

STEVENSON RANCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PART III - SUMMARY 12CA6

Our mission at Stevenson Ranch School is to insure that every child masters the challenging California standards. We define our expectations through our vision:

Staff will treat everyone with respect; insure that rigorous California Content Standards and District Performance Standards are mastered by using research-based strategies to meet individual needs in a safe environment; and collaborate in grade level and multi-grade level teams to examine assessments, reflect about learning, and take responsibility for results.

Students will generate high quality standards-mastery work that shows a sense of pride; actively participate in their own learning; share knowledge and divergent views in a safe, supportive environment; make meaningful connections between curriculum and their own experiences; and develop character through school experiences.

Community will: support, model, and instill the drive to work hard and the value of continued education; embrace and include the school in significant partnerships; and participate in goal setting and goal achievement.

Stevenson Ranch School is located in Stevenson Ranch, California, a suburban area 30 miles north of Los Angeles. Built in 1995, the school houses 910 general education students in kindergarten through sixth grade and 32 moderate level special education students in three Special Day Classes. The school and community support the values of honesty, responsibility, and patriotism. We are proud to be named a 1998, 2004, and 2008 California Distinguished School, 2001 National Blue Ribbon School, and a California Business for Education Excellence Foundation and California Just for Kids 2007 - 2010 Honor Roll School.

Our students' academic successes are a result of our teachers' skills, our Response to Intervention implemented in 2004-05, and our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) created in 2007-08. In 2003-04, before the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) our Academic Performance Index (API) was 901. Our 2010-11 API is 977, and at our most recent State ranking, we are in the 10th decile for achievement among all schools in California and 10th decile among similar schools.

Trends identified at PLC meetings define the focus of professional development and parent education including: academic vocabulary strategies, text structure identification for reading comprehension, Thinking Maps for text organization, Newhall School District Coherent Writing program, and use of Depth and Complexity Icons to promote thinking and lesson differentiation.

Additional quality review involves our Site Council in examination of student work, writing rubrics, assessment data, and professional development in its relationship to instructional improvement. Results of that analysis inform the direction for site funding choices.

Our Education Foundation funds programs that support our vision. Their emphasis is science, technology, fitness, and art. In the past eight years they have funded construction of a science lab to inspire scientific curiosity, a running track to develop fitness patterns for life, an art studio to develop creativity, and SMART technology in our classrooms to provide interactive 21st century learning opportunities. Since building the science lab in 2004, the percentage of students scoring advanced or proficient on the State science test has increased from 53% to 99%.

Student leadership contributes to a sense of community. Sixth graders partner with kindergartners to support literacy and numeracy in extended day programs. Fifth and sixth graders, in Peace Patrol, recognize primary students who use conflict-resolution strategies on the playground. Fifth graders lead a schoolwide recycling program that funds their field trip. Fourth through sixth graders are elected to Student Council and organize activities like the Annual Used Book Sale. Before school, third through

sixth graders participate in a Star Student program to welcome those entering the campus, and sixth graders participate in Wrangler Singers, singing birthday wishes to staff members and assisting during schoolwide flag ceremonies.

Student achievement, character, and commitment to fitness are celebrated through incentive clubs including: first graders' 200 Sight Word Club, third graders' Mathemagicians to recognize math fact mastery, Keyboarding Hall of Fame honoring third through sixth graders technology skills, and Runner's Club. Citizenship and effort are recognized at flag ceremonies. Our spelling bee honors accurate spelling. The geography bee encourages global awareness. The Science Fair values using the scientific method, while our variety show, orchestra, chorus, class plays, and art program encourage creativity. Our school's purposeful, child-centered environment, conducive to learning, and welcoming towards all, does not reflect the problems generally associated with a large population. The spirit on campus remains intimate through our traditions. Our school carnival is attended by hundreds of our families.

Grandparents/VIP Day brings over 700 guests to classrooms. Camp Read Aloud and Lingo Bingo emphasize language arts. We have three shifts for "Science Night with Dads" to accommodate all the families interested in this hands-on academic evening.

Parents, community members, and staff work closely together to exemplify for our children that school is a learning community for all. It is in this caring environment that a rich, thinking curriculum unfolds each day, and children, parents, and staff learn together.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS 12CA6

1. Assessment Results:

A. The standardized assessment administered at Stevenson Ranch School is part of the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. Students in grades two through six are assessed. We have given three assessments as part of that program.

1. The California Standards Test (CST) is given to our general education students.
2. The California Modified Assessment (CMA) is given to learning disabled, mainstreamed students who receive Resource Specialist and Speech Pathologist (processing, not articulation) support. Their programs are governed under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and the students must have performed at the below basic or far below basic level for two years to qualify for this assessment. In the past three years, we have given this assessment to one student in reading and three students in math. Prior to that time, the assessment was being field tested and performance levels were not assigned to students in the pilot years.

3. The California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) is given to those students who are moderately to severely disabled and who participate in special education, Special Day Classes (SDCs) for more than 50% of their day. We have three SDCs that serve students whose disabilities include, but are not limited to, Down Syndrome, intellectually disabled, autism, and traumatic brain injury.

There are five performance levels for all tests: advanced (A), proficient (P), basic (B), below basic (BB), and far below basic (FBB). The California Department of Education has determined that students at the proficient level are meeting California standards and that an API of 800, on a scale of 1,000, signifies a high performing school. Our first API in 1999 was 837. Our current API is 977.

B. ELA assessment data in grades 3-6 reveals the following comparisons from 2007 to 2011: the percent of all advanced/proficient students increased from 87% to 94%; the percent of English Learner advanced/proficient students increased from 73% to 92%; the percent of Socio-economically Disadvantaged advanced/proficient students remained the same at 96%; the percent of Hispanic or Latino advanced/proficient students increased from 87% to 94%; the percent of Special Education

advanced/proficient students increased from 65% to 83%; the percent of African American advanced/proficient students increased from 69% to 90%; and the percent of White advanced/proficient students increased from 87% to 93%.

Math assessment data in grades 3-6 reveals the following comparisons from 2007 to 2011: the percent of all advanced/proficient students increased from 89% to 95%; the percent of English Learner advanced/proficient students increased from 88% to 92%; the percent of Socio-economically Disadvantaged advanced/proficient students increased from 92% to 100%; the percent of Hispanic or Latino advanced/proficient students increased from 89% to 96%; the percent of Special Education advanced/proficient students increased from 76% to 80%; the percent of African American advanced/proficient students increased from 69% to 86%; and the percent of White advanced/proficient students increased from 89% to 94%.

In reading and math, all groups showed an increase except for socio-economically disadvantaged students in reading who remained the same at 96%. The greatest increase is 19 percentage points among English language learners in reading and 17 percentage points among African Americans in math.

While still achieving a substantial increase, the gap between all students and our special education students achieving proficiency is 11 percentage points in reading and 15 in math. By definition, to be placed in special education, students are, at a minimum, two years behind grade level and have an identified processing disability that complicates their learning. We provide multiple, targeted interventions that have enabled many of them to reach proficiency despite their disabilities.

Our increased achievement is the result of our Academic Support (AS) program initiated in 2005 and our PLCs initiated in 2007. In AS, we include all students who have not reached proficiency and those who are proficient or advanced on the CST but who have gaps in specific subtest standards. Our focus for reading AS is comprehension of text, and in math AS, it is number sense.

The research reported in Building Academic Background Knowledge, (Robert Marzano) suggests that increasing academic vocabulary will enable students to access text. For that reason, **vocabulary attack**, using word parts, context clues, and word placement in the sentence, and **vocabulary retention**, using background knowledge, drawings, and play-acting strategies are cornerstones of our program.

In her book, Reading-Writing Connections - From Theory to Practice, Mary Heller identified seven text structures that comprise the majority of informational text: definition, description, comparison and contrast, process, classification, analysis, and persuasion. When students identify the text structure, it supports understanding the author's purpose. If the structure is analysis, the student asks what is being analyzed. In addition, our expository text comprehension goals include differentiating fact from opinion, identifying facts and details, and analyzing them for commonalities to determine main ideas.

Our narrative text focus is to analyze story elements including setting, protagonist and wish, antagonist and conflict, the rising action sequence, resolution, and falling action. Character decision points and the motivations for and consequences of the actions are analyzed to determine theme and character growth over time.

Math AS focuses on number sense through number line use to 1) compare integers, fractions, decimals, and percents and 2) to round and estimate. Number manipulation patterns support students in creating formulas.

2. Using Assessment Results:

A. Our data analysis for planning, monitoring, and improving our program is extensive and pivotal in improving teaching and learning. Analyzing data to determine instructional weakness promotes reflection. As a result, teachers actively seek out colleagues' advice, share effective instruction, and

request meaningful professional development.

In August, teachers, in grade level PLCs, analyze prior year STAR data by subtests and subgroups. They compare those results with data from the district's third trimester summative tests in writing, English language arts, and math. Teachers examine individual, classroom, team, and school trends to inform program improvement. Using those data sources, English language development tests, anecdotal information from parents, and report card information, teachers analyze their current year's students. They clarify trends to separate program weaknesses, requiring reteaching for significant numbers of students, from individual student weaknesses where student placement in AS is warranted. After identifying relative strengths and weaknesses in the instructional programs, the teams collaborate in developing yearlong SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, results-bound, and time-oriented) goals in English language arts and mathematics. Next, grade level PLC teams develop yearlong pacing guides for instruction. A minimum of three times a year, these teams meet with administration to discuss curricular goals, professional development needs, and refine direction for AS.

The State framework and content standards define the core of our academic program. State released test questions, annotated student writing, and writing rubrics set performance standards and guide us in understanding the multiple contexts and applications intended for each standard. That analysis is the foundation for teacher and administrator committees to design formative assessments given weekly in math, three times a trimester in English language arts, and three times a year in writing.

As part of ongoing efforts to determine students progress toward short and long term goals, a dedicated database program, *Measures Aligned*, allows teachers and administrators to load and sort assessment data by student and standard. Data drives the pace of instruction and determines when and how students receive classroom intervention, school academic support, or classroom extension. Before beginning a teaching cycle, teams baseline assess to determine students' background knowledge. Students are flexibly grouped within the classroom according to progress toward standards. Students needing significant, foundational support are placed in supplemental AS. Students at mastery are given extension projects to deepen and broaden their standards application.

B. Annually, Stevenson Ranch updates its Single Plan for Student Achievement (SSP). The plan includes assessment results over time, yearly school improvement goals, and budget information. The plan is reviewed by district level staff, presented to the governing board, and shared with the community. The School Accountability Report Card is available for public view via the Internet and school office. Our Site Council performs a Program Quality Review (PQR) each spring to assess student achievement based on money allocated through site funds. Their report becomes part of their minutes and is posted in the office.

Stevenson Ranch teachers host a yearly Back to School Night to support parent understanding of specific grade level content standards and expectations for the school year. Teachers review multiple measures, including students' daily work and formative assessments, which are used to communicate student performance to families.

The principal gives a yearly State of the School presentation each August to share STAR assessment results with the school community and to outline academic focuses, program offerings, and student and parent leadership opportunities. This information is also included in the principal's monthly newsletter. Parent education presentations are held annually. Sample topics include: interpreting our standards-based report card, eliminating bullying through effective bystander rules, Depth and Complexity Icon use for comprehension, writing summaries, narratives, and literary responses, using text types and Thinking Maps for comprehension, and partner reading at home.

Parents and teachers communicate continuously through notes, websites, e-mail, and telephone; however, there are several formal schoolwide communication methods. Parent-teacher conferences are held in

November and March to update learning progress. Special education teachers attend their students' conferences. In addition, special education students' parents meet annually with the site team to review and develop goals for children's IEPs. Parents of children who scored BB and FBB on the STAR meet privately with teachers and administrators three times a year to review STAR and formative data for progress toward Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) goals. When a child is initially identified as at-risk academically, socially or emotionally, parents are invited to meet with our Student Success Team (SST) to devise intervention structures for school and home. Parents of our Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) students meet with teachers three times a year. Students share their ILP goals with their parents and present pre-test data, work samples, and their reflection summaries to outline progress toward their goals.

In May, at Open House, all families come to the school to examine student work.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Stevenson Ranch Elementary teachers collaborate with staff members within and outside of the district. Teachers at our site serve on many district committees including: Curriculum Council, Guiding Coalition, GATE Advisory Council, and the Writing Committee. Curriculum Council members analyze standards and district assessments. They share best practices for teaching strategies which enhance students' academic success. The Guiding PLC Coalition examines student data across the district and analyzes trends. These trends are then shared at site PLCs. The GATE Advisory Council discusses ways in which to meet the unique academic needs of the district's gifted and high-achieving population. The Writing Committee continues to examine and refine our writing program and plans the delivery of our grade-level writing trainings held each year. During the summer break, teachers throughout the district join committees in which current district grade level assessments are reviewed and modified based on the committee's evaluation. All teachers in the district meet together at district-wide staff development meetings and share best teaching strategies with their colleagues.

The Newhall School District Writing program was developed and piloted at Stevenson Ranch School. Several years ago, the current principal (a teacher at the time), created the program and trained other teachers who became coaches for the district. This coherent writing program spans from kindergarten to sixth grade. All teachers within the district are trained in the NSD Writing program. The success of the program has been noted by other districts, and today, more than 12 districts in the state have been trained in the program. Currently, there are four writing trainers on-site. In addition, the principal continues to present writing staff development in other districts and presents at local events, such as the recent Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) "Meet the Pros" seminar. Stevenson Ranch continues to pilot reading strategies which then become a focus of staff development for the entire district. These reading strategies are intended to support the writing program. Students learn to use these strategies when reading both expository and narrative text which, in turn, improves both their reading comprehension and their writing.

Local and surrounding district teachers and administrators, including our local high school staff, have chosen to observe aspects of our programs such as: AS, PLCs, classroom instruction, and writing trainings. We welcome the opportunity to share and collaborate.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

The school has a web of organizations and opportunities for families to become involved in supporting student learning.

The Education Foundation raises money for capital improvements in the area of science, technology, fitness, and art. In the past ten years, they have raised funds to build a technology lab and re-outfit it twice, a science lab, a 200 meter running track, fitness stations with climbing walls, an art studio, and the installation of SMARTboards in 29 classrooms and visual presenters in 40 classrooms. The Foundation also pays for the salaries of one science and three P.E. specialists.

Our Parent-Teacher Organization raises money and provides volunteers to run programs that enrich the educational experience for children. They fund our grade level field trips that support our social studies and science curriculums. They organize Grandparents/VIP Day, an opportunity for students to share their school day with those closest to them, generating investment and goodwill toward the school. They organize Science Night with Dads (an evening of science experiments), the Science Fair (an opportunity for students to create and display an experiment for review), Lingo Bingo (a vocabulary evening), Family Game Night, Camp Read Aloud, 6th Grade Promotion, The Book Fair, and Helping Hands (a supply, toy, and food drive to benefit the needy of the community). They participate in Art Appreciation, a program where volunteers, under the guidance of our district art teacher, assist with lessons in the art studio. They publish the school yearbook and manage the Student Store.

Our Site Council oversees our Site-Based Coordinated Funds which pay for our AS program. Members participate in a PQR each year to determine if the funds are meeting the targeted goals. Our English Language Learner Advisory Council (ELLAC) meets four times a year. Agenda items include school attendance importance, our English language program outline, results of the California English Language Development Test, reading strategies to use when reading with children at home, and ways to help grow vocabulary at home.

Each classroom has a room parent and that parent schedules volunteers to help in the classroom on a rotating basis.

Parent education evenings are held each year. Past topics included: effective bystander rules to prevent bullying, how to interpret your child's standards-based report card, the NSD writing program, Depth and Complexity Icon use, and text structure use to promote text understanding.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION 12CA6

1. Curriculum:

We provide students with an academic experience based on current research and aligned with California State Standards. District-adopted textbooks are augmented by research-based resources.

The Houghton Mifflin Reading Program series is used by all grade levels and is supplemented with materials to target skill deficits. The materials include: *Write Source Language Series*, *Bellwork: Reading and Language*, *Mountain Language*, *SRA Comprehension Labs*, *Strategies to Achieve for Reading Success*, *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies*, *Focus On Reading Strategies*, *Milestones*, *Passageways*, *Macmillan Spelling Series*, *Wordly Wise*, *Write Traits Instructional Resource Kits*, *SRA Science Laboratory*, and *National Geographic History/Social Science and Science Kits*. Teachers provide differentiated instruction based on student performance data. Students are taught to identify text structures and organize information onto Thinking Maps in order to critically analyze and evaluate their reading.

The reading and writing programs at Stevenson Ranch are integrated to provide a solid foundation in language arts. The cohesive writing program begins at the kindergarten level. Students continue to develop more sophisticated writing skills each year through sixth grade. The following domains are the focus of each grade level: Oral Summary of a Narrative (Kindergarten), Opinion (Kindergarten), Narrative (K-6), Description (Grade 1), Summary of a Narrative (Grades 1-4), Summary of Expository Text (Grades 2-4), Response to Literature (Grades 4-6), and Persuasive (Grades 5-6). We have begun our study of the Common Core Standards, and we are realigning our writing program to include opinion writing in all grades. As we learn more about the Common Core Standards, we will continue making adjustments to our entire curricular program.

Our math program includes the strands of estimation, number sense, computation, problem solving, understanding patterns, algebra, measurement, statistics, geometry, and spatial sense. The district's current math adoption is Macmillan McGraw-Hill. Supplementary materials are used to target skill deficits, including: *Bellwork: Mathematics*, *Comprehensive Assessment of Math Strategies*, and *Mountain*

Math. Students are assessed at the outset of each unit and differentiation is provided accordingly. Students who show mastery on the baseline assessment are given enrichment activities that require them to use the skill in a deeper and broader way.

The *Harcourt California Science* series focuses on the application of the scientific method and using investigations during instruction. Predicting, data collecting, hypothesizing, summarizing, inferring, drawing conclusions, mapping, charting, and graphing are skills that are integrated throughout the lessons, both in class and in our science lab. Currently, students in grades 4-6 participate in weekly lab investigations led by a curriculum specialist.

The district-adopted *Harcourt California Reflections* series emphasizes interpreting and drawing meaning from events in history to deepen students' understanding of the world. Assessments are performancebased and are rooted in content standards.

The Newhall School District employs one visual arts teacher. He works with students in grades 4-5. In addition, he creates standards-based lessons which he presents to volunteers who help K-3 and 6th grade teachers teach lessons in the art studio. K-3 students also receive music instruction from music teachers. Students in grades 4-6 are given the opportunity to join orchestra or chorus. In addition, classroom plays integrate grade level science or social studies standards with performing arts standards.

The Sports, Play and Active Recreation for Kids (SPARK) program is used by our teachers and three physical education instructors to deliver California fitness standards. Our voluntary Wrangler Runners' Club encourages students to run on our track during recess.

The district technology plan is supported by two computer labs. Students practice skills in word processing, publishing, presentations, and Internet use. Technology is integrated in the classroom using visual presenters, SMARTboards, CD players, and multimedia workstations. Video cameras and scanners are also available in central locations.

2. Reading/English:

Our reading program combines an emphasis on reading comprehension and writing skills. Current research indicates that in order for students to successfully access text in a meaningful way, they must be fluent readers and that all students need to be taught specific reading strategies and thinking skills. In kindergarten and first grade, teachers focus on building reading fluency. Sixth grade Letter Leaders come to kindergarten classrooms several times a week to work with struggling students on letter recognition and sounds. Kindergarten students also have several small group sessions focusing on skill deficits with their classroom teacher, a credentialed curriculum specialist, and parent volunteers. In first grade, a small RTI group is led by our Resource teacher to practice blending. Sixth grade Literacy Leaders are paired with struggling first graders to practice sight words and reading fluency in an extended day program three times a week under the leadership of a Stevenson Ranch kindergarten teacher.

All teachers build on students' background knowledge and develop academic vocabulary to help students to access grade level text. Beginning in second grade, students are taught strategies to determine the meaning of unknown words by targeting word parts, using context clues, and looking at a word's placement within a sentence. Students practice summarizing expository text orally and in writing. The text structure of each paragraph is analyzed in order to think deeply and deliberately about the information, and the overall text type is determined to establish the main idea. Thinking Maps and Depth and Complexity Icons are used by students to organize the information found within the text. Students in 1st-6th grades with deficits in foundational reading skills are targeted in second reading groups. This instruction is provided in addition to the small reading group instruction delivered by the classroom teacher and occurs during the students' independent work time, ensuring that students never miss direct instruction. Credentialed curriculum specialists provide additional practice with vocabulary

attack skills, identifying text types and main idea, determining the author's purpose, and organizing information in Thinking Maps.

Writing is integrated into all areas of the curriculum and builds upon skills from year to year. Rubrics are clear and include evaluation of content, organization, language, and mechanics. Writing samples are scored by grade level teachers several times during the year. Teachers analyze and use this data to inform instruction for individual students and to develop instructional goals.

3. Mathematics:

The math program at Stevenson Ranch is based on the California State Standards and includes instruction in computation skills, math concepts, and problem solving. At the beginning of each school year, all students are given a baseline assessment. This data is analyzed by grade level PLC teams and areas of strength and weakness are determined. Teachers use this information to plan differentiation, generate instructional goals, and create pacing guides to ensure that all grade level math standards are mastered by the end of the school year.

Assessments are given throughout the year and this information is analyzed by teachers in order to adjust their instructional goals and pacing. Newhall School District weekly math tests are short assessments which include questions from the previous grade and the current grade. Trimester tests are given before each grading period and allow teachers to identify areas of strength and weakness.

At the beginning of each unit, teachers give an assessment to determine students' prior knowledge of the skill. Students who show mastery of the skill before the unit is taught are given math extension activities which allow them to apply the concept in a deeper and broader way. Students who do not show mastery are shown the concept using concrete examples. Teachers use the discovery method to allow students to determine formulas and relationships in order to solve problems. Strategies to improve reading comprehension are designed to also strengthen skills in solving word problems.

In addition to providing extension activities for students who have mastered skills early, Stevenson Ranch offers an extended day math enrichment class for students in grades 4-6 who had a perfect score in the previous year on the math portion of the California Standards Test (CST). In this class, students work in teams to solve challenging math problems.

Differentiation is provided to students who have not yet mastered specific skills. After delivering a math lesson, teachers pull small groups to provide additional assistance and reinforcement. Students in third grade who have not memorized their multiplication and division facts are invited to an extended day program to practice these skills three days a week for 40 minutes each day. In grades 4-6, students who struggle with specific grade level concepts are also invited to an extended day program in the mornings. Grade level skills are practiced in a small group setting to provide students with the additional support they need.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The State calls for effective science programs to: 1-include the teaching of investigation and experimentation with direct instruction and reading; 2-use multiple strategies with multiple opportunities to master standards; 3-use technology to teach and assess students, develop information resources, and enhance computer literacy; 4-develop academic language of science; and 5-make connections between core subjects to reinforce science learning.

Students must experiment and interact with science systems to process and retain concepts. In-school, hands-on investigations motivate students to continue exploration outside the classroom. Our Education Foundation funded a laboratory, opened in November 2004, to inspire students' curiosity and involvement in standards-based science investigations. Our success is reflected by student proficiency on the science CST, given only in 5th grade and containing 4th and 5th grade standards. In 2004, 6% of our

students were advanced and 53% advanced/proficient. That increased in 2011 to 83% advanced and 99% advanced/proficient.

In the lab, students learn to: ask questions, differentiate observations from interpretation, justify predictions, conduct trials to test predictions, draw conclusions, and construct and interpret graphs about the data explored in the experiments.

In designing our lab and responding to the State's technology criteria, each station is equipped with a microscope, stereoscope, wireless computer, mouse, and keyboard. The lab contains a SMARTboard, visual presenter, and a microscope capable of displaying images on the SMARTboard. Responding to the State's cross-curricular criteria, students examine science weather patterns and geology of geographic areas in relation to the social studies topics of colonization and civilization. Combining science and math, students apply fractions, decimals, and percents in examining weather, plant growth, or era longevity patterns. Combining health and science, students analyze cell health with factors that contribute to illness and graph heart rates and amounts of exercise.

We responded to the State's goals of using multiple strategies and giving multiple opportunities for students to master standards and develop the academic language of science in several ways. In 2008, we purchased science content expository passages, and in 2010, wrote additional passages with more science vocabulary for our academic support (AS) program.

In further response to the State's goal for direct instruction in reading to promote investigation, in 2008, we provided site staff development in the use of Depth and Complexity Icons. These icons direct students to look for trends, patterns, and parallels among science concepts in reading and in investigations. They also spark curiosity for unanswered questions.

5. Instructional Methods:

Lessons are differentiated throughout the day so that students are challenged at their level toward proficiency.

In kindergarten, students experience flexible and differentiated small group math instruction and reading instruction with two teachers presenting the groups. Readers work on complex phonics and comprehension; while nonreaders work on simpler phonics to achieve decoding skills. Additionally, there is a 30 minute RTI block where two teachers support students who need significant remediation or extension. A further program, called Letter Leaders, pairs sixth graders with struggling kindergarteners for 10 minutes three times a week to practice letter sounds.

In 1st-6th grades, students needing extra reading support attend supplemental reading groups focused on expository comprehension and vocabulary attack strategies. Identified sixth graders attend an extended day program for extra reading support. Push in support is also given to identified students in fluency, narrative comprehension, and writing.

Extended day math support is provided for 3rd-6th graders. In addition, identified students receive pushin math support in grades 2-6.

Further targeted classes include: one group of 1st graders for phonics, one group of 4th and 5th graders for vocabulary support, and one group of 4th graders who need support in identifying cause and effect relationships.

GATE students participate in an extended day literary response writing, art, and i-movie program; while our highest achieving 4th-6th grade math students receive an enrichment program. A procedure at our school to facilitate classroom differentiation begins with baseline assessing. Students who show substantial knowledge of a particular concept receive extension activities to provide

application of standards in deeper and broader contexts. Use of Depth and Complexity Icons promote critical thinking across curricular areas.

In addition to our classroom differentiation and AS programs, students on IEPs participate in small special education classes for support.

All lessons follow researched- based best practices. Objectives are clear and students identify progress toward them throughout the lesson. Lesson relevancy is established by students connecting the lessons to their lives and sharing their background knowledge.

Peer-scaffolding for concept processing is established by using the think-pair-share model. Non-linguistic representations are used to illustrate concepts. Information is sorted on Thinking Maps. Students act-out processes and vocabulary words. They draw pictures, create chants, and use realia and manipulatives to solidify understanding. SMARTboards create virtual environments and allow students to interact with and manipulate numbers, graphs, shapes, and equations. Predicting, estimating, and summarizing are commonplace.

6. Professional Development:

The staff at Stevenson Ranch School feels that continuous staff development is essential to ensuring that optimal instruction and student learning takes place each year. Staff members participate in staff development which is regularly provided on-site and also take part in district staff development opportunities. Much of our staff development has focused on writing, reading comprehension, and math. The Newhall School District Cohesive Writing Program was developed at Stevenson Ranch School. District trainers on-site have provided staff trainings on summarizing expository text, responding to literature, narrative writing, and persuasive writing. Additionally, staff was trained to identify text structures in expository text and use that information to determine the author's purpose and the main idea of the piece. Our writing trainers continue to provide staff development for other schools inside and outside of the district.

Thinking Maps and Depth and Complexity Icons help students organize ideas and think critically about text in order to improve reading comprehension. Trainings have been held both on-site and at the district level. Robert Marzano's research regarding instruction of academic vocabulary has been the topic of staff development on-site, and those strategies are used to help students determine the meaning of unknown words. The Grammar Game was developed by a Stevenson Ranch staff member. Teachers write a sentence for all students to see, and students share everything that they know about that sentence including punctuation, word placement, parts of speech, spelling, and sentence structure.

In math, teachers have been encouraged to use a number line when introducing math concepts to create number sense. Research shows that this increases student understanding and retention of new concepts. The discovery method has also been introduced to teachers so that students are given the opportunity to determine relationships and formulas by identifying patterns. The Math Game, developed at our site, provides students with an opportunity to discuss everything that they know about a math concept. Teacher leaders at Stevenson Ranch have attended PLC conferences and engage in collaboration to improve instruction and optimize student learning. Teachers meet regularly to analyze student data in order to refine teaching strategies and target specific students and skills.

Many teachers have also attended Guided Language Acquisition and Development (GLAD) trainings provided by the district. This technique integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities across the curriculum to develop high level academic language and literacy skills.

7. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at Stevenson Ranch is that all children will learn given the appropriate time and support. Regardless of contributing factors, it is our responsibility to ensure student progress. Leadership at Stevenson Ranch is based on current educational research, and student

performance data informs school structures and learning strategies. Our philosophy has been influenced by the writings of Richard DuFour, Robert Eaker, Douglas Reeves, Michael Fallon, and Robert Marzano.

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Leadership is a partnership between staff and administration. PLC leaders are vital to program decisions. Teachers work within their PLCs examining data and discussing student motivations to determine focus areas. Teachers with the most success share their techniques. Assessment results motivate staff requests for professional development, peer and administrator observations, and lesson modeling.

Focusing on results, the principal coaches staff to build and sustain trust, resolve conflict, persevere, and embrace accountability. In August, in meetings between the principal, assistant principal, and teachers, individually and in PLC teams, classroom and grade level goals and the direction of AS are determined. Throughout the year, at grade level PLC meetings, data from formative assessments is examined. Administrators meet with PLC leaders at least three times a year and meet again formally with grade level PLCs in February and May. Teacher observations promote research-based best practices implementation. During all communication opportunities, teams and individuals propose ideas to support student progress. The principal procures resources and personnel to meet needs.

Cross grade level collaboration happens formally several times a year and informally daily. Teachers articulate foundational skills that the subsequent grade level considers essential for promotion. Administrators train AS curriculum specialists. This insures specific vocabulary attack, vocabulary retention, and narrative and expository text comprehension strategies are the focus of reading AS, and number line use forms the foundation of math AS.

To truly understand the challenges teachers and students face, site administrators periodically teach AS and classroom lessons. The principal stays current with site and district teachers' opinions by participating on the district Curriculum Council and Guiding PLC Coalition, and by collaborating with teachers to score writing and refine district assessments.

The principal regularly meets with district leadership and the governing board to report progress and present school improvement initiatives. The principal understands and models innovative thinking to address problems and implement solutions. The principal created the Newhall School District Coherent Writing Program, and through researching several comprehension studies, developed the comprehension strategies that are used throughout our district.