

*Mountain View Whisman School District*

**Agenda Item for Board Meeting of May 2, 2024**

**Agenda Category:** Review and Discussion

**Agenda Item Title:** Board Goal: Reimagining Castro Update

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

**Background:**

This presentation and report is a follow-up to the previous presentation made on March 14, 2024 and the report issued for the April 18, 2024 meeting that introduced a scope and sequence for building the *Re-Imagining Castro* action plan and gave updates on external site visits. This report summary and presentation is intended to provide an update to the Board on the actions of the Re-Imagining Castro EdRoundtable group and the creation of an action plan that addresses the Board's vision for Mariano Castro Elementary School.

**Site Visit Summaries:**

**Nystrom Elementary in Richmond, CA:**

Nystrom is a non-charter public school in Richmond, CA that enrolls 444 students, of whom approximately 75% are Hispanic/Latino, 58% are English Learners, and 68% are socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED). The Re-Imagining Castro working group had the pleasure of visiting the Nystrom campus, observing students and teachers in classrooms, and talking with teachers, the instructional coach and the Principal. Key takeaways from the Nystrom visit included how important it is that staff operationalize their commitment to literacy as a civil right through their hyper-focus on reading intervention and getting kids reading on grade-level. Getting kids reading on grade-level was the focus for the entire staff for the first three years of the 'turnaround' period at Nystrom, after which they saw remarkable results. Additionally, participants in the working group remarked on the strong, trusting relationships among adults at the school. In particular, participants could see that the teachers trusted one another as professionals. The teachers shared students during their Walk to Read time and were transparent about their data and goals for the shared students. The strong relationship between the teachers and the instructional coach was also evident. The coach was in classrooms giving real-time feedback almost everyday with every teacher. The teachers were effusive about how helpful it is to receive guidance and support from their instructional coach. Participants also noted that the instructional coach and Principal were the instructional leaders of the school. They provided the motivation and support needed for teachers to persist when times were hard.

**Community Engagement Summaries:**

**Castro EdRoundtable Meeting Summaries:**

*Meeting 5: 4/23/24*

At the April EdRoundtable meeting, participants were guided through a reflection protocol in order to crystalize the learnings gleaned from conducting a site visit at Nystrom Elementary School in Richmond, CA. As a result of the reflection protocol and active participation from all members, the group was able to have a substantive conversation about what they learned from the site visit (see summary above). Additionally, participants heard from Dr. Cyndee Nguyen, the Director of Early Literacy for MVWSD about the creation of a new schedule that would allow for the implementation of a school-wide Response to Instruction (RTI) model, where students are shared by classroom and reading intervention (RI) teachers across grade-levels to ensure each student is receiving support for specific reading skills. Participants asked many clarifying questions and were then guided through an activity summarized in the table below that helped refine the RTI School-wide model (and schedule) even more and provided additional things to take into consideration for the successful implementation of this schedule next school year.

Change Management Protocol for **RTI School-wide Model**, “DCOM”

<p>Describe the direction of our thinking and talk about why we are going in this direction?</p>	<p>We want to improve literacy instruction and reading is a fundamental civil right for all (North Star). We want to prioritize instruction and maximize time in core subjects such as Reading. We want the school schedule to prioritize student learning, first. Each kid deserves to get the help they need at the appropriate level to ensure growth.</p>
<p>Does everyone involved in this change have the skills necessary for successful implementation?</p>	<p>Teachers and staff may need some extra support to provide the desired level of differentiation and support.. A strong instructional coach can help manage these new changes in instruction. Teachers will be sharing kids and sharing data, so those relationships are important and trust-building should be prioritized.</p>
<p>What opportunities does this new change present?</p>	<p>Castro school is being prioritized by the school district. We have the opportunity to systematize ELA/Reading instruction (and intervention) with this new curriculum. We have the opportunity to showcase the Castro school identity and invite parents to actively engage with their kids in reading. We have another opportunity to emphasize for families how important attendance is (no missed days, no missed kids).</p>
<p>How will we keep people motivated when we know that change is hard?</p>	<p>Principal and data team will check in with teachers every 6 weeks. Additionally, student gains may transform staff morale. It will be important to capture and share all of these stories of growth and learning in order to sustain the momentum. Finally, it will be important to give</p>

	teachers/staff a safe space to provide honest feedback about the routines and practices they are new to implementing.
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**Castro Staff Meeting with the Superintendent Summary:**

During an April staff meeting at Castro, Principal Keirns, Superintendent Rudolph and Director Pohlman co-facilitated a feedback session with the teachers. Teachers Lizz, Lauren, and AnaMaria shared various insights gleaned during external site visits, especially as they related to learning acceleration, enrichment, and SEL support. Teachers had the opportunity to ask these teachers for additional information regarding their experiences or any clarifying questions. Director Pohlman presented the Castro staff with some strategic actions developed by the Re-Imagining Castro EdRoundtable group and the feedback is summarized in the table below:

Staff Feedback, Castro Elementary School, Strategic Actions 1-3

Strategic Action: School-wide RTI Model	Staff noted the following additional considerations they hope will be addressed in the implementation: + protected Thursday collaboration periods, + behavior support for students not in your class, + process for incorporating new students, + process for addressing teacher absences so this schedule can succeed
Strategic Action: Breakfast for all students built into the school day	Concerns/wonderings were noted around the following: + logistics of food and waste management, + concerns about increase in pests and insects, + guidance on procedures for very young students
Strategic Action: Centralizing data and grouping for RTI	Staff provided feedback with the hopes that the following would be addressed in the plan: + more adults on campus would be helpful for additional academic/social support –support from community is desired (eg. volunteers from the senior center or local high school).

**Castro Family Feedback Session Summary:**

During an April community feedback meeting at Castro, Principal Keirns, Director Pohlman, and Mr. Miguel Meza co-facilitated a feedback session with parents from the community. Parents Jon and Amy, along with Trustee Berman shared various insights gleaned during external site visits, especially as they related to learning acceleration, enrichment, and SEL support. Principal Kerins facilitated an activity with parents where they gave their hopes and expectations about what they wanted to see (1) to improve learning in the classroom, (2) increase engagement in school through field trips and after school

opportunities, (3) and with additional support and engagement opportunities for families. The feedback is captured in the table below:

<p>In the classroom, what do you hope to see to improve learning?</p>	<p>+time for students to build relationships with one another, +additional supports for English Learners, +more partnerships with parents on how to improve reading, +address bullying (kids need to feel safe to play/be on campus), +provide more supervision for Castro that is not shared with Mistral</p>
<p>Regarding after-school enrichment or field trips, what do you hope to see?</p>	<p>+personal invitation for parents to attend field trips, +personal invitations or parents to actively participate in campus activities, +more activities that are no-cost, not restricted on number of participants, and provide incentives for kids to practice their reading, +activities after school that include sports, art, music, and cooking</p>
<p>What are your hopes/expectations for how your family participates in school events?</p>	<p>+additional supports for students and families that are non-English speaking, +retired volunteers to support students and other activities, +encouraging students to make healthy choices and value the food provided (good habits), +more fun events on campus</p>

**Next Steps:**

**Meeting 6: 5/14/24**

At the final EdRoundtable meeting, participants will continue to reflect on the feedback gathered from the community, including at the community and staff meetings that took place at the end of April. Participants will work to incorporate as much of the feedback as possible into their recommendations. Additionally, the working group will refine/revise success criteria for the major strategic actions outlined in the Year 1 plan and also provide feedback on the evaluation plan attached to each strategic action.

**Next Board Update: 5/30/24**

At the 5/30 Board meeting, Years 2 and 3 of the ReImagining Castro plan will be shared with trustees and the community. This presentation will mimic the format of the previous presentation in the way strategic actions are explained and outlined. This presentation will additionally include success criteria for each strategic action outlined in the plan (Years 1-3) along with projected costs for any additional resources implicated in the plan.