

# EMPOWERING TEACHERS TO EMPOWER STUDENTS



Long time Success for All School Partner is Finding  
New Ways to Reignite Student Success

## THE CHALLENGE

Westwood Primary in the Alhambra School District, located in Phoenix, Arizona's central-west side, is a kindergarten through third grade school serving about 1,000 students. In 1998, with 98% of students receiving free or reduced lunch, Westwood Primary became a Success for All partner school in order to address the decline in student achievement. When implementing the Success for All curricula with a high degree of fidelity, they saw immediate and sustained growth for ten years. However, that started to change about four years ago when their scores plateaued and growth became stagnant.

Around this same time, Success for All developed the Leading for Success program. Leading for Success is a school-wide, systemic approach in helping to address the recurring issues that impact students' learning. Through a distributed leadership model, it helps mobilize leadership teams and staff in aligning their resources and systems to create an effective and continuously improving Success for All school.



With the assistance of a Success for All coach, school leadership teams meet on a regular basis to identify areas of concerns, complete a root cause analysis, develop and implement appropriate interventions to address these concerns. Achievement plans are customized to address the school's unique challenges with the ultimate outcome of increasing student achievement.

Then principal, Ms. Lori Weiss, and assistant principal, Ms. Melissa McKinsey, felt the Leading for Success program was just what their school needed to energize and empower teachers, as well as, to create lasting success in the classroom.

## THE SOLUTION

Ms. Weiss and Ms. McKinsey worked with their Success for All coach to plan and strategize implementation of the Leading for Success program. They knew this program would create powerful changes in the school and wanted to ensure it got off to a successful start. They set aside half a year for planning and in the fall of 2012, they began implementing the Leading for Success program.

"It's a growth process," says now principal Ms. McKinsey. "You have to move through the challenges it creates. It was a huge shift to move the school to a distributive leadership model where teachers needed to take ownership of the school's decision-making processes."

"It changed how we think and how we interact as a staff," Ms. McKinsey continued. "Once teachers moved past the initial struggle, they began to understand why the processes were important, and that's when we saw an increase in students' scores."

As a result, Westwood has seen significant growth across all areas of the curriculum, as well as, in non-academic components that were included in their School Improvement Plan. Currently, 82% percent of students are reading at or above grade level, kindergarten students transitioning to first grade are no longer experiencing a dip in performance and school-wide attendance has improved. Just this past year, Westwood achieved two quarters of 95% attendance.

# WE'RE NO LONGER WASTING TIME IMPLEMENTING THINGS THAT DIDN'T WORK. USING THE DATA, WE KNOW RIGHT AWAY IF SOMETHING IS WORKING OR NOT

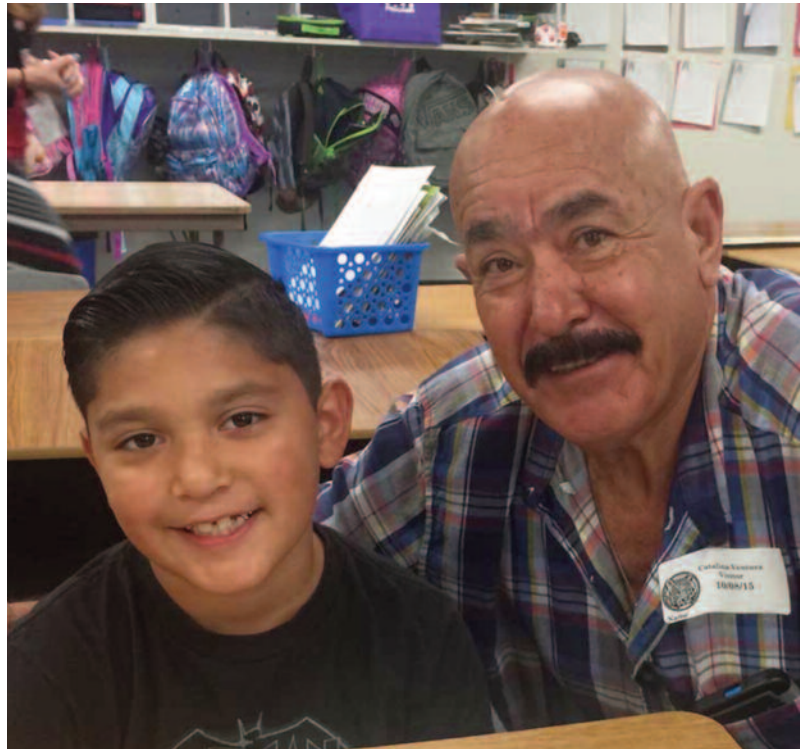
MELISSA MCKINSEY, Principal of Westwood Primary

The continuous improvement process is an integral element of the Leading for Success program. As confirmed by Ms. McKinsey, "We're no longer wasting time implementing things that didn't work. Using the data, we know right away if something is working or not, and we change it if it's not working for our students."

## THE RESULTS

The past few years have seen many challenges for Westwood. The school, along with most schools in the nation, had to learn the new Common Core standards, implement reading lexile bands and teachers had to adjust their teaching methods to help students achieve in these areas. In addition, the city of Phoenix is becoming a haven for refugees from all over the world. "This past school year, we had six to seven new students starting each day for months, and these new students spoke over five different languages," said Ms. McKinsey. "Without the Leading for Success network in place, we would not have been able to tackle these challenges as efficiently and effectively as we have."

For other principals who are considering implementing the Leading for Success program, Ms. McKinsey has this to say, "Don't give up on it. You have to move through the challenges, but the payout is huge on the other side. We are really proud of ourselves for sticking with this process. Success for All is now more than just a reading program in our school: It is everything - the whole school and the whole day."



**FOUNDED IN 1987**, the nonprofit Success for All Foundation is dedicated to ensuring that every child, from pre-kindergarten to grade 8, becomes proficient in reading and learning – opening up new doors for a lifetime of achievement. Not only has SFA been proven time and again to help with student reading ability and math performance, it also addresses non-academic concerns, improving behavior, attendance and parental involvement. Please contact us for more information.

**LEARN MORE! [SUCCESSFORALL.ORG](http://SUCCESSFORALL.ORG)**

  
**Success for All**  
FOUNDATION®