

## **Model Programs and Practices Narrative**

### **1. Description of the Model**

Quimby Oak has evolved over the years from a structured, defined school environment into a dynamic, progressive environment for all students where learning, and developing intellectually, socially, and emotionally are the cornerstones for success. With the reinvention of our academic course offerings, the development of our two instructional program choices: Lobo Comprehensive Program (LCP) and Lobo School of Innovation (LSI), and the launching of our school-within-a-school collaborative model in 2016, Quimby Oak is now an exemplar of what a systematic focus on academic standards, sound teacher practices, and strong school culture can accomplish.

An environment where students feel secure, recognized, and valued is built on the foundation of interpersonal relationships at school. Following extensive reflection and research, the Quimby Oak staff refined the team teaching concept to be more inclusive and to meet the needs of all students. Our Cross-Curricular Teacher Teaming model is the backbone of Quimby Oak's instructional practice. It shapes our school's culture and supports our belief in a school-within-a-school organizational framework.

Microcosms of approximately 160 students are equally grouped and balanced between interdisciplinary teams of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. Within each team, students have close interactions with their assigned group of core teachers in: English Language Arts, Social Studies/History, Science and Math. Students spend a majority of their day collaborating with peers that have the same set of core teachers. Teachers on each cross-curricular team share a common prep time, which allows for collaboration in lesson planning, development of integrated lessons, collaborative student assessments, parent communication, and student meetings. Across both programs, LCP and LSI, the uniting factor is teaming, even with the vast differences in the academic approaches we offer to students. This school wide initiative is also a part of our staff development. All meetings, workshops and professional seminars with teachers are shaped around their collaboration as a team and collectively how they work together to provide the best supports for the students they serve.

Quimby Oak's mission is to empower young minds to be proactive, lifelong learners who think critically and communicate effectively. We believe that our teaming approach is the best way to meet that desired outcome. With teaming, students and teachers build strong bonds. Teachers, working together, magnify the level of support provided to students. With the development of our two instructional choices, we can now highlight how LCP and LSI teams have each internalized our overall school vision and uphold a commitment to exceptional student achievement through teaming.

LCP teams are comprised of four teachers. Students in LCP follow a traditional bell schedule with 50-minute class periods. Teachers of those teams intentionally align their instructional goals so that their students feel connected as they rotate through English Language Arts, Social Studies/History, Science and Math. During each quarter, LCP teacher teams gather their students together for "Team Meetings." This creates the opportunity for them to review expectations, showcase successes, and calibrate their

work. The experience for students is a consistent model that helps them to properly navigate the hustle and bustle of middle school life. The benefit, is that all the teachers on a team have common practices and procedures though the content they share is different. Teachers on the team commit to strategies, protocols, and projects that support the unique learners that make up their collective team. Year after year, the teachers collaborate to provide a tailored approach for each new group of students.

LSI teams are comprised of teacher pairs that team teach in a project-based classroom setting. Teachers on the LSI team receive hours of specialized training in the fundamentals of Project-Based Learning via our partnership with the New Tech Network (NTN). NTN is a national nonprofit that works with over 200 schools and districts to reinvent and bring about comprehensive school change. Evergreen School District has a strong partnership with NTN and LSI joined the network upon its inception at Quimby Oak. With that, Quimby Oak absolutely found the benefit in integrating NTN's model with our Cross-Collaborative Teacher Teaming when designing LSI as a choice for students. Students in LSI follow a block-scheduling approach where they rotate through three 70-minute instructional blocks: an English Language Arts and Social Studies/History integrated course, Problem Based Math, and Science. Teachers on the LSI team evaluate their content standards and design hands-on projects that follow a series of five learning outcomes: knowledge and thinking, written communication, oral communication, collaboration and agency. The draw for students on the LSI team is the experience of applying their learning to real-life scenarios that help to solve a problem. Students see the impact of their learning and their teachers intentionally design standards-based projects with world application in mind.

Across the campus, teacher teams develop a bank of targeted CCSS and NGSS practices they can address as a group. Standards are maintained through the teams as teachers are provided with strategic collaboration time. Focusing particularly on literacy, and aligning with the student outcomes addressed in our LCAP, teacher teams aim to meet the following four student outcomes: 1) Students will read, write, apply and articulate understanding across the content areas, 2) students will use the 4C's (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity) towards achieving grade level learning on the continuum of college and career readiness, 3) students will demonstrate a mastery of literacy and mathematical foundational skills and apply them to real world scenarios, 4) students will show an ownership of their learning, their communities and themselves. These goals establish a vision and framework for all decisions and ensure that students come first.

At Quimby Oak, we have found that teaming maximizes teaching and learning. We can see this in the way our LCP 7th grade teams brainstormed how to effectively integrate an instructional unit where students were asked to research, write, and present claims. Students were taught to cite relevant evidence to support a theme or central idea. The teacher teams creatively developed a series of lessons where students investigated the Bubonic Plague. In Social Studies, students participated in Data-Based Question (DBQ) research activities around the Middle Ages and the Black Death. Science teachers created an inquiry based project where students researched and presented information at an exhibition on the impact of infectious diseases. In math, students worked in collaborative groups graphing data, which connected to the English

Language Arts teachers' lesson on citing examples in an argumentative essay on the impact of vaccinations. The Cross-Curricular Teacher Teaming structure creates the space for teachers to apply the philosophies of CCSS and NGSS. Students are no longer learning skills in isolation, rather students are able to make connections, scaffold their thinking and hone the skill sets needed as they build knowledge across the core subjects.

Sharing instructional bright spots from both our LCP and LSI cross-curricular teams aides Quimby's narrative and documents the intentionality behind our school wide model practice. Each time we join as a staff, host visitors, or publicly present our work, we share examples of how our teaming structure has metamorphosed and how this practice deeply aligns with our school's reputation of excellence. A major component of Project-Based Learning includes hosting exhibitions and showcasing student work to a public audience. Teachers work collaboratively to plan these exhibitions with students. Teachers coach students to display their work in powerful and thought provoking ways. The result is an event where parents, district administrators, board members, and community members experience the impact that teacher teaming has on students' abilities to demonstrate their learning.

Additionally, Quimby participates in district instructional rounds as a means to share our model practice and gain feedback from other schools. Instructional rounds give an opportunity for teachers and administrators to better understand and improve learning. Observation notes from the rounds are used to create a picture of the learning practices throughout the school as they pertain to Evergreen's Profile of a Learner. In turn, this data helps Quimby reflect on our teaming practice as a means to generate continued student success. Quimby continues to share bright spots by participating in the Evergreen 21st Century Learning Institute. This platform allows networking between teachers and schools. Quimby is able to build relationships with like-minded schools to help sharpen our teaming model. On a grander scale, Quimby has presented at the New Tech Network's Annual Conference over the past three years. We've shared exemplar projects, Restorative Justice techniques, collaborative strategies, and our school's design with educators around the United States. This has provided us opportunities to host school tours and student and teacher panels all for the purpose of informing our model practice.

In 2018, LCP 7th grade teacher teams began a yearlong focus on literacy standards amongst all core teachers. Teacher teams administered the Renaissance Learning Accelerated Reading STAR assessment to monitor the students scale score reading level. The students took this assessment each quarter and teacher teams were able to analyze student growth. After each assessment, teachers studied the student data and planned targeted instruction across the content areas. They identified and selected key standards that students showed a need for growth in and targeted explicit instructional strategies to close the gaps that they saw. Each teacher on the team committed to designing content unique lessons around the CCSS strand identified by the team. Teachers noted a remarkable growth in student performance because of their dedicated team mindset when planning instruction. Students not only improved in the identified standards, but overall reading skills increased. The LCP 7th grade teacher teams had all students set goals and track their progress. All students showed growth, many made

more than one year's growth, and some grew as much as 4+ years. Teachers' teams recognized students who made remarkable growth during "Team Meetings." Teachers bonded over a common goal and celebrated seeing their cohort of students succeed. This is a testament to how Quimby sets the stage for teachers to properly target instruction and use student data to effectively design lessons that improve literacy in all content areas.

Further, LSI 8th grade teacher teams anchored their work in Problem-Based Math to better target explicit instruction around the New Tech Network Five Learning Outcomes: knowledge and thinking, written communication, oral communication, collaboration and agency. Teacher teams launched a project entitled "Movie Magic" where students were asked to create a short 1-2 minute film using either stop animation or full animation to demonstrate their understanding of mathematical transformations. The LSI teachers designed small group math workshops for students to participate in where they explicitly taught translations, reflections, rotations, and dilations. The purpose was to push the students to further apply these concepts by applying their understanding using movie making as the platform. Students worked collaboratively to create a cohesive storyline, create characters, sets, and film the movie using iPad apps provided for the class. As they were designing and filming their movie, student groups were assessed by the teacher team. Teachers would collect data to ensure students could identify the quantity of each transformation and describe, through written statements, how the movie they were creating demonstrated a particular mathematical skill. The teacher teams were able to analyze data and track student understanding. Teacher teams utilized rubrics to highlight trends in student performance and provided students with feedback. The work culminated with a film festival exhibition where student movies were shown to a public audience. At the exhibition, students prepared oral presentations to emphasize the math concepts demonstrated in their movies. As a result, students not only mastered a key 8th grade math concept, but had the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in all five learning outcomes.

Each class at Quimby Oak supports all students in a rigorous standards-based program that also integrates opportunities for students to develop social and emotional skills that will support them beyond the school day. Another way teaming has helped shaped our school's collaborative structure is through the integration of all students. Special needs students are integrated into the program while being provided assistance through specialized resources. Our English-Language Learners are supported with the implementation of the California ELA/ELD framework and CA English Learner Roadmap. Teams ensure that English-Learners are effectively accessing rigorous, thought-provoking content at their level. This school year, All English Language Arts teachers from each 7th and 8th grade team participated in a 6-day Guided Language Acquisition Development (GLAD) training that involved a two-day research and theory workshop as well as a 4-day demonstration opportunity. Teachers were supported by a GLAD elite coach who facilitated deeper understanding of the strategies, variations, and impact for student achievement. Participating teachers were then awarded release time to brainstorm ways that the Cross-Curricular Teaching Teams could uniquely implement GLAD strategies across the content areas to support the growth of the specific English-Language Learners on their team. Conversely, Resource Specialists

collaborate with teaching teams during integrated unit lesson planning. They offer teachers strategies and protocols to help differentiate for all learners. Each Cross-Curricular Teacher Team assesses the learning habits of their students to best apply practices that meet the needs of all learners.

Quimby Oak is unique not only for who we are and what we do, but for the way we put it all together for students. We have never lost sight of our belief – students come first. The result is a powerful student-centered belief that all students can learn in a collaborative culture rooted in positive relationships with peers and caring adults.

## **2. Implementation & Monitoring of the Model**

Cross-Curricular Teacher Teaming implementation has further developed since the implementation of SMART Goals in 2015. Expected to align with the CCSS, every department generated student-centered goals that were specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound. Departments shared SMART Goals via Google Docs with the Quimby staff. Using the “Critical Friends” protocol, each member of our teams shared their department’s commitment to student learning. Together, teams provided feedback and they reflected how to best work together to meet departmental academic goals. They brainstormed strategies and practices they could incorporate to make learning rich for their student groups. The teams began designing projects and implementing units that would create a standards-based road map for students. Again, with literacy as the focus, teachers knew that strong reading and writing practices needed to be embedded in all core subjects.

With teaming in mind, Quimby continues to build a strong professional learning community. Staff meetings and department collaboration time have been reshaped to better support our model practice. The Quimby Oak staff joins together as a whole on the first and third Wednesday of every month. During these meetings, Quimby’s administration team provides support and professional development. Afterwards, Cross-Curricular Teacher Teams are given time to plan, make shifts and calibrate their practice. At every staff meeting, teacher teams share out instructional practices that are proving successful. During department meetings on the alternative Wednesdays, each teacher shares student work and data from their Cross-Curricular Team. They align themselves back to the developed SMART Goals. This makes our work fluid, meaningful and up-to-date with student learning trends. Cross-Curricular Teacher Teams meet regularly to lesson plan, build common assessments and discuss teaming procedures. The teams are always reflecting and building our model. The commitment, communication and collaboration between departments and the Cross-Curricular Teams are essential. This is also reflective of our vision for students.

Our Student Support Services specialists are integral to the team approach. These specialists include: resource teachers, our school psychologist, speech and language pathologist, and counselor. Each specialist contributes their expertise to teaching teams to ensure the needs of our students are being addressed. Resource teachers support teams implementing integrated CCSS instructional units by creating differentiated opportunities for students to access rigorous content. Resource teachers collaborate with core teacher teams offering strategies and models that meet the unique learning

needs of struggling students. A streamlined Student Success Team (SST) process has been created because of the collaboration of Cross-Curricular Teacher Teams and specialists. At these meetings teachers, specialists and parents review and plan alternative instructional strategies and resources for students showcasing a need for academic, behavioral, and/or emotional support.

Monitoring the effectiveness of our model practice is necessary. The Quimby administration team plays an active role in this process. Each of Quimby's assistant principals leads a department. The assistant principal acts as the facilitator during department planning and shares their instructional expertise. To support Cross-Curricular Teacher Teaming, assistant principals work closely with students on each team. All students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade are assigned an assistant principal who mentors the students through their middle school years. Assistant principals seek to establish a relationship with their assigned students where they serve as an advocate, counselor, and disciplinarian. As a result, assistant principals act as mentors providing proactive guidance to students for problem solving and building positive relationships. Assistant principals are able to interact with teacher teams and understand the workings of each team's expectations for students. Assistant principals monitor grades and assignments. They communicate regularly with teachers to ensure that students are supported in their academic program. With this model, students not only build relationships with their team teachers and peers, but also with the assigned administrator, creating another strong relationship on campus providing students with another caring adult at school.

With the implemented of our foundational practice of team teaching across the Quimby campus, we have found that we have also had to adapt to the needs of our students. In 2018, Quimby's staff dedicated its focus on implementing whole school Restorative Justice practices to build stronger student connections, community, and positive, dignified discipline procedures. This came as a result of analyzing our school's Youth Truth Data from the 2016-2017 school year. Notably, students identified wanting to build stronger connections with their teachers, peers, and school community. This left Quimby with a unique opportunity to begin to mold, reshape and reimagine what the middle school experience could be. We shifted our focus to address not only the learning needs of our students, but their social and emotional needs that often impact our students abilities to perform, feel connected, and establish a strong sense of self. Our leadership team recognized that students come to us with various family and cultural differences as well as a variety of untold life experiences and stories. This has helped to increase Quimby's empathetic lense with the educational experience we aim to offer. We embarked on a year long professional development journey with SEEDS Community Resolution Center out of Berkeley, Ca.

(<https://www.seedscrc.org/rj-schools>) With SEEDS, Quimby began the initial implementation of Tier I Restorative Justice practices. The main practice adopted was the idea of the classroom circle. Teachers, through SEEDS, learned Value and Agreement Circles, and Community Building Circles which helped to develop strong classroom culture and relationships with students. By understanding Discussion Circles teachers learned how to incorporate circle practice using academic conversation starters that focused on building interpersonal relationships. Conflict Circles, and

Restorative Group Conferencing taught teachers how to navigate discipline with a solution based approaches where relationships are healed after harm has been caused. These circles were then implemented with students in classrooms. Teacher teams realigned their focus to include specific attention to strengthening school culture, building positive relationships, and increasing opportunities to connect with students. As restorative justice circles are being implemented in classrooms, students and teachers are learning the power of shared voice discussions that have the power to bring classes together, resolve conflicts, and even provide opportunities to prevent future incidents of disagreement by opening the lines of communication between staff and students. Our staff has done a tremendous job of beginning the process of implementing restorative practices into the Quimby Oak teaming ecosystem. To reflect on the impact of our initial implementation of circles, we surveyed our students about their experiences. Teachers used the student feedback to reflect on the effectiveness of the initial rollout and how they will agree to continue using consistent Restorative Justice circle techniques. As we continue to integrate the use of restorative circles into our teaching practices across campus, we are learning what other elements we need to add to meet the needs of our students. Quimby Oak's approach to enhance the climate of safety and wellness throughout our student body is constantly evolving and getting better.

Communicating our model program to the larger learning community is essential. Our goal is to ensure that parents increasingly understand the academic expectations to support their child's success. Our unique parent-teacher-conference structure is an example of this. Teams arrange conferences with parents as a group. Parents are given the opportunity to speak with all core teachers about standards, grades and assignments. A support system is created, as parents are able to see how teachers on the team work interdependently. Students also participate during conferences and are given the platform to present to their parents their achievements, areas of growth and goals for improvement. All members of the conference set a goal to best support the student's success. This approach ties directly back to Quimby's restorative practices. One LCAP item that we find imperative is to enhance the climate of safety and wellness throughout the district. We feel that because of our Cross-Curricular Teacher Teaming model at Quimby, students will be physically, socially, and emotionally healthy, and well-nourished so they can focus on learning and feel connected to their school. We also believe that the teaming structure is the best way to support our parent community.

### **3. Results of the Model**

Historically, Quimby's students have thrived in an environment where they feel secure, recognized, and valued. Our data profile shows a pattern of continued success. In 2012, Quimby's students, in all sub-groups, met AYP. Our API increased 23 points reaching 894. That was a 100-point growth over a 5 year period proving dedication to a collaborative instructional program contributes academic results in achievement. With California's state assessment consortium under reinvention, and as schools prepared for the full implementation of the Smarter Balanced assessment system, Quimby continued to focus on our teaming model as the best way to support the transition to CCSS and a new assessment tool.

From 2015-2018 Quimby Oak students consistently reach proficiency at higher levels than our county and state. In 2018, 70% of students met grade level standards or above in English Language Arts and 61% in Math. Significant gains were achieved in 2018 with our Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students in English Language Arts and amongst our English Learners in Math.

Authentic data supports that our teaming model is proving to be successful however, there are identified students in need of additional support. We developed Lobos In For Targeted Tutoring (LIFTT) to provide greater access for those students. We continue to enhance this program to meet the needs of our learners. Beginning after the first quarter, students are identified for this intervention by their teacher team based on performance, class assessments, and assignments. In addition, students identified as mandatory retention and English Learners scoring at the Beginning and Early Intermediate levels are also selected for LIFTT. Approximately 60 students meet in the library after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays for one hour. Certificated staff, classified staff, and community volunteers provide small group and one-on-one support for participating students as tutors. Students are grouped via Cross-Curricular Teacher Team creating a “study group” atmosphere. This is not an after school drop-in program, but rather a program designed to provide students with homework support and targeted math and literacy skills development. The students’ team of teachers coordinates with the LIFTT tutors to ensure that the students’ specific needs in skill reinforcement are met. Teacher teams work with the students in the classroom to let them know what skills they should focus on in the program. Teachers check in with the students and the tutors to ensure that the skills are being reinforced effectively. LIFTT provides an additional much needed opportunity for students to gain skills and confidence in math, reading and writing. For example, a sampling of our LIFTT data revealed that 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students beginning the first quarter with a GPA (grade-point average) of 1.5 or below, improved their cumulative GPA by 62%. As we continue to refine the LIFTT program and align with team goals, we anticipate continued student growth.

Another indicator of our model’s success in our English-Language Learner reclassification statistics. 93.97% of students assessed on the CELDT from 2013 to 2015 either maintained or improved their English Language development performance level. As we deconstructed the 2014-2015 CELDT assessment data, we found that students in both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade made significant progress, with 92 students making performance level shifts. With the change to the ELPAC test during the 2017-2018 school year, the number of English Learner students has declined as students have earned reclassification status. With 11.4% of our student population designated as English Learners, 54.3% of those students have tested at a Level 4 and 16.6% are at a Level 3. Through cross-curricular teaming, common assessments, and continued dialogue amongst staff and stakeholders regarding the need for continuous improvement of academic learning, our English Learner students continue to make strides towards becoming proficient bilingual learners. Staff also continue to support the academic growth of our Level 1 & 2 students through implementation of GLAD strategies and additional resources like Rosetta Stone within smaller class sizes. This data proves to us that teacher teaming is effectively meeting the needs of our English-Language Learners. The collaborative nature of teacher teaming has led to a



focus on targeted literacy instruction. Teams of teachers are intentionally implementing a variety of strategies that bridge language and content knowledge for our students.

Cross-Curricular Teacher Teaming has significantly contributed to Quimby Oak's positive school culture. Attributes of this can be seen in our student behavior data. A significant decline in student suspensions has occurred between the 2016 and the 2017-2018 school years. During 2016-2017, 2.4% of students were suspended. With an added focus on teaming as a conduit to build positive student experiences at school, our current suspension rate has dropped to 0.9% of students suspended. Looking deeper into the suspension data there has been a decrease of -1.4% in our English Language Learners, -1.6% in our Hispanic students, and -1.7% in our Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students. The support of teacher teams reinforces to students that the adults at school are looking out for their best interests. Positive student-adult relationships are a direct result of teaming and we see this positively reflected not only in the behavior of our students, but how they engage in the classroom setting. Through teaming, Quimby's vision is clearly communicated to students. Team meetings reinforce expected behaviors, restorative practices contribute to deeper learning outcomes, and cross-curricular planning provides exceptional experiences for students to access content and build their knowledge and thinking.

Embodying our mission to be proactive, lifelong learners who think critically and communicate effectively, Quimby Oak Middle School students have thrived through the implementation of our model practice. Offering two learning programs, LSI and LCP, simultaneously helps us to reach our students' diverse learning needs. Foundational to these programs are teacher teams. This ecosystem is vital to the continued growth of our students as our teachers model critical inquiry and collaborative conversations with each other and with students. Cross-Curricular teacher teaming addresses the whole child so that every student is equipped to contribute to the world. With continued monitoring and analysis of local and state assessments, collection of feedback from all stakeholders, and implementation of academic and social-emotional support systems to build a well-rounded school culture, the road to success for Quimby Oak students is transparent and inclusive. At Quimby Oak, we don't just believe that students come first; we act with intention to keep them there.