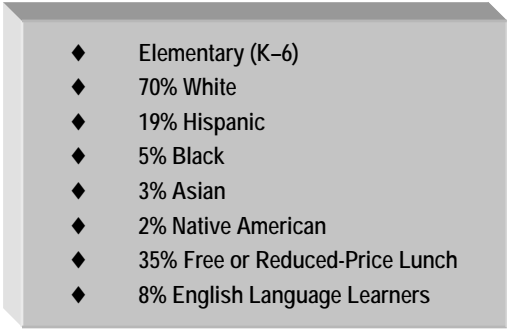


Hidden Hills Elementary School

1919 E. Sharon Dr.
Phoenix, AZ 85022
Principal: Lynette Geake

The mission statement of Hidden Hills Elementary School emphasizes the collaborative effort of the school staff “to create a safe learning environment which empowers children and provides learning opportunities with high academic standards, positive self-image, and empathy for others.” Accordingly, many of the classroom-level and school-level activities at Hidden Hills infuse social-emotional learning and teaching positive character values into the curriculum and school life.

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- ◆ Elementary (K-6)
 - ◆ 70% White
 - ◆ 19% Hispanic
 - ◆ 5% Black
 - ◆ 3% Asian
 - ◆ 2% Native American
 - ◆ 35% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
 - ◆ 8% English Language Learners

Several demographic factors have been taken into consideration in setting a schoolwide focus: large socioeconomic differences among students attending the school; an increase in the number of nearby rental properties, which has raised the mobility rates of the students; and the loss of two leaders of the Blockwatch/Fight-Back group who were involved in neighborhood activities to maintain safety and reduce crime. The school has integrated social-emotional and character education goals into the school vision, mission statement, and stated values. For example, the school values maintain that the “Hidden Hills Community values a positive school experience with students who value learning, respect others, and possess the skills necessary to pursue meaningful lives.” To promote a positive school climate and students’ social skills, the school has adopted the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) schoolwide model in conjunction with the Olweus Bullying Prevention program.

Behavior Data System

Because teachers understand that problem behavior may be a symptom of needs or difficulties that a student experiences, they take the time to find out why the problem occurred and to provide support accordingly.

The school uses the web-based School-Wide Information System (SWIS) to record and track the number of office discipline referrals per month, the type of problem behaviors by location and time of day, the interventions provided to students with disruptive behavior, and the progress of students over time. This data system is used by the principal and PBIS team to determine school needs and to facilitate the identification of intervention strategies most appropriate for individual students. Major sources for data collection are the Incident Report and the Discipline Referral form. Students fill out the Incident Report when they have been involved in bullying or other types of aggressive behavior or have witnessed such incidents. The students involved are called in for discussion with the principal to verify details and learn more about the incident.

Teachers fill out the Discipline Referral form for major incidents of problem behavior. The comprehensive form includes multiple types of information that help track and identify motives for problem behavior: location of incident (e.g., classroom, playground), type of behavior (e.g., fighting), recent history of prior minor behavior referrals (e.g., disruption), possible motivation (e.g., avoid task/activity), and student statement and signature. The principal fills out another section of the form to indicate action taken (e.g., time out in office); parent signature is required for “major” types of problem behavior or repeated (three sequential incidents) minor problem behavior. The principal enters all information from the form into the data system.

Behavior Matrix

The PBIS intervention team has created a framework of behavior rules called the behavior matrix. The matrix outlines positively stated behavior rules sorted by three dimensions: be safe, be responsible, be respectful, and ten key points during the school day: arrival at school, at line up, in the hallways, in the cafeteria, on the playground, in the restrooms, on the sidewalks, in assemblies, at dismissal, on the bus. The school has developed an engaging video clip that demonstrates how behavior rules should be followed. Examples of rules include: “keep hands, feet, and belongings to yourself, respect others’ space and belongings, always walk in the cafeteria, be polite and wait quietly, take turns and share equipment with others.” These rules are communicated to all students at the beginning of the school year through structured lesson plans and guided practice. A repeated integration of the vocabulary from the behavior matrix into school life and posters in classrooms and school halls serve as reminders.

Positive Reinforcement

Individual students “caught” demonstrating positive and helpful behavior are recognized through the morning announcements. Every month, one student per teacher who has demonstrated exceptional behavior or progress in showing good manners and positive values, is recognized through the principal’s monthly positive phone call to parents. In addition, teachers are recognized for their own behavior representing positive character traits (e.g., going above and beyond in helping students or other teachers) through the Positive, Awesome, Wonderful Staff (P.A.W.S.) rewards. The nomination forms are posted on the staff bulletin board and in the newsletter. Every Friday, one form is drawn for a \$10 gift card.

Instruction

Every Monday morning, teachers follow a structured lesson plan to provide a class meeting about a topic related to bullying prevention, social-emotional learning, or character education. All teachers in all grade levels use the same lesson plan on the same day. Class meetings include whole-group discussions, role playing, and work in small groups on art projects, graphic organizers, or other collaborative work. Teachers then return class meeting summaries and feedback about the lesson plans to the office. The principal uses this feedback to identify strategies that work well and strategies that need more teacher training or refining of purpose and method. In addition, the principal provides teachers with relevant storybooks to integrate into class meetings.

Summary

The principal of Hidden Hills Elementary and the school staff have been supporting each other in many ways: helping identify reasons for students behavior problems, helping to conference with or watch after a student who needed to be removed from a classroom for disruptive behavior, and acknowledging staff's contribution to the positive school climate through the P.A.W.S. rewards. In addition, the school has applied for and received several grants that enabled beautification of the school grounds and creation of schoolwide projects to enhance the feeling of a welcoming environment and provide students with opportunities for service learning to further develop their sense of social responsibility. Another important source of support is the school district. The school has received close guidance from the school district's Assistant Director for Special Education and two behavior experts, who come to the school regularly to observe classrooms and participate in decision-making meetings. The school has seen a steady decline in students' behavior problems. The principal has reported that students' friendships cut across all socioeconomic backgrounds and that students take ownership of behavior rules by "speaking the language" and serving as role models to new students and younger students at the school.

The school has been recognized as a "Highly Performing School" since 2005. In 2008, the school received an A+ designation from the Arizona State School Recognition Program for its academic and social-emotional learning programs. Finally, in October 2008, Hidden Hills Elementary was recognized by PBISAZ, a collaboration of four Arizona universities, as an exemplary PBIS school that has achieved exceptional implementation of the program and a substantial decrease in office referrals and suspensions.