



Mountain View
Whisman
School District

Board of Trustees SY23-24 Goal

Reimagining Castro: A Road to
Improvement

3/14/24



Today's Goals and Objectives

Today we will:

- ❑ Revisit the purpose and goals of the Re-Imagining Castro Initiative
- ❑ Give update on the meetings and work-to-date with Castro Roundtable Group
- ❑ Share preliminary learnings from external site visits and how it has informed our thinking and planning
- ❑ Review next steps including the conclusion of external visits and the Re-Imagining Castro plan skeleton

Alignment to Strategic Plan 2027

Goal Area #1: Effective and consistent instructional practices that meet the needs of all students

1B. Ensure targeted instructional opportunities that maximize learning for students

Goal Area #2: Student Social-Emotional Health

2B. Ensure an integrated, consistent approach to social-emotional learning

Goal Area #3: Inclusive and Welcoming Culture

3B. Expand and enhance culturally-relevant approaches to student, parent and community engagement

Goal Area #4: Effective and Engaged Employees

4A. Attract and retain diverse, quality employees

Goal Area #5: Equitable Distribution of Resources that Support Student Success

5A. Ensure facilities and resources equitably serve all student



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Re-Imagining Castro: Purpose and Goals

Equity Challenge

How do we **increase access to high-quality and culturally-responsive** educational experiences **and supports** for students at Castro that result in **increased outcomes** over time, considering the logistical, social, and fiscal hurdles this challenge presents?

Key Takeaways from Data Review

Quantitative:

- Growth indicators (annual and stretch) suggest growth of students at Castro is steadily increasing, though still below district averages. Growth has yet to rebound from school closures.
- Chronic absenteeism ballooning post-Covid may exacerbate most data trends due to lack of continuity of care and instruction
- Increase in suspensions a leading indicator of overall health and wellbeing of student social-emotional health

Qualitative:

- Need for increased academic rigor across grade levels and capacity to differentiate for students at different proficiency levels
- Need for more social supports and resources for enrichment activities that are typically funded through a school's PTA budget
- Structures and supports to lengthen instructional blocks and overcome barriers a shared campus may present

Managing Expectations:

Rollout of Changes:





- Will likely consist of 2-3 phases that are each rolled out approximately 1 year apart
 - this means it is possible that full implementation of changes put forth by the coming plan won't be fully implemented until SY25-26 or SY26-27
- Will require substantial time, human resources, and financial investment
 - any new change should be given at least 3 consecutive years of implementation before it is discontinued (unless it is causing harm)



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Work-to-Date

Stages of Creating a Plan

- ❑ Exploring Castro Data 
- ❑ Co-Constructing a Vision (DEC/JAN) 
- ❑ Identifying Priorities (JAN) 
- ❑ Seeking Expertise and Best Practices (FEB/MAR) 
- ❑ Identifying Goals and Success Criteria for each Priority Area (MAR/APR)
- ❑ Identifying Strategic Action, Priority Level(s), Persons Responsible, and Required Resources (APR)
- ❑ Sequence/Timeline these Changes (APR)
- ❑ Sharing the Plan with the Community (MAY)

Castro Educational Roundtable

Goal: To provide feedback to the Superintendent and designee on the vision and priorities of the Re-Imagining Castro initiative.

Multiple stakeholder groups:

- Castro Teachers (3)
- Castro Parents (2)
- Site Leadership at Castro (1)
- District Leadership (4)
- Board Members (2)

Identifying Priorities Areas

Priority areas were identified based on what it would take to ‘build the bridge’ between what our current data is showing us and what we want to see as an outcome of our work.

What data shows		Priority Areas		Overarching Goal
Steep learning loss after Covid.		Learning acceleration Enhancing learning experiences to reach important academic milestones		Students on track to gain proficiency in ELA/Math before leaving Castro.
Strained resources given concentration of need at school site.		Enriching culture Providing additional educational experiences to deepen knowledge		Students have access to high quality educational experiences.
High concentration of social and emotional hardships		Social-emotional supports Providing learning experiences that help nurture a students well-being and social skills		Students receive necessary supports for overall wellbeing.

Levers for Change

To center our work on what is doable, measurable, attainable, and meaningful, the following high-leverage change areas were identified to keep our plan targeted and specific.

Where can we affect the most change based on our goals?

High-leverage change areas		
Instructional practices What does teaching and learning in the classroom look like?	School structure How does the way the school day is structured help prioritize learning?	Quality of relationships How do the connections between people help students learn?

Seeing Through Our Change Framework

Together, the **priority areas** and **high-leverage change areas** formed the change matrix, which will be the skeleton for the Re-Imagining Castro action plan.

	Instructional practices What does teaching and learning in the classroom look like?	School structure How does the way the school day is structured help prioritize learning?	Quality of relationships How do the connections between people help students learn?
Learning acceleration Enhancing learning experiences to reach important academic milestones			
Enriching culture Providing additional educational experiences to deepen knowledge			
Social-emotional supports Providing learning experiences that help nurture a students well-being and social skills			

Look Fors Document

Evidence of learning acceleration		
Enhancing learning experiences to reach important academic milestones		
Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	What can you see that shows teachers may be providing varied instruction and tasks to meet the needs of different students? (adjusting how fast or complex the teaching is)
<i>What does teaching and learning in the classroom look like?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What can you see that shows the teacher may use small group instruction or peer tutoring ?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	What can you see that shows the teacher is using some kind of quick assessment to gauge student understanding and adjust instruction?
School Structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	What can you see that shows the school is providing extended learning opportunities ? (beyond school hours, or additional supports)
<i>How does the way the school day is structured help prioritize learning?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What can you see that shows the school schedules instructional blocks to promote learning acceleration ?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	What can you see that shows the school is allocating time in the schedule for individualized learning (for catch up or acceleration)?
Relationships and Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	What can you see that demonstrates a positive classroom climate ? (positive behavior, mutual respect, sense of belonging)
<i>How do the connections between people help students learn?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What can you see that demonstrates healthy peer collaboration ?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	What can you see that shows students are encouraged to explore topics in-depth , apply critical thinking skills and/or work collaboratively ?

The **change framework** also helped us build a ‘look fors’ document that helped focus our attention during external site visits and subsequent discussions and workshops.

Seeking Expertise and Best Practice through External School Visits

Benefits of external school visits on school improvement plans and processes:

- Best practice identification
- Innovation inspiration
- Problem-solving insights
- Parent/Community engagement models
- Infrastructure and resource management
- Continuous improvement mindset

Key Takeaways from Castro Visit

- **Strengths**

- Dedicated teachers wanting to serve at Castro, specifically
- Small class sizes
- Teamwork and collective responsibility

- **Challenges**

- Establishing a clear vision for change turnaround
- Peer conflict and behavior challenges lead to instructional losses, especially during unstructured times
- Staff/leadership turnover reduces staff cohesion and increases need for PD supports for new teachers
- Finding the time and maximizing longer instructional blocks

- **Priorities**

- student achievement *through* relationships and serving their social emotional needs
- Literacy

External School Visit Logistics

Most sites were initially identified based on a search through the National Blue Ribbon Schools 2023 cohort. Schools that are not National Blue Ribbon schools were included because they have adopted a *Community Schools** model and/or have demonstrated success in (1) integrated student supports, (2) enriched and expanded learning time and opportunities, (3) active family and community engagement, and (4) collaborative leadership practices.

*Klevan, S., Daniel, J., Fehrer, K., & Maier, A. (2023). Creating the Conditions for Children to Learn: Oakland's Districtwide Community Schools Initiative. *Learning Policy Institute*.

External School Visits

East Coast: Newark, NJ

- Uncommon Schools Network– Liberty Elementary School and Fairmount Elementary School
 - Approximately 85% SED, 13% SWD, 5% EL, and less than 5% McV/Unhoused
 - Charter Schools network
 - Approximately 70-75% of student scored proficient or higher on state tests in both ELA/Math
 - Two schools share one campus

External School Visits

During the visit:

- Roundtable members were able to:
 - observe multiple classrooms
 - interview principals and deans from both sites
 - talk with students and teachers about their experiences
 - observe large all-school gatherings at both sites throughout the school day
- Workshop with roundtable members the next day to record and process learnings

Key Takeaways from NJ Visit

After reflecting on what we saw and heard, roundtable participants were asked to first reflect on what they wanted to ‘keep’ and what they wanted to ‘question’. Items in the keep column included:

- Whole school enrichment activities and community building
- Intentional transitions for kids between classes, between places, and between periods of the day.
- Breakfast for every kid during school hours with additional enrichment and supervision
- Standardization and efficiency of the schedule
- Explicit teaching of routines and expectations (warm demander)
- SEL embedded in daily routines including affirmations

Key Takeaways from NJ Visit

After reflecting on the patterns that started to appear during the discussion on what we wanted to ‘keep’ from what we saw on our visit, the following theme emerged:

- **Power of the Collective**
 - “No missed days, no missed kids”--we are all a team moving in one direction (including charter network support and curriculum team)
 - Whole-school identity and shared language with SEL, behavior, and instructional routines
 - Whole-staff routine and standardized schedule aligning instructional blocks across grade levels
 - Whole-community expectations: parents brought in to set expectations and be trained in how system works

Upcoming External School Visits

West Coast (SoCal): San Diego, CA

- ABC Unified (Carver Academy Charter), SDCOE Community Schools, and Monarch School
 - Carver Academy Charter
 - Enrichment Clusters
 - National Blue Ribbon
 - SDCOE
 - Community Schools Programs and Partnerships
 - Monarch School
 - Community School run by the county in partnership with non-profit
 - 100% McKV students

Upcoming External Visits

The Castro Ed Roundtable group will wrap up the external school visits with some local visits to:

- Mission Prep in San Francisco, CA (MAR 20)
- Nystrom Elementary (TBD) in Richmond, CA



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Next Steps

Community Engagement

Collecting feedback about Castro's strengths, challenges, and priorities from:

- Teachers/Staff (staff meeting)
- Castro Parents/Families (format similar to Cafécito)

Building the Action Plan

Considering the three **priority areas** identified including (1) learning acceleration, (2) enrichment, and (3) SEL supports, the action plan will include for each of these areas:

- Goal(s)
- Success Criteria
- Work Action Plan
 - Strategic Actions
 - Person(s) Responsible
 - Priority level (low, medium, high)
 - Start/End (timeline)
 - Resources Required

Next Board Update:

April 18, 2024:

- Continuation of findings and reflections on learnings gleaned from external site visits (San Diego and local visits)
- Identification of goals with rationales substantiated through data from Castro and findings from external site visits.