

Live Oak Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 44697656049605

County: Santa Cruz

District (Local Educational Agency): Live Oak Elementary

School: Live Oak Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 350 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: Targeted Assistance

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Live Oak Elementary School has an approximately 70% English Learner population, with a free and reduced lunch and low socio economic population that is as well above 80%. This however does not define our school. Live Oak is not a fancy school, with green lawns and elegant furnishings, but rather a place where learning is our focus and hard work is our motto. Our school is best characterized by the small group of teachers who come to school each and every day and work hard to provide the most rigorous educational experience to all of our students.

The official data from the past 5 years backs up these assertions. Live Oak Elementary was the only school in the tri county area to exit Program Improvement in 2013/14. This past year our results on the SBAC assessments showed that our students significantly outscored both the county and state in ELA and Science between 10 and 20 percentage points respectively and were equal in Math. The data speaks for itself and distinguishes our school as a high poverty, high performing school.

The strength of our school lies in the dedication of our staff and the exceptional practices that we as a school and district have embraced. The Response to Intervention program, (RTI), the highlighted practice in this application, is a good example of the ongoing dedication to best practices here at Live Oak Elementary.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Response to Intervention Program

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

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

Target Population(s): Two or More Races, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners

Strategies Used: Small Learning Communities, Data-Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

Beginning with the 2009/10 school year our school adopted a three-tiered Rtl (Response to Intervention) model of intervention serving all grade levels, which focused on supporting students below standard. The district purchased a research & evidence based program from the Center for the Collaborative Classroom, called SIPPS-- Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight words. The goal is to provide systematic phonics to 100% of students in 1st grade and build on this phonics instruction as a foundation for literacy. The SIPPS program also has phonics components for 2nd and 3rd graders. This solid foundation in phonics helps all students learn to read, decode, and comprehend English, especially the ELL's who make up a majority of our students. The Rtl program goal is to serve 100% of identified students, (via a set criteria), who need intervention in small groups at all grade levels. The outcome of this is a strong safety net for all, including the 86% of students who are economically and socially disadvantaged at our site.

We are accountable to the school community because we routinely review data at team meetings throughout the year, and we have intervention records for all students in Rtl. This allows us to be able to identify individual students who continually fall below grade level and provide them more services, such as Tier 3 support and possibly Special Education, if warranted. Students' social-emotional well-being is reinforced because they are not allowed to fail. This caring environment allows students to be confident learners. We can show that school-wide achievement has risen as a result of the Rtl program. Students who do not need small group intervention are also supported because their teachers are able to provide reading work for them that is at or above

grade level during the Rtl block. In this way teachers and parents can feel confident that instruction is differentiated to serve all students at their level.

Our Rtl model is correlated to the State Board of Education's (SBE) adopted academic content and performance standards, which states that "the development of each student's literacy skills is a shared responsibility" and that teachers will collaborate to ensure students are ready for the 21st century. The SBE goes on to say that their standards are "research and evidence based" which our school has embraced by adopting programs like SIPPS, developed by John Sheffelbine.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Rtl program reviews all school data by the 3rd week of school. In the first two weeks of the year we assess all 1st graders, kindergarteners, and new students. For students in grades 2nd–5th we use the data from the previous year's 3rd trimester. We review this data as a team to decide which students will be served in Rtl. Parents are notified in September if their child has Rtl intervention. We invite parents to learn about Rtl at Back-to-School Night.

Rtl data team meetings include classroom teachers, the principal, RSP, and Rtl staff. We have meetings 3 times a year: in early September, in November and in March. We look at data for all students, but our focus narrows to students who qualify for Rtl. Fall priority goes to students who score below the predetermined criteria on our Diagnostic Assessment Decision Tree. We also identify students who need speech assessments, and who need a SST (Student Success Team). This year we are serving 137 out of 326 students or 42% of our school population, in the Rtl program. With 83% of LO students being low SES and 70% being ELL's our program has to be strong. We have a file for each student who has been in an Rtl intervention group which are used at SST and IEP meetings. We can easily see what intervention the student has had and can observe progress by looking at their levels for each trimester. In addition, Rtl staff write individual progress reports for each student every trimester. Teachers share these progress reports with parents at conferences.

For Rtl professional development, we have had success with whole group SBAC practice lessons, Rtl staff meetings, and group progress reports. During whole group lessons, all students, including Rtl students, classroom teachers, and teacher aides learn together. For example, each 5th grade class goes to a classroom and the Rtl teacher, RSP teacher, and classroom teachers work together teaching students while doing the SBAC practice tests. Often the Rtl coordinator or RSP teacher teaches the lesson to the whole group. In this way, the teacher aides and the students are all learning at the same time about topics such as fiction & non-fiction text features and close reading strategies. During Rtl staff meetings, we meet and discuss ways to make our teaching stronger. We use Accountable talk stems, the ELD matrix, and review SIPPS best practices. An important element of the SIPPS routine is explicit, but limited teacher talk, allowing increased student participation. There is also consistent teaching of language in SIPPS, that supports English language learners. Every 6 weeks Rtl staff fill out a report for each group to let the coordinator know where they are in lessons.

Teachers are asked to write down any behavior challenges as well as students who are not making progress or who are ahead of the group. This way we can move students before the trimester meetings, if needed.

Results and Outcomes

The Rtl program has made a significant impact on student learning, especially in our low socioeconomic students and English Learner groups, as indicated by our overall growth on the SBAC tests in ELA and Math. Since we started implementing SIPPS the Rtl program has grown stronger. We did not have Walk-to-Learn in any grade, but now 1st, 3rd & 5th grade programs are true “Walk-to-Learn” models. All students are grouped by their grade specific placement scores and are placed with a teacher. The teachers and the Rtl coordinator decide who will take each group. For example, in first grade we have 8 groups for reading instruction ranging in size from 4 students to 12 students. Currently about half our 1st graders are in SIPPS Challenge, which is usually taught to 2nd graders. These students are learning how to decode multisyllabic words, as well as studying Latin and Greek prefixes and suffixes. Students in Rtl also take Accelerated Reader (AR) quizzes, on books read in Rtl, to support their AR learning goals in class.

A few years ago we asked the 1st grade teachers to do SIPPS/RTI 5 days a week. This had surprising results. In 2013–14, 1st graders had 4 days of SIPPS and 40% of students reached at or above grade level for fluency. In 2016–17, 1st graders had SIPPS 5 days a week and 65% scored at or above grade level. Our 1st grade consists of 67% ELLs who need high levels of support from Rtl. The past 3 years 70% to 80% of 1st grade students scored below grade level on the incoming SIPPS placement test and needed intervention; but as we go up the grade levels, we see improvement. In 2017, 78% of 2nd graders, 72% of 3rd graders, 78% of 4th graders, and 81% of 5th graders scored at or above grade level for reading fluency.

Beginning in April of 2016 we started practicing for SBAC during RTI with 3rd, 4th and 5th graders two weeks before the SBAC test. We read paired passages and answered questions modeled after the SBAC ELA Performance Task. This helped our RTI students, 80% of whom are ELLs, be more prepared for the test and in 2017 we started taking practice tests on the computer during RTI time one day a week for 6 weeks. The results show that this practice is crucial. In one year our 3rd grade low SES group went from 35% to 47% scoring at or above grade level on the ELA portion of SBAC and our 3rd grade ELLs went from 28% to 48% scoring at or above grade level.

Our SBAC results from 2017 are an additional indication that our Rtl program has had a positive impact on student learning and reducing the achievement gap. For example, in ELA, our ELL students at Live Oak scored 48%, 48% and 18% at or above standard in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades respectively, while at the state level ELL students scored 17%, 12% and 11% in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. Our low socioeconomic students' scores were 47%, 58%, and 58% at or above grade level in 3rd, 4th & 5th grades respectively.