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For more information regarding the content of this material, please contact the Charter Schools Division by phone at 916-322-6029 or by e-mail at charters@cde.ca.gov.

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April 26, 2018

**Re:  Annual State Board of Education Academic Memo Request**

Sweetwater Secondary School (SSS) is in its second year of operation and is currently serving approximately 300 students with two resource centers located within the Sweetwater Union High School District in San Diego County.  The vast majority of students are in grades 9-12.  SSS is an academic intervention program with approximately 50% of new students enrolling credit deficient and 2-3 grade levels behind in Reading and Math.

In October of 2017, SSS was approved by the California Department of Education (CDE) as a Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) school.  The DASS criteria requires the school to have an unduplicated count of at least 70 percent of the schools' total enrollment composed of the following high-risk student groups: Expelled, Suspended, Wards of the Court, Pregnant and/or Parenting, Recovered Dropouts, Habitually Truant or Habitually Insubordinate and Disorderly, Retained More Than Once in Kindergarten through Grade Eight, Credit Deficient, Gap in Enrollment, High Level of Transiency, Foster Youth, and/or Homeless Youth.

Due to its' high-risk population, SSS's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) takes into account student enrollment trends.  Students can enroll any day throughout the school year and on-average are enrolled for a duration of 12-18 months.  SSS enrolled 61 new students between the months of January and May during the 2017-2018 school year, and SSS has enrolled 81 new students since January 2019.  Consequently, SSS serves a population of students who participate in CAASPP testing having spent little time enrolled at SSS prior to the testing window.

The 2017-2018 school year was SSS's first year of operation; therefore, the 2017-2018 academic outcomes indicate baseline data and no academic performance levels are currently displayed on the school's dashboard. SSS annually addresses improving performance schoolwide, and for low-performing student groups, within the LCAP. The 2019-2020 LCAP goals, actions & services, and metrics have been developed based on a comprehensive Needs Assessment, analysis of student achievement data and trends, and stakeholder input. SSS has identified areas of focus to ensure student achievement rates in Math and ELA maintain or improve for all student groups.  These areas are detailed below:

| LCAP Goal 1: Increase Student Achievement Appropriate for DASS Program | | |
|---|---|---|
| Actions & Services | Targeted Student Group(s) | 19-20 Metric Goal |
| Refine the Data Integration System to inform Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Learning systems. | Schoolwide, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities | NWEA Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) Progress results will maintain at 60% or the lowest performing student group will increase by 2% |
| Provide targeted math tutoring to qualifying students to close the achievement gap. | Socioeconomically Disadvantaged | Grades 3-8, 11 SBA in math DTS overall and unduplicated student groups will maintain status or increase by 3 points |
| Provide targeted literacy instruction to qualifying students to close the achievement gap. | Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners | Grades 3-8, 11 SBA in ELA DTS overall and unduplicated student groups will maintain status or |

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| | | increase by 3 points |
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| **LCAP Goal 2: Provide a Broad and Rigorous Course of Study that is Accessible to All Students.** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Actions & Services | Targeted Student Group(s) | 19-20 Metric Goal |
| Review, update, and monitor course of study to fully align with Common Core State Standards (CCSS), English Language Development Standards (ELD), Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), UC/CSU a-g requirements and NCAA requirements. | Schoolwide, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities | -Percent of CCSS, ELD, NGSS course alignment will maintain at 100% -UC a-g and NCAA approval rate will be maintained at 100% for core courses |
| Provide access to advances courses and learning opportunities (AP courses, Honors courses, Accelerated courses). | Schoolwide, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities | Maintain AP and Honors course offerings |
| Provide customized course curriculum based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to increase access to learning for students with disabilities and students with multiple learning styles. | Schoolwide, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities | 100% of new courses developed will meet the UDL Framework. |
| Provide curriculum enhancements for struggling readers and EL students: MyPath skill building courses, Achieve 3000, BrainPOP, Write Institute | Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities | NWEA Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) Progress results will maintain at 60% or the lowest performing student group will increase by 2% |
| Increase student access to online curriculum and resources through technology devices and internet connection. | Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, | Student participation rate will meet or exceed 84% |

| **LCAP Goal 3: Provide a Targeted and Data Informed Professional Learning System** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Actions & Services | Targeted Student Group(s) | 19-20 Metric Goal |
| Altus University course offerings and teacher trainings provided to increase teacher effectiveness in implementing CCSS, ELD, NGSS standards. | Schoolwide, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities | 100% of teachers will participate in a minimum of 60 hours of professional learning |
| Increase teacher subject matter competency in ELA and math through the Verification Process for Specialized Settings (VPSS). | Schoolwide, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities | 100% of teachers (employed for 3+years) will demonstrate subject matter competency in ELA and math |
| Math Specialist to provide additional support and professional development for teachers in CCSS math instruction, curriculum updates, best practices, strategies and resources for unduplicated student groups. | Schoolwide, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, English Learners | Grades 3-8, 11 SBA in math DTS overall and unduplicated student groups will maintain status or increase by 3 points |

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| LCAP Goal 4: Provide a Safe Environment and Supportive School Culture | | |
|---|---|---|
| Actions & Services | Targeted Student Group(s) | 19-20 Metric Goal |
| Provide School Social Work services and School Counselor services to coordinate agencies, provide services, and facilitate referrals to support student academic and social-emotional goals. | Schoolwide, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities | Student participation rate will meet or exceed 84% |
| Provide a Nutrition Program, partnering with the San Diego Food Bank, that includes healthy snacks, education, and outreach. | Schoolwide, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities | Student participation rate will meet or exceed 84% |
| LCAP Goal 5: Provide Innovative and Engaging, Community-based Resource Centers | | |
| Actions & Services | Targeted Student Group(s) | 19-20 Metric Goal |
| Increase access to Resource Center Supports and services by providing bus passes to qualifying students. | Schoolwide, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities | Student participation rate will meet or exceed 84% |

In response to the renewal criteria notice, we respectfully request that CDE and SBE adopt the practice of evaluating success of SBE authorized charter DASS schools to other DASS schools. As indicated on the CDE website (*https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/dass.asp*), the SBE's rationale for establishing the DASS program is, "*In 2013, California's accountability system significantly changed with the adoption of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). This new accountability system, the California School Dashboard (Dashboard), contains state indicators and standards to help identify a school's strengths, weaknesses, and areas in need of improvement. Because these state indicators and standards were developed for traditional (non-alternative) schools, **the State Board of Education (SBE) and stakeholders raised concerns that the state indicators and standards did not fairly evaluate the success or progress of alternative schools that serve high-risk students**.*" Based upon this rationale, it would be most appropriate to compare DASS schools to other DASS schools when determining success.

In reviewing the list of *potential* comparison schools provided by CDE staff for SSS renewal purposes, SSS believes it would be inappropriate to compare SSS to non-DASS Schools. Castle Park High School (HS), Chula Vista HS, Sweetwater HS, Options Secondary, Castle Park Middle School (MS), and Chula Vista MS are all traditional non-DASS schools with a different composition of pupil populations. MAAC Community Charter and Palomar High School are DASS schools, operated by the Sweetwater Union High School District, serving similar pupil populations. These schools, included on the list provided by the CDE, would be *apple vs. apples* comparisons to SSS. A detailed comparison of SSS versus other DASS schools located in the area is regularly analyzed by SSS staff and can be provided upon request.