Site Background

The Center for Fathers and Families MASTERS Expanded Learning has been providing all students in kindergarten through eighth grade at Pioneer a safe and nurturing learning environment since 2010. Pioneer School is located in the North Sacramento neighborhood of Foothill Farms and serves students TK through 8th grade. Pioneer Elementary is a culturally diverse, welcoming and supportive learning community with a strong sense of school pride. Pioneer’s population is 86.6% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, 33.3% Hispanic or Latino, 41.4% White, 9.5% Black or African American.

The MASTERS Expanded Learning program at Pioneer serves 100 students daily and we maintain a waitlist of over 100 students. The MASTERS program operates Monday through Friday from 2:27 until 6 p.m. The staff to student ratio is 20:1, and we strive to match out staff with the school's diversity. Our site vision is to empower youth to achieve their best through health and wellness and give students the tools they need to make healthy life choices.

Making a Difference

At Pioneer we have made huge changes through the HBI process, we have come to realize the importance of health and wellness and how can we be more intentional on the implementation of those components in our program. Some of the changes we have made are:
- Providing fresh water or infused water during supper and during all of our school events, this has prompted parent interest in providing the same opportunity for their children to drink more water at home.
- Nutrition education is implemented daily through our supper trivia and also during our twice a week nutrition and cooking classes.
- Structure play has also been fully implemented by reducing the amount of free play and increasing the structured and continuous movement play time. Students are a lot more engaged and excited about physical education.
- Parent resources have also been made available at each class and during all family events by setting up a station where they can learn more about healthy eating and fitness.

What We Do

- **Physical Activity:** Students engage in at least 45 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily.

  **Brain Breaks**
  During homework, staff facilitates brain breaks; these breaks are staff guided physical activity or using websites like go noodle, Teacher Tube. Brain breaks are physical activities that can help students refocus and improve their attention and reduce behavior problems.

  **Mileage club**
  Mileage Club is an exercise program in which students walk or run on the school playground once a week for 45 minutes. All students are provided with a Mileage Scan Card; with these cards students stop by an iPad scanning station every time the student completed a lap on the course.

  **HITS Tennis Program**
  Tennis can teach many great life lessons while on the court, but more importantly than the fundamentals of tennis, H.I.T.S. focuses on growing a child’s core values as well as the athlete. By participating in this program, children as young as Kindergarten, develop strong core values both on and off the court. H.I.T.S. is a tennis program for kids 10 and under that is being offered to our students in partnership with the USTA. Team leaders work with their group of students once a week for an hour.

  **SPARK Recreation**
  The focus of SPARK is the development of motor skills, movement knowledge, and social and personals skills to achieve a healthy life style. SPARK is implemented every day for 30 minutes during the after school program but it is also implemented during the school day.
Nutrition Education:

Students receive nutrition education on a daily basis to develop and maintain healthy habits that can be carried throughout their lifetime.

**Supper trivia:**
During our supper trivia, we provide students the opportunity to put to the test what they learn during the nutrition classes and the fitness class while also earning point for class rewards.

**Garden:**
Our garden provides hands-on activities and strengthens academic, personal, and social skills while also learning the farm to fork connection. We have recently started our garden and it has already creating interest in our students about eating fruits and vegetables.

- **Curricula:** Our staff utilizes research-based resources and curricula that build students’ skills. The resources and current curricula include:
  - Nutrition Education
    - MyPlate
    - Champions for Change
    - Skillastics
    - Rethink your drink
  - Physical Education
    - SPARKS
    - United States Tennis Association’s H.I.T.S. Program
    - Skillastics

**Our Partners**

**UCDavis extension:**
Through the UC Davis extension program we are able to provide our students another opportunity to learn about nutrition, cooking and other healthy habits for a duration of six weeks.

**CA Department of Agriculture:**
We have partnered up with the California department of agriculture to provide our students with more knowledge on where their food comes from as well as allowing us to participate on Farm Day where our students learned more about agriculture in our State.

**Parent Resources:**
At Pioneer it’s important that our families are aware of the resources available to them. We encourage our students to participate in the school’s breakfast and lunch program by guiding them with nutrition services and guiding them through the enrollment process as well as posting the monthly menu for both the school day and the expanded learning program. Our schools has also implemented a grab n' go breakfast for our middle school students who often skipping breakfast; this program allows them to take breakfast in a bag into the classroom with them. We have also have made available a list of community-based organizations that provide services SNAP/CalFresh, the WIC program and local food banks.
Additional Impacts of Our Program
In addition to improving eating, increasing physical activity and access to healthy food with our students; we have also impacted the entire school by serving as an example of healthy living. As a school site we have implemented the fresh fruit and veggie program, a salad bar program and have made changes to our wellness policy to try to shape the way parents do celebrations on campus. We have also made tremendous advances with the after school staff by changing our eating habits and exercising on a daily basis.