

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

### **School Information**

CDS (County District School) Code: 49707976051833

County: Sonoma

District (Local Educational Agency): Liberty Elementary

School: Liberty Elementary School

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 218 students

Location Description: Rural

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: Targeted Assistance

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: Yes

### **Overview**

Liberty School, serving 218 kindergarten through sixth grade students, is nestled in the rural, dairy ranching area of Petaluma, fifty miles north of San Francisco in Sonoma County. Founded in 1857, Liberty School is the oldest school in continuous operation at the same site, in Sonoma County. Many families have been attending Liberty School for generations.

More than just a school, Liberty is the hub of the community, where families meet neighbors and build relationships. The life of the school reflects that feeling of warmth and family, from the first day of school when the staff and parents open car doors to greet arriving students. This feeling of community is continued through yearly traditions such as the Veterans' Day program honoring our local heroes, Family Fun Night where families come for dinner, ice cream social, and a movie, a school-wide reading incentive program, the annual upper grade overnight where students act as the crew on the tall ship Balclutha, scheduled cleanup times enabling students to take turns contributing to

the care of their school environment, the sixth grade learning service project, and the Nifty Kid assemblies where students are honored and recognized for authentic growth and achievement. These special events provide important landmarks in the development of each student, lifting life at Liberty above the bells and schedules, making it a thriving and unique place to learn.

Liberty School has one specific goal: for each student to reach his or her highest potential as one individual in a community of learners. We take our goal seriously, understanding that basic skills in reading, math, and writing are essential to success. We have created a model program that focuses on integrated foundations for learning. This concept holds all students to high standards irrespective of their background. This combines many aspects of our rigorous expectations into a seamless program that supports students where they are at. We also recognize the importance of life skills, respect, and humor to successful living. The high expectations of Liberty's principal, staff, Board, parents and community have resulted in a school environment that is safe and caring, yet challenging and always productive. Liberty's excellent reputation has generated a student enrollment with over 40% inter-district transfers and ongoing requests in many grades.

The Liberty staff work as a close-knit team always focused on "what is best for kids", working to create an educational program that not only meets the needs of all students, but also raises students' levels of accomplishments beyond all expectations. The school focuses on our Foundations theme of holding all students to high expectations while providing them with the foundational learning necessary to be successful beyond elementary school.

## **Model Program and Practices**

Name of Model Program/Practice: Foundations

Length of Model Program/Practice: 8+ years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Education Supports, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Target Population(s): Hispanic, 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**

Liberty students receive an outstanding education that is aligned with the California adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in all academic areas. State approved

curriculum materials are being utilized to supplement our staff designed academic program throughout our school. Our District and School programs are the same since we are a one-school district.

We utilize research-based language arts practices in order to ensure all students are receiving balanced and comprehensive instruction. K–6 students are taught CCSS and a sequentially planned curriculum that includes foundational reading readiness skills and reading comprehension and fluency in all subjects. In addition, Accelerated Reader Tests and literacy circles are used to support student achievement.

In math, all students use state and district approved materials in addition to chosen supplemental materials. Saxon math is used in all grade levels to establish foundational math concepts, which supports struggling students and challenge those more capable. The school utilizes Eureka Math to address the CCSS and pursue deeper strategies around critical thinking and problem solving. IXL, Accelerated Math, and TenMarks digitally based programs also help reinforce and differentiate basic skills. At the instructional level, students with greater needs work in smaller groups.

Specialized instructors and classroom teachers teach the science program. The curriculum emphasizes direct instruction and a hands-on learning approach utilizing FOSS, Harcourt Brace, and supplemental materials to meet the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). At each grade level students are provided opportunities to hypothesize and prove their results through experiments, charts, analysis, and presentations.

Liberty integrates social science concepts and standards throughout the curriculum. Field trips are scheduled that align to the curriculum in order to further strengthen student understanding of topics presented in class. Teachers supplement social science with geography studies, current events, and local/state history.

Students are provided weekly opportunities to express themselves through music, visual, and performing arts. K–6 students receive teacher-guided instruction and exposure to art/music history and opportunities to create unique forms of art and songs with a specialist. Throughout the year students showcase their talents through exhibits and performances.

Classroom teachers, in conjunction with a PE specialist for all grades, provide instruction in physical education using the California Department of Education Physical Education Framework.

Technology is integrated into all curriculum areas as both a way to enhance and enrich learning and to supplement learning for students that are ready for advancement and students that need greater reinforcement and instruction.

### **Implementation and Monitoring**

Teachers at Liberty have access to a wealth of standards based materials in all academic areas. Every teacher is conscious and aware of the varying abilities

throughout their classroom. All teachers provide intensive intervention for those students who are not yet proficient. Students are regularly assessed and the results are used to plan instruction. The entire staff acknowledges the vital importance for assistance to struggling learners and in meeting the needs of all students. An after school reading program has been developed in grades K–3 for those students who are at risk of not meeting grade level standards. In addition a math-tutoring program has been implemented for grades 4–6. Resource students as well as EL students have access to all grade level standards based curriculum and receive specific instruction with intervention strategies. Our District and School programs are the same since we are a one-school district.

Every student is instructed at their appropriate developmental level based on current research and best teaching practices. To ensure the students meet or exceed the state standards, teachers provide diverse learning opportunities by differential instructional student groupings: total class, small group, and individual instruction. We emphasize direct teaching of skills and basic concepts with teachers modeling and providing students numerous opportunities to practice.

Our rigorous curriculum challenges all levels and abilities. Teachers set forth clear and precise expectations each year, concentrating on academic and behavior expectations of students. As teachers assess and monitor students, they continually conference with them about their learning. All students evaluate their own class work, projects, reports, and individual assignments, based upon individual and classroom rubrics.

Assessment and monitoring is an essential building block for student achievement and success at Liberty. We look closely at any gaps in our instruction and/or curriculum and develop school-wide goals to target any area that needs extra support. Appropriate interventions are set into action based on the continual monitoring of student progress. Student assessment results are communicated to parents, in their primary language, through conferences, report cards, weekly folders, phone calls and notes home.

Students meet standards at each grade level through support services offered at Liberty. Classroom teachers, the principal, and the RSP teacher all work together to closely examine all students, including at-risk students, and evaluate how each is progressing to reach expectations and standards. A year's growth is expected in all areas, however, classroom routines and curriculum are modified to best suit the needs of SWD, EL, and Full Inclusion students.

## **Results and Outcomes**

Liberty School prides itself on the various assessment tools it utilizes to monitor and improve student instruction and learning. We are committed to using a wide range of assessments and other grade level measures to monitor the continual progress of each student. Assessment is an essential building block for student achievement and success at Liberty School.

The entire teaching staff meets at the beginning of each year to study the results of the SBAC/CAASPP tests. We look closely at any gaps in our instruction and/or curriculum and develop a school-wide goal to target any area that may need extra support. In addition to meeting as an entire staff, teachers also meet in primary and upper grade teams three times a year to evaluate individual grade level assessments and weekly to review and collaborate on individual student progress. The goals of these regularly scheduled meetings are to build a cohesive learning environment among all grades, gain a better understanding of student needs to guide instructional planning, and individual teacher support.

In 2017, 81% of Liberty students met or exceeded State ELA standards on the SBAC/CAASPP. In addition to meeting the State standards, each grade level has its own set of "Liberty Standards" that must also be met by students. Additional grade level measures include: LEXIA, MindPlay, grade leveled reading passages, SRA Reading Laboratory and Skill Books, Benchmark reading books, Scholastic Reading Program and assessments, Houghton-Mifflin Language Arts Program and assessments, STAR Reading Assessments (computer-adaptive norm referenced reading test), Accelerated Reader Program, DOLCH Sight Word Lists, EL Paso Phonics Inventory, DIBELS (dynamic indicators of early literacy skills, and LEXIA. Appropriate interventions are set into action based on the continual monitoring of the assessments done by each teacher.

In 2017, 84% of Liberty students met or exceeded State math standards on the SBAC/CAASPP. Grades K–3 use Eureka Math, Saxon and Math Steps as their main curriculum for teaching math standards. Upper grades use Eureka Math and Saxon to teach math standards. Other supplemental material, such as Arithmetwists, TenMarks, IXL, Accelerated Math, manipulatives, and game playing are used to aid in mastering the curriculum standards.

Staff works together to closely examine at-risk students, and evaluate how each is progressing to reach expectations and standards. High expectations are set for all such students. A year's growth is expected in all areas, however, classroom routines and curriculum are modified to best suit the needs of Resource Specialist, English Language, and economically disadvantaged students. English learners at Liberty have done very well on the SBAC/CAASPP. In 2017 65% met or exceeded standards in English/Language Arts and in mathematics 82% met or exceeded standards. At Liberty, we believe that everyone benefits when all students are succeeding.