

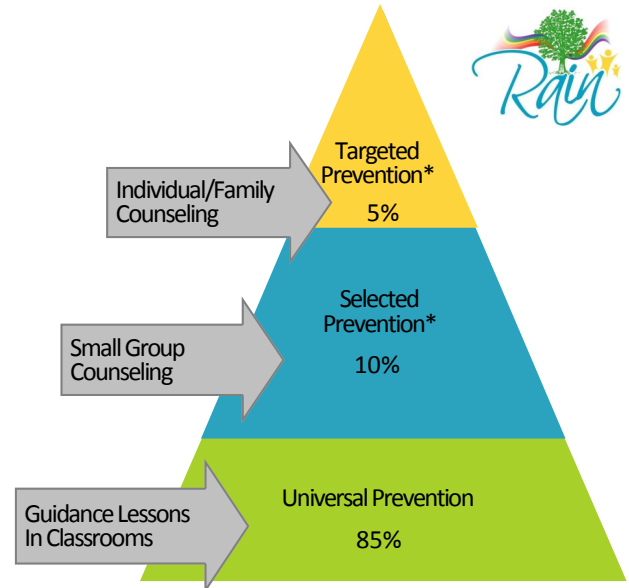
# MVUSD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM RAIN EVALUATION FINDINGS

## Program Overview

In 2008, the Murrieta Valley Unified School District (MVUSD) was one of fifty-three school districts across the nation to receive a three-year School Counseling Grant to implement a comprehensive school counseling program for elementary students. MVUSD utilized research of Dr. Adelman and Dr. Taylor, from the UCLA School Mental Health Project, on reducing barriers to student learning and school improvement to implement the RAIN (Re-engage, Advocate, Intervene, Nurture) Elementary School Counseling program. The RAIN program is designed to provide guidance and support to elementary students and their families. The overall goals of RAIN are to: reduce school discipline issues, decrease school bullying, and increase student achievement.

To meet these goals, RAIN school counselors:

- 1) Teach guidance lessons in all classrooms, covering information on academic support; organizational, study and test-taking skills; goal setting and decision-making; career awareness; peer relationships; coping strategies and effective social skills; and, communication, problem solving and conflict resolution.
- 2) Facilitate small group counseling sessions with at-risk students. Group sessions cover topics such as: academic planning; goal setting/decision-making; education on understanding of self including strengths and weaknesses; transition plans; and referrals for additional support.
- 3) Offer individual responsive services for crisis assistance such as individual/family counseling.



\*Based on CST scores and referrals.

The RAIN program incorporates curriculum from evidence-based programs such as Shapiro’s Peacemaker Violence Prevention Program and Grin’s Social Skills Group Intervention. RAIN also follows the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model of combining aspects of academic, career, personal, and social skills into all lessons. In alignment with ASCA National Standards, RAIN:

- ◆ Ensures all students have equal access to effective instruction through a range of learning supports.
- ◆ Explores students’ academic goals as well as social and emotional needs.
- ◆ Promotes healthy development and prevents problems.
- ◆ Enhances competence, self determination, and relatedness to others.
- ◆ Provides ongoing support to students, parents, and staff as needed.
- ◆ Explores career awareness activities, personal talents, and interests.

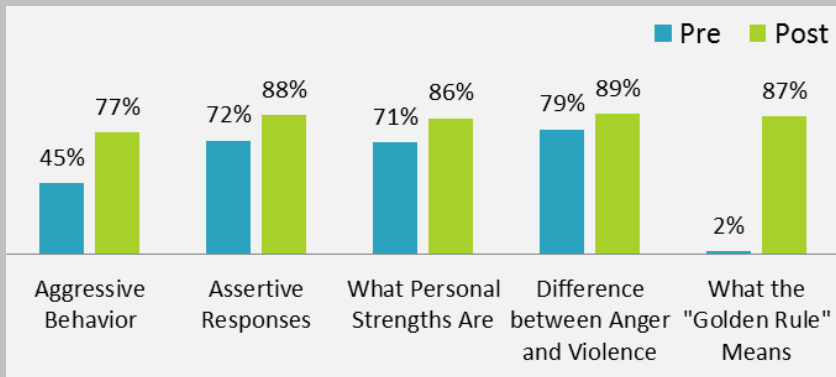
## RAIN Data Collection Strategies and Tools

- ✓ Pre-Post Peacemaker Violence Prevention Survey
- ✓ California Healthy Kid Survey (CHKS, district-level)
- ✓ School Discipline Referrals
- ✓ Academic Performance Index (API)
- ✓ California Standard Test (CST) - Proficiency in Language Arts and Math

## Promising Findings and Impacts of RAIN on MVUSD Elementary School Students

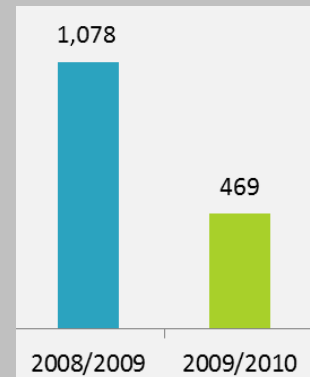
### Increased Knowledge and Skills

Students had a better understanding of topics related to bullying and other interpersonal behaviors after participating in the RAIN guidance lessons



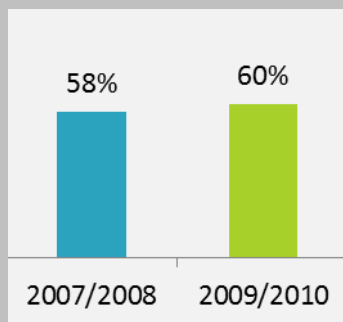
### Fewer Discipline Referrals

The number of discipline referrals across the district decreased over 50%



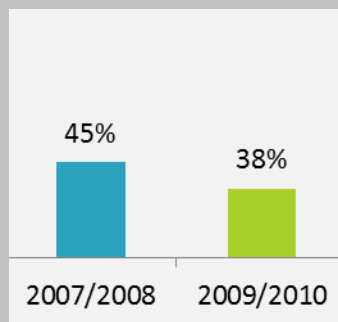
### Increased Feelings of Safety

More 5th grade students reported feeling safe at school all of the time



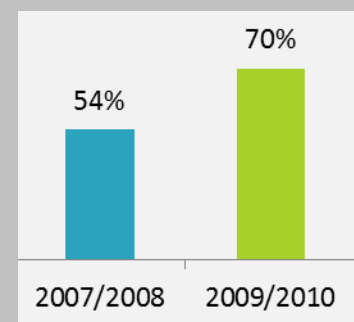
### Reduced Bullying

Fewer 5th grade students indicated ever being bullied (i.e., hit or pushed)



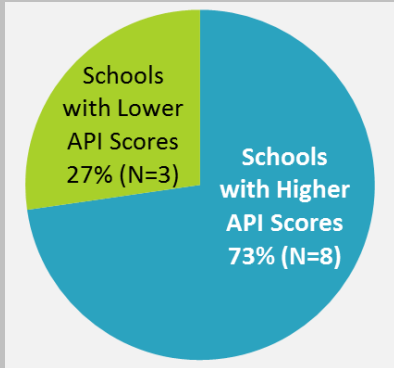
### More School Connectedness

More 5th grade students reported high levels of school connectedness



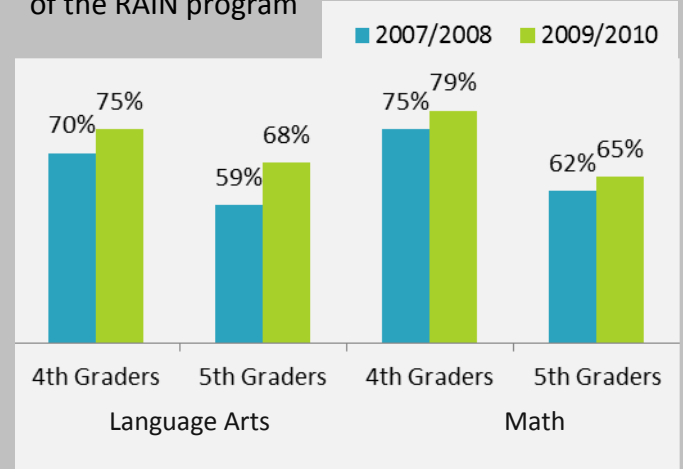
## Improved API Scores

8 out of 11 MVUSD Elementary Schools obtained higher average API scores in 2009/2010 as compared to the previous school year



## Increased Proficiency in Math & Language Arts

A greater percentage of students were proficient in Language Arts and Math after implementation of the RAIN program



## Spotlight on E. Hale Curran Elementary School

**Huge Improvements in School Connectedness and Perceptions of Safety**

CHKS Indicators	E. Hale Curran 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders		
	2007/2008	2009/2010	Change Across Years
Have high levels of school connectedness	31%	67%	+36%
Have been bullied (i.e., hit or pushed)	63%	33%	-30%
Saw someone with a gun or knife at school	41%	15%	-26%
Feel safe at school all of the time	48%	66%	+18%
Have high levels of caring relationships with a teacher/other adult at their school	47%	64%	+17%

The RAIN program helped transform E. Hale Curran Elementary School into a safer place in which fewer students are bullied and more students feel connected to school and have caring relationships with a teacher or other adult at school. For example, less than a third of E. Hale Curran 5th graders reported high levels of school connectedness before RAIN; however, after implementation of RAIN, two-thirds of the 5th graders feel connected.





## What MVUSD Teachers and Principals Say about RAIN

*“When the counselors came out to the classroom, the lessons were thought provoking and engaging. The children grew in their knowledge of how to respond to people in different situations and choose assertive responses.”*

*“I have two students who are benefitting from the Friendship Club. They are very excited to attend it each week. Together, these and other interventions are making a difference in the lives of our students. Thank you for making this possible.”*

*“When the counselors are truly integrated with the intervention process, they have a major effect on the work of our teachers in supporting all students. I have no doubt that the students RAIN has served this year at our site (almost 100 students on a personal level, not to mention the hundreds impacted by full-class lessons) will excel more academically due to this.”*

*“For the first time ever, not one fifth grader was suspended from school for the entire year. Who should take credit for that? It has been the collective effort of many professionals that were able to produce such sound and favorable results. I give credit to the support services afforded us by the counseling services available. The counseling services allowed teachers to teach and stay above what could have brought the whole house down. I am grateful for the partnership that has been made and I support its continued efforts on our behalf and for our school.”*

*“The Friendship Crew group for boys was a tremendous help for my student, and he is now slower to react inappropriately in difficult situations on the playground.”*

*“The children I have in the small group sessions greatly need this service. They have life-challenges outside of school that keep them from doing their best in school. So far, all the children have greatly enjoyed the sessions and seem genuinely relieved of burden when they come back.”*

## Recommendations and Next Steps

The following next steps are recommended for MVUSD and their partners as they move forward in their efforts to reduce barriers to student learning and improve academic performance.

- 1 Continue to provide RAIN Elementary School Counseling Services to the children of MVUSD.
- 2 Continue to monitor progress toward reducing discipline issues with a special emphasis on bullying and harassment.
- 3 Continue to identify children in need of additional assistance and provide them with small group interventions and other services as appropriate.

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