

APPENDIX V-31

Support Strategies Combined Narrative

1. Districtwide Student Support Strategies

MTSS and School-Wide Support Plans

The District required all schools to use Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and develop support plans for high-risk students through an MTSS team. Teams met bimonthly, but many held weekly meetings. The District assigned a dedicated MTSS Facilitator to 38 high-needs schools, identified by student AzMERIT performance, discipline data, percentage of free and reduced Lunch students, and other demographic data. Sites without a full time MTSS Facilitator designated an MTSS Lead to coordinate team efforts and document tiered interventions. Facilitators and Leads provided site trainings regarding the MTSS process, best practices in interventions and documentation, social-emotional learning, restorative practices, PBIS, and Culturally Responsive teaching practices. MTSS Facilitators and Leads regularly documented meeting notes and student support via the online documentation platform, Synergy MTSS. Specialists from the African American (AASSD), Native American (NASS), Asian, 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, Asian, Native American and Hispanic students.

Standardized Curriculum

During SY2019-20, the District renamed the curriculum “Tucson Unified's Multicultural Curriculum,” moving away from the previous naming (1.0, 2.0, etc.). This naming reinforces TUSD's commitment to a Multicultural Curriculum and eliminates the need for continuous version identification, other than the applicable year (i.e. “Tucson Unified 2019-2020 School Year Multicultural Curriculum”). The Curriculum features a model Understanding by Design (UBD) Unit for all grades in ELA and math. TUSD also included a transitional curriculum in Science and Social Studies to address new standards, and the curriculum department worked with teachers to develop inquiry design units for SY2020-21 in Social Studies, and evaluated materials in Science. The District also continued Curriculum, Instruction, Professional Development and Assessment Academies (CIPDA Academy) for site

support personnel, including curriculum service providers (CSP), MTSS facilitators, magnet coordinators, and instructional data intervention support personnel. These CIPDA Academies were monthly, full-day professional learning opportunities. CIPDAs utilized an extensive, train-the-trainer model to build capacity so that support personnel could provide on-site, job-embedded coaching and support. The District shifted its focus from Lead Teachers to utilizing the CIPDA Academy participants in order to train their staff on Curriculum.

Due to COVID-19, the District developed a remote learning curriculum utilizing Learning Boards, developed by teams of teachers and curriculum developers. In addition, TUSD utilized Zoom to provide extensive and well-attended professional learning for teachers on best practices for remote teaching.

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 SY2019-20, ten dropout specialists made over 530 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. The Specialists conducted home visits throughout the school year, including after Covid-19 school closures.

AASSD and MASSD Support

In SY2019-20, the MASSD targeted the lowest performing 25 sites identified by the Assessment and Evaluation Department based on student demographics, discipline data, District assessment data, and ADE letter grades. The MASSD assigned program specialists to 15 identified sites, each with a Hispanic student population of at least 30 percent, to provide support in targeted areas to increase educational

outcomes. College mentors were assigned to designated CRC classrooms for student academic mentoring at 16 sites. Additionally, MASSD program specialists and a behavior specialist responded to 17 additional sites in need of direct support through requests for interventions from site staff and regional assistant superintendents. MASSD staff mentored students academically and behaviorally, conducted home visits, and provided advocacy in discipline and academic related parent conferences.

The AASSD assigned specialists to designated schools based on school enrollment, student discipline data, benchmark assessment data, achievement gap data, and AzMERIT scores. The AASSD responded to 32 requests for support through the online request for interventions form.

See section V.D.3 Targeted Academic Interventions and Supports for more information on the ways by which AASSD and MASSD supports African American and Hispanic student graduation and retention.

Steps to Success

The District and the Tucson Mayor's office 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 in SY2019-20, 57 students returned to school.

Table 5.#, Steps to Success

	White	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian/Pacific Islander	Multi-Racial	Total
Enrolled	8	5	41	2	0	1	57
	14.0%	8.8%	71.9%	3.5%	0%	1.8%	
Graduates	2	0	4	0	0	0	6
	33.3%	0%	66.7%	0%	0%	0%	

Site-based Steps to Success

In SY 2019-20, middle and high schools continued quarterly, site-based Steps to Success practices. Principals, counselors, teachers and school staff made personal visits to the homes of their students who may have dropped out of school, were failing classes, demonstrating poor attendance, and were credit deficient. Dropout Prevention assisted by creating the effective procedures, guiding schools during implementation, and joining visits to provide real-time professional learning.

2. High School Student Support Strategies

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

In summer 2020, the District continued the Freshman Academy (formerly the Summer Bridge Program) at eight comprehensive high schools: Catalina, Cholla, Palo Verde, Pueblo, Rincon, Sahuaro, Santa Rita, and Tucson High, online. 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 In SY2018-19, more than 600 students attended. In SY2019-20, the District increased enrollment to more than 700 students. 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. Also, students who attended received a semester high school elective credit.

Organize High School Classes into Smaller Tier 1 Communities or Teams

In SY2019-20, the District embedded Santa Rita High School's Success Academy (referred to as SOAR--Students Organized Around Rigor) into the differentiated bell schedule on Wednesdays and Thursdays. On these designated days, classes incorporate 25 to 30 minutes of Tier 1 intervention and enrichment for

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.

students in each class. During this intervention time, teachers focused on ELA, math, science, and social studies. Santa Rita's SOAR classes also provided 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 Zoom. Through these college and career resources, students have access to opportunities such as resume writing and technical vocabulary in smaller settings.

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. In SY2019-20, seven high schools included at least one section of Algebra support (Response to Intervention) for 9th graders in their master schedules: Catalina, Cholla, Palo Verde, Pueblo, Sahuaro, Santa Rita, and Tucson. More than 400 students enrolled in the classes.

Dropout Prevention Specialists

During SY2019-20, Dropout Prevention Specialists were assigned by region, following the organizational format of schools: five regions, each with 14-17 schools. While the high school level required the most attention from specialists, all schools are encouraged to 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.

During the school closures due to COVID-19, dropout specialists delivered laptops/Chrome Books to students to mitigate the risk of harm to students,

particularly at-risk students, who may have reduced internet access. Not only did this provide a means for the student to continue their education, but it gave the specialists an opportunity to encourage students not to give up during this unusual circumstance.

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. MTSS facilitators closely monitor the credit deficiencies of all students and, through the MTSS process, assign case managers to monitor and support those students.

MTSS facilitators review course grades, credit accumulated 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 their progress. . MTSS facilitators work closely with each student’s classroom teachers to make sure they are aware of their progress, and to ensure that teachers they are part of the support network to ensure student academic success.

Step by Step, Dropout prevention’s transition to high school program provides training to 8th grade students on class credits. The training explains how students earn credits, the required number of credits for graduation, and which subject areas have specific credit requirements to graduate. In addition to this, students learn about the causes of credit deficiency and the options available to them should they become credit deficient. Step by Step looks at the relationship between attendance, grades, and credits and how it is their responsibility to be sure they are credit current.

AASSD student success coaches 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, coaches meet 1:1 to review students’ progress. Coaches 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 Hispanic students individually and in group settings to

improve academic achievement and educational outcomes through direct asset-based support services integrated with culturally responsive practices. Designated program specialists and college mentors utilize strategies to increase the overall achievement of Hispanic students, which includes increases in graduation rates, attendance, Advanced Learning Experiences (ALE) enrollment, academic identity, social-emotional well-being, and college entrance rates. Additionally, parent workshops are conducted to further inform and engage Hispanic families in educational goals for students.

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 post-secondary 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 (CCRCs) Coordinators work with both students and parents in creating and reviewing students' progression.

In SY2019-20, the District required all 8th-12th grade students to use AzCIS as one tool to create ECAPs. School counselors and CCRCs worked directly with students and teachers to develop ECAPs for all students. High school students created 13,644 entries and 3,348 portfolios in AzCIS. At the middle grade level, students made 3,074 entries and 2,299 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 three alternative schools in SY2019-20—Project MORE Alternative High School and Teenage Parent High School (TAP) and Mary Meredith—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 SY2019-20, Project MORE offered services to a small sophomore cohort in need of this alternative program but no students accepted placement.

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. Targeted instructional supports are provided in math, reading, and writing to students who enter 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, Edgenuity, GradLink2, and Weekend Academy at Project MORE. Alternative summer school options included credit recovery through C.O.L.E. on-line learning and the Freshman Academy program. These options provided 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.

In SY2019-20, the District renamed AGAVE as the Catalina Online Learning Experience (C.O.L.E.). C.O.L.E. continued to operate just like AGAVE, including providing computer labs staffed by teachers to provide additional one-on-one support, and its location and hours remained the same.

GradLink was an AGAVE program that became a C.O.L.E. program, GradLink2, focused on seniors who are within eight credits of graduating. GradLink2 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.

3. Middle and Elementary School Student Support Strategies

Middle School Strategies

Organize Middle School Classes into Smaller Communities or Teams

In SY2019-20, four middle schools implemented teams to help support the middle school concept and consistent review of student data. These schools included Doolen, Pistor, Secrist and Valencia.

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 2019, the District identified underperforming fifth 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 SY2019-20. The District held four informational meetings (two informational meetings for each site) 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 SY2020-21.

Each class includes a certified teacher and instructional specialist, and serves up to twenty students throughout the school year. The objective is full enrollment

and for each class to meet standardized testing growth goals. CP programs will remain at Booth-Fickett and Southwest Education Center in SY2020-21.

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. Eight high schools hosted the academy; students enrolled at the high school they planned to attend the following year. The District hosted 21st century summer programs for students in grades K-8 at all 21st century campuses.

Sixth Grade Bridge Program

Dodge Traditional Magnet 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

The seven-period day allows daily teacher PLC 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. In SY2019-20, TUSD expanded the number of schools that utilized the seven-period day.

4. Elementary and K-8 Strategies

Master Schedule

In SY2019-20, 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 SY2019-20.

Focus on Early Literacy

In SY2019-20, the District aligned its focus on early literacy with the Arizona State K-3 MOWR requirements, and continued the practices described below in SY2019-20.

During a 90-minute literacy instructional block, instructional strategies included direct modeling, guided reading, and the use of literacy workstations. Schools utilized the criteria for reading instruction from the National Reading Panel 2000 findings.

The District used Benchmark Advance/Adelante and Cengage Reach, a research-based reading series included on the list of approved adoptions, as its primary reading adoption. Both literacy adoptions met the ESSA requirements. The District also utilized approved resources such as the Scholastic Leveled Libraries and the Multicultural Libraries to support Tier 1 and Tier 2 literacy instruction. For interventions, the District employed approved online programs: SuccessMaker, Waterford, Imagine Learning, and Achieve 3000. Additional intervention resources and programs varied by site.

All sites monitored progress using various instructional and assessment systems, including Acadience, Scholastic Next Step Guided Reading Assessment (NSGRA), Developmental Reading Assessment, SuccessMaker, Achieve 3000, and Imagine Learning. All sites were required to use Acadience, SuccessMaker, and SchoolCity benchmark data. The District continued to work with Scholastic in creating a comprehensive K-12 literacy plan.

Preschools

In SY2019-20, the District's 50 inclusion classrooms provided two sessions of preschool each day, serving more than 1,500 students. Research has shown that high-quality preschool programming is instrumental in dropout prevention. Children and families attending inclusive programs develop meaningful relationships with certified staff who increase the child's ability to develop appropriate social and emotional strategies, improving kinder readiness. 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 continued implementation of its expanded kindergarten transition plan by including transition strategies to existing approaches such as Kinder Round-Up.