

A BLUE PRINT FOR CHANGE



South Bay Union School District gained a remarkable increase in the number of students reading at or above grade-level after implementing a research-based, research-proven Reading program.

THE CHALLENGE

South Bay Union School District serves approximately 500 elementary-age students in Eureka, California, at Pine Hill Elementary (k-3) and South Bay Elementary (4-6). Because approximately 70% of the students qualify for free/reduced lunch, South Bay schools are classified as school-wide Title I.

Superintendent Gary Storts has seen a lot in his many years in South Bay. He attended South Bay schools as a child, served as a classroom assistant at Pine Hill while attending college, and since has been a teacher, assistant principal, and principal. He has shared that before South Bay adopted the Success for All program in 2015/2016, they had been without an adopted reading program for more than a decade. Reading instructional practices were classroom-created and without a consistent school or district approach. As a result, reading achievement had plateaued.



grant to help fund the adoption of SFA at the two elementary schools.

All staff members at Pine Hill Elementary and South Bay Elementary were trained in the summer of 2015. They began an implementation of the full Success for All model in both schools. As a part of the program, an intervention team comprised of the entire administrative team, solutions coordinator, SFA facilitator, and a classroom teacher meet weekly to address any obstacle that stands in the way of reading proficiency. The first year was a great success.

To help maintain the momentum over the summer, the Community Connections Team, in-step with the Parent and Family Engagement Team, put together a Summer Reading Challenge that had Pine Hill and South Bay students commit to reading over the summer. Students who reached their halfway goal got a ticket to see the local Humboldt Crabs semi-professional baseball team play. Students who met their end of summer goal were recognized at an assembly held at the beginning of the school year.

Pine Hill Elementary kicked off this school year with a Literacy Night. SFA Facilitator Shawna Storts presented the Read & Respond parent education PowerPoint to educate families on the importance of homework and what SFA is all about. Their parent organization provided a taco dinner and teachers read a folk tale and did an art project with families after the presentation.

SFA SHAPES MY APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE AND WORKING WITH FAMILIES

TAMI BEALL, Principal of
Pine Hill Elementary School

THE SOLUTION

Because the students and families at South Bay matter a great deal to Mr. Storts, he conducted research in an effort to understand the barriers to success that several students were experiencing.

He came across the Adverse Childhood Experience study, which led to a report put together by the Annie E. Casey Foundation: Early Warning: Why Reading by the End of the Third Grade Matters. That then prompted him to research proven reading programs that address "disadvantaged student populations." It was through this process that Mr. Storts learned about the Success for All program. And was able to take advantage of an 13 federal

WHEN PARENTS GET ON BOARD, CHILDREN HAVE MORE READING OPPORTUNITIES AND THAT TRANSFERS TO SUCCESS IN THE CLASSROOM.

TAMI BEALL, Principal of Pine Hill Elementary School

THE RESULTS

At the beginning of their first year, only about 40% of the students in the across the two schools were reading at or above grade level. By the end of 2015-16, approximately 80% of Kindergartners, 1st Graders & 2nd Graders had attained this goal. South Bay has set a district-wide goal of 66% at grade-level by the end of this year, and 80% by the end of 2017-2018. They feel confident that they can build on the successes of last year and hit this target.

Other great things are also happening as a result of implementing Success for All:

- There is a marked increase in teacher collaboration.
- Parents and students are reading together at home. (Read & Respond rates skyrocketed from below 50% to nearly 75% by the end of last school year.)
- SFA provides the time of day with the most on-task student behavior.
- At this point in the school year, attendance between the two school sites in 96.3% - the highest % in recent memory.
- They have increased parent involvement and volunteers since adopting SFA.

Observations from SFA Facilitator, Shawna Storts:

2016/17 is our second year of implementation and I have already noticed a lot of change in our schools. Everywhere I go I see students using their reading strategies. The growing amount of student confidence that I get to observe is very encouraging. The large majority of our students are now comfortable enough to answer questions in their teams and whole class. This year, as a form of habit, students are answering questions in complete sentences. This has been especially beneficial for our English Language Learners.

Both students and teachers seem to be more comfortable with the SFA routines this year. We have 5 new teachers on staff and the

teachers who are in year two of SFA implementation have shared with me that they find it just as helpful to be able to share their experiences with our new teachers as it is helpful for the new teachers to hear about them. We have had several teachers willing to go observe and be observed by their colleagues in an effort to gather ideas and further their own growth and understanding of the program. In year two, our district-wide focus is on instructional pacing and using data to drive our instruction. Teachers are beginning to learn more about the reports that Member Center can generate and how to use those reports to identify the root causes that stand in the way of reading at or above grade-level.

Parents and students are reading together more than ever. Our Read & Respond numbers continue to improve. I used Back to School Night and Literacy Night as an opportunity to present and clarify the Read & Respond process and expectations. Many families came up afterward and thanked me for teaching them several strategies that they could use at home when reading with their children.

Overall, I think that there is more excitement about reading. Kids are excited to show what they can do and are proud of the growth that they are making.

FOUNDED IN 1987, the nonprofit Success for All Foundation is dedicated to ensuring that every child, from pre-kindergarten to grade 8, becomes proficient in reading and learning – opening up new doors for a lifetime of achievement. Not only has SFA been proven time and again to help with student reading ability and math performance, it also addresses non-academic concerns, improving behavior, attendance and parental involvement. Please contact us for more information.

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