction based on the developmental needs of the students, by integrating hands-on, inquiry based STEAM lessons.
- Our school works collaboratively with Home & School Club (parent/teacher organization), DHOH, and our district to provide a welcoming and enriching climate.

Oster Elementary School is a thriving ecosystem of student achievement, educational leadership, community involvement, and teachers who are dedicated to equity and excellence for all. Students from a myriad of backgrounds and abilities bring their own special qualities together in a cohesive manner that increases learning and achievement for all students. The State Smarter Balanced Assessment and California School Dashboard demonstrate that Oster students are meeting or exceeding state standards, and that our ELL students are showing steady growth. This growth can be attributed to financial, technological, and professional development support from the district, in addition to a response to intervention model, increased teacher collaboration, innovative STEAM integration, and the utilization of data to drive instruction.

Opportunities are given to students that enrich their lives. The students are given access to programs such as robotics, Project Cornerstone, and Almaden Valley Counseling. These opportunities provide experiences that may not be available to students outside of the school environment. One second grade girl shared that her goal is to become a robotics engineer based on her experience from participating in the Robotics Club at Oster. Additionally, programs like Project Cornerstone and Almaden Valley Counseling provide students with emotional support and character development. Oster's positive school climate is a direct reflection of all of these programs.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Response to Intervention - Rtl with Technology
Focus

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Professional
Development, Use of Technology

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

Strategies Used: Small Learning Communities, Data-Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Professional Development

Description

In 2009, STAR data indicated that our English Language Learners (ELLs), Students with Disabilities, Hispanic, and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged subgroups were not proficient in English Language Arts (ELA). Teachers acknowledged the need to adopt a researched based model to address the needs of at-risk students, as well as those of all ability levels.

Prior to 2009, reading instruction was delivered to students by their homeroom teacher who faced the challenge of students reading at multiple levels. After analyzing data, it was determined that students' needs were not being met, so the flexible reading model was implemented. Using data from district benchmarks, Accelerated Reader (A.R.), and STAR results students were placed into ability groups as follows: Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Below Basic, and Far Below Basic.

In 2010, Oster School was placed into Program Improvement based on scores of the following subgroups: ELLs, Hispanic, Socio Economically Disadvantaged and Students with Disabilities. Students in these groups were performing at a range of 745–795 on the STAR, while White and Asian subgroups performed at a range of 935–965. Administration and teaching staff acknowledged that the way instruction was being delivered was not effective. The district provided the Response to Intervention model (Rtl) that became Oster's signature practice. The goal was to meet the needs of all students, especially the target groups.

Rtl is a model for delivering instruction to students based on formative and summative assessments. Homeroom teachers, Resource Specialist, Read 180 Intervention teacher and Title 1 teacher meet with grade level teams to decide which proficiency level they will teach. In these collaborative meetings, data is analyzed and needs are identified. Students are then placed into flex groups based on summative, formative, and SBAC scores. Students below proficiency are placed in lower student-to-teacher ratio classes. Students progress at their own pace while receiving the appropriate support, guaranteeing equal access to curriculum. Teachers use the district adopted curriculum along with student-centered reading strategies. Programs and strategies include Read 180, GLAD, Jr. Great Books, Thinking Maps, Depth and Complexity, Guided Reading, Technology, and STEAM integration.

In 2014, the district provided 1:1 devices for all students and intensive training for all staff. The new technology allowed teachers to incorporate the 4 Cs (collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, communication) more effectively during their Rtl block. Technology is used to collaborate with schools outside of the state as students discuss books with digital pen pals using Google Apps, Seesaw and Flipgrid. Meanwhile other students may use details and evidence from the text to create story maps, using programmed Ozobot robots to retell the plot. Rtl continues to be Oster's signature practice, and technology has incorporated real-world applications.

Implementation and Monitoring

The implementation and monitoring of our Rtl signature practice involves the staff and parent community. Grade levels meet bi-weekly to discuss how to differentiate instruction and to talk about student progress in flexible reading groups. These teams determine which assessments will be administered to students every 6–8 weeks. Data from these assessments is used in two ways: to determine which skills need to be retaught, and which students need to move groups. Data analysis throughout the year confirms that the Rtl model is effective in advancing all students towards meeting or exceeding grade level standards.

Ongoing professional development is key to the success of Rtl. Both district and site training opportunities offer teachers a balance between technology and literacy development. While the district offers global strategies, the site based training targets specific needs and interests of the Oster staff. For example, this year each grade level presented a training based on George Couros' book *The Innovator's Mindset*, where teams shared innovative ideas to use during the Rtl block. Additionally, teacher leaders from Oster developed sessions for Tech Tuesdays based on the differentiated needs of the teachers. Information learned in these sessions was directly incorporated into Rtl lessons.

Monitoring and assessment methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional strategies include running records, Accelerated Reader, formative and summative unit tests, district benchmarks, KDS (Key Data Systems) assessments, Flipgrid, SBAC, RAZ Kids, STAR, and teacher created exit tickets that check for understanding.

Parent involvement and communication is critical for the success of Rtl. Home and School Club and School Site Council are two avenues used to inform the parent community about the Rtl program features, data, and volunteer opportunities. Parents receive an individualized snapshot during parent/teacher conferences, which take place in November and March. Rtl information is also shared through class newsletters, websites, and monthly principal newsletters. The end of year parent survey confirms that the monitoring and assessment methods are successful and valued.

With the support of technology integration the parent community has in depth access to Rtl classwork. All teachers use Google Apps for Education, which enables parents to view Rtl work through Google Classroom and Drive such as slide presentations, Hyperdocs, and collaborative projects. Google Hangouts allow parents to participate in Rtl classroom novel discussions while at work. Digital portfolios through Seesaw, Google Sites, and Flipgrid involve parents in monitoring Rtl progress throughout the year.

The unifying factors of continuous data monitoring, differentiated professional development, community involvement, and the seamless integration of technology has allowed for our Rtl signature practice to flourish, ultimately creating lifelong learners.

Results and Outcomes

Throughout the year, the staff uses a variety of informal and formal assessments during Rtl to monitor and ensure that students are progressing and on track to grade level proficiency. Ultimately, the State Smarter Balanced Assessment and California Dashboard corroborates the interim data that has been guiding instruction throughout the year. The California Dashboard below indicates that the majority of students are meeting or exceeding grade level standards in English Language Arts. It also confirms that the ELL students, one of the target groups, are also showing positive growth. The Socioeconomically Disadvantaged and the Hispanic students continue to make progress and will remain at the forefront of planning and instruction.

A data analysis collection that is unique to Oster is the data collection and reflection work around each staff members' Target Students. At the start of each school year, teachers look at both quantitative and qualitative data to select two target students. Students must fall under the following subgroups: English Language Learner, Hispanic, or Socioeconomically Disadvantaged. They also need to be at a basic or below basic proficiency level, with the goal of reaching proficiency by the end of the school year.

Once selected, teachers report current test scores and personal information that will assist in building a positive rapport between teacher and student. Both teacher and students benefit from this interdependent relationship. Teachers are able to use target student data to reflect on their own best practices, ultimately becoming more cognizant of building relationships with all students. Throughout the year, this ongoing process ensures that not only the target students, but all students, are receiving the most effective and engaging Rtl instruction.

The correlation between the target students and the non-targeted students shows a clear alignment between the two groups. For example, a teacher reported that the implementation of more visuals and GLAD strategies for the target students increased their proficiency levels. In addition, results showed that all students benefited from the Rtl strategies directed toward the target students. The SBAC scores reflected a similar growth pattern in both targeted and non-targeted students.

This process of analyzing data, monitoring student progress through a variety of assessments, and using Target Students to gauge the effectiveness of strategies being used to teach reading, is an ongoing cycle of inquiry. The inquiry process allows for short and long term planning that includes specific professional development based on the results of data analysis, assessments and Target Student results. The data also speaks volumes about the best practices used at Oster that need to be in place in order to develop 21st Century Learners that are prepared to be productive members of a continuously evolving society.