

APPLICATION: Buena Vista Horace Mann Community School

**Describe the critical challenge you would like to tackle in a different way.**

The Challenge:

To get right to it, our greatest challenge is that X School has not been historically able to provide our English Language Learners with the key academic and social-emotional skills needed to thrive in our current K-12 educational system and beyond.

A review of Fountas and Pinnell reading data in English demonstrates the unfortunate reality that our ELL students are performing significantly behind English Only students, especially in English, which is a key gate-keeper in the students' ability to be reclassified out of English Language Learner status. At the end of last year, 67% of our 8th grade ELL students were "not yet meeting benchmarks" in English reading as compared to 20% schoolwide; 60% of our 7th grade ELL students were "not yet meeting benchmarks" compared to 25% schoolwide; and 81% of 6th grade ELLs were "not yet meeting benchmarks" compared to 33% schoolwide! Additionally, student referral data shows a prevalence of ELL students receiving discipline referrals for being disruptive and not engaging in work. We are certain that there is a direct correlation with academics and behaviors.

Tackling the challenge in a different way:

We don't feel that an intentional focus on academic interventions will solve our dilemma; in fact, we feel that this is largely a socio-political problem. A problem that has been successfully addressed using a community school lens. To truly reach Vision 2025 and attend to the vision of seeing our parents as partners and seeing our school as the center of community life, we need to be able to access critical community based organizations to support our students and families in the areas of health care, immigration, computer technology, academic support, social skills, and a host of other fields. While we currently have personnel constraints to coordinate the services idealized above, we do have strong relationships with key community based

organizations and a robust PTA that is more than willing to dig in and support our efforts.

More about our students:

Our ELL students, particularly those that have newly arrived in the US, face many more challenges than the current school system can support. Newcomer youth and children of immigrants face unique stressors that impede their ability to form a positive self-identity and transition to healthy adulthood. They are impacted by separation from their parents and relatives; the loss of primary support systems, culture and language; living at or below the poverty line; lower rates of education and literacy; and an internalized sense of oppression and low self-esteem. Grappling with tremendous loss and transition, they face linguistic and social isolation and frequently, inadequate support. In addition, combined with the desire for social acceptance, Latino youth may be deeply impacted by their family's immigration experience, leaving them vulnerable to harmful behaviors such as gang involvement, substance abuse, disengagement/dropping out of school and early pregnancy. (Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count 2014)

**What outcome(s) or change(s) would you like your design to achieve at your school site?**

Driven by new administrative leadership, X School is focused on creating a consistent and coherent set of student supports across the school day and after school to help students build the academic, and social-emotional skills that SFUSD has identified as critical to their success.

We are interested in collaborating with the ilab[KB3] to design a logic model, which will develop our ideas and create an implementation plan that can be measured for its effectiveness. With strong school leadership, a quality after school partner and a

shared vision for success, we are hopeful that this journey will provide our collective leadership with program clarity, attainable goals and milestones.

Some initial goals include:

- X School will see a decrease in behavior related discipline incidents, truancy, and conflict for Tier II and ELL 6-8 students
- X School Tier II and ELL 6-8 students will make progress in the School Quality Improvement Index (SQII) data in the CORE Social/Emotional competencies: Growth mindset, Self efficacy, Self management, and Social Awareness.
- X School teachers will be trained to recognize and participate in tracking the progress of Tier II and ELL 6-8 students as they become more proficient in SEL skills and competencies.[KB4]
- X School parents of Tier II and ELL 6-8 students will be trained to recognize and participate in tracking their youth's progress in SEL skill and competencies. [KB5]
- X School will be able to provide the SFUSD with an assessment of the project, and a potentially replicable model of support.

### **How have you engaged your school to identify your critical challenge?**

The need to support our ELL students is long-standing at so many schools in the SFUSD. Last year we sent twelve 8th grade students on to high school with Fountas and Pinnell results demonstrating "not yet meeting standards." During our initial site-based before-school institute (BSI), we shared schoolwide Fountas and Pinnell data with our teachers and staff and demonstrated how our English-Only students in middle school are outperforming our Latino English Learners in Spanish reading. The

finding is startling and has led our Instructional Leadership Team to set concrete goals for reading progress. To support these goals, we are also in the progress of agreeing upon set instructional strategies that have been previously only “suggested” for implementation. As X School continues to define itself as a landmark Spanish immersion K-8 school, we need to be transparent with our current realities, in order to identify strategies to support our students.

Furthermore, this dialogue has been extended to the PTA and School Site Council, which has identified a desire to hear monthly updates about progress in reading. In terms of support, the members of this design team have affirmed their commitment to putting equity at the center of decision making. While the team has not collectively been grappling with this challenge as a whole, some organizational shifts have already occurred. For example, the PTA went through a identity process and now calls itself “Somos Uno.”

**What solutions have you tried or considered to address this challenge so far?**

In response to this challenge, the school has begun to integrate the after school program (Jamestown), which has deep roots in the community and relationships to the youth and families of X School into weekly Student Assistance Process (SAP) meetings and afterschool program coordinators do an amazing job in trying to support school-day practices. Additionally, the Principal, Assistant Principal collaboratively meet monthly with after school leadership to continue to align programming. Our current assessment is that strong communication between school-day and after school staff is greatly lacking and the professional development that is provided for school-day staff is often inaccessible after school staff, and vice versa.

**How is this challenge an equity dilemma, one that is interfering with your school's ability to ensure that all of your students will thrive?**

As identified in recent SFUSD reporting, our Latino ELL students lag significantly behind our English-Only students in reading in both English and Spanish. We have identified (in question #1) several of the areas of inequality in the lives of these students that are impediments to their success socially, emotionally and consequently, academically. We are not appropriately preparing them for high school and beyond and ---% of them left X School without the ability to be reclassified. [KB6] While non-ELL middle income children and youth in the Mission District may have a variety of opportunities to develop social-emotional skills – through camps, extra-curricular activities, stay-at-home parental support, our ELLS, who grow up with fewer resources and parents working 1, 2, or 3 jobs have far fewer opportunities to develop these skills. For our newcomers ELL students, the dynamic is even more dramatic given the vast cultural, linguistic and economic divide. These students are more likely to need extra support and consistency from publicly-funded systems – whether in-school, after school or summer – in order to experience the types of support that will build their social, emotional and academic skills. The parents of our ELLS will have greater capacity to advocate for their children if many of their basic needs are met and we can strengthen the relationships between school-day, after school staff, and parents along the way.

We are leveraging the resources funded through the MTSS, especially including our social worker and family liaison to provide leadership to our Behavior Response to Intervention work and support our families' ability to advocate for their children, communicate with teachers and staff and access referrals of community based organizations off-site. While we are proud to be laser focused on creating an implementable PBIS strategy during the school day and supporting some of our families, we are not leveraging the collective resources of all staff member, parents and the community.

**Who is on your design team? (the more diverse the better)**

Principal

Vice Principal

Social Worker

School Safety and Support (Security)

Head Counselor

ExCEL Academic Liaison

Jamestown Community Center Site Coordinator

Jamestown Deputy Director for Program Design and Evaluation

Jamestown Treehouse Program Manager

TA Director at PCY[DH7]

Parent, PTA Co-President

**How will you make sure your team will commit the time needed to succeed?**

This work is central to our efforts to create a predictable and safe school and classroom climate for all students. Our struggles to do so cut across the academic, behavioral, and structural elements X School. We are prepared to use the time, space, and staff hours already carved out to address Instructional Core, Behavioral RTI, After School Alignment, and School Operations, to develop a clear theory of action to unify our currently siloed efforts to change outcomes for the historically underserved populations at X School. We are fortunate to have a collaborative and committed staff and parent body that has demonstrated a commitment to social justice and a firm belief in education as a civil right. Our deficit is not of commitment, but of coordination, clarity, and time to distill the various components of our community school into a shared vision informed by all of our stakeholders.