



Action Plan for School Improvement Mariano Castro Elementary School



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Strategic Plan Alignment

From the beginning, the Re-Imagining Castro school improvement project was anchored in the MVWSD Strategic Plan. The depth and scope of the Re-Imagining Castro process touched all five strategic plan goal areas listed below.

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



Framing the Problem

The continuing reproduction of **educational inequality** in relation to race and social class is not a unique problem for Mountain View Whisman School District. Over the past few decades, millions of kids in the U.S. have experienced the negative impact growing inequality has on communities (Steil & Menedian, 2014). The **concentrated poverty and disadvantage** at Castro over the years can be correlated with increased teacher and admin turnover, a decrease in enrichment programs and classroom volunteers due to diminished enrollment, and/or the reinforcing feedback loop of 'low-performing schools' receiving less community support through enrollment. These system fluctuations and unintended consequences were studied aggressively when planning for **significant and sustainable change** for Castro's future. Framing the problem was an important first step to addressing it. MVWSD framed the Re-Imagining Castro Initiative as an Equity Challenge.

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?



Roadmap to Improvement

The development of a plan of action for Mountain View Whisman's lowest performing school required a process that included understanding the root causes of underperformance, undergoing a benchmarking exercise using learnings from external site visits, and contextualizing best practices for future work at Castro.

November 2023

Exploring Castro Data

A comprehensive data analysis of Castro Elementary's historical performance was conducted along with staff interviews in order to determine root-causes.

January 2024

EdRoundtable was Formed

A Re-Imagining Educational Roundtable group was formed that included representatives from multiple stakeholder groups

February 2024

Areas of Priority Defined

In collaboration with the EdRoundtable, areas of priority were identified based on the root-case analysis results.

March 2024

External Site Visits

The EdRoundtable team visited six external school sites that included public, Title I schools, community schools, and charter schools with similar demographics to Castro.

May 2024

Development of Action Plan

The district district staff explored highleverage changes to Castro practices in order to operationalize our new learnings and design a program that will improve student outcomes.

April 2024

Synthesis of Learnings

Based on the observations and interviews conducted during the external site visits, the EdRoundtable synthesized their learnings using the Look Fors document previously co-created by the team.



Analyzing Castro Data

At a series of Board meetings, Dr. Rudolph and Director Pohlman presented a deep dive analysis of Castro Elementary's historical performance. This analysis and subsequent findings were informed by Castro's current and historical enrollment and student performance data in addition to staff interviews. Key findings of this analysis are included below.

Key Findings:

- Enrollment Data:
 - Decreasing number of SED students but increasing number of students who qualify as homeless suggest that families living in poverty are being pushed into homelessness (struggles of poverty are being amplified by current economic conditions)
- Student Performance DAta:
 - 'Standard Not Met' in both ELA and Math was steadily increasing over time pre-Covid. Post-Covid there has been significant growth of students in the 'Standard Not Met' category, which indicates that this group is the most influential in overall scores for the entire school
 - For ELA, Grade 3 scores show the largest current gaps between the number of students who are scoring in the 'Standard Not Met' and 'Standard Met' categories
 - Looking a bit more closely at CAASPP Literacy and Receptive Language (Listening) scores reveals fairly stagnant trends of students in the 'Near Standard' or 'Below Standard' categories. Students scoring in the 'Above Standard' category saw significant declines Post-Covid.
 - Additionally, students scoring 'Below Standard' in receptive language saw significant increase Post-Covid



Analyzing Castro Data

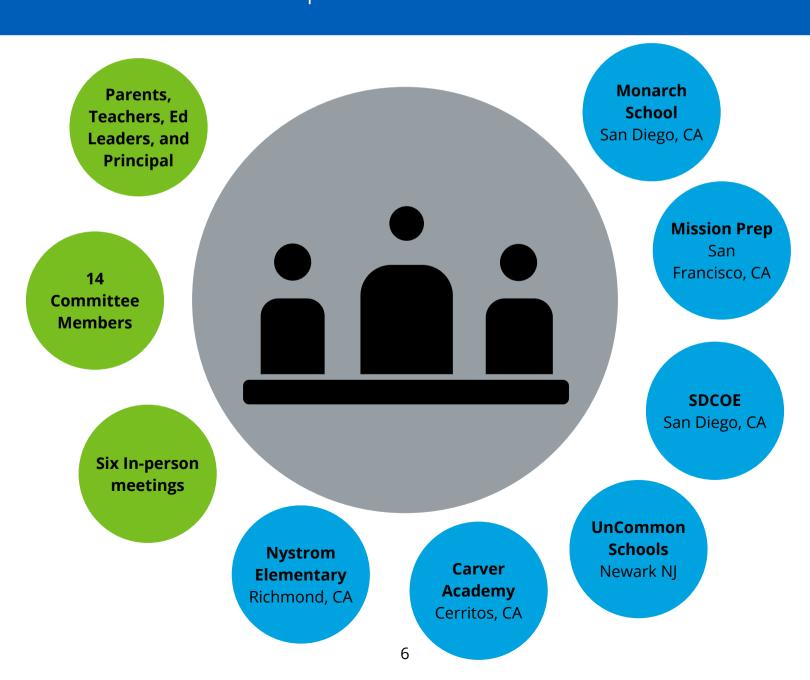
Key Findings (Cont.):

- Attendance, Suspension, and Long-term EL Data:
 - Chronic Absenteeism has been steadily increasing since 2017 and increased significantly Post-Covid, even outpacing the State.
 - Suspension rates remained in line with district averages and increased slightly before Covid. Post-Covid there has been an exponential increase in suspensions due to dysregulated behavior and challenges on mental wellness of students.
 - Long-term EL data reveals a typical fluctuation from year to year as cohorts reclassify. The overall trend is a slight increase in students at-risk for long-term EL status in Grades 3 and 4, with decreases over time for 5th grade.
- Interviews with Staff and Administrators:
 - Strengths
 - Dedicated teachers wanting to serve at Castro, specifically
 - Small class sizes
 - Teamwork and collective responsibility
 - Challenges
 - 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 SEL needs
 - Literacy
- Factors impacting past improvement efforts:
 - School closures due to Covid-19
 - Principal and staff turnover
 - Applying changes for only short period of time before shifting to something else due to perceived lack of results (i.e. "quick fixes")
 - Tight daily schedules eliminating longer instructional blocks
 - outside provider schedule constraints
 - sharing facilities/personnel with Mistral
 - social-emotional and behavioral needs of students increased post-Covid and takes classroom time



EdRoundtable Committee

A Re-Imagining Educational Roundtable group was formed that included representatives from multiple stakeholder groups including parents, teachers, district leaders, and principals. The first meeting was held on 1/9/24 and the last meeting was held on 5/14/24. The team met six times at the District Office and completed an additional six external site visits.





External Site Visits

Based on the observations and interviews conducted during the external site visits, the EdRoundtable synthesized their learnings using the Look Fors document co-created by the team using Castro data. The learnings were organized by priority area. Insights are summarized below using this structure.

Priority Area 1: Learning Acceleration

- Teachers use common curriculum with fidelity to reduce time spent on lesson creation and maximize time on lesson delivery and differentiation
 - o Coaching focuses on explicit feedback on instructional practices
- Teachers share students across grade-level bands for RTI in Reading, which allows to support all students at all levels
 - School day is structured to allow for this
- Learning occurs when basic needs of students are being met
 - Schools provided breakfast AND snack; and cultivated a sense of school identity/belonging to increase attendance

Priority Area 2: Educational Enrichment

- Enrichment (before, during, and after school) is most meaningful when it is student-driven.
- Requires avenues for student-driven opportunities and student interest surveys
- Strong community partnerships help make enrichment activities culturally-relevant and meaningful
- Community partnerships take time to create and work/time to maintain but improve overall experience of families
- Schools that become 'places to gather' in a community can better serve families–which helps kids. Having frequent 'reasons to gather' is important.
- Strong parent/school partnerships require communication and time/space to develop

Priority Area 3: SEL Supports

- Clear (high) expectations and positive behavioral support is key to maintaining a healthy learning environment
- Having more adults in the classroom and on campus can allow for increased support for students academically, emotionally, and behaviorally
- Structure of the school day must account for increased adult presence
- Emotional regulation and social skills must be taught explicitly and reinforced by teacher and parents in close collaboration
- Teacher/Parent consistent communication is essential and requires intentional systems/practices staff have time and space to implement



Action Plan Considerations

Being mindful of staff/community capacity for change and some of the sweeping district changes being implemented in the next three years across the district, staff conceived of a plan skeleton that would introduce changes at Castro rolled out in 2-3 phases, approximately 1 year apart.

2024-25

2025-26

2026-27



Implementation Year 1 Changes from Action Plan

District-wide changes occurring at all schools

Capacity Building for Year 2



Implementation Year 2 Changes from Action Plan

Evaluating
Year 1 Changes
from Action Plan

District-wide changes occurring at all schools

Capacity Building for Year 3



Evaluating Year 2
Changes from
Action Plan

Refining
Year 1 Changes
from Action Plan

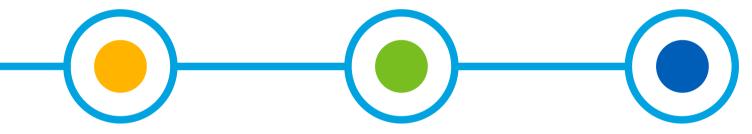
District-wide changes occurring at all schools

3-Year Re-Imaginging Castro Evaluation



Special Considerations

Given the number of English Learners at Castro, all Action Plan steps need to account for properly attending to students' learning of academic and conversational English. Without it, students may struggle both academically and socially. Intentional improvement in ELD grouping, planning, and teaching is needed to support English Learners at Castro.



Considerations for our English Learners:

Year One (SY24-25)

In Year 1, Site leadership will ensure all students recieve leveled, high-quality, explicit language development instruction with support from the District ELD TOSA.

Year Two (SY25-26)

Additionally in Year 2, site leadership will utilize the site data team to identify additional instructional ELD supports tailored to the needs of Castro students with direct support from the District ELD TOSA.

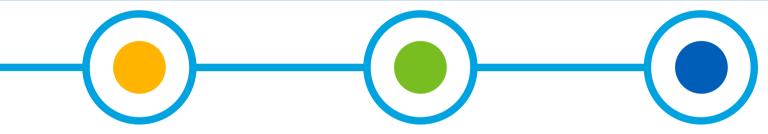
Year Three (SY26-27)

Finally in Year 3, site leadership will implement a process for annual review of all EL & RFEP students' language progress, identifying supports where needed.



Special Considerations

The transformative nature of the Re-Imagining Castro process and all of the changes proposed in this plan has presented staff with a unique opportunity to re-invent and revitalize the school identity. This will be an organic process that is kicked off during staff development days in late summer.



Considerations for School and Classroom Culture and Climate

Cultivation of School Identity

As a part of Re-Imagining Castro Year 1 changes, the school site leader will be using one of the additional summer staff days to engage teachers in a workshop to develop and crystalize a new school identity centered around the questions:

What makes Castro unique from other schools? What do we care about? How will Castro look/sound different than it was before Re-Imagining Castro?

Cultivation of Classroom Identity

Several of the schools visited through external site visits presented models of teachers who cultivated strong classroom identities with students. In many cases, each classroom in the school would co-construct a classroom identity with students--represented by an animal, a college/university, or a school value. This classroom identity was used by the teacher to increase class cohesiveness and pride.



Action Plan Year One

For school year 2024-25, the most significant changes made through the Relmagining Castro Action Plan include a school-wide RTI model, breakfast for all during the school day, and centralizing data management for RTI.

2024-25







School-Wide RTI Model

Includes:

A new master schedule with 50-minute blocks, common breaks for 1-5th, and cross grade-level RTI

- Implications include: RI teaching team ascending on gradelevel band (8-10 teachers at once, including RI teachers and grade-level teachers)
- separation of STEAM from RTI (whole class will attend STEAM)
- team teaching during math

Breakfast for all

Includes:

Providing breakfast for all students during the school day in addition to snack at recess time and lunch

- implications include: specific time set aside for this as a part of the master schedule
- new routines need to be internalized by students and staff

Centralizing Data Management

Includes:

Site-based data team will form and include Principal, instructional coach, reading intervention specialist, ELD TOSA, and Newcomer teacher.

> implications include: modified UDC for Castro teachers, with an emphasis on action planning and reflection

Additional Changes

- Extra PD days for teachers in August (paid, incentivized)
- Recess/Lunch behavioral support (Playworks, etc.)
- Increased FTE for Newcomer teacher to 1.0
- Continued Wellness Center support



School-Wide RTI Model

2024-25

Why the change?

Before the change:

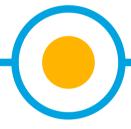
- first-teaching instructional blocks shortened and inconsistent
 - due to issues created by shared campus, specials and scheduling, and reading intervention push-in
- lack of targeted interventions based on data
 - o due to lack of ability to group based on varying needs within one classroom
- current scheduling practices
 - which included scheduling around specials, not instruction (misalignment with our goals)

- school-wide master schedule prioritizing longer instructional blocks to prioritize tier 1 instruction
- common intervention blocks so teams can work together to share students
- teachers on same lesson pace, which makes it easier to combine classes when necessary



School-Wide RTI Model

2024-25







How will we know it's working?

Capacity Building

Will include training for teachers around Tier 1 instructional supports and quality first-teaching with new curriculum.

Evaluation Plan

Leading Indicators:

Adherence to set schedule.

Changes in data conversations between teaching teams as it relates to benchmarks and curriculum-based assessments.

Consistent use of curriculum components.

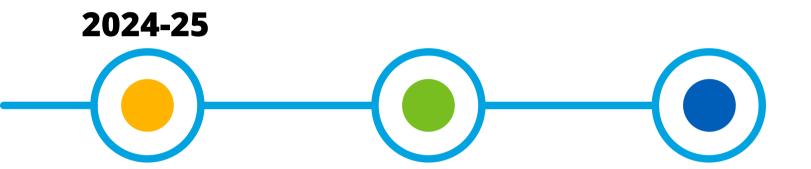
Lagging Indicators:

Academic growth (progress) of students from the iReady assessments

Fewer disciplinary incidents during Tier 1 instruction time due to increased engagement.



Breakfast for All



Why the change?

Before the change:

- drastic increase in students who quality under McKinney-Vento
- necessitating a re-evaluation of how basic needs are being met from the school site

- school-wide breakfast during the school day provided a structure for there to be food available all day
- sites visited were successful in using this time to build community by incorporating breakfast into morning meeting
- access to food/resources de-stigmatized as a result of overall site shift to breakfast for all



Breakfast for All

2024-25







How will we know it's working?

Capacity Building

Will include training for janitorial support, more trash cans, practicing delivery/pickup, and developing new waste management processes for students/staff.

Evaluation Plan

Leading Indicators:

Meals served (number)

Staff/teacher and parent survey on implementation at the end of Trimester 2 and once per year thereafter.

Lagging Indicators:

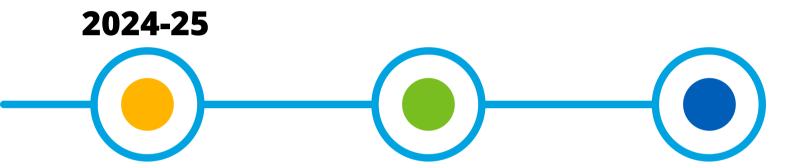
Improved attendance

Reporting increased sense of belonging and connectedness

Decreased tardiness reported at end of Trimester 2 and annually thereafter



Centralizing Data Management



Why the change?

Before the change:

- data management of student groupings for RTI requires constant changes/vigilance
- cross-grade-level RTI groupings requires additional logistics management–which is a burden unrealistic for teachers to bear
- RTI groupings benefit from interdepartmental collaboration (such as for Newcomer, EL, and RI support)

- data management by a site-based team promoted school-wide data transparency and ownership
- data management by a site-based team took burden of groupings/swaps off of teachers who could focus on instructional shifts



Centralizing Data Management

2024-25







How will we know it's working?

Capacity Building

Will include training for members of the data team along with development of feedback loops between data team and teachers.

Evaluation Plan

Leading Indicators:

Data sources for UDC are uniform

Use of central data repository by teachers and data team

Lagging Indicators:

Teachers reporting increased confidence with using student data to respond instructionally (survey) given T2 and once annually thereafter.

Academic growth (progress) of students from the iReady assessments



Action Plan Year Two

For school year 2025-26, the most significant changes made through the Re-Imagining Castro Action Plan include the implementation of districtsupported, student-driven clubs, additional Castro community partners to increase the flow of resources and volunteers to campus, and Looping classrooms

2025-26







Increased Community Partnerships

Includes:

Additional community partnerships, including more volunteers present on campus

 implications include: conducting a community assets mapping session with community in Year 1

Continuation of:

- Year 1 Action Plan Changes (3)
- Extra PD days for teachers in August (paid, incentivized)
- Recess/Lunch behavioral support (Playworks, etc.)
- Increased FTE for Newcomer teacher to 1.0

Continued Wellness Center support

Student-Driven Clubs

Includes:

A new menu and schedule for district-supported, studentdriven afterschool programs and clubs

- Implications include:
 Student and
 community feedback
 and interest will be
 captured by survey in
 Year 1 (SY24-25)
- Working with MVWSD+ to ensure all students have a choice to meaningfully participate and still access after-school care

Looping Classrooms

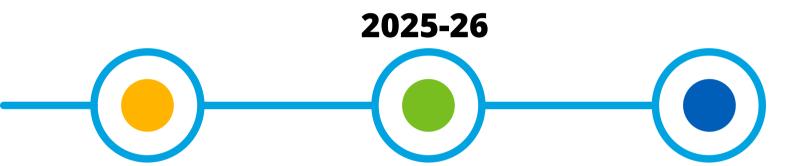
Includes:

Teachers identified in year one will travel to the next grade-level with their student group

- Implications include: Teacher and community feedback gathered in Year 1.
- Additional curriculum licenses for teachers
- Implementation of new protocol for student assignment in Year 1.



Increased Community Parterships



Why the change?

Before the change:

- School closures and community hardships due to Covid-19 increased non-profit and business turnover, which made it more difficult to manage community partnerships
- Responsibility to create/maintain relationships with outside vendors has been inconsistently assigned as an employee task

- Strong community partnerships help make enrichment activities culturally-relevant and meaningful
 - Community partnerships take time to create and work/time to maintain but improve overall experience of families
- Having more adults in the classroom and on campus can allow for increased support for students academically, emotionally, and behaviorally
 - o Structure of the school day must account for increased adult presence



Increased Community Partnerships

2025-26







How will we know it's working?

Capacity Building

Community assets mapping to be conducted with the community during Year 1. Additional capacity building to occur in Summer 2025 and will include training and resource procurement for staff taking a lead role.

Evaluation Plan

Leading Indicators:

Increased adult presence on campus

Increased parent participating in oncampus activities

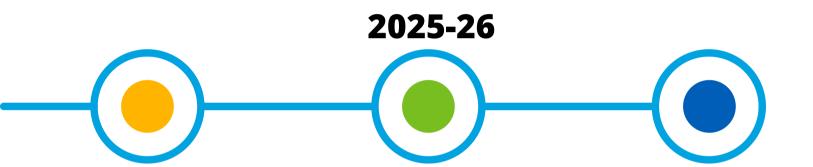
Lagging Indicators:

Attendance and chronic absenteeism rates decreasing

Increased feelings of belonging and parent satisfaction (LCAP survey)



Student-driven Programs/Clubs



Why the change?

Before the change:

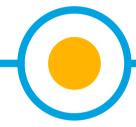
- After-school programs outside of MVWSD+ severely limited due to financial burden additional partnerships require for the site and/or families
- Castro/Mistral operating as separate autonomous sites, not collapsing or sharing afterschool opportunities between the schools due to the complexity of logistics

- Enrichment (before, during, and after school) is most meaningful when it is student-driven.
- Schools that become 'places to gather' in a community can better serve families which helps kids. Having frequent 'reasons to gather' is important.
- School-wide enrichment opportunities provided incentive for kids that increased attendance and decreased chronic absenteeism.



Student-driven Programs/Clubs

2025-26







How will we know it's working?

Capacity Building

Interest surveys to go out to students and community in Year 1. Additional capacity building to occur in Summer 2025 and will include training and resource procurement for staff agreeing to take a lead role.

Evaluation Plan

Leading Indicators:

Program participation (%)

Student interest (survey)

Lagging Indicators:

Attendance and chronic absenteeism rates decreasing

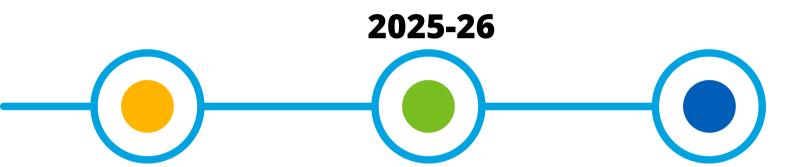
Increased feelings of belonging (LCAP survey)

Increased parent satisfaction (LCAP survey)

Decreased behavioral incidents



Looping



Why the change?

What is looping?

Looping, a school practice since 1913, is "a policy in which whole classes (or most of the students within a class) are taught by the same teacher in sequential years" (Cistone, et al 2004 in Hill 2018, p. 2). Other names for looping include: "persisting groups," "multi-year grouping," "teacher/student progression," "teacher cycling," "teacher rotation" or "persistence teams" (Zarlengo, et al 1997, p. 8).

What is the research on looping?

- Having 'familiar faces' from the previous school year was linked to lower numbers of unexcused absences and lower odds of chronic absenteeism (Kirksey, 2018).
- Having a group of consistent classmates was associated with better achievement or socio-emotional outcomes (Espinoza & Knifsend, 2012).
- Students who have more consistent peer networks experience fewer changes to their learning context, which leads to a stronger connection to school (Juvonen et al., 2012).
- Consistency in peers serves as a protective factor for children's adjustment during the inevitable transitions they encounter (Ladd & Price, 1987).



Looping

2025-26







How will we know it's working?

Capacity Building

Interest surveys to go out to students and community in Year 1. Additional capacity building to occur in Summer 2025 and will include training and resource procurement for staff agreeing to take a lead role.

Evaluation Plan

Leading Indicators:

% Students 'Looped'

Ramp-up time for core instruction at the beginning of the year

Lagging Indicators:

Attendance and chronic absenteeism rates decreasing

Increased feelings of belonging (LCAP survey)

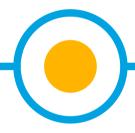
Academic growth (progress) of students from the iReady assessments



Action Plan Year Three

For school year 2026-27, the most significant changes made through the Re-Imagining Castro Action Plan include the additional support and guidance to teachers on team teaching in math and the creation of a Re-Imagining Castro extension plan based on a comprehensive evaluation of efforts in Years 1-3.

2026-27







Continuation of:

- Year 1 and Year 2 Action Plan Changes
- Extra PD days for teachers in August (paid, incentivized)
- Recess/Lunch behavioral support (Playworks, etc.)
- Increased FTE for Newcomer teacher to 1.0
- Continued Wellness Center support

Team Teaching in Math with New Curriculum [pending adoption]

Includes:

A plan to support teachers in maximizing team teaching with a new curriculum in math.

- Implications include:

 Feedback needed from teachers about current practice of team teaching
- Providing 'team teaching' professional development in addition to curriculum training

Re-Imagining Castro Evaluation and Extension (for SY2027-2030)

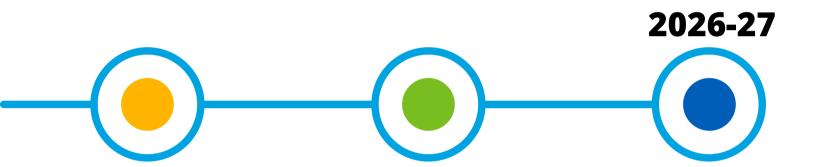
Includes:

Creating a Re-Imagining Castro extension plan

- implications include: conducting a comprehensive evaluation of Castro data and feedback from Years 1-3
- bringing community members together to gather feedback that will inform extension plan



Team Teaching in Math



Why the change?

Before the change:

- Much like in Reading, teachers at Castro are struggling to adequately differentiate instruction for students in math due to the learning gaps produced by school closures during Covid-19.
- Interview data gathered from staff indicated a strong desire for additional trained adult support in classrooms
- School-wide RTI model provides an opportunity to allow teachers to team teach during math multiple times a week

- More trained adults in the classroom allows for more targeted student support
- At the sites visited, adult teaching assistants were often observed taking small groups of students for remediation or enrichment, which helped meet varying student needs in a diverse classroom
- Instructional coaches and assistants had strong, collaborative relationships with classroom teachers, which allowed them to better serve students



Team Teaching in Math

2026-27

How will we know it's working?

Capacity Building

Capacity building for team teaching in math begins in Year 1 as teachers start team teaching in math as a result of the School-Wide RTI model. Formalized training in team teaching will be responsive to the perceived needs of educators in the first two years of implementation of that schedule.

Evaluation Plan

Leading Indicators:

Opportunity of small-group remediation and enrichment in math

Increased number of trained adults providing support in math

Lagging Indicators:

Academic growth in Math on iReady assessments



Conclusion

Special Thanks

Mountain View Whisman Trustees

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