

2015 QTEA Impact Application

Presidio Middle School

Award amount: \$46,310.19

- Describe your strategies, projects, and/or practices. Tell us who your focal student groups are, what the strategy is, and how it supports or aligns to the Six Strategies for Success and Vision 2025 Essentials

To ensure that we know our students are leaving our school ready to achieve college and career success, we want our students' grades to reflect as accurately as possible their achievement of core curriculum standards; with minimal deviation between grades awarded by individual teachers within academic departments and between GPA indications and district/state assessment data.

Focal students addressed by this project are those who currently are not displaying high-school readiness according to SFUSD's metric for 8th graders (GPA above 2.5, attendance rate above 96%, no Spring semester Ds/Fs in Math or English, and no suspensions in 8th grade). Following the first six week grading period for the 2015-16 school year, 43 8th Graders (or 12 %), 30 7th Graders, and 24 6th Graders received below a 2.5 GPA. Of our 43 8th graders in this group, 27 or 63% are male, 18.6% are Hispanic/Latino; 27.9% are African American, and 23% are SPED. Of the SpED identified students in this data set, only two are Hispanic/Latino and none are African American. This most recent GPA data reflects our Balanced Scorecard data where it's reported that African American and Latino students at our school underperform their peers in every measure: CLA, GPA, SRI, referrals, lost instructional minutes and participation in Special Education.

Our project is to guide faculty in a year-long study of assessment and grading practices, with the aim of deepening our school-wide understanding of the connection between assessment and grades so that both reflect student growth towards mastery of standards. Our aim is to develop a partnership with another school and potentially other Bay Area public and charter middle and high schools where teachers and administrators can meet in PLCs as thought-partners to develop understanding and practice of standards based grading. Our ILT will be instrumental in providing reflection on the direction this work takes as we try out best practices in relation to Standards Based Grading at our school in an optional pilot for this school year 2015-16 with the goal of making recommendations for putting a Standards Based Grading Practices Policy into school-wide implementation for the 2016-17 school year.

In addition to PLC work focused on assessment and grading embedded in the regular Wednesday morning PLC schedule of the school, this grant will enable us to: support a cohort (or cohorts) of teachers in exploring and implementing best practices in grading with standards based grading as a lens; activities this cohort will engage in include:

- 1) Developing, refining, and using standards based rubrics
- 2) Examining student assessment and GPA data
- 3) Gathering and reflecting upon student voice regarding their understanding grading and assessment
- 4) Building student reflections and opportunities to request reassessment into the design of summative assessments
- 5) Using a ROCI cycle of inquiry as a guide for practice, teachers will try out standards-based grading in practice as part of their course and share their experience with administration and faculty as a tool to reflect upon and build more accurate assessment practices at our school.
- 6) Develop members of the ILT and teachers who are involved in the Standards Based Grading cohort as Teacher Leaders at our school; modeling, implementing and guiding their peers in research and use of current best practices in teaching and assessment.

While we believe that this project hits upon all six of the district's Strategies for Success, it is most closely aligned with strategies 1-3. By using student data to reflect upon and refine assessment strategies, our cohort of teachers will represent leaders in our school as they engage in the ROCI cycle to make informed decisions and recommendations around assessment practices at our school in order to support all students in learning and provide all students with clear opportunities to graduate on a path for college and career readiness.

- **What outcome(s) or change(s) do you believe this project or practice will have at your school site? Note: Quantitative and/or qualitative data are encouraged.**

We believe that our students will receive grades that are more consistent, accurate, and meaningful as a result of this project. We also believe that this project is the starting point for whole school change towards grading and assessment practices that more effectively communicate with students and families their skills and progress towards academic achievement. We also believe that exploring and practicing using Standards Based Grading will result in students engaging reflectively with their learning and thinking actively about the quality of the learning they are doing; rather than the quantity of points they are earning. We believe that examining and altering our assessment practices will also change the relationships between students and teachers where teachers are promoting growth mindset and student

acquisition of skills; rather than acting as gatekeepers to a passing or failing grade, an idea of success that currently is widely variable and not clearly defined.

Currently, our grades show discrepancies between teachers of the same course and grade level, so we know that grades may not accurately represent a student's' knowledge but rather what their course schedule allotted them. For example - using data from the Mark Analysis by Teacher - in 6th Grade Math average course GPAs range across a difference of 3.68 to 2.7 depending on teacher and in 7th Grade English average course GPAs range from 3.73 to 2.41.. We also know that we have wide variance amongst teachers in practices that do not lead to accurate representation of grades such as: awarding extra credit, including "participation" in academic grades, and awarding zero points rather than 50% to represents "F's and "Incompletes" - all of these percentages, positive or negative, skew the accuracy of the grade awarded.

- As part of the application, you will provide a detailed action plan for how you plan to implement this within 12 months. In addition to this action plan, below please identify the key stakeholders, major milestones and any major risks you foresee?

Oct. 2015

Action: Creating a PLC to work as a dedicated group in exploring and discovering best practices in assessment at the middle school level.

Stakeholders: ILT, Admin, Department Representatives via self-nomination

Milestones: Forming Cohort to expand understanding of best practices in assessment and work as thought-partners in use of Standards Based Grading in different school contexts, at different stages of practice.

Risks: Not enough teachers joining from our school.

Nov. 2015

Action: Set a PLC calendar - prioritize time for teachers to meet twice a month off-site in mixed school group and twice a month on-site.

Stakeholders: as above

Milestones: Set goals for initial exploration of SBG and related best practices around assessment. Create actions in alignment with goals. Reflect upon goals and actions. Make adjustments to goals based on grading data. Begin ROCI Cycle 1

Reflect on Grading Data for P1 and P2

Risks: Prioritizing teachers time for this project.

Dec. 2015

Action: Complete ROCI Cycle 1

Create SBG Pilot for Semester 2 based on ROCI Cycle Reflection and Results

Stakeholders: as above

January/February 2016

Action: SBG Pilot begins

Stakeholders: as above, plus other interested parties at our school, lead by school cohort
Milestones: Using data and reflections from ROCI Cycle 1 to inform, SBG Pilot begins at our school. ROCI Cycle 2 begins

Risks: Responding to unforeseen complications or questions that arise from trying out a new practice may feel frustrating or discouraging. Maintaining morale and commitment to goal will be important.

March 2016

Actions: Reflection on GPA Data for P4 and P5

Stakeholders: As above.

Milestones: Adding Student and Family Voice to the experience of the SBG project as a way of further informing our instructional decisions. Gather Student and Family Voice on SBG/traditional grading experience.

Risks: Push back from Families and Students who find the system confusing or worry about lowered GPAs if an A is defined as exceeding, rather than meeting, standards.

April 2016

Actions: Compile data to share experience of SBG pilot with other teachers at our school.

Stakeholders: As above.

Milestones: Research and practice based vision for renewed grading practices and policies, authentic to the school site, begin to emerge. Create list of recommendations for altering grading practices for full faculty.

Risks: Fear of change.

May 2016

Actions: Teacher leaders co-facilitate presentation of pilot project to full faculty.

Stakeholders: As above.

Milestones: Administration and teacher leaders create a grading policy at our school in response to data gathered by working group and faculty feedback.

Risks: As above.

June-August 2016

Action: Attendance at Model Schools Conference

Stakeholders: One administrator and 7 representatives from ILT and SBG cohort

Milestones: Gather evidence, research, and learning about best practices in assessment from model schools across the country with the aim of returning to our school and sharing learning with the faculty to further inform our goals and work towards creating more equitable assessment strategies.

Action: Full day faculty retreat is provided in the summer to work through grading policy in practice, adjust and edit course syllabi and expectations, build/adjust settings in gradebooks.

Stakeholders: Full faculty at our school.

Milestones: Grading policy, syllabus, and schoolloop all in alignment across the school site, reflecting commitment to awarding grades that reflect students' achievement of standards.
Risks: Resistance to change.

Action: Pilot group works with administration on documentation to introduction grading policy to students and families

Stakeholders: Administration, ILT, SBG pilot cohort

Milestones: Published our school's Grading policy reflecting the voice and experience of stakeholders from across our community.

Risks: Fear of change.

September 2016

Actions: Teacher Leaders from Pilot group maintain open classrooms/lines of communication to their peers as 'resident experts' as growing pains emerge.

Stakeholders: Teacher Leaders

Milestones: Avenues for collaboration around assessment and alignment are deepened.

October 2016:

Action: Continued work to gather teacher, student, and family experience to reflect refinement on assessment practices required. Stakeholders: All member of our Community.

Risks: Maintaining momentum and commitment across the school.

- Also, as part of your application, you'll send a detailed budget set-up form. Below can you tell us, how much is needed for implementation? (Ranges provided between \$0 and \$30,000)

Other