

This document was provided, as is, to the California Department of Education (CDE) by **Sweetwater Secondary**. This document is posted to the CDE website to meet the legal requirements of California *Education Code* Section 33009.5.

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

Response from Sweetwater Secondary



May 27, 2020

Re: Annual State Board of Education Academic Memo Request

Sweetwater Secondary School (SSS) is in its third year of operation and currently serves approximately 350 students with three resource centers located within the Sweetwater Union High School District in San Diego County. SSS is an academic intervention program with approximately 55% of new students enrolling credit deficient and 2-3 grade levels behind in Reading and Math. Most students are in grades 9-12. SSS is an approved Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) school due to its unduplicated count of at least 70 percent of the schools' total enrollment composed of a DASS-identified high-risk student group. Students can enroll any day throughout the school year and on-average are enrolled for a duration of 12-18 months. Consequently, SSS serves a population of students who participate in CAASPP testing having spent little time enrolled at SSS prior to the testing window.

As indicated on the 2019 California School Dashboard, SSS's ELA and Math Academic Performance is improving. There was one student group, Hispanic, with ELA and Math CAASPP Dashboard results. The results of this significant student group mirrored that of all students, and SSS did not have any student groups with a red performance color in the Academic Indicators. It is important to note that out of 49 active DASS Schools in San Diego County, SSS ranked 6th highest performing in ELA and 4th highest performing in Math. Throughout the 2019-2020 school year, SSS implemented internal monitoring instruments to closely track and intervene with real-time measures to improve the College and Career Indicator rate for all students and significant student groups.

Sweetwater Secondary School's systems approach to a continuous improvement cycle guides the steps that have been taken and will continue to be implemented to improve academic performance schoolwide and to address student groups as indicated in the detailed chart below:

LCAP GOAL 1: Increase Student Achievement Appropriate for DASS Program				
Actions & Services	Targeted Student Group(s)	2018-2019 Baseline	2019-2020 Goal	2019-2020 Actual
Full implementation of the Student Intervention Program (MTSS) to include training, consistent practices, and monitoring to increase high-risk student engagement in school	All, LI, EL, FY, SWD	All: 90.8% LI: 89.9% EL: 91.3% FY: n/a SWD: 84.3%	The cumulative student participation rate, including for all unduplicated student groups (LI, EL, FY) and Special Education will meet or exceed 84%	All: 90.3%* LI: 89.6%* EL: 91.4%* FY: 100%* SWD: 87.3%*
		Data Not Yet Available	Maintain a dropout rate of 5% or less	TBD
		93%	90% of students will gain in their ability to learn and succeed in school within 90 days of enrollment	87%*
Implement the web-based NWEA system, administer Pre- and Post-Assessments, analyze and report student group results to best inform Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Learning Systems and close the achievement gaps	All, LI, EL, FY, SWD	All: R:90/L:85/M:68 LI: R:97/L:85/M:67 EL: R:94/L:83/M:59 FY: n/a SWD: R:86/L:92/M:82	NWEA Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) progress results will maintain at 60% or the lowest performing student group will increase by 2%	Due to Covid-19 closure, data not available. Evaluating alternate metrics.
Utilize the Data Integration Systems Department to best inform Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Learning Systems of multiple measures of student achievement data	All, LI, EL, FY, SWD	L4+L3: 83.1% L4: 42.9% L3: 40.5% L2: 11.9% L1: 4.80%	Maintain ELPAC Level 3 and Level 4 Performance Levels at or above 75% <u>or</u> increase percent of students scoring at level 4 by 3%	TBD
		All: 74.5% LI: 72.4% EL: 70.0% FY: n/a	Achieve graduation rate "medium" performance level or increase by 3%+	TBD

Response from Sweetwater Secondary

		SWD: 76.5%		
Collect, analyze and disseminate key performance measures aligned to student achievement and publish in The Storybook (monthly, annually)	All, LI, EL, FY, SWD	Math (Gr 3-8) All: -104.38 LI: -112.91 EL: -79.67 SWD: -147.67 Math (Gr 11) All: -104.96 LI: -116.45 EL: -174.80 SWD: -59.00 ELA (Gr 3-8) All: -39.23 LI: -51.27 EL: -22.33 SWD: -89.33 ELA (Gr 11) All: 7.46 LI: -7.30 EL: -96.0 SWD: -56.0	SBA Math and ELA proficiency rates will demonstrate school wide achievement that reflects ≥ the math proficiency rates of schools students would otherwise attend (local DASS schools) SBA in Math and ELA Distance to Level 3 overall and unduplicated student groups will achieve “medium” performance status or increase by 3 points	Due to Covid-19 closure, data not available. Evaluating alternate metrics. Due to Covid-19 closure, data not available. Evaluating alternate metrics.
LCAP Goal 2: Provide a Broad and Rigorous Course of Study that is Accessible to All Students.				
Actions & Services	Targeted Student Group(s)	2018-2019 Baseline	2019-2020 Goal	2019-2020 Actual
Align CTE Curriculum to CTE Model Standards Provide CTE Certifications in Adobe, Hospitality, and Workforce Readiness	All, LI, EL, FY, SWD	100%	Maintain state approval status of established CTE Pathways	100%
Review, update, and monitor course of student 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	All, LI, EL, FY, SWD	100%	Maintain percentage of CCSS, NGSS, ELD aligned courses at 100%	100%
Provide access to advanced courses and learning opportunities (Advanced Placement Courses, Honors Courses, Accelerated Courses)	All, LI, EL, FY, SWD	100%	Maintain advanced course offerings including Honors and AP courses	100%
LCAP Goal 3: Provide a Targeted and Data Informed Professional Learning System				
Actions & Services	Targeted Student Group(s)	2018-2019 Baseline	2019-2020 Goal	2019-2020 Actual
Altus University course offerings and teacher trainings provided to increase teacher effectiveness in implementing CCSS, NGSS, ELD standards Increase teachers’ subject matter competency in ELA and math through Verification Process of Special Settings (VPSS)	All, LI, EL, FY, SWD	85.7%	100% of teachers who have been employed for 3+ years will demonstrate subject matter competency in ELA and Math	100%
Provide CTE Professional Development in key Industry Sectors and Externships Altus University courses provided to increase capacity though Leadership Studies and Fellows Project New Teacher Training Program includes Youth Mental Health First Aid Training and Certification	All, LI, EL, FY, SWD	Average PD hours: 79 97.4%	100% of teachers will participate in at least 60 hours of professional development 90% of staff will report high levels of relevance as indicated by an average 4 rating on training evaluations	Average PD hours: 92** 97%**
LCAP Goal 4: Provide a Safe Environment and Supportive School Culture				
Actions & Services	Targeted Student Group(s)	2018-2019 Baseline	2019-2020 Goal	2019-2020 Actual
Expand School Social Work Services to include intern program and build capacity for: coordinating agencies, providing services, and facilitating referrals to support student academic and social/emotional goals	All, LI, EL, FY, SWD	0.2%	Maintain a suspension rate at 1.5% or less	0%*
		0%	Maintain an expulsion rate at 1% or less	0%*

Response from Sweetwater Secondary

Expand the leadership and character development program, Cadet Corps, to promote student achievement and increase student engagement				
Provide small group learning environment at each Resource Center that promotes positive behavior and accountability	All, LI, EL, FY, SWD	Parents: 100% Students: 97.5%	Maintain 90% or higher satisfaction rate from students/parents on safety from Annual Surveys	Parents: 100%** Students: 98%**
LCAP Goal 5: Provide Innovative and Engaging, Community-based Resource Centers				
Actions & Services	Targeted Student Group(s)	2018-2019 Baseline	2019-2020 Goal	2019-2020 Actual
Design innovative Resource Centers, enhanced with technology, that engage students in 21 st century learning environments to inspire achievement	All, LI, EL, FY, SWD	100%	90% of parents will report that Resource Centers engage students in innovative learning opportunities	99.7%**
*Cumulative data as of March 2020; **Cumulative data as of May 2020				

On March 16th, 2020, SSS transitioned to distance learning and implemented a phased, systems approach to ensuring high quality teaching and learning during the COVID-19 school closure period. The phased distance learning engagement methods and continued instructional supports for all students and significant student groups are outlined below.

Phase 1: Equitable Access: SSS deployed a Technology Needs Assessment and expanded the Altus Connect Program to provide Chromebooks with embedded hotspots to students in need. Priority was given to Students with Disabilities to ensure access to Special Education services. To date, SSS has distributed approximately 60 devices to its students. SSS also deployed a Family Needs Assessment to gather information on overall health, mental health, academic, and physical needs. As follow up to the survey feedback, school staff has made personal contact with approximately 100 families to provide resources and referrals to support their well-being. The Needs Assessment results are regularly reported, and documentation is completed in the student information system. Additionally, the Altus Food Program was implemented to provide “Grab and Go Meals” to families 4 times per week at 2 separate locations, and the school website also provides information on available food resources throughout San Diego County.

Phase 2: Meaningful Support and Engagement: SSS teachers work with students virtually in both one-on-one meetings and small group tutoring sessions, hold virtual office hours to offer instructional support to all learners, and check in with students regarding academic progress via online forms, surveys, screencast videos, virtual resource center events, and online communication tools. To date, SSS instructional staff have made over 17,000 contacts with students and families that include virtual conferences, phone calls, emails, etc. as documented in the school’s student information system. The comprehensive English Learner Development (ELD) Program informs the implementation of the English Learner Plan, and English Learners are engaged in learning through both Integrated and Designated ELD supports. Students with Disabilities continue to receive an equitable education that is in alignment with acceptable practices as recommended by the U.S. Department of Education. Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI) is provided for each student by an Education Specialist through distance learning methods, including virtual and telephonic. Related services are contracted through a CDE approved Non-Public Agency (NPA) and are delivered through virtual and telephonic methods.

Phase 3: Continued Engagement and Learnings: SSS deployed an Effectiveness of Distance Learning Survey to collect stakeholder data on the effectiveness of the Distance Learning plan during COVID-19. This stakeholder feedback will help inform SSS’s continuous improvement cycle as well as the development of the COVID-19 Operations Written Report. SSS teachers implement a variety of formative and summative assessments to evaluate student learning. Teachers utilize their findings to determine how best to modify curriculum and instruction to improve student learning outcomes. Some of these assessments include, but are not limited to, the following: Altus printed coursework, Edgenuity activities, quizzes, unit tests, writing assignments, Illuminate learning checks, quick writes, pop quizzes, group projects and presentations, web portfolios, presentations/speeches and end of course exams. Since the transition to distance learning, SSS has continued to engage staff in its innovative professional learning system, resulting in an average of 10 hours/month in training for each teacher.

Although school resource centers are temporarily closed, SSS is still able to serve its students utilizing virtual engagement methods, and there has been no loss of learning during the transition to distance learning. Each week, SSS students continue to receive academic support, master content standards, earn course credits and meet all of the requirements to earn a high school diploma.



October 1, 2020

Re: Annual State Board of Education Additional Academic Memo Request

1. Continuity of Distance Learning Instruction:

Sweetwater Secondary School (SSS) will continue to use a systematic approach to provide high-quality distance learning opportunities for all students. While some students are proficient users of technology and distance learning resources, there are other students who need support in this area. To meet this need, teachers have been able to provide ongoing technology training and support to all students. In addition, teachers have been able to extend technology training and support to parents and caregivers as well to ensure that they are involved in their child's distance learning education. This ongoing technology support has strengthened the school-to-home partnership and increased equity and access to the School's full curriculum. Edgenuity is the learning platform the School uses to deliver online curriculum. Edgenuity curriculum was offered to students prior to the COVID-19 closure if online instruction was their preferred learning style. Students have access through the Edgenuity curriculum platform to multiple scaffolds to support their learning; these are essential learning supports for English Learners and Students with Disabilities with functioning and universal tools to support all learners. Students who did not previously have access to a computer and/or home internet have received a laptop and hotspot through the Altus Connect Program to ensure they have the same accessibility to the online Edgenuity platform from home as they would have had previously at the Resource Center. School staff remain committed to maintaining high levels of student engagement and supporting academic achievement in distance learning. Some of the key instructional distance learning strategies are virtual one-on-one meetings and small group tutoring sessions, virtual office hours, and online check-ins to offer instructional support to all learners.

Distance learning math instruction continues to be a key instructional area of focus. To improve student math proficiency, teachers regularly provide instructional sessions in math that scaffold student skills to achieve performance targets of the courses and assessments. While instruction is claim and target-driven with a focus on both skill-building and content mastery, adjustments are made throughout each session based on formative assessment to ensure understanding for all learners. Additionally, students are grouped based on academic level data and content needs to support individual progress in a safe and supportive learning environment. SSS has also provided increased support in English Language Development (ELD). Designated ELD sessions incorporate online tools that support English Learners and struggling readers with the purpose of increasing Lexile scores and English language proficiency. Students engage in online literacy circles that promote virtual collaboration and language development in alignment with the English Learner Plan. Throughout these sessions, students are exposed to frontloaded vocabulary, explicit and scaffolded instruction, and multiple means of representation while being able to use their home language when needed to activate higher order thinking skills. In addition to a focus on reading comprehension, reading fluency, and writing structures, Designated ELD sessions offer English Learners an opportunity to develop oral language competency through virtual interaction in a meaningful, collaborative learning environment.

2. Devices and Connectivity to Support Distance Learning:

To close the digital divide, SSS has conducted multiple student and parent needs assessment and satisfaction surveys to determine which families need home technology. In addition, teachers communicate regularly with students and parents through multiple methods to identify ongoing student needs or unique circumstances. As a result, SSS has been able to deploy Chromebooks and internet hotspots to all students in need. As new students enroll, school clerks and counselors conduct a technology needs assessment with each family, and when necessary, quickly deploy devices to these newly enrolled families to ensure all barriers to learning are eliminated. On occasion, some of the school issued devices need repair or service. In this case, devices are collected and submitted to the School's Operations Department for repair/service. Students are issued replacement devices to ensure there are no gaps in access. SSS has also enhanced school websites and technology tools. As a coordinated effort to minimize confusion and redundancy for students and parents, SSS has created an online landing page, www.altusgo.com, that provides students and families with all necessary access points to curriculum and instructional supports. From this online landing page, students can

Response from Sweetwater Secondary

access pertinent school technology programs such as Edgenuity, Naviance, Illuminate, Achieve 3000, BrainPOP, and the Tech Tool Library. The Tech Tool Library provides subject specific resources and digital tools for creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.

3. Pupil Learning Loss:

As students continue distance learning, instructional staff needs to monitor what students are learning and where they need additional support. Additionally, SSS understands that some students have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and need increased services and supports. By using a Data Integration System, the school will be able to accelerate individual student learning by focusing on resources where they are needed most. SSS's Data Integration System is comprised of several formative and summative assessment tools administered throughout the school year. To start the school year, all students will be given an initial diagnostic assessment, NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), that measures students skills in Reading, Language, and Mathematics. Individual student score reports will be shared with students and parents in private conferences with the focus on a growth mindset. School leaders will work closely with teachers to analyze each student's assessment data and adjust curriculum and instruction to accelerate learning in those areas. Students identified as below grade level in Reading and Language will be assigned a specialized literacy program, Achieve3000, to improve ELA skills. Students scoring below grade level in Mathematics will be assigned an Edgenuity MyPath Math course to accelerate learning or provide increased math instruction in one-on-one and/or small group settings. SSS will also administer NWEA MAP in the Spring semester. The NWEA MAP spring administration will serve as a post-assessment and measure student growth over the course of the school year in the domains of Reading, Language, and Mathematics. SSS also plans to administer the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments to students in the fall to evaluate mastery of grade level standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Instructional staff will analyze student scores at multiple venues. Data analysis will be an integrated team approach focused on the development of systematic methods to improve student learning.

As students make progress in their assigned courses, whether it is a traditional textbook curriculum, online, or blended, students are required to complete a variety of formative assessments. These formative assessments include, but are not limited to, writing assignments, quizzes, virtual labs, and presentations. SSS's curriculum departments have also embedded Illuminate Learning Checks into each specific subject and grade-level to ensure that students are meeting key standards and learning topics. Teachers also use formative assessments when conducting virtual tutoring sessions. These continuous formative assessments inform teachers about student progress and if their practices are effective while at the same time building student capacity to be self-aware of their learning. SSS will continuously assess student English Language Development (ELD) throughout the school year. The School will use multiple assessment tools to evaluate student language proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. ELD assessments will include administering the Summative ELPAC, ELPAC Practice Tests, and ELD Assessments embedded in the curriculum. Virtual designated ELD sessions will be offered to English Learners and struggling readers to teach content and provide a check-in opportunity with students. SSS will continue to personalize learning programs to meet the needs of all students, with special emphasis on student groups that may have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. SSS's curriculum has been uniquely designed to ensure equity and access for all learners. Universal Design Learning ("UDL") principles are integrated into the curriculum to eliminate barriers to learning through the provision of multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression. Moreover, SSS utilizes both Integrated and Designated ELD to support language proficiency. Teachers work closely with their school instructional leaders to determine how and when to use Integrated and/or Designated ELD. While SSS's Integrated ELD ensures that English Learners are accessing ELD standards while in core curriculum, Designated ELD is focused on language development skills separate from core instruction.

Teachers will hold frequent meetings with students and parents to discuss their Pathways Personalized Education Plan (PPEP), provide progress reports focused on academic engagement, class grades, and progress towards grade level promotion or graduation and show parents and students how to access the School Pathways School Information System (SPSIS) Student and Parent Portal. When students do not make adequate progress, instructional staff will utilize the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), a collaborative intervention approach, that matches the needs of students with appropriate resources and services. In some cases, students and parents meet with counselors, school nurses, and school administrators to address areas of needs.

SSS will use multiple assessment tools and data analysis protocols to determine effectiveness of services and supports. School instructional leaders and staff have collaborated to determine the feasibility of formative and summative assessments this school year. There is agreement that the NWEA MAP is an effective and viable assessment tool to gauge student academic skills in Reading, Language, and Mathematics. The school as a whole, instructional

Response from Sweetwater Secondary

leaders, staff, and students/parents believe that the spring NWEA MAP (post-assessment) will be an effective tool to evaluate what students have learned in the 20-21 school year and what academic domains and topics need targeted intervention in the summer months. The instructional program will place special emphasis on evaluating Illuminate Learning Checks and End of Course Exams (EOCs). Illuminate assessments are fully integrated into the core curriculum. As students are introduced to content standards and topics in their assigned courses, Illuminate Learning Checks evaluate student understanding and ability to apply knowledge. In addition, Illuminate Learning Checks and End of Course Exams are aligned to grade level state standards and Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment practice items. Teachers will be provided the time and space to analyze student data, reflect on instructional practices, and connect with peers and subject matter experts. Illuminate will serve as an instructional database where each student has a profile, updated with demographics, so that instructional staff can analyze academic achievement by student groups. This will ensure that instructional staff can identify gaps in achievement and increase the appropriate services and support to meet the needs of all students. Ongoing professional learning will be provided to instructional staff on how to administer Illuminate assessments to students, grade constructed responses, and evaluate student data.

4. Student Mental Health and Social and Emotional Well-Being:

The mental health and social and emotional well-being of students, their families, and staff is a top school priority. School leaders understand that the pandemic has created traumatic experiences for many, to various degrees. Therefore, SSS has developed trauma informed crisis response systems which are sensitive to the emotional needs of students, families, and staff. A key component of the crisis response system is forging strong school-to-home relationships, centered on trust and two-way communication. Staff have remained connected with students and their families by using secure texts, emails, video conferences, and phone calls to conduct informal conversations focused on social-emotional needs. In addition, SSS has utilized multiple surveys to assess students, their families, and staff needs. School leaders analyze the recorded data, collaborate with appropriate professionals to determine how best to support each individual case, and document follow-up efforts and referrals. To support the social-emotional learning needs of students, SSS has provided a series of live, interactive video broadcasts for students called Resilience in Student Education (RISE). RISE sessions are aligned to Social and Emotional Core Competencies and serve to enhance a students' capacity to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviors which effectively and ethically deal with daily tasks and challenges. SSS understands how important it is to attend to the social and emotional needs that arise during times of crisis and challenge and will continue to offer social-emotional learning topics that are essential to mental health and wellness during this pandemic. To further train and equip staff, SSS teachers have completed the Youth Mental Health First Aid training (YMHFA) certification program, which is designed to educate adults who work with youth on how to identify risk factors and early signs of mental health challenges common amongst adolescents, including anxiety, depression, psychosis, eating disorders, ADHD, disruptive behavior disorders, and substance use disorder. Teachers also employ Trauma Informed Practices (TIPS) in instructional engagement strategies.

5. Anticipated Apportionment Deferrals:

The fund balance for SSS as of June 30, 2020 is \$2,393,994. SSS prepared Cash Flow to assess liquidity and the monthly cash balances. The beginning Cash Balance as of July 1, 2020 is 1,411,293. Although the estimated State Deferred Revenues is \$1,133,071, the estimated Cash Balance as of June 30, 2021 is \$1,022,633. Thus, SSS's fiscal position is positive.

The California School Finance Authority ("CSFA") will issue a pooled TRAN and will use the proceeds to make loans to charter schools. This is designed to offer charter schools to use as a cash bridge over the February to November 2021-deferral periods. Small Businesses Administration ("SBA") released the Main Street Loan program to nonprofit organizations. The leaders of the school are good fiscal stewards and are seeking alternative financial resources to apply for the TRANS and the Main Street Loan Program in order to preserve the cash reserves in case of a prolonged State fiscal crisis and to help finance the enrollment growth during the current fiscal year that is not funded by the State.

Regards,

Hayley Beaupre

Hayley Beaupre
Administrator of Instructional Services