

APPENDIX V – 33

District-wide Student Support Strategies

MTSS and School-Wide Support Plans

The District requires all schools to use Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and develop support plans for high-risk students through an MTSS team. Teams meet bimonthly, with many holding weekly meetings. The District assigned a dedicated MTSS facilitator to 38 high-needs schools, identified by student AzMERIT performance and discipline rates. In SY2018-19, two schools used site funds to hire a full-time MTSS facilitator. Other sites designated an MTSS lead to coordinate team efforts and document tiered interventions. Facilitators and leads provided site trainings as needed and documented meeting notes and student support via the online documentation platform. Specialists from the African American (AASSD) and Mexican American (MASSD) student services departments served on at least one MTSS team to provide additional Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 support for African American and Hispanic students.

Standardized Curriculum

During SY2018-19, the District rolled out the comprehensive Curriculum 5.0, featuring a model Understanding by Design (UBD) Unit for all grades in ELA and math. Curriculum 5.0 also featured alignment to the new standards for ELA and math (adopted by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) in 2016). The District continued to utilize lead teachers but changed the focus from one lead teacher per site to two lead teachers per site, one ELA/social studies lead teacher and one math/science lead teacher. The lead teachers attended quarterly training sessions and then trained their site staff. The District also continued training administrators at Instructional Leadership Academies (ILAs) and added Curriculum, Instruction, Professional Development and Assessment Academies (CIPDA) for site support personnel, including curriculum service providers (CSP), MTSS facilitators, magnet coordinators, and instructional data intervention support personnel. These CIPDA academies utilized an extensive, train-the-trainer model to build capacity so that support personnel could provide on-site, job-embedded coaching and support.

Language Accessible Social Workers

The District provided social workers to support exceptional education

student needs and provided three social workers at Cholla, Pueblo, and Tucson high schools to serve non-exceptional education students.

Dropout Prevention: Home Visits

Dropout prevention specialists visited homes of students who experienced habitual absenteeism or were in jeopardy of dropping out. In SY2018-19, eight dropout specialists made more than 400 daytime and evening home visits, both scheduled and spontaneous. For students of legal age, the specialist directed the conversation toward the student. For students under the legal age, the specialists spoke with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and encouraged them to include the student in the conversation and resolution.

AASSD and MASSD Support

In SY2018-19, the MASSD targeted the lowest performing 25 sites identified by the Assessment and Evaluation Department based on student demographics, discipline data, and District assessment data as well as sites with low letter grades as determined by ADE. The MASSD assigned a program specialist to fifteen identified sites, each with a Hispanic student population of at least 30 percent. Additionally, MASSD program specialists responded to 22 sites in need of support through requests for interventions and regional assistant superintendents. Supporting services included home visits, parent conferences, and mentoring. The AASSD assigned specialists to designated schools based on school enrollment, student discipline data, benchmark assessment data, achievement gap data, and AzMERIT scores. For more information about AASSD and MASSD support for African American and Hispanic student graduation and retention, see Section V.D.3.

Steps to Success

The District and the City of Tucson, Office of the Mayor implemented Steps to Success as a means to identify, seek out, and retrieve students who have dropped out of Tucson Unified schools. The Dropout Prevention Department coordinates this yearly event. Through home visits, this partnership allowed educational staff, including support staff from the Dropout Prevention and Student Services departments, city officials, and community members to visit with students and their families to encourage them to finish their high school education. The table below

shows that 64 students returned to school and five graduated in SY2018-19.

Steps to Success

| | White | African American | Hispanic | Native American | Asian/Pacific Islander | Multi-Racial | Total |
|-----------|-------|------------------|----------|-----------------|------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Enrolled | 9 | 1 | 47 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 64 |
| | 7.1% | 1.6% | 73.4% | 7.8% | 3.1% | 0% | |
| Graduates | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| | 1.6% | 1.6% | 4.7% | 0% | 0% | 0% | |

In SY2018-19, the District implemented quarterly site-based Steps to Success programs at each middle and high school, whereby staff from each school made personal visits to the homes of students that had dropped out. The Dropout Prevention department assisted by creating the procedures for how this was to be done and guided the school in how to implement the model.

High School Student Support Strategies

Freshman Academy (Summer Bridge Program) for Incoming 9th Graders

In summer 2019, the District continued the Freshman Academy (formerly the Summer Bridge Program) at all ten comprehensive high schools. While any student could attend, the District targeted its recruitment to students who faced particular academic challenges, such as 8th grade students in jeopardy of not promoting to the 9th grade.¹ More than 600 students attended Freshman Academy. The District recruited teachers working on the respective campuses to be a part of the Freshman Academy so they could start building relationships with the students prior to the first day of school.

Organize High School Classes for Freshmen into Smaller Communities or Teams

In SY2018-19, the District embedded Santa Rita High School's Success

¹ Students participated in a four-hour school day in which they received 1.5 hours of instruction in both math and ELA, and one hour of either study skills or campus orientation. The math and ELA curricula are the same as those used for other 8th grade retention programs but staff members deliver it in an abbreviated amount of time. The District designed the program to provide students with a solid foundation in these core content areas as they transition to high school. The campus orientation and study skills component of the program allowed students to become accustomed to their high school site so that as incoming freshman they would have less difficulty transitioning to high school.

Academy into the differentiated bell schedule on Wednesdays and Thursdays. On these designated days, classes incorporate 25 to 30 minutes of intervention and enrichment for students in each class. During this intervention time, teachers focus on ELA, math, science, and social studies. Santa Rita's Success Academy also provides students with college and career readiness pathways. The District designed the class for students to connect with college advisors and industry partners through whole-class interaction, one-on-one conferencing, and online services such as Skype. Through these college and career resources, students have access to opportunities such as resume writing and technical vocabulary.

Pilot Program to Use 8th Grade Data to Place Students in Need of Math Support in a Two-hour Block of Algebra/Algebra Support

The District continued to implement a "double-block" Algebra 1 class for struggling freshmen, with plans to expand in the following year. In SY2018-19, the following high schools included at least one section of Algebra support (Response to Intervention) in their master schedules: Catalina, Cholla, Palo Verde, Pueblo, Rincon, Sabino, Sahuaro, Santa Rita, and Tucson. However, while this strategy supported many students at the majority of schools (Tucson High, for instance, had 124 students enrolled in classes and Pueblo had 113 students), three high schools — Catalina, Cholla, and Palo Verde — had fewer than ten students. Based on the data, the District is eliminating the strategy for SY2019-20 at Rincon and Sabino but will continue at Sahuaro.

Dropout Prevention Specialists

During SY2018-19, dropout prevention specialists worked within the defined, reorganized organization of schools into five regions. Each region comprises elementary, K-8, middle, and high schools. While the high school level required the most attention, sites could request services from dropout prevention specialists using the Student Equity and Intervention Request for Services online referral process. Specialists support students through one-to-one conferences, attendance monitoring, referrals to other District departments as needed, identification and monitoring through the MTSS process, and home visits. They also provide alternative options for students to complete school and connect students with community resources as necessary. Dropout specialists often serve as student advocates and liaisons between the schools and families. Additionally, specialists

are instrumental in supporting district-wide initiatives such as Steps to Success and the National Attendance Awareness Campaign as well as supporting credit recovery efforts.

Credit Tracking Training

One of the priorities for the District is to ensure students graduate on time. The most-utilized intervention at the high school level is credit recovery. During SY2018-19, MTSS facilitators closely monitored the credit deficiencies of all students and, through the MTSS process, assigned case managers to monitor and support those students. The following describes ongoing programs and processes for ensuring students graduate on time.

MTSS facilitators review course grades, credit accumulation reports, and other information to identify students and their academic needs. Each “at-risk” student is assigned a case manager who is responsible for meeting with the student regularly to provide support and monitor progress. MTSS facilitators work closely with each student’s classroom teachers to make sure they are aware of student progress and to ensure that teachers are part of the network supporting student academic success.

Step by Step, Dropout Prevention’s program for transitioning to high school, provides training to 8th grade students on class credits. The training explains credits: how students earn credits, the required number of credits and which subject areas have specific credit requirements to graduate, how students lose credits, and how to catch up if you become credit deficient. The program also explains the relationship between attendance, grades, and credits.

AASSD student success specialists at designated K-12 schools meet with students to review academic progress, serve in student support meetings, and interact with parents. At the middle and high school levels, specialists meet 1:1 to review students’ progress. Specialists also work to provide 1:1 and small group support in the area of social and emotional development through serving as a mentor and/or working with mentoring partnerships.

MASSD staff mentor individual students to improve the academic achievement and educational outcomes of Hispanic students through direct asset-

based support services integrated with culturally responsive practices. Mentoring is designed to increase the overall achievement of Hispanic students, which includes increases in graduation rates, attendance, Advanced Learning Experiences (ALE) enrollment, and college entrance rates.

Education and Career Action Plans (Portfolios) for Students

The Arizona Career and Information System (AzCIS) is an internet-based program provided at no cost to public school districts in Arizona. It is designed to provide comprehensive educational, career, and occupational information to help students make more informed career and school choices and allows students to create and update personalized Education and Career Action Plans (ECAPs). Through AzCIS, students enter, track, and update their course enrollment and post-secondary plans aligned to career goals and document any college and career readiness skills developed. School counselors and college and career readiness coordinators (CCRCs) work with both students and parents in creating and reviewing student's progression.

In SY2018-19, the District required all 8th-12th grade students to use AzCIS to create ECAPs. School counselors and CCRCs worked directly with students and teachers to develop ECAPs for all students. High school students created 21,335 entries and 3,663 portfolios in AzCIS. At the middle grade level, students, made 6,326 entries and 2,203 portfolios.

Structured Concept Recovery

The District used this strategy on a wide scale, providing concept recovery as an intervention to students struggling with content, particularly in ELA and math. Sites used online learning tools to provide specific concept recovery lessons to at-risk students under the direction of a teacher. As the District refines its approach to MTSS for academic purposes, it is also refining the methods of concept recovery used as an academic intervention.

Alternative Schools and Programs

The District operated two alternative high schools in SY2018-19—Project MORE Alternative High School and Teenage Parent High School (TAP)—as well as

online alternatives. Project MORE serves juniors and seniors seeking flexible web-based, blended learning options supported by personalized instruction with an emphasis on credit recovery. In SY2018-19, Project MORE expanded services to a small sophomore cohort in need of this alternative program and will continue to do so in SY2019-20.

Teenage Parent High School is a small alternative school designed to help pregnant and parenting teens finish high school; prepare for college and careers; and become safe, loving, and well-informed parents. TAP provides small, direct instruction and online courses to ensure students can complete all District course requirements for high school graduation. TAP offers credit recovery courses via direct instruction and/or online based on student need and graduation time lines. In SY2018-19, the District continued to provide targeted instructional supports in math, reading, and writing to students who entered TAP several years behind their grade-level peers. TAP utilizes a wide variety of live, technology-based and blended learning interventions to ensure students who are at a high risk for dropping out of high school gain skills needed for high school and post-high school success.

In addition, any high school student who failed one or more semester of required courses had the opportunity to choose among multiple credit recovery options, including AGAVE Middle and High School, AGAVE Credit Recovery, Edgenuity, GradLink, and Weekend Academy at Project MORE. Alternative summer school options included AGAVE Credit Recovery and the Freshman Academy program. These options provide students with opportunities to make up credits before, during, and after school; during evenings, weekends and holidays; or during the summer either in a traditional high school environment or online.

AGAVE Middle and High School serves any student residing in Arizona in a virtual environment under the guidelines of the Arizona Online Initiative (AOI); however, the majority of the student body resides in Pima County. AGAVE provides a quality curriculum taught by highly qualified and appropriately certified staff. The school allows students to progress through middle school and attain a high school diploma while allowing flexibility of time, place, path, and pace. Unlike most virtual schools in Arizona, AGAVE provides computer labs staffed by teachers to provide additional one-on-one support. These labs are located at the AGAVE offices on the Catalina Campus during the day, on four evenings a week, and on Saturdays, and at

Pueblo and Tucson high schools four evenings a week. The AGAVE offices are centrally located at Catalina High School.

In SY2019-20, the District is renaming AGAVE as the Catalina Online Learning Experience (C.O.L.E.). C.O.L.E. will continue to operate just like AGAVE, including providing computer labs staffed by teachers to provide additional one-on-one support, and its location and hours have not changed.

GradLink was an AGAVE program that will now be a C.O.L.E. program focused on seniors who are within eight credits of graduating. GradLink students have access to a counselor and three evening labs staffed by highly qualified teachers to assist them through the completion of their graduation requirements.

Middle and Elementary School Student Support Strategies

Middle School Strategies

Organize Middle School Classes into Smaller Communities or Teams

Eight schools utilized the team model for SY2018-19, as shown in the table below.

| School | Teams in 2016-17 | Teams in 2017-18 | Teams in 2018-19 |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Dodge | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Doolen | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Gridley | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Magee | No | No | Yes |
| Mansfeld | No | No | No |
| Pistor | No | Yes | Yes |
| Secrist | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Utterback | No | No | No |
| Vail | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Valencia | Yes | Yes | Yes |

CORE PLUS

The District designed the CORE PLUS (CP) Academic Intervention Program to provide academic intervention to low-performing 6th graders. Staff members

provide the entire 6th grade curriculum to participating students and spend extra time during the day on math and ELA curricula to fill in gaps and boost student confidence.

In spring 2018, the District identified underperforming 5th grade students from across the District, prioritizing African American and Hispanic students. In partnership with elementary schools, CP invited parents to attend informational meetings and enroll their child in CP for SY2018-19. The District held three informational meetings and subsequent individual parent meetings. Because CP is a program and not a school, the enrolled students maintained their District middle school registration but attended one of the CP classrooms. In cases where the student did not meet enrollment requirements, CP staff contacted the student's middle school to arrange for the student's return by mid-quarter. CP has been in existence since 2011, and the District will continue offering this intervention to 6th graders for SY2019-20.

Each CP class has a certified teacher and an instructional specialist and serves fifteen to twenty students throughout the school year in each classroom. The objective is to have full enrollment in each classroom and meet standardized testing growth goals. CP programs will remain at Booth-Fickett Magnet K-8 and at the Southwest Education Center in SY2019-20.

Summer School

The District provided a Freshman Academy program for students wanting additional support to move to the next grade level and required participation by any 8th grade students in danger of retention. With successful completion of this program, students also obtained a semester of an elective high school credit. The District designed the Freshmen Academy to help incoming freshmen strengthen their skills in math and ELA with a variety of engaging and hands-on activities while building their note-taking and social skills in a high school setting. Each high school hosted the academy so students could enroll at the high school they planned to attend the following year.

The District hosted similar programs for identified and at-risk students in 3rd grade at various hub locations, recruiting all students in jeopardy of not promoting to 4th grade. Additionally, the summer enrichment program coordinator

collaborated with the AASSD and MASSD directors to recruit African American and Hispanic students.

Sixth Grade Bridge Program

Dodge Traditional Magnet Middle School, Gridley Middle School, and the Doolen Middle School GATE program provided bridge programs for their incoming 6th grade students. Dodge and Doolen programs offered an academic component but focused more on orientation, students' skills, and the transition to middle school, with an emphasis on each site's particular programs. The program at Gridley provided incoming 6th graders with a half-day orientation and a community-building opportunity.

Seven-Period Day

In SY2018-19, the District continued to utilize a seven-period day to allow daily teacher professional learning community time to facilitate teacher reviews of student assessment data and plans for interventions. Students benefit from having an additional elective period so that they have greater access to intervention classes without sacrificing an elective course. Furthermore, having interventions during the school day makes it easier to participate in extracurricular activities, including interscholastics and performing arts. This strategy directly supports academic achievement, professional development, Tier 2 support for ELA/math, and extracurricular activities.

Elementary and K-8 Strategies

Master Schedule

In SY2016-17, principals created a master schedule that allowed for a 90-minute reading block, a 30-minute intervention block, and a 60- to 90-minute math block. The literacy schedule was part of the District's K-3 Move On When Reading (MOWR) state literacy plan. Site administrators followed the District's Governing Board policy for implementing organized recess minutes. The District continued this practice in SY2018-19.

Focus on Early Literacy

In SY2016-17, the District aligned its focus on early literacy with the Arizona State K-3 MOWR requirements, and continued the practices described below in SY2018-19. During a 90-minute literacy block, instructional strategies included direct modeling, guided reading, and the use of literacy workstations. School sites used the criteria for reading instruction from the National Reading Panel 2000 findings.

The District used Harcourt Brace, a research-based reading series included on the list of approved adoptions, as its main reading adoption. The District also utilized other reading materials such as the Scholastic Leveled Libraries and the Multicultural Libraries to support Tier 1 literacy instruction. For interventions, the District employed a variety of resources such as Sounds Abound, Great Leaps, Rewards, Wilson Readers, and the online SuccessMaker program. Intervention resources and types of interventions varied by site.

All sites monitored progress using various instructional and assessment systems, including Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Scholastic Next Step Guided Reading Assessment (NSGRA), SuccessMaker, Achieve 3000, and Imagine Learning. All sites were required to use DIBELS, SuccessMaker, and SchoolCity benchmark data. In SY2018-19, the District worked with Scholastic to begin creating a comprehensive K-12 literacy plan.

Preschools

In SY2018-19, the District's 50 inclusion classrooms provided two sessions of preschool each day, serving more than 1,600 students. Research has shown that high-quality preschool programming is instrumental in dropout prevention. In addition, inclusive preschool gives a greater number of students with individualized education plans access to learn in a less restrictive, more realistic environment, better preparing them for elementary school and beyond.

In addition to preschool, the District expanded the quality and scope of its kindergarten transition plan, adding transition strategies to existing approaches such as Kinder Round-Up.