

Creekview Elementary School
N2 Learning Innovative Schools Application
Creekview Elementary School
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Overview and Background

Sometimes hope is kindled during our most difficult moments, changing challenges into opportunities. The changes that resulted due to COVID, the subsequent Texas recovery legislation, and significant staffing and administrative changes challenged us to look at the systems and processes we developed for meeting the needs of every student over the past few years. In fact, these changes and challenges have propelled us forward as we continue to refine our collaborative processes and systems for intervention. Over the past few years, Creekview has experienced an explosion in student population as well as a significant increase in Emergent Bilinguals (EBs) since the 2019 school year. We dedicated time to rediscover our mission and vision as a reminder of the purpose that drives us all to “ensure great learning for all”. Last school year during a staff professional development session, our team of teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, and administrators had an “ah-ha” moment where it was discovered that we were all in agreement with the process for identifying students in need of intervention and extension and how to serve them. We are a data rich campus with many sources for determining which students need supports and acceleration opportunities. The glaring problem was that we needed a way to increase our ability to serve a larger number of students in a more targeted way. The staff acknowledged that the expertise and talent was in the room, we just were not able to find a way to maximize our talents and skills when confined to the schedule and boundaries of one particular grade level or content area.

Focus Area

According to Article IV: Accountability for Learning of the Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas document, “Excellence and sustained exceptional performance come from a commitment to shared values and a clear vision that encourages collaboration and teamwork.” The Creekview staff took this to heart and became driven to find a better way to serve the maximum number of students in strategic and intentional ways. “Accountability systems should be carefully designed on a theoretical base that honors what teachers and students actually do, that empowers and builds integrity, trust, and commitment to the values that define the school.” The system that has been developed is far from perfect and will require the guiding coalition to continue making adjustments to refine our processes over the years, but this structure honors the abilities of our staff and puts a great deal of trust in our collaborative processes.

Work

While students must be rostered to grade level homerooms, Creekview staff decided to look beyond and consider student skill gaps across grade levels with a focus on essential learning standards. Rather than grouping students by age, we found common time to instead group students by skills and needs. The master schedule was adjusted entirely to include a protected 45 minute whole school intervention and extension block at the very beginning of each day. This has allowed for special education and ESL to service students across grade levels based on specific goals, freeing up time later in the day to push in for co-teach opportunities with general education teachers. It has also provided special educators the time to see how students are generalizing skills and applying their learning from specially designed instruction to the general education grade level curriculum. Ongoing vertical conversations are occurring so that groups may be flexibly adjusted and focused on essential skills and knowledge that span multiple grade levels. Finally, all paraprofessionals, instructional specialists, campus administrators, and support staff pull groups at this time. Some of these groups are focused on remedial skills, project based learning units, social skills, etc.

Results

The greatest result Creekview has experienced as a result of our whole school intervention initiative is the increased collaboration and effectiveness of teachers. According to the Panorama Education survey, our staff relationships improved 19% from 67% to 86% favorable response. This survey area includes questions around trust, how staff members face challenges together, leadership, and respect. Additionally, the response around the value of staff professional development improved 13% from 56% to 69% favorable response. This improvement in data reflects the benefits of being intentional and targeted in prioritizing the development of our teachers directly related to the initiatives we are trying to implement and prioritize on campus. It has given us permission to say “no” any directives or external mandates that could cause a distraction from the work we have identified as most important to our current staff and students. Additionally, a vertical collaboration committee was established to lead the campus in aligning essential learning, identifying areas of instructional strength and target areas we need to build over multiple years as students matriculate through the grade levels. Rather than professional development being led by administration or specialists, the vertical committee along with the guiding coalition team has taken the lead in disseminating information, planning professional development, and establishing a focus on improving instructional outcomes for students collaboratively. Creekview is excited to continue monitoring how students have been impacted by their participation in intervention and extension groups from the beginning of year to end of year.