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Response from High Tech Middle Chula Vista

High Tech High**Report Prepared for California State Board of Education****In reference to: High Tech Middle Chula Vista****Submission Date: April 13, 2018****Overview**

As requested by the California Department of Education, High Tech High submits the following Summary Report regarding High Tech Middle Chula Vista (HTMCV) in response to the three requested inquiries in support of the State Board of Education's (SBE) Annual Academic Memo (Academic Memo). Specifically, this report addresses:

1. A summary of school's reflections on its Fall 2017 Dashboard Results, identifying areas of greatest progress and greatest opportunity for growth.
2. A summary of the school's reflections on Element Two: Measurable Pupil Outcomes.
3. A summary of the school's reflections on Element Three: Method for Measuring Pupil Outcomes.

Section 1**School Reflections on Fall 2017 Dashboard Results****Identification of areas of greatest progress and greatest opportunity for growth**

High Tech Middle Chula Vista's Fall 2017 dashboard data indicates growth in all of the areas for which data is available, with the two greatest areas of progress being our decreasing suspension rates (showing decline of 3.9%) and our improved ELA data (showing an overall increase of roughly 6.3 points and a "significant increase" for English learners and students with disabilities).

Greatest Opportunities for Growth***Math Achievement***

Our most significant opportunity for growth is in the area of math achievement. Though we did show growth in math for five subgroups, we showed little to no growth for three of our subgroups (socioeconomically disadvantaged students, African-American students, and Latino students).

As a result, we have increased our focus on math instruction. Two-thirds of our math teachers have now attended math workshops led by Stanford University researcher Jo Boaler, most known for her Youcubed math center; we plan to send more teachers next year. We have a HTH Graduate School of Education Leadership resident serving in the role of math instructional coach, and we plan to continue a similar structure moving forward. We have partnered with middle school math expert Debra Fuentes, who will train our staff in the use of the Cognitively Guided Instruction approach to math education and who we've contracted with to provide regular teacher coaching next year. An additional strategy that HTMCV has

been pursuing to support math growth has been to align all curriculum and projects with Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

HTMCV has been implementing these instructional practices in math classrooms during the 17-18 school year. In August 2018, HTMCV intends to carefully analyze 17/18 SBAC data to determine the extent to which these instructional strategies are leading to mathematics growth for these specific subgroups and next steps.

At HTMCV, we strive to see evidence of CCSS-aligned reading, writing, and/or mathematical reasoning skills in all of our project work. To this end, teachers use a planning tool called the Backwards Project Planner, which includes a section in which teachers map Common Core Standards onto project plans. Below is an excerpt from one teacher's completed planner:

4. YOUR LEARNING GOALS

What do you want students to learn?

Standards/Frameworks: [CCSS ELA & Literacy \(p. 45\)](#); [CCSS Mathematics \(p.40, 46, & 52\)](#); [Next Generation Science Standards \(NGSS\)](#)

What ACADEMIC CONTENT do students need to know? How can they learn it?

CONTENT GOAL	How?
Reading Standards for Literature:	
Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	Preparation for partner discussions and socratic seminars / Independent reading practice
Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.	Story study
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.	Language study / Independent reading practice
Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.	Language study <input type="checkbox"/>
Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.	Comparative study between book and movie

Teachers also regularly engage in the practice of project tunings, in which they receive feedback from colleagues and veteran teachers about the quality of their project design. After projects are completed, teachers engage in reflective conversations about their project work and set goals for future project work. As such, we ensure that projects are rich in reading, writing, and/or mathematical reasoning content, depending on content area.

Areas of Greatest Progress

Decreased Suspension Rates

The faculty at High Tech Middle Chula Vista is committed to supporting students as they navigate the challenges of adolescence, and to help turn discipline situations into learning opportunities. Over the past few years, HTMCV has increased our efforts to help support this

work by hiring a full-time staff member in the role of Social-Emotional Learning Coordinator. This staff member has been instrumental in pioneering our shift to a more restorative approach to discipline. Not only have we explored alternatives to out-of-school suspensions (such as restorative circles and meaningful community service), but we have implemented measures to *prevent* unwanted behaviors, such as classroom community circles. Our Social-Emotional Learning Coordinator has also led professional development for our staff, including training on restorative practices and restorative language to use with students.

These efforts have helped us to decrease our suspension rates significantly over the past four years. Moving forward, we will continue to have a full time faculty member in this role, and we will continue supporting both new and veteran staff members with restorative practices.

Increased ELA Scores

The Dashboard also shows that we exhibited growth in our ELA achievement, as measured by the CAASSP. We showed an overall increase of 6.3 points and a “significant increase” for English learners (18.1 points) and students with disabilities (34.4 points).

We have strengthened our work around literacy in a variety of ways at High Tech Middle Chula Vista. Our humanities teachers meet weekly to discuss dilemmas, share best practices, and examine student work. We have devoted an increasing percentage of our full-faculty PDs to literacy work, in which we model and engage in researched-based literacy strategies to strengthen literacy work across disciplines. We also have two faculty members who serve in the role of literacy coaches to our newer colleagues.

In addition to these internal PD experiences, we have sought outside opportunities for professional learning. Over two-thirds of our humanities teachers have attended the Teachers’ College Summer Reading Institute, which has impacted our literacy practice in noticeable ways, and three of our teachers attended the 2016 HABLA Institute.

Moving forward, we plan to continue our internal professional learning around literacy, as well as our external work at institutes like Teachers’ College. We have also recently begun using a reading intervention program called Mindplay, which several teachers at other HTH schools have piloted with much success.

Section 2

School Reflections on Element Two: Measurable Pupil Outcomes

Areas of Greatest Progress and Greatest Opportunities for Growth

Engagement and Sense of Belonging

HTMCV has been focused on the goal of increasing the number of students who report having a positive experience at HTMCV. Recent data indicates that HTMCV has been making

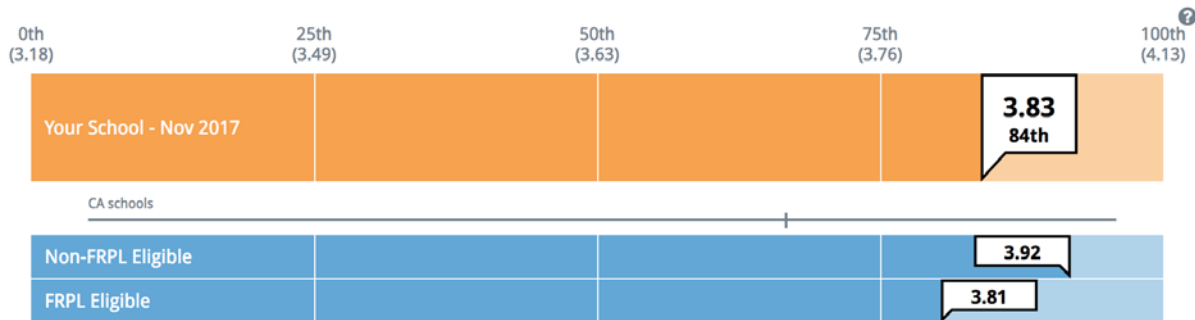
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progress in cultivating student engagement. As with any endeavor, we are working to improve and we are inspired in this work by Camille Farrington’s research around academic mindsets, particularly her finding that a student’s sense of belongingness in a school community is linked to positive attitudes toward school, task orientation toward learning, and academic achievement.

In order to collect data on how our students experience HTMCV, we give the annual Youth Truth survey, which helps us to better understand their experience and attitudes towards our school. One of our identified objectives is that these student survey results will show that students are having a positive experience at HTMCV. Our most recent Youth Truth data shows encouraging results. Specifically, results show that we are in the 84th percentile nationally for the Student Engagement metric, which measures the degree to which students perceive themselves as engaged with their school and their education. For this metric, 71% of our students rated their engagement and enjoyment of school positive (a 4 or 5, out of 5), compared to only 59% nationally.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY MEASURE

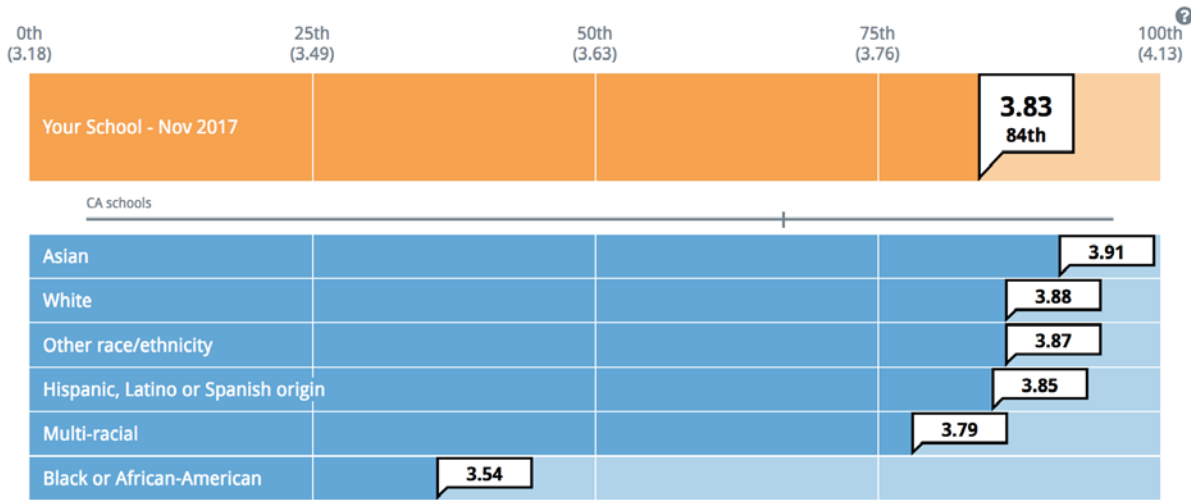
This summary measure describes the degree to which students perceive themselves as engaged with their school and their education.



While we are proud of our overall data around student engagement, we have identified a related area of growth; specifically, our African-American students report the least favorable sense of engagement of any of our six subgroups.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY MEASURE

This summary measure describes the degree to which students perceive themselves as engaged with their school and their education.



This is recent data, so we are beginning to discuss how we will address this area of growth. We have recently started a Black Student Union on our campus so that we can better address the unique experience of our African-American students and increase their sense of belongingness. We will also continue to increase the diversity of our teaching staff so that it better reflects the demographic makeup of our student body.

Areas of Greatest Progress

Chronic Absenteeism

In order for students to feel a sense of belongingness and engagement, they must attend school regularly. For this reason, we have also set a goal to reduce chronic absenteeism at HTMCV. HTMCV has been struck by the research that chronic absences are linked to lower test scores, lower reading proficiency, high HS dropout rates, and lower college persistence.

While our attendance numbers are quite strong (96% at the time of this report), we have been tracking students who are consistently and chronically absent each year. During the 2015-2016 school year, we identified a chronic absenteeism rate of 6.2%, which was the second highest of the four HTH middle schools.

The following year, 2016-2017, we implemented several new practices. We began sending monthly letters home to parents of chronically absent students, in which we inform them of the number of days their child has been absent, as well as the academic impacts of missing school. We ask families to sign the letter and return it to school. If the absences persist, we call home or meet in person with the parents in order to understand the reasons why children are missing school, offer any services that we may have available (often connecting parents

with nearby families for carpooling), and share research to indicate the negative outcomes associated with chronic absenteeism.

As a result, we noted our chronic absenteeism rate drop from 6.2% to 3.9% over the course of the 2016-2017 school year. We will continue to communicate to parents the importance of regular attendance, and implement these practices that have proven to be successful.

Section 3

School Reflections on Element Three: Method for Measuring Pupil Outcomes

Area of Greatest Progress and Greatest Opportunities for Growth

Family Engagement

One of HTMCV's goals is for students to create high-quality work characterized by complexity, authenticity, and craftsmanship that invites family and community members to participate in student learning and reflection. HTMCV strives to maintain a culture in which parents are engaged with students' academic project work in meaningful ways. To measure this outcome, we regularly examine and reflect on SLC and POL parent attendance data, and Youth Truth family survey data.

To achieve a high level of participation at school events the elementary, middle, and high schools on our Chula Vista campus have hired a bilingual Parent Outreach Coordinator. This coordinator has been instrumental to the founding of the *El Pueblo Unido* K-12 parent involvement group which has deepened the participation and engagement of families at HTMCV. This has been accomplished by organizing events that engage all families, and reaching out specifically to our Latino community to help increase participation. In addition, the coordinator publicizes exhibition and student-led conferences and invites families to attend HTMCV family collaborative meetings and parent info meetings.

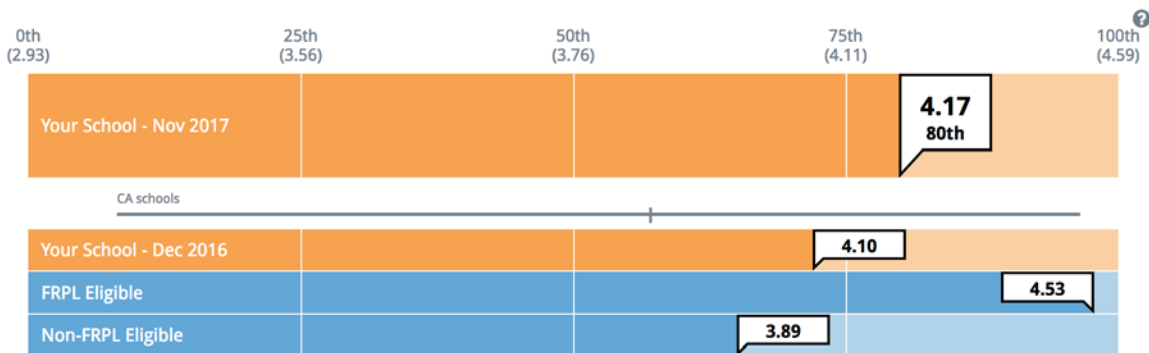
One data point that indicates a high level of family engagement is our family attendance rate at school-wide presentations of learning and student-led conferences. Each semester, we use a spreadsheet to track parent attendance at these events. For both our Spring 2017 Presentations of Learning and our Fall 2017 Student-Led Conferences (SLCs), we had 99% parent attendance rate. Though it would not be possible to measure parent attendance at our exhibitions given the nature of those events, we know that few--if any-- students report that a parent was unable to attend. Parents receive frequent communication at many points throughout the year about the importance of attending these events and, as such, it is part of the school and community culture that parents attend. Particularly at SLCs families, students, and teachers all identify specific instructional strategies, supports, and interventions beneficial to the growth of that specific student. These approaches are then implemented by the teacher and student to ensure that each student receives the necessary academic supports.

Youth Truth Family Survey

Another indicator of family engagement is the annual Youth Truth Family Survey, which HTMNC began giving to parents during the 2016-2017 school year. On this year's survey, HTMNC observed slight increases in our parents' sense of engagement and empowerment. On that metric, which describes the degree to which families are engaged in their school and empowered to influence decision making, we were in the 80th percentile, with 83% of our parents giving positive ratings (4 or 5), compared to 64% nationally. Our FRL-eligible parents reported even higher ratings than did our non-FRL-eligible parents:

Engagement & Empowerment Summary Measure

This summary measure describes the degree to which families are engaged in their school and empowered to influence decision making.



HTMNCV also uses this survey data to solicit additional feedback from families. The HTMNCV director shares the data with families at a parent education workshop and invites their feedback to more deeply understand ways in which families are engaging with HTMNCV and opportunities to more meaningfully involve families at HTMNCV in the future. For example, HTMNCV is trying to determine why it received a slightly lower ranking in the resources category as displayed below.

Youth Truth Family Survey Key Ratings Fall 2017



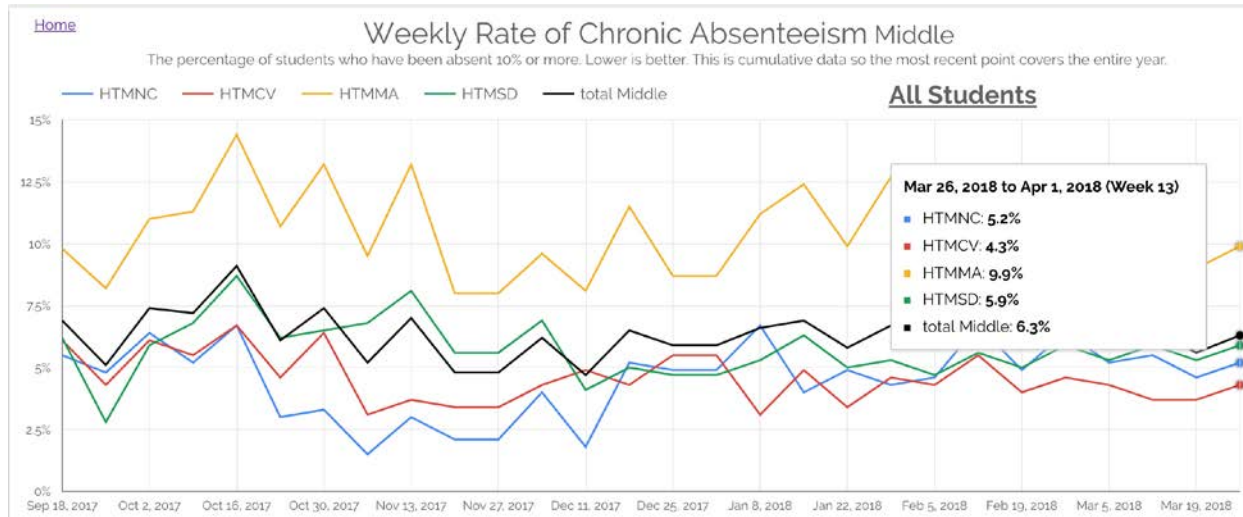
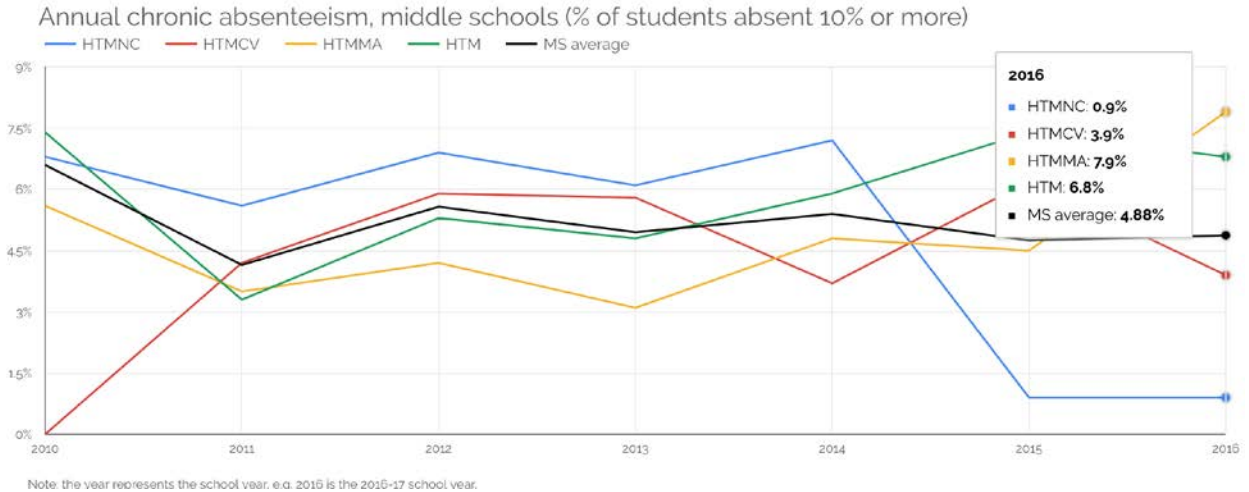
Areas of Greatest Progress

Nurture a Culture of Belongingness

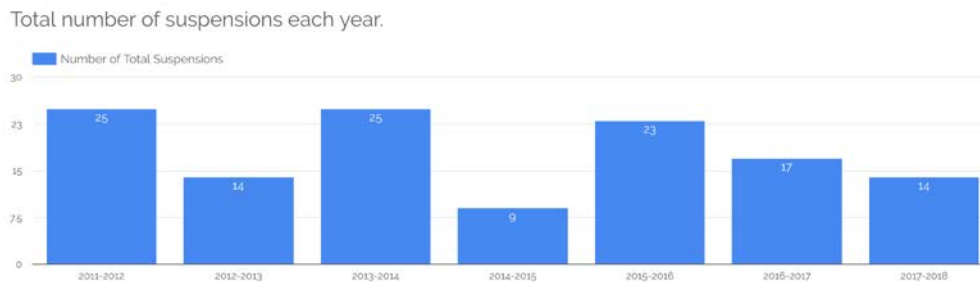
Another of HTMCV’s goals is to create safe, inclusive environments where *all* students feel a sense of belonging, are supported with socio-emotional needs, develop strong relationships and experience joy. To measure this goal, we use three methods: *tracking chronic absentee data, tracking suspension data, and examining Youth Truth data.*

As described above in section two, we use our attendance data to identify students who are chronically absent. We generate a weekly chronic absence report and use that to communicate with families. We then track that data for HTMCV (as well as all HTH schools) in order to determine if our change efforts are making an impact. Below is the graph showing the annual chronic absenteeism rates for all HTH middle schools, as well as a graph showing the weekly chronic absenteeism rates for the current school year. HTMCV is in red on both graphs.

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As mentioned in section one above, we have demonstrated a significant decrease in our suspensions over the past few years. We track this data using our student information system, and the director and social-emotional learning coordinator regularly analyze the data in order to identify patterns and progress. Below is the annual suspension data for HTMCV.



Conclusion

Please feel free to contact us if there are any questions regarding the HTMCV Summary Report.