

**MID-CYCLE VISIT
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

FOR

THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

@MIGUEL CONTRERAS LEARNING COMPLEX

322 South Lucas Avenue

Los Angeles, CA 90017

Los Angeles Unified School District

Self-Study Visit: February 7-10, 2016

Mid Cycle Visit: March 28, 2019

Visiting Committee Members

Henry H. Fries, Jr., Chair
Retired Assistant Principal, San Fernando High School, Los Angeles USD

David E. Platt
Teacher, Covina High School, Covina-Valley USD

I. Introduction

Include the following:

General comments about the school, its setting, and the school's analysis of student achievement data.

The School of Social Justice (SSJ) is part of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and is one of four small schools on the Miguel Contreras Learning Complex (MCLC) campus. The 18 classrooms are located on the third floor of the campus. School enrollment is 464 students in grades nine through twelve.

SSJ began as a small learning community in 2002 at Belmont High School. In 2005 a small learning community design proposed and certification obtained. In the 2012-13 school year, the SSJ faculty and stakeholder groups applied for Pilot School status and the Board of Education approved our plan. Pilot schools are afforded autonomies over budget, curriculum, assessment, school calendar, and other areas. Teachers who work at a pilot school are still members of the teachers union but agree to a "thin contract" and must sign an Election-to-Work Agreement (EWA) that outlines teachers' working conditions and expectations each year.

The majority of our students reside in some of the poorest neighborhoods west of downtown Los Angeles with a median household income is \$24,900. The neighborhood consists of mostly working class, immigrant, and low-income families; 61% of adult residents have less than a high school diploma. Parents of the students value education and the increasing opportunities for their children. The ethnic breakdown of the neighborhoods is 66% Hispanic, 7% White, 21% Asian, and 5% African American / Black. The ethnic breakdown of SSJ is 97% Latino, 2% African American / Black and 1% Filipino. Since the school opened, SSJ has been a Title I School.

SSJ has 18 general education teachers, 2 special education teachers, 1 academic counselor, 1 Targeted School Population (TSP), 1 Pupil Services and Attendance (PSA) Counselor, 1 Psychiatric Social Worker (PSW), 3 clerical staff members, and 2 administrators and 5 Bilingual TAs that target classes with ELD students. New programs and changes in our academic program in the last few years include: a Health class for incoming 9th graders, a Peer Counseling class for upper class students, an Ethnic Studies elective for upper class students, Mexican American Studies, Latin American Studies, Ethnic Studies, and African American Studies elective classes for upper class students. Students in grades the 10th, 11th and 12th grade make take community college courses on campus taught by college professors.

The district's LCAP goals are (1) 100% graduation, (2) proficiency for all, (3) 100% attendance, (4) parent-student-community engagement, and (5) school safety for our targeted student populations

In order to match these district goals, SSJ elected to focus spending in those areas. Student enrollment has decreased from 497 in 2014-15 to 463 in 2018-19. Graduation has fluctuated from 77.8% in 2014, increasing to 84.8% in 2016 and decreasing to 73.6% in 2018. CAASPP data is inconsistent with results rising and falling. SSJ consistently finishes with between 25 and 28% of student grades are at the D or F level. The school has increased the number of students taking the SAT and ACT. The school realizes consistent success on AP Spanish Language Exam. Other subject tests are still a challenge for the students. Dual enrollment college classes incorporated in the student students has seen an increase in enrollment and the opportunity to complete up to 10 college course prior to high school graduation. About 90% of our students report they will attend either a 2- or a 4-year college after leaving SSJ.

Include a description of any significant changes and/or developments, i.e., program additions since the last full visit, changes in student enrollment, staffing changes

Teacher Turn Over: SSJ had 8 teachers and the TSP Coordinator leave. Nine teachers were hired of which seven are first year teachers.

YPI Grant: The school was selected as one of eight recipients of the Youth Policy Institute's (YPI) Promise Neighborhood Grant. The 5-year grant funds seven positions in its cradle-to-college-and-career approach to closing the educational opportunity gap. YPI provides a shared ELA Learner and STEM instructional coaches positions within the LAPN grant.

Newcomer ELD: There was an increase of 60 Newcomer students since 2016. The school incorporated a newcomer line into the master schedule. Since students were segregated from non-ELD peers and had

limited opportunities to learn English from their peers. This year the school modified the program into an ELD Block of tailored instruction. All other classes ELD students are integrated with their peers.

Partnership with Principal's Exchange: YPI funded the Principal's Exchange for 2018-19 that has allowed SSJ to work with other local high school to address Action Plan Goal #1 regarding data analysis and collaboration.

ILC to ILT: The Instruction Leadership Committee (ILC) planned professional development in 2015-16. The committee structure was too limiting to serve the various PD calendar priorities. In 2017-18 the responsibilities were divided between the ILC and a team of committee leads. The ILC meets weekly.

Full time PSA and PSW: A full time PSA was purchased in 2017-18. In 2018-19 a full time PSW was purchased.

Implementation of LACC Courses:

SSJ, beginning the fall of 2015, offered dual enrollment classes within the regular school day. In 2017-18 the number of class offered increased. The goals were to address deficiencies in students English and math skills and offer classes that fulfilled college general education or transfer credit aligned to a social justice theme. The program was revamped in 2018 dropping the English/Math components and focus on general education courses.

Describe the impact these changes and/or developments have had on the school and/or specific curricular programs.

Teacher Turn Over: New teachers contribute a high level of energy, motivation, and awareness of the newest pedagogies of teaching urban youth. They involve themselves in student activities. They are receptive to coaching and support and are always open to feedback to inform instruction. The teacher turnover initially placed a strain on teacher morale. Overall, teachers have shown a revived sense of excitement this year.

YPI Grant: The YPI grant provides academic and emotional counseling support. Students receive help with resumes, job placement and internships. YPI has paid for SJA to participate in the Principal's Exchange and supports English Language Arts with academic coaching.

Newcomer ELD: This year the school modified the program into an ELD Block of tailored instruction. All other classes ELD students are integrated with their peers.

Partnership with Principal's Exchange: Teachers administer online assessments in English and Math every six. SSJ partners with Belmont HS so that teacher in both schools can analyze data, discuss reteaching needs and finalize instructional plans for the next six-week unit. Administrators Counselors, PSA and PSW attend Guidance Alignments session five times per year to track students and benchmarks.

ILC to ILT: The ILT has a more holistic understanding of the school priorities and focuses instruction rather than operations.

Full time PSA and PSW: Through the work of the PSA, there was an increase in student attendance and a decrease in chronic absenteeism. With the addition of the PSW the Positive Behavior Support committee receives an integral member, a vital member of the Student Success and Progress Team (SSPT), one who completes school safety plans and addresses Title IX complaints.

Implementation of LACC Courses: In 2017-18, discipline issues occurred in English and Math classes with student not completing coursework and ditching the class. Currently students are taking college classes and earning credits. They feel that they are better prepared for college since they have experienced what is expected of them in college. SJA has had former students return to speak about appreciating the opportunity to take college classes while in high school.

Briefly comment on the school's follow-up process. Include a description of the committee that has been responsible for overseeing the progress of the school's action plan and the preparation for the visit.

Annually, the progress on the school-wide action plan is evaluated and modified for the upcoming school year. Since the former WASC coordinators transferred to other locations, the ILT has assumed the

WASC coordination duties. The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) comprised of volunteers from teachers committees and administrators are the individuals responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan and visit preparation.

Describe the process used to prepare the progress report.

The midterm progress report work began in May 2018. The ILT reviewed the midterm progress report format and discussed the timeline for completing the necessary tasks with the entire staff. The Instructional Leadership Team assessed the school's progress on the Critical Areas of Follow Up in August of 2018. Committee Chairs gathered information during their meetings in the fall 2018, data was compiled and put into section IV of the Mid-Term Progress Report. The academic counselor, principal and assistant principal throughout the fall semester completed the Student/Community Profile.

II. Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up/Schoolwide Action Plan

Provide an analytical summary about the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section referencing the critical areas for follow-up addressed through each section.

The school has two main goals for their critical areas for follow-up. Goal #1 is to increase student academic success. Goal #2 is to have improvement in student supports. According to the mid-cycle report, they accomplished these goals through by embedding critical areas of follow-up into each goal.

Goal #1:

For the first goal, increase student academic success, the school embedded the Mastery Learning cycle, staff collaboration, and data analysis. These strategies were selected to address the first and second student learning outcomes: that students will think critically, research, and create solutions; and students will be socially responsible and advocate for themselves and others.

Mastery Learning Cycle:

According to the school, the following strategies and activities were addressed to meet the needs of the first goal: develop professional development for Instructional Learning Teams (ILT's) centered on Common Core State Standards (CCSS), instruction based on engagement, differentiation, and rigor, formative assessment, reflection, and summative assessment.

The schoolwide approach to the mastery learning cycle helped to define a system on grade books and grading and a process to align assessments and instructional practices to content standards and the student learning outcomes.

A Kagan Structure PD was the central professional development initiative to focus faculty on the mastery learning cycle. The Kagan model has been continued since 2016-2017 through additional PD and modeling by ILTs.

To address the needs for academic differentiation, the school continued a process of training for the academically fragile populations. The training focused on building supports for English Language Learners (ELL) and students with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs.) The trainings, both for all faculty and for a smaller group of teachers, were used to implement the English language standards. Staff-wide and focus group PD was help to give teachers more support and training to understand and support IEPs.

Data Analysis and Collaboration:

The school addressed the second strategy of the first goal, data analysis and collaboration, by developing departmental benchmark assessments and pre- and post-tests, a vertical alignment of curriculum and performance expectations, and cohesion, and created instructional plans, content team assessment scoring, calibration, and analysis.

According to the school, data analysis was approached over the course of the last three years. During the 2016-17 school year, the plan was for the school to map out long-term learning outcomes for student mastery for each grade level. To accomplish this, content teams met to create a vertical alignment of objectives and outcomes. Departments selected anchor standards and designed common assessments around those standards.

A PD time was used at the beginning of the year for common assessment development and creates a cycle of data analysis for the school year. Departments to complete their cycles used PLC/Common planning time. There have been difficulties in this implementation due to there being one teacher for a course per grade level. This made common assessment and data analysis difficult. The school has worked at additional strategies but has not continued them for the 2018-2019 year.

Collaboration and implementation of common instructional strategies amongst math teachers:

The third strategy was focused on math and creating a system of common planning and data analysis for the math department. The plan was to create a common PLC among the math teachers in which they would discuss data and student progress by having all math teachers teaching Algebra 1 to have a standardized curriculum. The plan as implemented with the 2017-2018 school was canceled due to staff changes and teachers on leave.

Long-term Professional Development Plan to ensure structured teacher collaboration:

The fourth strategy focused on common strategies for all teachers. The school has implemented weekly PLC time, a monthly complex-wide math PLC, team teaching with inclusion specialists and math teachers, and modeling of strategies and practices.

Between ILT and various committees, a PD plan was created to address the third critical area of need of establishing a long-term professional development plan. Over the course of three years, the school initiated, developed, and then continued a PD plan. Up until the 2018-2019 school year, the school began developing a PD plan focused on Goal #2. This past year the school changed the PD structure to focus on strong instruction due to teacher turnover. An English component was added to in order to create standards-aligned learning objectives. By Spring 2019, the PD plan shifted to focus on "Teacher Reflection" based more on teacher consensus, the ILT, and the action plan.

Goal #2:

For the second goal, the school focused on the development and implementation of student supports to create a learning environment in which students feel connected and safe. Four strategies were implemented to support this goal. These strategies aligned with the first, second, and third SLOs so that students will enter the world as resilient, lifelong-learners, applying their knowledge and skills to the pursuit of social justice.

Develop and implement a rigorous, relevant seminar curriculum and instructional program that encourages positive teacher-student rapport:

To address the first strategy of the second goal, the school had professional development on their Seminar, the restorative justice component of their school. This has a comprehensive goal to teach students civic and community responsibility. It also has an effect of help identify psychological stress among students. Google Drive is used to organize materials and activities for Seminar, separating content and focus by grade level. The Seminar has shift since the 2015-2016 report, which was structured by an academic counselor and members of a seminar committee. The current structure has seminar coaches working with seminar teachers during a once a month PD to review best practices. Seminar coaches meet once a week to identify patterns across grade levels and develop supports. Every Monday is Seminar is devoted to council and restorative justice circles. There is also a peer counseling class, which supports the weekly councils, and students in peer counseling assigned to each seminar class to lead or co-lead the council.

Develop and implement SLPs

The SLP is a senior project meant to challenge students to think critically and deeply as well as engage themselves as a responsible citizen and community member. To address the needs of the SLPs, the school addressed teacher needs for SLPs by providing professional development and has grade level planning to help with a vertical alignment of goals culminating in the Senior Project. The different grade levels focused on different social justice issues to create a culture of service throughout all grades.

To demonstrate mastery of the senior project, the school has students write research papers for both the culminating project and for the various grade specific topics. Seniors are required to present their topic to

groups of underclassmen and teachers. Evaluation is based upon a four-point rubric to assess listening and speaking standards as well as use of technology in presenting their project.

Continue to improve and fully implement the PBS policies and activities

To address the needs of student behavior and to have a model in place for teachers and administration to have supports for students, the school continues to develop its Positive Behavior Supports program (PBS.) Professional development was provided at both the district-level that focused on student behaviors, strategies, and interventions. The committee to focus on trauma-informed instruction, behavioral contracts, culturally responsive pedagogy, and a Tier 2 instructional classroom provided PBS PD at the site level. The school developed a flow chart to help teachers navigate supporting student behavior and addressing student needs from classroom strategies and the establishment of behavior contracts.

The school uses surveys from stakeholders in the community to help assess effectiveness of PBS by obtaining information from teachers, students, and parents. The resulting outcomes of the PBS program, which includes restorative justice and peer counseling, has led to improved attendance rates and a decrease in behavior referrals.

Improve growth mindset

The final strategy of Goal 2 is to improve a growth mindset. Addressing a growth mindset is a school-wide initiative that begins with student council meetings. During grading periods, students write reflections in which they analyze performance in classes and identify which study skills have contributed to success. PBS is incorporated into fostering a growth mindset by having students also set goals for the next grading period.

In addition to these school-wide implementations, a group of teachers opted to attend Executive Function trainings offered by PESI, a non-profit organization offering research-based seminars on practical strategies to support learning.

Note the evidence supporting the progress made and the impact made on student achievement.

Evidence - Goal #1:

Primary evidence to support progress can be shown through teacher feedback, reflections, and classroom observations. Observations at the peer and administrative level are key points for all strategies for the first goal. Data gathered from instructional rounds data was listed as primary information gathered from those observations. Coaching is also a key component listed for all but the fourth strategy. The PLC model is central to the school as a place for reflection, discussion, and data interpretation to occur. Only in the fourth strategy was student improvement in assessment noted as a means for demonstrating results.

Evidence, Goal #2:

A central point of evidence that the goal has been met was teacher and administrative observation. Administrative observations included feedback. Because student supports was the central aspect of the goal, surveys to stakeholders, including students and parents is used as evidence. As with goal #1, reflections are also part of evidence gathering including student reflection. The school has also noted increased positive responses from surveys from both teachers and students. Because school culture is a key aspect to the second goal, the school has noted lower dropout rates and an increased college acceptance rate. Attendance has also increased while also reflecting a decrease in behavioral referrals.

If any critical areas for follow-up were not included in the school's action plan, indicate what actions have been taken to address these issue(s) and include supporting evidence.

While the school has made strides to ensure that goals and strategies were met, the following items were noted as not to have been addressed with evidence in the report:

- Effective instruction (which includes differentiation, engagement and discourse), formative assessment, reflection and summative assessment. Goal #1, Strategy #1

- During the 3/28/19 visit, 100% of classrooms demonstrated teacher-directed instruction with the teacher as the center leading the discussion.
- Promote training and implementation of academic differentiation, particularly for academically fragile populations (special education, English learners and academically apathetic students.)
 - In meeting with the ILT team on 3/28/19, the team noted co-teaching with SPED. ELL conversations occur in PLCs and through observations. Common planning allows for building into lessons for SPED and ELL.
- Collect and analyze data to better inform all programs and resource allocation.
 - Data analysis has become more prominent for the school but tends to be more specific to the seminar and math programs and not systemic to all curricula.
 - The ILT noted on 3/28/19, that data analysis has shifted in focus to strategies for instruction rather than how students are doing on assessments.
- During the 3/28/19 visit, the ILT noted that assessment addressed mainly in PLCs and through Learning Walks. Learning Walks were occurring more often but are now pulled back.

Note: The school’s schoolwide action plan should have incorporated all the critical areas of follow-up or major recommendations that were stated in the last self-study visiting committee report.

The school noted the following updates to their goals in their revised action plan:

Goal #1:

Strategy #1: PD is made to tie in more specifically to the goal.

Strategy #2: Work with Principal’s Exchange has been added to develop benchmark assessments. HMH Reading and Math Inventories have been implemented for all 9th and 10th graders.

Strategy #3: Has been removed.

Strategy #4: Weekly PLCs were removed. The complex-wide math PLC meetings stopped.

Three new strategies were added:

- a. Explore greater integration of technology to improve student engagement, tracking data and learning outcomes
- b. Greater incorporation of team-teaching between inclusion specialists and teachers
- c. Facilitate and support collaboration between Designated and Integrated ELD

Goal #2:

Strategy #1: Stayed the same.

Strategy #2: Remained the same. Seminar has grade level topics. Panels assess Senior Seminar.

Strategy #3: Remained the same with more detail added.

Strategy #4: Remained the same.

Previous	Updated
PD from the SSJ PBS Committee	PD from the SSJ PBS Committee on fundamental student interventions (MiSiS records, classroom strategies, etc.)
PBS Forms and Guidelines (e.g., Flowchart For Student Concerns)	Re-evaluation of Flowchart for Student Concerns

	<p>Parent Conference forms to be completed before and after conferences</p> <p>Implementation of standardized Behavioral Contracts (parent conferences, jury verdicts, etc.)</p> <p>Implementation of Peer Counseling course (mentorship, mediation, peer jury, council facilitation)</p>
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III. Commendations and Recommendations

A. Commendations:

- **Comment on significant progress the school has made in responding to the critical areas for follow-up and in carrying out the related action plan.**

The school is integrating the social justice theme into the majority of curricula and applying it to current societal issues.

The school collaborates with the Principal’s Exchange to analyze data for Math and ELA.

Senior Seminar is developed and student assessment is done through the use of presentations to invited guests. In addition, the school has added grade level specific themes to build up to the Seminar.

Use of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) to support behavior and provide student supports. Inclusion of the peer-counseling course is the step in the right direction to developing student-led PBS supports.

The Mastery Learning Cycle is a positive step to ensuring cohesion and collaboration between teachers and does effective data analysis.

B. Recommendations:

- **Comment on any critical areas for follow-up/action plan sections that have not yet been completely addressed, if applicable.**

Collect and analyze data to better inform all programs and resource allocation.

Improve curriculum and lesson planning through PLCs.

Promote training and implementation of academic differentiation, particularly for academically fragile populations (special education, English learners and academically apathetic students).

- **Identify any new areas of concerns, if applicable.**

Identify and adopt a standard for technology use for students, teachers, and administrators and ensure that systemic and effective use of technology is occurring during instruction.

Implement supports and strategies to direct teachers from a teacher-led to a student-led learning environment.

Refine the Master Schedule to create common planning/PLC time during the school day.

The school might consider placement of the EL classroom to be more integrated to the location of the majority of the school.