



Ravenswood Classroom Partners

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ravenswood Classroom Partners Offers New Phonics Focused Program

Menlo Park, CA (December 5, 2023) Given it's move to a new, phonics focused literacy program, the Ravenswood City School District is relying even more this school year on the enormous number of hours donated by classroom volunteers with nonprofit Ravenswood Classroom Partners (RCP) to help students build literacy and comprehension skills. Since 2008, RCP has supported teachers in classrooms by tutoring students in need of extra academic support. RCP is guided by the district's priorities and curriculum and by the teachers so that their support of students is seamless and tightly integrated with the district curriculum. Our emphasis is tutoring students reading below grade level in grades TK-5 to help close the academic achievement gap.

Starting in fall 2023, RCP implemented a new literacy tutoring program which aligns directly with the district's new SIPPS (short for Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words) curriculum which is a "science of reading" approach emphasizing phonics. SIPPS is a research-based foundational skills program which has had a significant positive impact in other, similar school districts in California and nationally.

The Ravenswood school district is confident that emphasizing the ability to decode words will boost students' academic performance and bring more students up to grade level in reading. Last year, during a pilot program supported by RCP, results showed that students receiving SIPPS instruction and tutoring made twice the progress that non-RCP tutored students made; they gained an average of 3 reading levels in a 10 week session. The program is expected to have an important positive impact with Ravenswood students over the next several years.

This year, the RCP volunteers will be integrated into what the district is calling its Universal Tier 2 Intervention Block, a new structure for coordinating multiple supports being provided to students to improve their academic performance and social-emotional

skills. All students needing additional instructional support receive it during this time block instead of having students pulled out of the classroom throughout the day. The impact of RCP's sustained, high-dosage tutoring will be measured through the district's iReady program which provides individual analysis of students' progress towards academic skills they need to build. The RCP tutors have been trained by Karen Schreiner, the district's Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning, who is also training teachers and support staff in the SIPPS curriculum.

Ms. Schreiner says, "As a District Leader, I am beyond appreciative for the support and partnership of Ravenswood Classroom Partners. As we embarked on adopting a new literacy intervention curriculum this year, RCP was right there beside us the whole way to support implementation. Through significant change, RCP volunteers have been supportive, responsive, communicative, and impactful on student learning. After just a few months, we are already seeing improved outcomes on student learning, thanks to the dedication and persistence of RCP volunteers."

In addition to tutoring students in literacy skills, RCP volunteers who wish to tutor in math will be matched with teachers requesting math support. RCP is working with the district's instructional coach Alina Zhang to ensure it is aligned with the district curriculum. The math curriculum relies heavily on literacy and comprehension, so the work all of the RCP tutors do with students in reading provides foundational skills necessary to be successful in math, science and other STEM fields.

About Ravenswood Classroom Partners: Inspired by the belief that every child deserves an equal opportunity to learn, Ravenswood Classroom Partners (RCP) has been sending trained volunteers to classrooms in the Ravenswood school district since 2008, helping improve students' academic performance and self-confidence. RCP is unique because volunteers work with the same teacher and students each week throughout the school year at no cost to the school district. RCP's dedicated, trained volunteers are a consistent, caring presence in the lives of the children they support. In Ravenswood City School District, nearly 60% of the students are English learners, 86% are low income, and 44% are in unstable housing or considered homeless. RCP supports students facing these challenges. www.ravenswoodclassroompartners.org

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