

Mountain View Whisman School District

Agenda Item for Board Meeting of April 18, 2024

Agenda Category: Consent Agenda

Agenda Item Title: Board Goal: Reimagining Castro Site Visit Update

Person Responsible: Dr. Ayindé Rudolph, Superintendent
Megan Pohlman, Director of Equity

Background:

This report is a follow-up to the previous presentation made on March 14, 2024 that summarized the learnings from the Castro Ed Roundtable's visit to external school sites in Newark, New Jersey. This report details the learnings from subsequent visits to San Diego, CA and San Francisco, CA. Takeaways from these visits will inform the creation of an action plan that addresses the Board's vision for Mariano Castro Elementary School.

Site Visit Summaries:

Cerritos, CA Carvery Academy Visit:

EdRoundtable participants were invited to participate in a site visit at Carver Academy Elementary School in Cerritos, California. Carvery Academy is a magnet school (in ABC Unified) that presented on their Enrichment Clusters program, where students get the opportunity to participate in a 6-week, family and community-run series of classes/activities every Friday that are developed based on student interest. The Principal and Instructional Coach presented on the various benefits of this program including attendance incentivization and student leadership opportunities. During the classroom observations, the group noted a very collaborative, strong relationship between the Principal and the Instructional Coach and saw classrooms where students were engaged and focused. The rigor in the classrooms, the positive behavioral supports, and the intentional classroom management left a particularly strong impression on our team. Additionally worthy of note is that the Instructional Coach prepares the data for the site and actually constructs the instructional 'small groups' for the teaching teams. This site also uses a very specific reading intervention program (called SIPS) and has aligned all of the grade level ELA teaching times so they can group students across grade levels for intervention when needed.

San Diego County Office of Education Visit:

EdRoundtable participants traveled to the San Diego County Office of Education and enjoyed a panel presentation from the Community Schools team. The county team gave a brief presentation on the Community Schools model and then opened up the session to a panel discussion where members of our roundtable discussed the various elements of community schools. A big takeaway from this meeting included elevating student and parent engagement (voice and choice) in the development of school programs and supports. The Community Schools team emphasized the importance of having someone on

staff that is strictly dedicated to building and maintaining community partnerships in order to sustain the work. Additionally, the panel discussed how community schools differed from ‘typical’ schools because community schools are often a type of community ‘hub’ with extended hours, resources for parents and families, and a place of activity and joy within the community, even after school hours.

Monarch School Visit in San Diego, CA:

Monarch is run through the County Office of Education and strictly serves students and families who are designated under the McKinney-Vento Act. Key takeaways from this site visit included a strong coordination of services for students and families (Examples include services for parents—help with job applications and housing issues AND services for students—academic, social, and emotional support along with basic need supports including showers and three meals per day). The monarch staff were experts in coordinating services from the community and recommended having someone at the site dedicated to making these kinds of connections. Like Carver, instructional coaches, not teachers, were creating focus groups of students based on student data. Additionally, all students undergo a comprehensive intake process (with assessments) that allows staff to maximize their impact on student learning from day one. The importance of honoring student voice and choice was evident at this site based on the enrichment activities the school provides being chosen by and for students and families.

San Francisco, CA Mission Prep Visit:

EdRoundtable participants were invited to Mission Preparatory School in the Mission District of San Francisco, CA. This school is a K-8 standalone charter school that was selected based on their success with improving academic achievement scores of one of their most vulnerable subgroups: Latino male students. Participants got a tour of the facilities and were also invited to observe classrooms in multiple grade levels. A few of the major takeaways included the power of community partnerships to help students feel connected to their culture and to increase their sense of belonging. Additionally, Mission Prep provided opportunities for students to engage in meaningful supervised activities both before and after school for an extended period of time. The site was using ELOP funds to cover the costs of this additional programming. They had a close partnership with the Boys and Girls club just down the street and were actually able to use their facilities to host daily essential activities such as PE in their gymnasium when they lacked such a facility directly on campus. Food was always available for students throughout the day and the campus had several places where students could go to decompress around a supportive adult. Finally, they used an SEL model that included restorative approaches to peer conflict. Each classroom posted restorative sentence frames that students could use daily.

Next Steps:

Meeting 4: 3/26/24

Participants will debrief the experiences visiting Mission Prep in San Francisco, CA. Participants will also begin completing the Look Fors matrix using the learning from all of the external site visits completed. Finally, participants will start to find the key themes and takeaways from external site visits that will guide the major changes in our priority areas including instructional changes, school structure changes, and additional SEL support for students and families.

Meeting 5: 4/23/24

Participants will debrief the final external school site visit to Nystrom Elementary in Richmond, CA. Additionally, participants will begin to provide feedback on the 'high priority' items of the Re-Imagining Castro plan. This will be the first time the committee provides feedback to the Superintendent/Designee on items the staff presents for the Re-Imagining Castro plan.

Cafécito for Castro Families - Re-Imagining Castro: 4/25/24 from 8:15-9:15 AM

Purpose: To speak with parents about their experiences at Castro and their hopes for how we can improve the student experience in the following areas: (1) speeding up learning after Covid, (2) providing extra experiences for students during/before/after school to deepen learning, and (3) supporting Castro students and families socially and emotionally.

Staff Meeting Debrief with Dr. Rudolph and Castro Staff: 4/24/24 from 3:15-4:15 PM

Purpose: To speak with the Castro staff about their experiences at Castro and their feedback for how we can build capacity around (1) learning acceleration, (2) in and out of classroom enrichment, and (3) providing SEL support to students and families.

Next Board Update: 5/2/24

During this Board update, the Board will be presented with an initial draft of primary critical actions related to the Re-Imagining Castro plan along with performance indicators (short and long term).