



Mountain View
Whisman
School District

Board of Trustees SY23-24 Goal

Reimagining Castro: A Road to
Improvement

5/30/24



Today's Goals and Objectives

Today we will:

- ❑ Explore Action Plan (Years 2 and 3)
- ❑ Examine projected associated costs of Action Plan implementation
- ❑ Outline next steps for implementation and evaluation of Action plan items

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?

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)

Managing Expectations

Year 2-3 Changes Review: [today]

- changes that required more ‘adult learning’ such as professional development for teachers that needs to be planned ahead of time; and/or
- required more community/staff input before strategic actions are implemented (eg. student or teacher feedback)



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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 Actions and Getting Feedback from Community (APR) ✓
- ❑ Sequence/Timeline these Changes (MAY) ✓
- ❑ **Budgeting for cost/expense (MAY 30)** ✓
- ❑ Sharing the Plan with the Board (MAY 30) ✓

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?

External School Site Visits Completed

- Mariano Castro, Mountain View CA [internal]
- Uncommon Schools Network, Newark, NJ
- Carver Academy, Cerritos, CA
- San Diego County Comm. Schools, San Diego, CA
- Monarch School, San Diego, CA
- Mission Prep, San Francisco, CA
- Nystrom Elementary, Richmond, CA

Key Takeaways (All visits) - Learning Acceleration

- Teachers use common curriculum with fidelity to reduce time spent on lesson creation and maximize time on lesson delivery and differentiation
 - 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

Key Takeaways (All visits) - Enriching Culture

- 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, feedback loops, and time/space to develop

Key Takeaways (All visits) - SEL Supports

- Clear (high) expectations and positive behavioral support is key to maintaining a healthy learning environment
 - Positive behavioral intervention requires adult learning and consistent reinforcement throughout implementation
- 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

Community Engagement

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

- Castro EdRountable Committee - **ongoing**
 - **Parents, Teachers, Board Members, Superintendent, Principal, and District Staff**
- Teachers/Staff (staff meeting) - **April 24**
- Castro Parents/Families (format similar to Cafécito) - **April 25**



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Action Plan (Year 1)

Action Plan Framework: Zoom Out

Based on learnings from external site visits and research on best practice, **Action Plan Year 1 includes:**

Castro (specific)–

- School-wide RTI Model
- Breakfast for all (in the classroom)
- Centralized data management
- Extra PD days for teachers in August (paid, incentivized)
- Recess/Lunch behavioral support (Playworks, etc.)
- Increased FTE for Newcomer teacher
- Cont. Wellness Center support

District-wide–

- Adoption ELA curriculum rooted in the science of reading
- Continued Newcomer support
- Continued Reading Intervention support
- Site-based counselor

Special Considerations

Given the number of English Learners at Castro, all Action Plan steps need to account for attending to students' learning of *academic* and *conversational* English. Intentional improvement in ELD grouping, planning, and teaching is needed to support English Learners at Castro.

Considerations for English Learners:

Year 1 (SY24-25): In Year 1, Site leadership will ensure all students receive leveled, high-quality, explicit language development instruction with support from the District ELD TOSA.

Year 2 (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 3 (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, in addition to new site leadership, 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 Culture/Climate:

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?



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Action Plan (Year 2)

Action Plan Framework: Zoom Out

Based on learnings from external site visits and research on best practice, **Action Plan Year 2 includes:**

Continuation of Activities From Year 1–

Refine/evaluate action plan items from Year 1 including school-wide RTI model, Breakfast for all, and continuation of:

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

New in Year 2–

- District-supported, student-driven clubs/activities
- Increased community partnerships [volunteers/resources]
- Classroom Looping

Zoom In: Student-driven clubs/activities

Needs necessitating 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 after school opportunities between the schools due to the complexity of logistics

Student-driven clubs/activities

Best practices uncovered at site visits:

- 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 clubs/activities

Proposed strategic action:

Providing Castro students with new district-supported, student-driven afterschool programs and clubs

- 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 have access after-school care

Zoom In: Community Partnerships

Needs necessitating 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

Community Partnerships

Best practices uncovered at site visits:

- 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
 - Structure of the school day must account for increased adult presence

Community Partnerships

Proposed strategic action:

Creating and maintaining additional community partnerships to promote increase in resources and more volunteers present on campus

- Strategic Action necessitates conducting a community assets mapping session with community in Year 1

Zoom In: Classroom Looping

What is looping?

- Looping is “a practice 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).

Classroom Looping

Research about Looping:

- Having ‘familiar faces’ from the previous school year was linked to lower numbers of unexcused absences (Kirksey, 2018).
- Having consistent classmates associated with better achievement & 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).

Classroom Looping

Proposed strategic action:

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

- Necessitates gathering teacher and community feedback in Year 1.
- Necessitates critical focus on protocol for student assignment in Year 1.



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Action Plan (Year 3)

Action Plan Framework: Zoom Out

Based on learnings from external site visits and research on best practice, **Action Plan Year 3 includes:**

Continuation of Activities From Years 1 AND 2–

Refine/evaluate action plan items from Years 1 and 2, and continuation of:

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

New in Year 3–

- Formalized training for teachers in team teaching for math
- Evaluation of ReImagining Castro Action Plan and possible extension of plan for SY 2026-2030 based on need

Zoom In: Team Teaching Training

Needs necessitating 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

Team Teaching Training

Best practices uncovered at site visits:

- 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 Training

Proposed strategic action:

Support teachers in maximizing team teaching with a new curriculum in math by providing explicit guidance and training on team teaching.

- Feedback needed from teachers about current practice of team teaching from Year 1 and Year 2
- Providing 'team teaching' professional development in addition to curriculum training

Evaluation of Re-Imagining Castro Plan at the end of Year 3

Along with continual updates made to the community and to the Board of Trustees, site and district leadership will conduct a formal evaluation and summary of findings for Re-Imagining Castro plan at the end of Year 3. This will include:

- Study of action item metrics over time
- Qualitative feedback about changes from staff, students, and families
- Proposal to extend parts of plan based on need

Budget Considerations

Strategic Action	Anticipated Cost (per year)
Breakfast for all	Cost-neutral (\$0.00)
Recess support (Playworks)	\$38,000/year
1.0 FTE Newcomer Support Teacher	\$160,000.00/year
Additional PD Days for Teachers/Staff	\$12,000.00 for two days/year
Total	\$210,000/year
	(for <i>at least</i> the next 3 years)



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Next Steps

Implementation

While much preparation is already underway to enact the strategic actions of this plan, other major changes will be acted upon immediately including:

- additional personnel (hiring for additional FTE)
- seeking services from outside vendors (Playworks, etc.)
- communication with staff about additional PD days in August
- preparation for centralized data management and new school day schedule

Special Thanks

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