

California State Distinguished Schools Narrative

Background and Description of the Model

The 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model, serving approximately 3800 students, is a Model Program for supporting all students for six years to build a strong academic program and consistently support student needs to improve student achievement. Before Clovis North Educational Center opened twelve years ago, the district looked at historical student achievement indicators such as graduation rates; college-readiness indicators such as the Early Assessment Program (EAP); English Placement Test (EPT); Entry Level Mathematics (ELM); SAT and ACT; CAHSEE pass rates; and CST proficiency rates from intermediate to high school and examined factors that may contribute to higher success rates in student achievement. One of the factors analyzed was the transition period from intermediate to high school and the impact intermediate school had on achievement indicators such as CAHSEE, PSAT, and CST proficiency rates. Data showed losses in proficiency rates from intermediate to high school. In addition, Clovis North Educational Center's founding administrators and teachers considered the fact that PSAT and CAHSEE were both taken early in a student's sophomore year, giving traditional high school counselors and teachers only one full year to support a student's success. The initial team also considered the "revolving door" effect of having students at a campus for two years (intermediate) then having students move to a different school (high school), thus potentially interrupting any consistency in developing a plan to support student success. As a result, Clovis North Educational Center opened in the fall of 2007 as the district's first 7th-12th grade educational center, containing both intermediate school (Granite Ridge) and high school (Clovis North) under one principal, one administrative team, one teaching team, and one counseling team.

The 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model was central to incorporating the district's vision of educating the whole child in "Mind, Body, and Spirit." When Clovis North Educational Center opened, the administration, teachers, and staff understood the importance of working with students earlier to support them toward high school graduation and college- and career-readiness. As part of the 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model, students are assigned to a counselor in the spring of their sixth grade year and remain with this counselor for all six years while enrolled at Clovis North Educational Center. Because of this early outreach from counselors, administration and staff build authentic relationships with students for six years in order to provide both academic and social-emotional support. Counselors in the 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model rely on these relationships to build a strong school to home communication, identify overall student needs, and determine which programs and systems are essential at Clovis North Educational Center.

The 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model, with its focus on providing all students a one-on-one relationship with a counselor for six years, set its goals to increase graduation and college-readiness rates, create a college-going culture starting in the seventh grade, eliminate the transition from eighth to ninth grade, create consistency in developing a plan to support student success, provide six years of consistent academic and social-emotional support for each student, and foster strong articulation among services, programs, and instruction to support students. In addition, counselors focus on developing a consistent plan of support in collaboration with the LCAP-funded Transition Team for at-risk students, follow the development and progress of our English Learners, connect our socio-economically disadvantaged students with appropriate

academic and social-emotional supports, and to collaborate with our Special Education team to monitor the progress of our students with disabilities. Counselors' long-term relationship with their students allows them to identify specific needs based on changes in academics or behaviors to find the appropriate supports for all students.

An added benefit to the 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model is the opportunity for staff to collaborate on a consistent basis across grade levels from seventh grade through twelfth grade. This model allows for a seamless transition of academics, co-curricular, and student supports starting in the seventh grade through the twelfth grade. Since Clovis North Educational Center's inception, the vision and expectation of the campus has been to operate as a seventh through twelfth grade team. As a result, the Principal's Cabinet, a weekly leadership team meeting, includes all leadership members from seventh through twelfth grade. Likewise, monthly Academic Senate meetings include all department chairs and other instructional leaders from seventh through twelfth grade. In fact, most department chairs oversee their departments as a seventh through twelfth grade department with PLC teams meeting in grade-level groups and department meetings.

The Clovis North Educational Center physical building structure encourages grade-level collaboration amongst teachers due to the location of classrooms. The main academic building located in the center of campus houses the majority of Granite Ridge Intermediate and Clovis North High School teachers. This proximity enables a Granite Ridge teacher to observe, collaborate, team-teach, or share best practices instantaneously. Teachers have the opportunity to share information quickly with a larger audience and make the necessary adjustments promptly. Yearly adjustments to teaching schedules help balance out areas of concern while providing teachers the opportunity to teach at Granite Ridge Intermediate and Clovis North High School. This competitive advantage is a major reason the Clovis North Educational Center's academic scores are the highest in the Central Valley and among the highest in the State.

Implementation of the Model

The 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model's overall concept is simple--create a comprehensive educational seventh through twelfth grade experience for all students to increase academic achievement. This experience begins with providing one-on-one support with an academic counselor starting in the seventh grade and continuing with the same counselor for the next six years; clear academic, co-curricular, and social-emotional support articulation; and Transition Team support for our most at-risk students. The Counseling Center is designed to be the center of a student's educational experience. Situated at the center of campus, the Counseling Center is intended to be the one-stop shop for students and parents as counselor, parent, and student work together to develop a plan to meet the student's needs. As part of the 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model, Clovis North Educational Center also houses a Transition Team, which is designed to support at-risk students in the Clovis North Area from fifth through twelfth grade. The Transition Team, which consists of seven full-time employees, focuses on developing positive relationships with students and parents, providing services and resources for students to reach their potential and pursue their goals, and creating a sustainable support system for our participating students from elementary school through high school. Lastly, the 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model allows for strong articulation from seventh through twelfth grade by eliminating the physical

barriers of housing an intermediate school and a high school on a separate campus and creating an environment rich in collaborative opportunities across all grade levels.

In order to create a college-going culture, counselors meet with seventh graders to discuss their 6-Year Plan. Seventh graders are introduced to A-G requirements for college; are encouraged to consider their college goals and identify specific course choices to support these goals; and begin to develop an academic plan. The next year, counselors meet with students as eighth graders to prepare them for their transition into ninth grade while developing a 5-Year Plan. Additionally, counselors use a computer software program called Xello starting in seventh grade to help students explore college and career goals. Xello allows counselors to guide students with college and career decisions and supports building a college-going culture from seventh through twelfth grade.

With Clovis North Educational Center's 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model, staff develop authentic relationships and identify specific supports for parents and the community that span the full six years of intermediate and high school. Counselors hold a variety of workshops to support parent understanding of A-G requirements, college expectations and planning, and available academic supports through a series of Parent Nights offered at 8th grade, 10th grade, 11th grade, and 12th grade. For parents of students who are struggling academically, counselors, in collaboration with the Transition Team, host a Granite Ridge Parent Resource Night, informing parents of the academic and social-emotional support options available. In addition, Transition Team members provide workshops on study strategies, organizational skills, and support services. The Transition Team also houses a Parent Resource Center, which provides resources to support parents and students with a variety of academic and social-emotional issues.

After building a supportive environment and seamless transition seventh through twelfth grade, Clovis North Educational Center turned its attention toward developing relationships with students beginning in the sixth grade with the goal of reducing transition issues related to entering seventh grade. Transition Team members along with counselors, teachers, and administrators collaborate to invite sixth graders to Bronco Round-Up in late January. At Bronco Round-Up, sixth grade students spend the day at Clovis North Educational Center learning about the variety of programs available while sixth grade teachers and elementary administrators are provided information about support services available at Granite Ridge Intermediate. The goal is to train sixth grade teachers in the courses, programs, and supports available so they can make informed recommendations in order to place students correctly and provide appropriate support as quickly as possible. As part of the day, students are given a Bronco spirit shirt with their graduation year imprinted on the shirt and are introduced to the counselors, administration, and the campus. A 6th Grade Parent Night in March helps parents as their child transitions into seventh grade. Beginning with registration in spring, every sixth grade student is assigned a counselor they will have from seventh through twelfth grade. Counselors visit the Clovis North Area feeder elementary schools twice during registration to meet with students and begin developing each student's 6-year academic plan. In addition to meeting with students individually to develop their academic plan, counselors meet with teachers and administrators at the Clovis North Area feeder elementary schools to identify at-risk "transition" students--students who may need individualized attention as they enter seventh grade--in order to provide a smooth and consistent transition into seventh grade. The Transition Team provides an additional

layer of support during the sixth to seventh grade transition year by meeting with parents to focus on the emotional aspects for at-risk students entering seventh grade. The Transition Team also identifies at-risk students as early as the fifth grade and works directly with those students at their elementary sites. The 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model has been essential in the development of the LCAP-funded Transition Team to support at-risk students. While the Transition Team supports students from Clovis North Educational Center's feeder schools starting in fifth grade, the seamlessness of the 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model allows them constant access and high visibility for our most at-risk students.

Through the 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model, all programs for students operate as a seventh through twelfth grade program. Whether it is an academic department, the performing arts department, a co-curricular team, or the athletics department, each group focuses on building their program as a seventh through twelfth grade program. For academic, athletic, and elective departments, department chairs serve as a seventh through twelfth grade department chair--guiding collaboration of department teachers. In athletics, Directors of Sport serve as a leader for the seventh through twelfth grade sport program--creating a seamless program for athletes. In co-curricular teams, advisors work with Granite Ridge teachers to develop and run supporting programs to build interest and skills for the specific co-curricular area. This articulation provides a seamless transition for students throughout their six years at Clovis North Educational Center and creates strong programs that build on each other to support students in Mind, Body, and Spirit. An understated strength of the 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model lies in the housing of Granite Ridge and Clovis North teachers in one building on one campus. The proximity of teachers creates opportunities to share best practices and model lessons or provide instructional support.

Results of the Model

A number of indicators are used to determine the overall effectiveness of the 7th-12th Grade Articulation Program. A variety of test score data are used to evaluate student progress and to adjust programs to meet students' needs. State indicators showed Granite Ridge students achieved in the higher performance levels according to California's accountability system--California Schools Dashboard. In 2018, 84.97% and 69.49% of 7th grade students met or exceeded the standard in ELA and Math, and 76.04% and 64.99% of 8th grade students met or exceeded the standard in ELA and Math. According to the 2018 California Dashboard, Granite Ridge achieved Green Level in three indicators--English Language Arts with an average 66.1 points above standard, Suspension Rate with 3.7% suspended at least once and improving from Orange Level from 2017, and Chronic Absenteeism with a 4.3% chronic absenteeism rate. Granite Ridge achieved Blue Level in the fourth indicator with 44.3 points above standard in Mathematics.

The success of the 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model does not stop at Granite Ridge Intermediate. A true articulation model success will be based on the future success of all students as they progress through high school. The college- and career-readiness path begins with seventh graders as counselors guide students through their first Xello program and begin to explore their interests and future college options. Next, all eighth grade students take the PSAT and meet with counselors to discuss results, guide students toward next steps, and counsel students on college

pathways. The 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model supports early conversations with counselors and teachers about college and career interests while providing students a seamless transition from intermediate to high school. Clovis North Educational Center's college- and career-readiness data show strong graduation rates in the Blue Level according to the 2018 California Dashboard and a strong performance on the College and Career Indicator. Clovis North High School scored in the Blue Level with 71.4% of students reaching the Prepared Level. In order to support all students' success in reaching their goals, the Transition Team continues to work to identify at-risk students to support them toward meeting graduation and college- and career-ready goals. The Granite Ridge AVID Team also works to identify individuals early to challenge themselves in Honors courses and AP courses in the future so that they may achieve their college- and career-readiness goals. The Granite Ridge AVID Team works directly with the Clovis North AVID Team to provide continuous support for students.

In an effort to examine their effectiveness, adjust to meet students' needs, and monitor for continual improvement, the counselors have exiting seniors take a Senior Exit Survey. Counselors utilize the results of the survey to monitor program effectiveness and to make the necessary adjustments. Students, at all grade levels, and their parents consistently give their counselors high marks for communicating regarding graduation/college, responding to student requests to meet with them, responding to phone calls and emails, and creating a welcoming atmosphere in the Counseling Center. This positive relationship regarding academic/college and career readiness pathway beginning in seventh grade and culminating with their junior conference sets the students on a clear pathway driven by their individual future goals. Student comments speak for themselves when they responded to the question, "Please indicate the most helpful college/career information that was given to you by your counselor." Many students shared that the advice they received in preparing their course schedule and academic program made them feel supported and confident in preparing for graduation and college. Several comments from the twelve pages of student comments stand out, though, showing the level of commitment the counselors have to their students and the impact those counselors had over the six years:

"Because of my counselor I was able to apply for the EOP program at Fresno State, which I would have never known about without them, now I get many benefits and help from Fresno State just for being in the program"

"Meeting with her [counselor] and talking about college and career choices that best suited me and my needs."

"I was positive I didn't want to go to college of any sort until my senior year...I was convinced to further my education by my parents and Dr. Center. I am now attending the Conservatory of Recording Arts and Sciences..."

The Transition Team also reaches out to students for feedback about how the program. Students receive one-on-one support from a Transition Team members and give the following feedback about the program:

“Without the Transition Team, I would not have made it to my senior year and on track to graduate. They provide me with guidance and are always there for me when times are tough.”

Paolo, Grade 12

“The Transition Team has always provided me with the motivation to be successful despite daily challenges. They are people who care and make sure I’m on track to be successful.”

Moe, Grade 11

“Transitions is a safe place where I can let my guard down. They are family to me that I know I can trust and confide in. I can be myself around them and know they’ll accept me for who I am.”

Faith, Grade 11

The 7th-12th Articulation Model creates a unique educational experience for staff and students while at the Clovis North Educational Center. Through the 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model, students are provided a point person focused on their success during their academic journey. This relationship begins in the spring of sixth grade and continues for six years, allowing counselor, student, and parents to partner to meet the educational needs of the student. The counselors' constant access and monitoring of student success indicators allows them to influence programs and courses available on our campus in order to support our students' needs. In addition, students have access to social-emotional and academic support through a Transition Team that begins to identify at-risk students in fifth grade and continues to support students for next six years. The 7th-12th Grade Articulation Models enables the staff to benefit from the opportunity to collaborate with fellow staff members from grades seventh through twelfth on a daily basis. These academic conversations enhance staff learning and support student mastery. The 7th-12th Grade Articulation Model creates a competitive advantage over stand-alone middle schools and high schools by connecting students to individuals and a site for six years. The seamless transition for students from Granite Ridge Intermediate to Clovis North High School enhances the chance for students to be successful inside and outside the classroom.