

Rosedale Middle School

2019 California Distinguished Schools Program

Model Programs and Practices Narrative

School Focus: Higher Order Thinking Skills with an Emphasis on DOK Levels 3 and 4

Rosedale Middle School is on a Coherence Journey. The goal of that journey is to create a learning environment where sustainable change can happen and all students will make progress toward grade level mastery and college and career readiness. Collectively our staff has committed to student success indicators, staff practices, cycles of collective inquiry of student evidence, school supports and timelines. We call this our School Focus. Our School Focus is: Higher Order Thinking Skills (H.O.T.S.) with an emphasis on Depth of Knowledge levels 3 and 4. We believe if we focus on H.O.T.S., with the emphasis of DOK 3 and 4 levels, then students will be able to read closely to determine what the text says, make inferences and cite evidence. Additionally, they will be able to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. We believe if we focus on H.O.T.S., then students will engage in research and inquiry to investigate topics, analyze data, and integrate and present information. This focus goes hand in hand with the Rosedale Union School District LCAP Goal 1, Student Outcomes, "All students will make progress towards grade level mastery and college/career readiness through effective classroom instruction, intervention and data analysis in order to support full access to the California Content Standards." This LCAP goal supports the state priorities 4 and 8 of pupil outcomes.

Rosedale Middle has been fortunate to work with InnovateEd for the past several years. Working together we developed our school focus directed by a few guiding principles that all of our work proceeds from. First, our school focus was written with impactful student learning priorities that are essential to school wide coherence. Next we believe in collective expertise and collaboration. We lead from the middle with a school leadership team made up of teachers from each discipline, school administrators and other paraprofessionals, who then work with all colleagues to implement our focus. Finally, we understand that it is professional learning communities focusing on evidence that will lead to continuous growth and improvement.

In order for our school focus to make a difference we need to continually develop a shared sense of understanding about the nature of our work. To that end, all professional development surrounds our school focus. Our PLCs and Staff Meetings center around our focus and on improving our collective capacity and coherence. Our District offers professional

development opportunities to support our focus and continuous improvement for our staff and students. All this leads to the actual work being done in our classrooms and why our District was recently chosen as “A District on the Move,” by Michael Fullan and Joanne Quinn. According to Fullan and Quinn, “Districts (*Schools*) on the Move embrace the simplicity of creating a strategic focus for learning by doing and knowing thy impact on improving teaching and learning. It involves allowing defined autonomy for collaboration and co-learning among and between district staff, principals and teachers. It involves focusing direction to collectively improve practices that result in the sustainable improvement of equitable student learning outcomes.” (Fullan and Quinn, *Districts on the Move* 2018). What makes a District on the Move are the Schools on the Move within it.

Rosedale Middle School is On the Move! We took InnovateEd’s four benchmarks for capacity into account when we wrote our School Focus. Benchmark one is Focusing Direction. We analyzed multiple measures of student data, lag metrics, to determine where we needed to focus our efforts. We determined that our students needed support to think deeply, thus Higher Order Thinking Skills with an Emphasis on DOK 3 and 4 level questions was a natural choice to demonstrate visible evidence of student learning. Next, a Shared Leadership or Collaborative Culture was created. We assembled a School Leadership Team to help develop the formal structures and processes for collaboration and co-learning with the capacity to improve teaching and learning. This team, along with teacher teams and PLCs, support school improvement efforts based upon student learning needs. The third benchmark is a Coherent Instructional Framework to develop collective expertise. As mentioned before, all professional learning opportunities revolve around our school focus. Lead metrics, such as interim assessments, cycles of inquiry conducted every 6-8 weeks, and other student evidence are used to monitor our focus and guide instruction. The cycle of inquiry provides us with valuable information using a common student evidence analysis protocol. We look at student work with the goal of identifying patterns of success and challenges. Determining what skills are missing in students not making progress toward the objective and what critical skills all students need to be successful helps us to collaborate on what instructional strategies might best engage students in their future learning needs. Additionally, using the cycles of inquiry we can commit to specific implementation strategies we can use to help our students in their future learning. The final benchmark in creating a capacity for coherence at Rosedale Middle is Securing Accountability. Using the lag metrics as yearly benchmarks, we are continually adjusting our school focus to establish growth targets that can then be monitored throughout the year with our lead metrics. Clearly defined cycles of inquiry based on student evidence create continuous loops for feedback and improvement of student learning results.

We believe that creating a coherent system of improvement will require a long term commitment to our school focus. It is a living document that

requires constant sharing of knowledge and building on the collective expertise of the community. It is sustainable if it keeps pace with the current student learning needs and involves all stakeholders. It's not a program as much as it is the way we do business at RMS. All teachers at RMS are committed to our school focus. Everyone, including students, know that we have a focus on Higher Order Thinking Skills with an emphasis on DOK 3 and 4. If you forget what DOK 3 and 4 look like there are posters in each classroom as a reminder. Our school focus includes five categories that we monitor. Success indicators for students include, but are not limited to, being able to explain concepts and apply their knowledge to real world problems. Additionally, they will justify their reasoning based on evidence and transfer their knowledge to new contexts. Staff practices include posting of the academic objective and increasing the frequency of DOK level 3 questions and level 4 projects. Evidence of student learning, the data we collect, will include work that demonstrates the ability to include DOK 3 and 4 in their presentations, tasks, projects etc. School Supports include increased opportunities for professional development and developing success indicators such as rubrics and protocols. The final category is a timeline of when we want to achieve and or monitor each benchmark. The successful implementation of our school focus is evidenced by our school dashboard. Additionally we have seen an increase in student attendance and a decrease in suspension rates since our school focus has become part of our culture. Students are more engaged and enjoy using H.O.T.S. as they navigate their learning. We look forward to the 2019 Dashboard when we hope to move several of our performance levels into the blue.

California Dashboard	2018	2017
Chronic Absenteeism		Not part of the dashboard
Suspension Rates		
English Learner Progress	no performance color Less than 11 students	no performance color Less than 11 students
English Language Arts		
Mathematics		