

SOAR

Tenderloin Community Elementary School

An Interview with Laura Hoover, SOAR Teacher

- **What you are doing in the classroom to support students?**

"We work hard to provide differentiated instruction to meet each student's needs. Academically, my students range in instructional level from Kindergarten-6th grade. I create centers to cater to each student's needs and IEP goals. As a staff, we strive to constantly model appropriate behavior and problem solving for the students. For example, we role-play different scenarios and have the students be the staff. They really enjoy this and it helps with buy in to the program. We also try to incorporate movement and multisensory learning throughout the day to keep students engaged in learning. We also incorporate explicit social skills instruction several times a week and have daily community meetings to build relationships. To reinforce positive behaviors we use a token economy. This is instrumental in shaping replacement behaviors and keeping students on track."

- **Tell us about your Point/level system**

"Students start at the daily level, where they work to earn at least 80% of their points for the day by following 3 expectations: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe. Students are scored on each expectation throughout the day in 30 minute intervals. At the end of the day, if students have reached the 80% benchmark they are able to go to the Honors room and play with Legos/toys, use electronics (iPad and Wii game system), and special snacks. Students practice working cooperatively together and practice applying social skills they are learning throughout the day. Students who achieve the daily level for 17 out of 20 days and for the last 7 days move up to the Weekly level. This level has the same incentives as the daily level in addition to a weekly Honors outing. Examples of weekly outings include a trip to the park with popsicles, making cookies and cards for office staff, a trip to a neighborhood ice cream shop. The highest level is Natural level, where students no longer need a point sheet and get to go on the weekly outings. This level parallels skills needed and expectations for participating in a larger, mainstreamed class. We also have "Zero Out" behaviors, where students must go through a "reboot" process to come back to class and start earning points again. Zero out behaviors include: physical aggression, sustained non-compliance and elopement."

- **What has been a huge success for you?**

"Hands down, the biggest reward is watching my students learn to be kind to each other, and work cooperatively as a community when conflicts arise. We have created a safe community and the students are able to play together, compliment each other, and exhibit other pro-social behaviors that they will need in their tool kits for life skills. Today during honors time some students were playing the card game Old Maid with staff. Other students were playing cooperatively on the carpet and most of the kids chose to skip their time on the computer to play together!"

Want to learn more about SFUSD's SOAR Program? Contact Rachel Noto (notor@sfusd.edu).