Baird Middle School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 10 62166 60006084

County: Fresno

District (Local Educational Agency): Fresno Unified

School: Baird Middle

Demographics

Enrollment: 613 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: Yes

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Baird Middle School is a magical place where children thrive! We are a non-criteria magnet middle school serving students in grades 5 through 8 in Fresno, California – one of the poorest cities in our nation. We believe that All means ALL. This drives everything we do. We are a center for world languages, agribusiness, technology and AVID. Our student body consists of 613 beautiful children reflecting the diversity of our great city. Every decision we make is intentional, from hiring staff who mirror our students’ language and cultural backgrounds to our standard of dress policy, which promotes a sense of unity and belonging. We believe these are vitally important to the social, emotional and academic success of our students. We believe in the intrinsic worth of every human being. We believe in nurturing the talents and character of each child.

Baird was designed to foster cultural diversity in a rich learning environment. Baird has been successful in reaching students from all corners of the city, drawing students from 51 different elementary schools throughout Fresno Unified. Baird was named a California Distinguished School previously in 1999 and 2009, a California Gold ribbon

A hallmark of our success is a systemwide approach to providing intensive supports, enrichment and acceleration for all students. Student needs drive our master schedule. Intensive supports come via our RTI (Response to Intervention) program which targets and adjusts to student needs. This takes on various forms: Tier 2 deployment, Tier 3 intensive instruction, schoolwide AVID strategies, afterschool and weekend tutoring, immersive parent workshops, and our summer literacy program. In addition, all students have a variety of opportunities for acceleration and enrichment built into our system as part of the regular school day, including classes taught by community education partners. Every dollar of our budget is allocated based on what is best for students rather than adults.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: MTSS: Equity by Design

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Educational Supports, Parent, Family and Community Involvement, Professional Development, Use of Technology

Target Population(s): American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Filipino, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

Strategies Used:
School Climate, Parent Engagement, Data Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional and Behavioral Support, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics

Description

The foundation of Baird Middle School’s success has been and continues to be our unrelenting commitment to finding solutions in every area, at any cost, as well as our ability to face head on the weaknesses in our system. We continuously adapt as we evolve. We take risks and test out new practices, measuring results in order to improve. We take full responsibility for the learning and well-being of every child at this school. We either believe all means all, or we don’t. There is no middle ground. For the past 20 years, we have worked tirelessly to improve our practice so that every child gets what he or she needs in order to be successful. These efforts have evolved into our current Multi-Tiered System of Supports, which is a true synthesis of AVID, PLCs and the RTI Pyramid. MTSS is the roadmap for success. PLCs are the vehicle and RTI is the navigational system that gets us to our destination. Our program is the educational
equivalent of the WAZE traffic app: just as the WAZE community of drivers shares real-time traffic and road info, assisting fellow drivers in finding the best route to arrive at their destination, we at Baird are a community of educators sharing real-time data, identifying roadblocks and redirecting programmatic and instructional practice to allow all students to reach their destination.

When Baird was named a CA Distinguished School for the second time in 2009, our AVID program was a cornerstone of our application. We had a successful program that reached 80% of our students, but we weren’t satisfied with anything less than 100%. Our motto became “All means ALL” and in our pursuit of this goal we sought to become one of a handful of AVID National Demonstration Schools in the world. AVID-trained staff who were known at the national level for their expertise in teaching and professional development were hired on staff. Systematic PD in the areas of English Learner strategies, Culturally Relevant Teaching and Student Engagement was provided. Even with this designation, it was still apparent that we needed to evolve in order to ensure that all Baird students leave here at or above grade level per Common Core State Standards. The reality was clear: students could not be expected to meet grade level CCSS without intentional, targeted intervention on our part. Through a collaborative process, teachers, SPED support and admin determined a need for more systematic delivery of instruction, assessment and intervention. It was through a visit to another CA Distinguished School that we observed a successful MTSS program in which students were exposed to strategic instruction combined with frequent progress monitoring to ensure mastery of learning for all students. Additional Baird staff visited the school and determined which parts of the program would be successful in Baird’s model. PLCs were implemented at Baird within and across grade levels with the focus on defining curriculum, instruction, continuum of skills, ins and outs at each grade level and specific academic supports based on student need in support of the new Common Core State Standards. Although the exemplary school we visited provided interventions before and after the school day, we knew this would not work for us. Due to our status as a magnet school with 11 buses arriving daily from all over the city, we knew we had to find a creative way to incorporate intervention, enrichment and acceleration within the regular school day.

Our staff set about creating a comprehensive approach to maximizing every instructional minute and to synthesizing separate successful programs into one overarching effort. In order to do this, staff needed simultaneous professional development in AVID, PLC work and RTI. Resources such as time and money needed to dramatically shift in order to accomplish this.

Universal screeners and intentional design of our master schedule provide for structured support at all three tiers. ELA and Math PLCs have developed a continuum of skills with guaranteed ins and outs for each grade level. Grade level team members share ownership of literacy standards to ensure students are receiving support in all content areas.
Tier 1 focuses on access to grade level standards for all students. We utilize best first teaching practices based on AVID and Hattie’s research. All students learn Cornell note taking, time management, organizational strategies, and collaborative discussion in the AVID Scholars class. Scholars is part of our Tier 1 elective wheel, which also includes Technology/Robotics, Ag Science, and the study of two world languages: Spanish and German. Our standard of dress policy promotes unity and belonging and keeps the focus on learning. Our Block 8 enrichment classes give students the opportunity to engage in creative pursuits in the last class of the day. These include Mosaics, Hip Hop, Baile Folklórico, Painting, Music, Intramural Sports, Rube Goldberg, to name a few.

Tier 2 addresses additional time and support within the school day needed to meet grade level essential standards. Baird teachers work in Professional Learning Communities at both the grade level as well as in their content areas. Support is focused on essential standards and is based on ongoing assessment of standards mastery. Two 50-minute blocks of time each week are devoted to targeted second instruction on essential standards, with priority given to ELA, Math and Literacy.

Tier 3 provides for intensive remediation in universal skills such as reading, writing, number sense, English language, attendance and behavior. A designated RTI class in Math and ELA, targeted for students in need of intensive support in foundational skills, is provided at each grade level. The classes are staffed with four adults: two credentialed teachers (content area and RSP) as well as two college tutors. Our hybrid AVID/Mentoring Program (Young Men’s and Women’s Alliance) which serves as a Tier 3 academic and social emotional support. Our Summer Literacy Academy is designed for students who are far below grade level in reading. This combination of efforts has resulted in increased student achievement, reduced suspensions and expulsions, and improved attendance across the board as outlined below.

Elements of Baird’s model program are aligned to the district’s Local Control Accountability Plan as referenced under each of the four overarching goals of Fresno Unified’s: Goal #1: All Students will excel in reading, writing and math. Goal #2: All students will engage in Arts, Activities and Athletics. Goal #3: All students will demonstrate the character and competencies for workplace success. Goal #4: All students will stay in school on track to graduate. We have expanded upon these goals through creation of a unique multi-faceted approach to include interactive parent workshops within the classroom, all-staff development with MTSS experts, and commitment to schoolwide Personalized Learning to extend our reach beyond traditional instruction for students.

Implementation & Monitoring

Baird’s entire program is results driven and is guided by our Instructional Leadership Team. This team serves as our guiding coalition for all decisions made. The ILT is comprised of lead teachers representing each grade level and department on campus.
along with the Principal, VP and Learning Director. The team meets monthly to assess, guide and direct the work of our PLCs in service of our schoolwide goals as outlined in our Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). In addition, the team is given release time during the school year to plan professional development for staff based on evidence collected through lead teacher reports, instructional practice walks, student and parent surveys and, of course, student achievement data. The Instructional Leadership Team implements, monitors and refines the school’s MTSS.

Weekly PLC meetings take on one of two forms: twice a month, teachers meet in their grade level teams and focus on academic literacy. The other two weeks they meet in departments, focusing on essential grade level content area standards. During this designated time, teachers examine evidence of student learning, share best practices, develop common assessments, monitor student progress identify challenges, set goals, and adjust interventions for individual students.

**Results and Outcomes**

As a result of our targeted efforts, Baird saw growth in ELA and Math. Student achievement grew from 2015 to 2018 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple Measures</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>% Growth (+/-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBAC ELA – at or above grade level</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBAC Math – at or above grade level</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>+14</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Learner Progress Indicator (*)2015-2017</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>*82%</td>
<td>+15</td>
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For further consideration, below is a summary of Baird student achievement as compared to the district overall:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2018 Multiple Measures</th>
<th>Baird Middle</th>
<th>Fresno Unified</th>
<th>Diff. +/-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBAC ELA – at or above grade level</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>+25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBAC Math – at or above grade level</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>+20%</td>
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Below are examples of subgroup performance in the academic domain from 2017-2018:
- African American: maintained in ELA; increase of 14.8 points in Math
- Hispanic/Latino: increase of 5.8 points in ELA; increase of 7.7 points in Math;
- English learners: increase of 7.9 points in ELA; increase of 9.6 points in Math;
- Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Students: increase of 8.5 points in ELA; increase of 11.2 points in Math