

Geyserville Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 49707066051734

County: Sonoma

District (Local Educational Agency): Geyserville Unified

School: Geyserville Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 110 students

Location Description: Rural

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: Targeted Assistance

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Geyserville Elementary School is located in the quaint town of Geyserville in Northern California. Upon visiting our school, one cannot help but take in the breathtaking view of rolling green hills and vineyards. Complementing our external beauty, however, is what you will discover on the inside. Our small school community, the dedication of parents and community members, and the outstanding staff who embrace the new school improvement model, The 21st Century Renewal Project, make Geyserville Elementary the successful school that it is today.

Geyserville Elementary School is one of three schools in a TK–12 district. Our school has approximately 110 students. Of these students, 56.0% qualify for free or reduced lunch or are considered in poverty, 60% are Hispanic/Latino and 37% are English Language Learners. Over a two-year period we have seen tremendous growth.

Mathematics: For both 15–16 and 16–17 our school had a participation rate of 100% and a performance level increase from “Orange” to “Green” for all students and all

targeted student groups that receive performance levels. Status/Change details: All Students: Medium/Increased Significantly; Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (SED): Medium/Increased Significantly; and Hispanic: Medium/Increased.

English Language Arts: For the 15–16 school year our school had a participation rate of 100% and during the 16–17 school year we had a participation rate of 98%. Our school had a performance level increase from “Yellow” to “Green” for all students and all targeted student groups. Status/Change details: All Students: Medium/Increased; SED: Medium/Increased; Hispanic: Medium/Increased.

Suspension: For the 16–17 school year the performance level for all students and all targeted student groups was at the “Green” or “Blue” level. Status/Change details: All Students: Green-Low/Declined; SED: Green-Medium/Declined Significantly; Hispanic: Green-Medium/Declined Significantly; English Learners: Blue-Very Low/Declined Significantly; White: Blue-Very Low/Declined Significantly.

English Learner Progress: We had 14 students Reclassified as Fluent English Proficient in 2016–2017. This decreased our EL population to a value that is not reported as a performance color. In 2014–2015 (Spring 2017 Dashboard) our performance for English Learner Progress was “Blue”-Very High/Increased Significantly.

The shift from orange/yellow to the blue/green performance coloring described above shows how much improvement we have made as a school community. The 21st Century Renewal Project has assisted us in making a significant cultural shift that has resulted in a clear and shared focus on student learning and success. Together as a school community, we have renewed our dedication to our students and our school through the development of a shared vision, an understanding of a systemized approach to shared decision-making and a focus on continuous school improvement, using data analysis, inquiry and evaluation.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: The 21st Century School Renewal Project

Length of Model Program/Practice: Less than 2 years

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

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

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

Description

The 21st Century School Renewal Project is an ongoing collaborative program model that unites our school community through a shared vision, uses data-based decision making, systematically utilizes the inquiry process, and respects the variety of expertise and experience within our school community.

The cornerstone of the process is the development of a shared vision by all stakeholders (teachers, classified staff members, community leaders and district leaders). The first step, called “history mapping”, involved sharing historical accomplishments, memorable events, key people, etc. We then extrapolated the enduring values and beliefs that were consistent throughout our history and that we wanted to bring forward into the future. Next, we identified the current local, state and national context with which we all work and discussed those challenges. Once we understood these aspects of the school, we began to envision our future. We imagined what our “dream school” would look like in five years and then developed a “Cover Story” that showed our school on a magazine cover, complete with pictures, quotes and a title of our story.

After developing our shared vision, we entered the next phase of the Renewal Project: Taking Stock. We divided into teams to discuss relevant information that would determine the gaps between our current reality and our vision. We analyzed various types of quantitative, qualitative and process data (demographics, attendance, discipline, testing results, surveys, academic support, communication, etc.). We then identified our strongest needs and priority areas for improvement and formed “Renewal Cadres” that use the inquiry process to develop action plans that address the challenge areas.

Each cadre presented its action plan to the staff and allowed others to ask questions and give input. A consensus decision was required, since the school team would be expected to be responsible for the implementation of the action plan. Each year we will continue to focus on identified priority areas for our Renewal Cadre work and action plans, but the inquiry process will always remain the same.

The 21st Century School Renewal Project is unique in the district and the county, with emphasis on developing our own shared vision and enduring values created by the entire school community. This continuous improvement process provides clear systems for choosing school priorities that will systematically move the school closer to its shared vision. This shared focus for the entire school community ensures that everyone understands the steps needed to make the school successful for students. This model also recognizes and builds upon the strengths of the school staff, students and community. Collaboration and distributed leadership play an important role in the decision-making.

This ensures that even with leadership or other staff changes, the school can move forward with continuous improvement.

Implementation and Monitoring

The following are examples of goals that the Renewal Cadres developed to define their work in developing action plans. They are referenced when adjustments are needed.

Math Cadre Action Plan: By the end of the 2017–18 school year, 55% of our students tested will attain grade level proficiency in our overall math CAASPP score and all students will improve. Each year, for the next 3 years, we will increase our goal by 10%. In order to reach our goal, teachers and instructional aides will engage in a Cycle of Professional Learning, a targeted learning plan that has a maximum impact on instructional practice.

Social Emotional Cadre Plan: Our school community will be safe, respectful and responsible. Our students and staff will understand the structure for student behavior management and social emotional support, taking into consideration our shared vision and enduring values.

Implementation: Once a Renewal Action Plan is approved by the school community, the implementation phase begins. This action plan provides principals and staff members a clear guideline of expectations and agreements for the entire school. They engage in planned professional learning activities to support the Renewal Action Plans. This plan also provides a clear reference; eliminating any confusion of expectations. The entire school community takes on the responsibility for the implementation and the success of the Renewal Action Plan.

Monitoring: The principal plays an important role in assisting with the implementation and monitoring of the action plans. She is responsible for ensuring follow through on the school-wide agreements and referring to the action plan if it is not implemented. After a specified amount of time, the action plan is evaluated to determine if all agreements are being met. The effectiveness of the plan is based on measurable outcomes, and a determination is made whether or not the plan was accomplished, needs revision, and should continue.

Distinguished Implementation: Without clear systems for continuously improving, schools are often faced with making knee-jerk decisions that do not match their unique student needs. Rarely are decisions collaborative and assessed for effectiveness. The 21st Century Renewal Project is different. The implementation of our model is distinguished from other schools in the county. There is an emphasis on clearly defining challenges, followed by using a specific inquiry process to create an Action Plan that addresses the challenges. Action Plans are approved by consensus, creating a sense of ownership by staff for both the process and the action plan. Staff members have a vested interest to fully participate in the implementation of the Action Plan because they have created and approved the plan themselves. This process is well thought-out and perhaps takes longer to put into place, however, once the plan is in place, everyone is on board and steps up to accomplish common, agreed upon goals.

Results and Outcomes

Results

The growth and improvements that Geyserville Elementary School has seen in the past two years is exciting and energizing.

Academic Indicators: All performance levels are at a “green” level on the state dashboard; ELA: In 2016–2017 we saw a 10% increase in the percent of students who exceeded the standard and a 3.2 point improvement in the average distance away from 3; and Math: In 2016–2017 we saw a 1% increase in the percent of students who exceeded the standard and a 15 point improvement in the average distance away from 3.

Suspension Data: All performance levels are at a green or blue level on the state dashboard; In 15–16 we had 5 students suspended (or 3.8% suspension rate), in 16–17 we only had 1 student suspended (0.8% suspension rate), a decrease of 4 students, or 3%.

English Learner Progress: In 2016–2017 we saw a significant increase in our RFEP students. In the years leading up to 16–17 we averaged about 3 RFEP students a year. In 16–17 we had 14 students Reclassified as English Fluent Proficient.

Outcomes

The most important outcome from our model is that it is sustainable. It can last through leadership transitions, teacher changes, grade level changes, etc. Having clear processes and systems in place to ensure a focus on the shared vision with clear expectations and agreements is extremely important for the success of our school. This process unites us as a staff, focuses us on continuous improvement and professional learning, and ensures that we are always striving to move towards our vision.

The three main outcomes identified by the 21st Century Renewal Project are the following:

1. All members of the school community share a vision for the school and work toward a common set of goals designed to benefit all students.
2. Every member of the school community is empowered to participate in a shared decision making process, share the responsibility for implementing these decisions, and are held accountable for the outcomes of these decisions.
3. The school community recognizes and utilizes the knowledge, talents, and resources of every member of the school community.

Teacher Quotes

We have overwhelming support from teachers and staff regarding this model. They are empowered by it and are excited to be part of the process.

- "It's brought us all together ...The staff is more united in a single focus. There's accountability in it. I'm really thankful for it. We have an effective way of handling any challenge. We have procedures now, a system."- Christie Rennie, 5th grade teacher
- "It is nice that teachers' opinions are valued and instrumental in creating the school culture... having everyone work together to focus on positive behavior and intervention creates an environment where everyone is on the same page...I feel like I'm part of the process... helps to understand where the school is and where people want to go."-Robyn Virball, 4th grade teacher