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Response from High Tech Middle Mesa

High Tech High
Report Prepared for California State Board of Education
SBE Academic Memo COVID Addendum
In reference: High Tech Middle Mesa
Submission Date: October 8, 2020

Summary:

As requested by the California Department of Education, High Tech High submits the following Summary Report regarding High Tech Middle Mesa (HTMMesa). The Report is an addendum to the 2019-20 Academic Memo, addressing the school's response to COVID-19.

1. A description of how the charter school will provide continuity of distance learning instruction during the school year to ensure pupils have access to curriculum.

HTMMesa began the 2020-21 school year with a distance learning model for all students. The model is designed to ensure instructional continuity for pupils is a transition between in-person instruction and distance learning is necessary. Distance learning will include daily, live, synchronous instruction for all students in addition to asynchronous activities and assignments that students will complete each day. Distance learning will also include opportunities for students to meet (virtually) in small groups to collaborate with peers and develop and strengthen peer to peer relationships. The school day schedule will align with the typical in-person school day schedule and contain the same classes and elements of instruction. The distance learning program will meet the state instructional minutes requirements of 240 daily minutes for students in grades 6-8.

Teachers will design learning experiences that align to common core and state standards, and are consistent with High Tech High's design principles of: equity, personalization, authentic work, and collaborative design.

- Equity
 - Students will engage in distance-learning coursework through integrated classes where teachers differentiate instruction to provide access and challenge to all students
 - Opportunities for students to communicate with a teacher or academic coach during asynchronous work time
 - Targeted supports for English Learners and special education students
- Personalization
 - Provide opportunities for students to connect with teachers and advisors
 - Provide opportunities for students to connect with each other, both academically and socially
 - Weekly communication with students and families regarding class schedules, assignments, and expectations
 - Weekly feedback to students and families about student progress, including intervention if necessary
- Authentic Work
 - Limit screen and Zoom time by supporting students in engaging in authentic, hands-on project based learning

- Opportunities for students to develop and practice foundational skills within the context of authentic project based learning
- Collaborative Design
 - Multiple opportunities each week for teaching teams or grade level teams to collaborate on instructional planning
 - Teachers soliciting feedback from students on a regular basis (at least once per week) to learn about distance learning successes and challenges
 - Schools soliciting feedback from families on a regular basis to learn about distance learning successes and challenges

2. A description of how the charter school will ensure access to devices and connectivity for all pupils to support distance learning.

The school has collected data from all families via Google Form and phone calls in the family's home language in order to identify families in need of Internet access and/or a keyboard-enabled device. Based on this data, the school has distributed HTH-owned Chromebooks to all students in need. The school has also distributed Internet hot spots to all students who request them. The school has also connected families to local service providers offering low-cost or free service. Additionally, school staff will continue to reach out to families if students are not participating in distance learning synchronous classes and/or not submitting schoolwork to determine whether access to technology is a factor in the low participation rate for that student. If it is determined to be a factor, school staff will coordinate Chromebook pick-up or drop-off for that family.

HTH IT staff are available to support families with troubleshooting both hardware questions and to provide support with online learning platforms that students are using for instruction. Families may contact HTH IT support through an online form or by phone, and some technology support is also available in-person at the school site.

3. A description of how the charter school will address pupil learning loss that results from COVID-19 during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years with consideration to the charter's demographics and grade levels served.

The school will address learning loss through synchronous and asynchronous tiered instruction in the distance learning model.

During Tier 1 synchronous instruction, students will engage in standards-aligned instruction focused on key skills and concepts for that grade level. In Tier 2 synchronous instruction, students will work in small groups with their peers on targeted skills. In Tier 3 synchronous instruction, students will work one-on-one with a school staff member, and the instruction will focus on specific skills that students need support with. The Tier 2 small groups and Tier 3 one-on-one sessions may include focused supports for English learners, low-income, foster youth, pupils with exceptional needs, and pupils experiencing homelessness. The small group and individual instruction will also be provided to pupils who have significant learning loss as a result of COVID-19. Small group instruction and one-on-one instruction may be facilitated by classroom teachers, education specialists, EL coordinators, and academic coaches.

During asynchronous instruction, teachers will differentiate assignments for students based on their levels in order to provide challenge for some students and additional supports for other students.

4. A description of how the charter school will monitor and support mental health and social and emotional well-being of pupils during the school year.

High Tech High has a dedicated mental health and wellness team comprised of eight School Psychologists, two Lead Mental Health Supervisors, ten licensed associate clinicians, and four mental health trainees. In addition, most campuses have deans who support social-emotional learning and some campuses have student support coordinators. These teams of professionals work in collaboration with one another to build systems of care for students, families, and teachers. Before school started, this looked like many hours of planning and preparing on how to reach each student and conduct empathy interviews in order to evaluate the needs of each child and family. This also included training on trauma-informed practices for teachers and what to look out for in students and how to refer them for support. As the year continues, these teams will begin to implement whole school SEL lessons and curriculum, offer wellness checks in and clubs, offer training and support for staff and parents, as well as a referral system for students who may require more intensive support and therapy. Bi-monthly consultation meetings with these teams will occur all year to track students and discuss whole school SEL and MH supports. Additionally, each School Psychologist has created Wellness Website with resources for parents, teachers, and students to access.

5. A description of how the charter school will address the anticipated apportionment deferrals.

We expect to meet our financial needs during the deferral period by accessing school reserve funds and/or the 15 million dollar line of credit with City National Bank as needed.