

Pioneer Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 57726786056279

County: Yolo

District (Local Educational Agency): Davis Joint Unified

School: Pioneer Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 526 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Pioneer Elementary School is in Davis, California, a university community with a population of approximately 66,000. It is located 14 miles west of Sacramento. Davis has primarily middle to upper-middle income levels and the community places a high value on education and civic involvement. More than 80% of the district wide parent community have college and post-graduate degrees.

Pioneer Elementary, founded in 1966, is a K–6 grade school with a student population of just over 500. The school currently houses 2–3 classrooms at each grade, one of which is a AIM cluster (Gifted and Talented Program) class in grades 4–6. In addition to the general education classrooms, Pioneer hosts a Special Education Resource program of roughly 20 students and a Full Inclusion program of just under 25. A large focus of the Pioneer community is on being inclusive and kind. Programs and events that support this cause include: an anti-bullying program coordinated by our school counselor in grades 4–6; a structured lunchtime game program entitled “Lunch-a-palooza” where the Physical Education Specialist coordinates and oversees inclusive games for all students during lunch recess; “A Touch of Understanding” disability

awareness workshop for our fifth graders along with a short assembly on the same topic for grades 1–4; monthly recognition assemblies recognizing students for exhibiting the character traits from our monthly "Life Skills; weekly "class chats" by the principal to connect with students; and weekly recognition of positive acts through a positive referral program. Pioneer welcomes students and families coming to school from a local domestic violence shelter and has continued the "Families in Transition" program. This support network provides after school homework help for students and a welcome meeting with our school counselor. During this welcome meeting, our counselor attempts to connect families with local resources through the Center for Families and/or the Family Resource Program at Montgomery Elementary school. As a result of our inclusive practices, discipline referrals have declined, suspensions rarely occur, and family support for school staff is positive

The school, along with the entire district, is in the third year of a math adoption. The program, called Envision, is supported by a half time math coach. This coach works with individual teachers and grade levels supporting the alignment of the program to math frameworks and depth and complexity of instruction in the classroom.

This is the first year the district is using a new English Language Arts program, Benchmark. Implementation is supported by ongoing district and site level professional development and training. Pioneer administrators have been recognized as districts leaders and the district taps their talents to support data driven decision making in other schools districtwide.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Reading Intervention and Support Program

Length of Model Program/Practice: 8+ years

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

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

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

Description

Early intervention is one of the model practices used for students who lack foundational literacy skills. The program uses a collaborative approach to engage all teachers, including paraprofessionals by using a growth mindset, which views all learners as capable of learning. The instructional practices coupled with effective parent engagement have led to positive outcomes for all students but especially for low-

income, EL, and students with disabilities. Nine years ago, this model was implemented to address many students in 4th–6th grade who were reading below grade level. It was determined that the foundational skills were not sufficiently being taught in the primary grades. The program houses one Reading Specialist and 2 paraeducators. The program teaches foundational skills in a systematic way that is reinforced in both the classroom. Extensive coaching and instruction is conducted classroom and resource teachers as well as para-educators to provide a unified approach. This collaboration is a key to the success of the program. Collaboration with parents is also critical to the program's success. Parents receive assessment results, learning target goals, as well as home support resources in the form of appropriately leveled reading material and parent education by the Reading Specialist.

Over three-fourths of the students served by the program are in Kindergarten through 3rd grade. Baseline district assessments are used to capture levels on all K–6th grade students. This data is shared with teachers and parents. Students below targeted benchmarks qualify for the program and are grouped according to need. Students receive 30 minutes/5 days per week of Tier 2 or 3 targeted small group instruction depending on the severity of reading deficits. The intervention tools used are determined by the identified need. These include: SIPPS, Benchmark decodable text, guided reading with nonfiction text, Soar to Success, and Passageways. Groups are scheduled so that students receive both classroom reading instruction and small group intervention. Intervention is not meant to be a replacement for classroom instruction. Progress monitoring and mid-year assessments allow the groups to be fluid.

The reading intervention program provides specialized, intensive instruction for two student groups: students who meet the definition of dyslexia and students in the unduplicated population. Both need extra support due to language, English vocabulary and background knowledge differences. The program plays a critical role in supporting these students with access to grade-level curriculum by with smaller group sizes, topic material at students' reading level, frontloading and review, and comprehension strategies to organize material with graphic organizers. Finally, teaching students how to believe in themselves so they practice a growth mindset when tackling literacy and other core subjects is key.

Implementation and Monitoring

Student progress is monitored using both formative and summative assessment tools. All stakeholders, particularly parents are engaged in how to understand formative assessment data. For example, at the beginning of the school year, the entire student population is screened for reading foundations, fluency, and comprehension. Results are shared with parents and practices include showing parents how to help strengthen reading support in the home. Communication with all learners is our strength. Parents who don't speak English receive information in their native language. Parents who have special needs students have support from community agencies and special education specialist. Practices include ongoing intervention groups for students using curriculum based assessment, teacher based rubrics and state mandated summative assessments. All staff members are trained on how to disaggregate data and how to

establish goals for all students. English Language learners have assessments that consider both English language proficiency and socio-emotional needs. Mid-year data chats occur with all students and a growth mind set is used when establishing goals with students. When students meet grade level benchmarks, celebrations occur and new students receive assistance. Reclassification of English Learners is integrated in data chats and with parents playing a key role in our data-driven decision-making process. For special education students, IEP team members collaborate with regular education and other specialist to ensure that socio-emotional and behavior needs are reviewed. Data on student absenteeism or suspensions is monitored to ensure prevention and intervention support is provided early, thus supporting the school's goals of increasing student attendance. Ongoing evaluation methods allow not only for students to experience a growth mindset but also builds confidence of all stakeholders that the programs goals are being met. Methods that are not yielding positive results are changed as the PLC process uses communication and collaboration tools to keep the focus on and student achievement. The cycle of continuous improvement is a hallmark of the reading intervention program.

Students with disabilities, especially those in the Resource program with mild-moderate disabilities are also served by the program. Resource students will not only participate in reading intervention small groups, but our Reading Specialist does ongoing training and professional development with the Resource Specialist and para-educators who serve students. These aligned practices provide for reinforcement of reading and comprehension instruction during Specialized Academic Instruction time and as students receive support on subject area reading assignments in Social Science and Science.

Results and Outcomes

Monitoring and assessment data show a drop in the number of students who start off participating in the program. This means that an average of 70 students participated in the Reading Intervention program every year and as students move up in grade levels, the need for the program decreases. The assessment results show that the program is being effective. The goal is to offer early intervention of foundational literacy skills so that as students move into intermediate grade levels, and the challenge becomes "reading to learn", their reading fluency and comprehension allows them keep up with State standards and the demands of academic English. Program enrollment indicates that this goal is being met. In grades K–3 the program serves roughly 50 students. In grade 4 that number drops to 7 and by 6th grade only 3 students are at a reading level that qualifies them for this reading support. In reviewing annual data, students participating in the program make, on average, 2 years of reading growth. This is necessary growth as these students do need to "catch up" to be on pace with grade level peers.

In addition to the students served and benefiting from this program in their reading /literacy growth, students from our English Learner population saw benefit as well. Reading team staff collaborates frequently with classroom teachers and English Learner staff. Topics of collaboration include training on phonemic awareness, phonics, reading

assessments, sharing of resources, and strategies for early literacy instruction. Data from these assessments was used for re-classifying students as Fully English Proficient. In the spring of 2017, six students achieved this level of language proficiency. In addition, in December of 2017, twelve more EL students were reclassified. This reclassification rate of 35% can be attributed not only to the integrated and designated EL supports provided for language learners, but the consistent, aligned reading instruction done in conjunction with the Reading Intervention Program.

Over 90% of the primary students meet the district baseline assessments. Evidence of the stability of this growth is seen in later statewide assessments such as the CAASPP. The Fall 2017 California Dashboard documents gains and successes in English Language Arts, especially for students with disabilities. This subgroup grew over 13 points from Spring 2016 to Spring of 2017. Qualitative data on our inclusive and kind school efforts show a decline in school suspensions and an increase in student attendance.