



Madera Unified School District

Madera, California

2012-2015 Instructional Focus

Madera: Unified for Success!

At Madera Unified School District, we have a long-standing commitment to educate all students so that they meet rigorous academic standards. In recent years, we have made some gains relative to fulfilling that commitment. However, about half of our elementary students and nearly 12 out of every 20 secondary students did not meet state standards. We can do better. Our Goal is clear: equip our students with the knowledge, skills and character for success in college, career and life.

This **Instructional Focus** is the centerpiece of our plan to transform student learning in every school in our district. It is an affirmation of our commitment to improving the effectiveness of teaching practices, leadership practices, and organizational practices, because they are the preconditions for higher levels of student learning.

The Instructional Focus is one component of the district's three-year strategic plan; it is framed by **Four Pillars** that provide a strong foundation for teaching, learning and leading.

Gustavo Balderas
Superintendent of Schools
June 2012



- Our first Pillar – **Equitable access to rigorous high-level programs** – ensures that all students, without exceptions, are held to high academic expectations and are provided multiple opportunities for successful learning.
- Our second Pillar – **Data-driven professional learning and collaboration** – focuses on continuous professional development for our teachers, leaders and staff.
- The third Pillar – **Safe and healthy environments for learning and work** – addresses environments where students and adults feel safe, secure, and respected, and, therefore, are able to do their best work.
- Finally, our fourth Pillar – **Strong relationships with families and community** – recognizes that schools can't do it alone! Through collaboration and proactive communication with parents and community stakeholders, we strengthen trust and public commitment to our schools.

This Instructional Focus, together with our 2012-2015 strategic plan, provides us a roadmap for our journey toward our Goal. In Madera, we are **unified for student success!**

In Madera, we are committed to educating the whole child through high expectations, community collaboration and shared responsibility for each student's health, safety, and success in life.

Our Goal is clear:

Madera: Unified to ensure every student is **educated for College, equipped for Career, and empowered with Character.**



Vital Signs of Student Growth and Development

We want our students to experience *continuous* **academic growth**.

Therefore, we will monitor and thoroughly analyze:

- Proficiency in all subjects
- Closing the “achievement gap” and accelerating learning for all student groups
- Successful transitions from level-to-level (i.e., prekindergarten-Elementary-Secondary-post-Secondary)

We want our students to embody **academic tenacity**. Therefore, we will thoroughly analyze and continuously motivate:

- Self-responsibility, self-discipline and initiative
- Critical thinking and problem-solving

We want our students to model **socio-emotional resiliency**. Therefore, we will promote and consistently monitor:

- Meaningful participation in class, school and community
- Acquisition of positive life skills

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

In the Madera Unified School District, we are committed to **HIGH EXPECTATIONS, COMMUNITY COLLABORATION** and shared responsibility for professional practices and student learning; ensuring an **EFFECTIVE TEACHER FOR EVERY STUDENT AND EFFECTIVE LEADER FOR EVERY SCHOOL.**

Teaching Practices

Leadership Practices

Organizational Practices

Pillar #1

Curriculum, standards-based instruction, and programs are directly driven to provide all students with equal levels of opportunity and achievement.

Equitable Access to Rigorous, High-Level Programs

T1: Teachers will uphold high expectations and rigorous student engagement to ensure continuous growth and development.

T2: Teachers will require cognitively challenging, real-world tasks that require questioning, exploration, research, decision-making and communication.

L1: Leadership will facilitate ongoing dialogues around high expectations of student work that meets rigorous standards.

L2: Leadership will provide professional development and support to facilitate discussions and implementation of standards-based curriculum and instructional practices.

O1: All leaders, teachers and staff will proactively monitor their own beliefs and behaviors to ensure that high expectations are communicated to all.

O2: All leaders, teachers and staff will use data to identify strengths and adjustments to delivery of standards-aligned curriculum, instruction and assessment practices.

Pillar #2

Staff uses data to engage in meaningful collaboration and professional learning to improve and shift practices.

Data-Driven Professional Learning and Collaboration

T3: Teachers will collaboratively use a data-driven cycle of inquiry to improve student learning and professional practice.

T4: Teachers will use effective collaboration discussions, observations and interactions to improve instructional practices.

L3: Leadership will guide teachers through data-driven inquiry cycles focused on student learning.

L4: Principal will provide in-service and ongoing support to grade-level groups/department teams regarding mindset and behaviors for effective collaboration.

O3: District will provide time, resources and professional development opportunities for collaboration.

O4: District leadership will provide a data management system that provides user friendly access and timely reports.

Pillar #3

The school culture and structures support the personal safety of the students, staff and community with fair and consistent expectations.

Safe and Healthy Environment for Learning and Work

T5: Teachers will solicit input from students regarding behavioral expectations and will engage students to enforce them.

T6: Teachers will recognize students for achievement and will make a concerted effort to motivate positive attitudes and behaviors.

L5: Leadership Team will consistently and equitably enforce broad-based agreements about standards for student behavior.

L6: Administration/Teachers will develop a comprehensive system to address barriers in teaching and learning, engage students and recognize achievement.

O5: School staff will implement practices that promote social, emotional and civic competencies along with content-area competencies.

O6: Administration/Teachers/District/Community will build systems to link educators, students, parents and caregivers to create schools that are safe and caring.

Pillar #4

Initiate and sustain trusting relationships among home-school-community through shared responsibility for student success, proactive communication and meaningful stakeholder "voice."

Strong Relationships with Families and Community

T7: Teachers will include parents in setting learning goals and will communicate student expectations for academic and behavioral standards.

T8: Teachers will show appreciation for parents' participation, value their diverse contributions and encourage them to be equal partners in the education of their children.

L7: Leadership team will treat parental concerns with respect and demonstrate genuine interest in developing solutions.

L8: Leadership team will enable parents to participate as partners when setting school goals, developing or evaluating programs and policies or responding to performance data.

O7: District leadership will create an environment for staff, parents and community to collaborate and share decision-making.

O8: District will mobilize community groups to provide aligned, coordinated services (e.g., health and safety, after-school, co-curricular and extracurricular, internships) that maximize students' educational experiences.

Vital signs & look-fors

What gets measured and reinforced, gets done!

In the medical profession, vital signs define the body's most basic functions and are used to detect and monitor patient health. In a professional learning community, a series of vital signs can be used to track "organizational health" and monitor progress toward the goal.

By paying consistent attention to the Vital Signs of Student Learning and Professional Practices, we will be able to monitor and communicate progress, continuously improve practices, ensure accountability and celebrate our successes.

Student Learning	Teaching Practices	Leadership Practices	Organizational Practices
<p>Work that meets standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in percentage of students meeting standards on assessments and benchmark. • Student articulation of the skills and concepts that are currently being taught. <p>Application of learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student collaboration extends beyond the classroom. • Students apply knowledge to solve problems in new situations. • Increase percentage of students successfully completing a multi-disciplinary project. <p>Motivation and satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase percentage of students monitoring own learning goals. • Students receive timely, constructive feedback and encouragement. 	<p>Effective lessons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher assigns tasks/activities directly related to the standards. • Teacher includes instructional tasks with high levels of rigor. • Increase percentage of classrooms/grade levels/departments implementing core instructional practices consistently. <p>Relationships with students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher communicates realistically high and positive academic and behavioral expectations for all students. • Teacher recognizes students for achievement and improvement in academic and behavior. • Teacher communicates caring for and interest in students' welfare and learning. <p>Collaborative analysis of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase percentage of grade levels/departments that plan and assess student progress collaboratively. • Increase percentage of grade levels/departments where teachers routinely visit colleagues' classrooms and reflect together on their observations. • Teachers have rich discussions regarding the quality of student work and implementation of appropriate practices. 	<p>Instructional monitoring and feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase percentage of teachers who use the school's vital signs and "look-fors" rubric for self-monitoring of instructional effectiveness. • Leadership facilitates the staff's usage of assessment data to guide instructional practices. <p>Team collaboration aligned to priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade level/department teams meet for blocks of time sufficient to develop and refine instructional plans and review student learning data. • Principal provides grade level/department teams with explicit, measurable and public criteria for quality professional practice. <p>Positive school culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school promotes understanding, appreciation and use of the community's diverse cultural, social and intellectual resources. • Principal provides teachers with materials, resources and professional development crucial to their jobs. 	<p>Aligned instructional supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is aligned to meet the needs of students, based on data and research, as evidenced in the district's plan. • School schedule maximizes time spent on quality instruction. <p>Culture of achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly acknowledge and celebrate achievement. <p>Positive home-school-community connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are viewed as partners in students' problem-solving and goal setting. • Parents and community members take part on various advisory committees within the schools.