

School Overview

Claremont Middle School is a public middle school for grades 6 through 8 located near the northern border of Oakland, California. The school serves about 488 students within OUSD. Claremont Middle School is an extraordinary school. Our entire staff is dedicated to the success of all students and making sure that we get students High School Ready. Our dedicated staff works collaboratively both as grade level and department teams to provide engaging and equitable learning environments, and are skilled at bringing out the best in all learners.

Claremont is one of the most diverse schools in Oakland. Our population is 30% African American, 5% Asian, 20% Latino, 35% White, and 9% multi-race. Of our 488 students, approximately 40% qualify for free and reduced lunch. In preparing students to be citizens of the 21st century, we have integrated technology into curriculum. There are 10 Chromebook carts that move freely from classroom to classroom at school and technology is used to listen to leveled books, compose essays, do research, build grammar skills, enhance math concepts and skills, and teach digital literacy. We constantly strive to increase family engagement with family-friendly events such as Pi Night, Black History Night, Literacy Night, and weekend school beautification events. Additionally, we are increasing family access to school with software such as Google Classroom, the Remind App, and our school's website.

In addition to our Common Core aligned programs of reading, writing, math, science and social studies, Claremont provides an African American Male Achievement program (which offers African American males an elective rooted in academic and historical experiences of the African American community), art, professional digital media training in a state-of-the-art computer lab, an exceptional music program, an active sports and physical education program, and a multi-faceted after-school program. We have a very active Parent Teacher Association and School Site Council. These important bodies hold interactive monthly meetings and elicit input into and raise money to support many aspects of the offerings that make our school great. Their efforts have helped us to secure a librarian, field trips, math intervention, additional support of the STIP subs, and funding incentives to academic initiatives such as our Reading Race to 1000 and Beyond, in which we are offering ice cream sundaes to students who make significant progress on reading assessment scores. We have also begun hosting educational programs to support parents and students in critical issues such as drug awareness and puberty education. Families are critical to our success and brought into the fold in many ways. All families can log in to Aeries, our information management system, to be informed about their student's progress. If a student is struggling, we work with the family to create contracts and weekly progress reports to encourage students to develop positive habits.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Multi-Tiered Intervention and Support

Length of Model Program/Practice: Less than 2 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Prevention, Educational Supports

Supports Target Population(s): Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

Strategies Used: Small Learning Communities, Data Driven Decision making, Professional Development

Description: Students come into Claremont Middle School at all levels of reading and math from an array of elementary school experiences. Some students are far below grade level, while others have the capacity to engage in highschool and college level texts and do high level Algebra before moving on to high school. This data seems to correlate with race, class, and/or zip code in Oakland. At Claremont, we have determined that the most important way we can support struggling readers and mathematicians is to provide targeted and ongoing support with small groupings in reading and math, as well as to have Tier 1 systems in place for all students. Consequently, Claremont has focused on this particular OUSD LCAP (Local Control Accountability Plan) goal: To support students to read at or above grade level. Additionally, we have worked to support all students to be able to do math at or above grade level, focusing on the OUSD LCAP goal of ensuring students are proficient at State Standards.

To address this reading achievement gap, Claremont has created a multi-tiered approach to support all of our students to grow their reading abilities. Our goal is for all students to grow one year as measured by the Reading Inventory (formerly Scholastic Reading Inventory, or SRI), and for students who are below grade level to grow at least two years. Our Tier I practices, designed to showcase our reading culture and impact the greatest number of students, include: at least one Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) period per week in English Language Arts class; Newsela, an online nonfiction reading platform, in Science and Social Studies once a week; the expectation that students read 30 minutes per night four nights a week and complete a reading log for each read; individual and grade level Reading Inventory growth challenges; and a celebration of our reading culture with an accessible and student-friendly library and hallways decorated with pictures of staff with their favorite books. Teachers across disciplines all teach specific reading strategies (e.g., reciprocal teaching, chunking, context clues, vocabulary development). Our Tier II approach, designed to provide targeted group intervention, includes: implementation of the online reading program, LightSail, with 40 students who are reading below grade level and have opted in to this program; communication with parents; and small pull-out reading groups during English class SSR periods, with no more than five students in each group to engage with high interest culturally relevant book and learn reading strategies. Our Tier III approach, designed to provide targeted individual intervention, includes: strategic intervention for five students per grade level who are 2.5 to 1.5 years below grade level (according to most recent lexile score). These students will be part of pull-out reading groups and will get additional two-to-one or one-to-one support “check ins” on reading log, reading comprehension of small group book and from trained STIP subs during advisory class 3-4 times

a week. We have leveraged district-provided resources such as having a dedicated resource teacher and Intervention Specialist Support (ISS) at each grade level, who provide push-in and pull-out services to students on their caseload.

To guide the implementation and progress monitoring of the Multi-Tiered Reading Intervention and Support Program more formally, we have allocated resources to increase our instructional coaching staff from one part-time coach to adding an additional full-time coach. In addition to facilitating and monitoring, the coaches focus on literacy strategies as a core component of effective practice with all the teachers they coach. We have utilized STIP subs to provide the staffing and received support from the PTA for the incentives. These STIP subs have also received training in how to support small group instruction, and when they are pushing into classrooms, how to best target support around reading instruction. We believe that through a whole school approach supporting Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III students, we can lift up all of our students to become successful readers, prepared to enter high school, college, and the workforce.

In math, the goal is similar, but we use the SBAC as the main measure. We expect all students to grow one grade level, and for students multiple grades below, we expect that they will grow at least 1.5 grade levels. Similar to reading, we also work with extra staff, such as STIP subs, to do small work groups or one on one support. We have also changed scheduling in a very impactful way. Previously, students in eighth grade could take algebra as their only math class if they tested in. Today, they take Math 8 during their regular day, and then take Algebra during a non-instructional time. This allows math classes to be more heterogeneous and provides the students who struggle with more support if they need it, in the form of other students who are grasping concepts and can deftly explain key concepts.

Implementation and Monitoring:

Our literacy work is grounded in theory and data. Staff have participated in professional development based upon the work of educational researchers such as Stephen Krashen and Jeff Zwiers. We analyze both formative and summative data to inform our approach and instructional strategies. We began this work during professional development two years ago by picking a reading strategy, Close Reading, and having all teachers use this strategy in some form in their classrooms.

Families are a key part of our success. Families monitor the at home reading in English. Their signature is part of the assignment, and gives them authentic opportunities to talk with their student about what they are reading. They are also a partner in the student- led conferences(SLCs). SLCs happen twice a year and are student-driven. Students spend time in their advisory period reviewing their body of work and creating a reflective script for leading their conference. Here students, parents, and the advisor work together to focus on the student's goals in academics generally, and also focus specifically on how well they are reading and how they can improve. Recently, our School Site Council (SSC) crafted a vision for a future family engagement event designed to provide parents with tools to limit screen time and to encourage

reading. This event is currently in the planning phase and we hope to have a panel of parents speak to their challenges/successes with supporting their students with reading, our librarian is working to curate resources such as suggested reading lists, information on Manga books, and links to our local public library. We hope to also have breakout rooms where parents can gather to discuss how they manage screen time. All of these efforts are intended to extend the reach of our parent engagement and leverage parent insight/experience in support of one another.

One measure of our progress is the Reading Inventory assessment, which is administered three times per year. At each administration we incentivize students in both group and individual ways. As an individual, students can earn incentives such as ice cream or pizza for increasing their score with 100 points or more. They can also earn a “Celebration of 1000” if their reading score goes above 1000. The grade level that grows the most can also earn incentives. Finally, throughout the year, all students can earn incentives like an ice pop party lunch if they are all reading in advisory during a surprise visit. These competitions facilitate a learning environment that presents students the academic challenge that often is difficult to create in a single classroom. They can offer the types of experiences that foster the development of productive attitudes and work habits.

In terms of monitoring the effectiveness of the interventions, the Instructional Coaches meet consistently with the STIP subs and the principal to evaluate the strategies, the text options, the student groupings, and their overall impact. Data collection and monitoring are done at regular intervals to ensure that our efforts are aligned and impactful. We continue to iterate to better meet the needs of our students.

For Mathematics, we have also had a multi-tiered approach to supporting our student most at risk. First, we have used both district and PTA monies to provide an additional teacher or aide in our math classrooms. The aides work closely with students who are struggling to grasp a concept and reteach this strategy in small groups. The math department has worked to develop a few key strategies to support all students:

1. To have a designated seating chart that balances stronger students with students who are approaching standards;
2. To use engagement strategies, such as Rally Coach, where each student is required to teach their partner verbally and written the problems of the day; and through use of academic language where all students will be held accountable for a particular problem during cooperative learning time.

Additionally, we pulled the data in math for our eighth grade students and found that we had been tracking students into a high math class—Algebra—where nearly 100% of the students tested for proficient in 2015 and 2016. Meanwhile, our students who were in the straight math 8 class, who were predominately students of color, were testing far below grade level. For the past three years, we have had **all students** take Math 8 during the instructional day and have provided a separate Algebra class to our highest achieving students that did not interfere with our master schedule. We believe that this one adjustment—to have our strongest 50 students in

Math 8 with all the other students—has provided a tremendous amount of additional teaching and learning support. We have seen an incredible performance increase, specifically in our Latino students in math, but also across all populations. Over half of students are now at or above grade level based on last year's SBAC math scores.

To contrast Claremont's intervention strategy with our peer schools across the District, at Claremont, we believe that all students should still have access to an elective, while other schools often have students take an intervention class instead of an elective. In terms of English intervention for example, other schools may have students take a Read 180 program, or classroom teachers may develop their own curriculum to teach one period of intervention in place of an elective for students who struggle. Claremont has chosen to do intervention directly into and during the regular reading block. Similarly, in math, there is no separate intervention class. The intervention is providing stronger students strategically placed throughout the classroom, as well as both a teacher and an additional adult to move around the room and provide the reteaching and targeted support. For many students who need more support, the elective may become the incentive for coming to school each day. At Claremont, all students get a chance to explore learning outside of the core curriculum with an elective which gives them opportunities to be successful in different areas.

Results and Outcomes:

When we began this program in Fall 2016, 27.3% of our sixth graders were scoring multiple grades below and 56.8% tested at advanced on the Reading Inventory. Two years later, 20.8% of our eighth graders (the same cohort of students) tested multiple grades below and 67.5% tested at advanced. As a school, two years ago, 30.1% of students were multiple years below grade level and 55.6% were advanced. Today, only 23.2% of students are multiple years below grade level and 63.9% of our readers are advanced.

If we look at breakdown by ethnicity and socioeconomics, we see similar gains. When we disaggregate our data we see that two years ago, our sixth grade African American students tested at 55.6% multiple years below and only 17.8% advanced on the Reading Inventory. In eighth grade, this same group has 42.5% of students at multiple years below and 42.5% scoring advanced. Two years ago, 50.8% of sixth grade students benefiting from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) were multiple grades below and only 30.5% scored as advanced. Today, these same students are in eighth grade and only 43.1% are multiple grades below, with 43.1% scoring advanced.

As we have continued to develop our reading intervention and support strategies, we can use the incentive program as a measure of our success. Last year, during our first Celebration of 1000 ceremony, we had 22 students meet the mark of growing by over 1.5 years and meeting grade level expectations during the fall. Twenty more students and their families celebrated this achievement in the spring 2018, for a total of 42 students last year who grew multiple years and got to grade level. This year, we have already surpassed last year's total number of students that have climbed up to grade level standards in just the first five months of school. Our winter

2019 celebration will include 45 students and family members sharing their story of how they have become a proficient reader during these past five months. Anecdotally, students who are simply growing by 100 points or more are consistently checking in with staff about their status and when will they receive their incentive for their success.

Our SBAC data has also improved overall. In the year before we implemented this coordinated effort (SY 2015-16), 41.8% of students were at or above standard in English. Last year, which is our most current data, 51% of our students were at or above standard. When we break down for ethnicity, before we began implementation, 17.7% of African American students were meeting or above standard. Last year, that number increased to 25.7%. When looking at students benefiting from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), before implementation 22.8% were meeting or exceeding standards. Last year, that percentage increased to 32.5%.

When we look at our year over year data on the SBAC test for our Latino population, our students have had unbelievable growth. Three years ago our Latino students, as a whole, were approximately 1 to 1.25 years below grade level as measured by the SBAC, and now the average performance of a Latino student is at grade level. While this is an aggregate set of data, it is possibly our most impressive piece of data. In other words, as a school, the average performance of a Latino student has grown from one year below grade level to grade level during their time at Claremont.

Looking at math data, we have similar gains as in English schoolwide, and also specifically with our African American and Latino students. With our Latino population (75 students), they have gone from being multiple years below grade level (83 points as measured by the SBAC) to just below grade level (16.5 points below) as an aggregate group. As far as our African American students, they have shown 30 point growth as an aggregate group (140 students) - from being 129 points below grade level to 99 points below. Special Ed has shown a 37 point aggregate gain, going from more than 150 points below level to about 114 points below (40 students). We expect all of these groups to show continued improvement as we refine our strategies and implement them more fully.

Even attendance data, an important focus of LCAP Goal 5: Students are Engaged in School Every Day, has improved. While this may be a collateral benefit, it is worthy of note. In the first year of implementation 65.8% of students were considered satisfactory on attendance. Last year, that number went up to 71.5% of students. And on the other end 14.2% were considered moderately or severely chronically absent. Last year the percentage shrunk to 6.1%. We believe this is collateral benefit was due in part to more students getting their needs met, feeling more confident in their ability to access text, and the targeted support of our Community Schools Manager and attendance clerk who worked together to address barriers around attendance. These two critical staff members hold consultations with parents to provide resources to improve their student's attendance (e.g., mapping transportation routes, providing Clipper Cards and BART tickets and other student incentives).

Our suspension data has continued to decline. Before we attempted this effort, 7.7% of students were suspended. We ended last year at 3.6% and are on target this year, to reduce it further, at 2% for the year as of February of 2019.

We still have more work to do. While the gap is narrowing, it has not closed, and therefore our work is not complete. We continue to analyze data and review research that will improve outcomes for our students. We continue to seek out ways to engage our core parent base and expand it to include those who have barriers to participation (e.g., work schedules, child care needs, etc.). We continue to vet resources, explore reading intervention programs, and make adjustments to our master schedule to better meet the needs of our students.

We have also concentrated more effort and incentives in our reading program than in our math program in recent years. In the future, we hope to fully develop a math plan modeled after our reading successes. Part of that will entail finding a math assessment similar to the Reading Inventory that will allow us to gauge students' success more than once a year.