Annual Report for Alternative Schools for CA Department of Education:
<u>Davis School for Independent Study</u>
Davis Joint Unified School District
526 B St Davis, CA 95616
(530) 757-5333

Prepared by: Rob Kinder, Principal rkinder@djusd.net

<u>Overview:</u>

Davis School for Independent Study (DSIS) is a unique learning community. Since its inception in 1991, the school site and facilities have expanded to better meet the needs of the students. DSIS offers voluntary educational options for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) who are seeking an alternative to traditional modes of instruction. Students and parents choose DSIS for a variety of reasons such as acceleration, credit recovery, flexible scheduling, small size, one-on-one instruction, desire to homeschool, and/ or to address special circumstances such as mental and physical health reasons.

Employing home study (K-6) and independent study (7-12) methodologies, students, parents, and teachers work closely together to build learners' self-responsibility, academic growth, and social-emotional well-being. DSIS is a fully WASC-accredited high school that uses district-approved curricula based on Common Core standards. The school provides guidance and materials to families and gives students opportunities for accomplishment, both individually and as community members. By its very design, DSIS celebrates diversity. This is a school where education and life are intertwined and where learning is a product of daily living.

The core staff of 16 (part and fulltime) includes a Principal, 2 office staff, a counselor, a psychologist and 11 teachers. The school is attached to the District Office building and consists of two wings that houses the elementary and secondary sites.

The goal of the school has always been to create a platform that allows students to be successful in school while being more independent and having more flexibility in their time. Relationships between students and staff are a priority and helps to encourage student achievement. DSIS has continued to evolve to meet the demands and needs of 21st century learning by incorporating more technology, course offerings and delivery methods including the use of a Learning Management System (Schoology). In recent years, DSIS has seen a large increase in students who identify as being depressed and/or suffering from anxiety. Our current goal is to create a strand/program within the larger program that meets the needs of these learners.

Identification of Variables:

General Variables:
- Independent Study with a site
- Homeschool with a site
- Some students are highly independent
- Students often have outside priorities: extra curriculars, medical, work, family
- Population more transient than average
- Small classes
- One-on-one meetings
- Learning Management System (Schoology)
- Increased number of students have depression/anxiety
- Teacher created curriculum
- Intervention systems in place for at-risk students

DSIS Elementary Program (Gr. K-6)
Students in grades K-6 are considered to be in a home study (or homeschool) program. The parents of these students assume the primary responsibility for the child's instruction and learning under the supervision of a credentialed teacher. Students and parents meet with their supervising teacher for one hour a week to review progress on completed work, assess learning, and prepare for the following week's work.

Students may also choose to attend on-site workshops titled Integrated Science, Kaleidoscope and Computers. A weekly "Fun Friday" workshop is also offered where students may participate in enrichment activities. These weekly workshops, taught by credentialed staff, are hands-on, interactive and well-attended by students. Elementary students also partake in numerous field trips, enrichment opportunities, and on-site activities throughout the school year.

DSIS Secondary Program (Gr. 7-12)
Secondary students are primarily responsible for managing their educational plan during the week and are expected to be independent learners. Each student meets with a supervising teacher for one hour a week to receive instruction, assess progress on assigned work, and preview new

assignments for the week ahead. Many parents report the one-on-one relationship of their child with his/her teacher to be one of the highlights of our school.

The academic year consists of two 18-week semesters with students taking a maximum of seven courses at one time. Student-teacher meetings, classes, and workshops are scheduled from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with exception of Wednesday when staff has collaboration time from 8:00am to 10:00am

Junior high and high school students attend the DSIS campus for small group classes in math, science, art, study skills and other electives. These classes are "blended classes" in that they combine independent assignments with face-to-face class time. Student utilize Schoology as a learning management system to access assignments and resources as well as submitting work online. Students also return to the DSIS campus for tutorials in math, science and English. DSIS supports clubs Robotics, Leadership, LGBTQ clubs.

Additionally, DSIS offers the distinct advantage of allowing concurrent enrollment for up to three classes at any of the district's comprehensive secondary schools while maintaining full-time status in independent study. This option encourages students to take advanced academic courses or specialized electives that DSIS does not offer. Since students cannot fulfill 100% of their UC/CSU "a-g" admission requirements through DSIS, most take courses at the traditional high school as well. As shown in the chart below, concurrent enrollment has ranged from 62-73% for the past several years. Students may also augment their high school course work through participation in summer school, concurrent enrollment in community college, UC, CSU, or online learning.

DSIS has completed the goal of modernizing the institution with increased use of technology, incorporating a learning management system, and creating additional course offerings. A larger scale current objective is to implement proactive supports and interventions for students suffering from anxiety and depression who are often in crisis. DSIS is working with the DJUSD to learn and implement our own Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) program to support our learners. The MTSS committee has been assembled and implementation will occur during the 2019-2020 school year.

The one-on-one teaching methodology central to the DSIS approach to independent study typically results in a strong bond between student and teacher built on mutual trust and respect. Assignments are clearly explained during the student meeting and the weekly assignment sheet reinforces teacher expectations. In addition, students always have access to their teacher by phone, email, or drop-in visits between weekly appointments.

The small school environment and highly specialized nature of the independent study program work creates a high degree of professionalism and pride among the staff. The enthusiasm and respect for learning among staff is apparent to everyone who comes on campus and visitors consistently comment on the positive attitude of teachers, staff, and the principal. All DSIS teachers have the option of membership in the California Consortium for Independent Study, and many attended yearly regional conferences.

As mentioned earlier, there is a collaborative spirit among staff and a willingness to share information and best practices using a shared drive of resources, collaboration time, and curriculum binders. DSIS staff routinely shares information about students and curriculum, and most decision-making involves the entire staff. Teachers, working within their elementary and secondary teams, assume responsibility for different areas of curriculum and program development. Information is disseminated to the entire staff via staff and grade level meetings, weekly common prep periods, and the school-wide database. In addition, twice-yearly district-wide articulation provides staff access to updated curriculum, and facilitates alignment with departments at other sites.

School Mission
Davis School for Independent Study is a small, innovative school for students in grades K-12 offering differentiated, high-quality curricular pathways to pursue educational and career goals. We combine independent study, home school, on-site classes, access to other high school and community college courses, and community learning experiences. All incorporate individually tailored, challenging and engaging curriculum. We value and prioritize personal attention and strong relationships among staff, families and students.

Academic Achievement:

Given our small population, it is hard to look at snapshot data points such as the California School Dashboard to get an accurate sense of the school. The DSIS student population is somewhat transient and there are a significant number of students who opt out of standardized tests. While our test scores are at or above similar schools in our region, they do fall below that of the traditional site-based schools in our district.

Student achievement is the highest priority of the K-12 program at DSIS. Evaluation of standardized test scores, student learning outcome assignments and student satisfaction surveys provide annual feedback on the school's progress. The Site Council prioritizes professional development and collaboration to support student achievement and allocates funds each year to support staff and students.

The counselor and teachers identify at-risk students using Illuminate, transcripts, and student work product and make referrals to appropriate academic support options such as math tutoring, basic writing lab, UC Davis tutoring, and non-college prep courses. Although initially implemented for struggling students, math tutoring is utilized by all students.

Three year data from CAASPP (below) illustrates consistency, however some discrepancy in cohort and proficiency. Most striking is the increase in both standards NOT MET and standards EXCEEDED in Math. While these extremes are reflective of our student population in general, it has led DSIS to add additional Math tutoring options both as regular tutorials offered by DSIS teachers as well as student selected individual tutoring time slots. While optional, some students are also required to attend as intervention. Our goal for 2019-20 is that no students are in the category of "does not meet standard" and that we see an increase of 5% for both ELA and Math and "standard" and "standard met".

ELA 3 Year CAASPP Data

Smarter Balanced Performance Summary - Multi-Year Cohort Comparison

Subject: **English-Language Arts (Summative)**

Roster Date
Control Panel (05-17-2019)

	Grade Level(s)	Gender(s)	Reported Race	Special Education	Socio-Economic	English Proficiencies
	All	Male & Female	All Reported Races	Special & Non Special	SED & Not SED	All

Overall & Claim Performance for Davis School Independent Study

Year	Claim	CS 3 Above Standard	CS 2 Near Standard	CS 1 Below Standard	No Score/ Not Tested
2017-18	Reading	47%	41%	12%	0%
2016-17	Reading	35%	53%	12%	0%
2015-16	Reading	47%	47%	6%	0%
2017-18	Writing	35%	47%	18%	0%
2016-17	Writing	41%	53%	6%	0%
2015-16	Writing	47%	53%	0%	0%
2017-18	Listening	35%	59%	6%	0%
2016-17	Listening	24%	71%	6%	0%
2015-16	Listening	24%	71%	6%	0%
2017-18	Research/Inquiry	59%	41%	0%	0%
2016-17	Research/Inquiry	41%	53%	6%	0%
2015-16	Research/Inquiry	47%	47%	6%	0%

Smarter Balanced Performance Summary - Multi-Year Cohort Comparison

Subject: **English-Language Arts (Summative)**

Roster Date
Control Panel (05-17-2019)

	Grade Level(s)	Gender(s)	Reported Race	Special Education	Socio-Economic	English Proficiencies
	All	Male & Female	All Reported Races	Special & Non Special	SED & Not SED	All

Overall & Claim Performance for Davis School Independent Study

Year	Total Tested	Meeting Standard	Not Meeting Standard	PL 4 Standard Exceeded	PL 3 Standard Met	PL 2 Standard Nearly Met	PL 1 Standard Not Met
2017-18	17	76% / 24% — Average Distance from Level 3: +55		29%	47%	24%	0%
2016-17	17	71% / 29% — Average Distance from Level 3: +44		24%	47%	24%	6%
2015-16	17	76% / 24% — Average Distance from Level 3: +53		41%	35%	24%	0%

MATH 3 Year CAASPP Data

Smarter Balanced Performance Summary - Multi-Year Cohort Comparison

Subject: **Mathematics (Summative)**

	Grade Level(s)	Gender(s)	Reported Race	Special Education	Socio-Economic	English Proficiencies
	All	Male & Female	All Reported Races	Special & Non Special	SED & Not SED	All

Overall & Claim Performance for Davis School Independent Study

Year	Claim	CS 3 Above Standard	CS 2 Near Standard	CS 1 Below Standard	No Score/ Not Tested
2017-18	Concepts & Procedures	53%	29%	18%	0%
2016-17	Concepts & Procedures	59%	18%	24%	0%
2015-16	Concepts & Procedures	47%	47%	6%	0%
2017-18	Problem Solving & Modeling/Data	47%	41%	12%	0%
2016-17	Problem Solving & Modeling/Data	53%	41%	6%	0%
2015-16	Problem Solving & Modeling/Data	24%	59%	18%	0%
2017-18	Communicating Reasoning	47%	41%	12%	0%
2016-17	Communicating Reasoning	47%	35%	18%	0%
2015-16	Communicating Reasoning	53%	47%	0%	0%

Smarter Balanced Performance Summary - Multi-Year Cohort Comparison

Subject: **Mathematics (Summative)**

	Grade Level(s)	Gender(s)	Reported Race	Special Education	Socio-Economic	English Proficiencies
	All	Male & Female	All Reported Races	Special & Non Special	SED & Not SED	All

Overall & Claim Performance for Davis School Independent Study

Year	Total Tested	Meeting Standard / Not Meeting Standard	PL 4 Standard Exceeded	PL 3 Standard Met	PL 2 Standard Nearly Met	PL 1 Standard Not Met
2017-18	17	71% / 29% Average Distance from Level 3: **+50**	41%	29%	18%	12%
2016-17	17	71% / 29% Average Distance from Level 3: **+44**	41%	29%	24%	6%
2015-16	17	71% / 29% Average Distance from Level 3: **+36**	29%	41%	29%	0%

Teacher/Student/Parent/Guardian Input

Students

Interviews with students reveal that one-on-one and small class teaching styles provide them multiple opportunities to discuss their level of performance and to understand course expectations. In fact, when a student applies for admission in to DSIS, many students report that they chose DSIS in part because they wanted increased feedback on what was expected of them and how they were doing on their coursework.

The institution of beginning-of-the-year and end-of-the-year Student Learning Outcome assignments greatly increased the visibility and awareness of the school's student learning outcomes. Staff analysis of beginning-of-the-year assignment responses found that students frequently mentioned that the one-on-one interaction with their teacher helped them to set realistic academic and personal goals. Students also reported improvement in their ability to be

flexible, adaptable, and better at time management since a week's worth of coursework is assigned at one time.

Additional student data was compiled from the following survey administered May, 2019 with the intention of gathering data on social emotional needs as well as assessing the blended course offerings that have been added over the last three years. Following the survey is the summary of findings which reflects student's appreciation for one-on-one classes and the relationships they create while also illustrating the growing social-emotional needs of our students. The findings have informed new DSIS goals to 1) create a program specializing in supporting students with anxiety and 2) continue offering a balanced mix of both one-on-one courses as well as blended courses.

See following pages for Student survey and results

Teachers
Staff evaluates program regularly in various ways
- Twice a month staff meetings
- Weekly collaboration time
- Regular 1:1 meetings with principal
- PLCs and committees

On May 1, 2019 teachers met to discuss the pros and cons of some of our newer initiatives-mainly blended classes. Below are the notes.

5/1 Visioning Notes

Group 1: Cathy, Jamie, Rob, Allison, Marvie
We have fewer student slots with more blended offerings. What's working? What's a challenge? How do we evaluate a successful blended or IS course?

- Freshman and at-risk students tend to do better in blended. However, seat time isn't the right fit for them because of other needs.
- Some teachers really like supervising most of the classes and wouldn't want that option to go away.
- We'd like to provide options for students who are doing well to be able to follow a more traditional model of IS where they don't have to attend the classes as often.
- Giving the supervisor teacher more time to work with at-risk students helps the student with their issues.

We have fewer student slots with more blended offerings. What do we do if we are full? What strategies would we implement?

- Add FTE

Group 2: Amy, Shantel, Christine Simms, Lori, Shaney
What's working? What's a challenge? How do we evaluate a successful blended or IS course?

- Some students prefer blended, some prefer independent study.

- Why are students coming here?
- Are we meeting our mission?
- What about students who aren't very
- Students at times have scheduling challenges (split site conflict, etc.)

Evaluating success:
- Grades are important.
- Increasing enrollment--are students asking for and staying in those courses?
- Student feedback
- Attendance
- Family feedback
- Enrollment numbers in a course

Do we see a difference in outcomes for those attending blended classes?
Should we restrict certain classes; i.e.: at-risk kids must take blended?

- Kids in crisis should possible need to be in blended classes and supervisory teachers support depending on the needs of the child and nature of the crisis.
- When this happens, part of the building a relationship is having at least one content class
- For some students, the blended classes are stressful, and they don't do the subject
- Possibly a basic math and science class online? Have video lessons? everyone would not take math in class.
- We need to look at each child and get to know what they need. The question becomes are we enabling or supporting a child? We need to know a child to know what is helping and how they will learn best based on who they are.
- Being full lessens success, as there's no extra time to help students in crisis

We have fewer student slots with more blended offerings. What do we do if we are full?
What strategies would we implement?

- Ask for more FTE
- Blended classes only do supervisory with electives
- Not having any classes with the student, nor blended classes with the student,
- Should have at least one blended class with the student.
- Or enroll students struggling into an I-Search/ study skills class. Can we develop this course?
- Enforcement of probation = inequitable
- Not on the same page for attendance accounting
- Being rigorous would also help without accountability with expectations. This ties into attendance taking and if we are on the same page.

Group 3: Christine, Matt, Diane, Alex
What's working? What's a challenge? How do we evaluate a successful blended or IS course?

Do we see a difference in outcomes for those attending blended classes?
Should we restrict certain classes; i.e.: at-risk kids must take blended?

We have fewer student slots with more blended offerings. What do we do if we are full?

What strategies would we implement?

Group: Christine E. Matt, Diane, Alex, Cathy B
What's working? What's a challenge? How do we evaluate a successful blended or IS course?
- 11th -12th graders on average seem to be more successful than 9-10th graders in the blended courses
- What works is IS teachers are freed up from having to teach English or Social Studies thus having more time to focus on other curriculum
- younger grades are less independent, entering with more "Crisis" thus having higher failure rates
- Students entering at mid-way through the year or later are more challenging, not prepared, falling behind almost from the beginning
- Blended options could include:
  - Reworked to maybe include 2X/week, at least for 9-10
  - Blended may take on a more supportive role
  - Keep enrollment (official start date in the blended class) limited to once/month with an orientation period with Schoology. In the interim period students could still have assignments, earning ADA as an IS student with supervisory teacher

Do we see a difference in outcomes for those attending blended classes?
- Yes, there is a difference in outcomes with more success at the 11-12th grades levels as compared to the 9-10th grade (we focused mainly on English and Social Studies)

Should we restrict certain classes; i.e.: at-risk kids must take blended?
- This may be counter-intuitive- Some at-risk kids don't do as well in blended than one-on-one. At risk students need more support and accountability (especially when they are probation, how do we keep them accountable, who is watching them and keeping track of their obligations?)

We have fewer student slots with more blended offerings. What do we do if we are full?
What strategies would we implement?
- IS teachers with students only taking PE or community service, those meetings could be shortened to 30 min?
- Expand our shared curriculum to include all the electives which would allow single subject specialists such as English to devote more time to that area and could free up more time in our meetings.

Extra:
- Reassess admission process and orientation
- Update the application to include a question "Do you have access to a computer and internet at home?"
- Require students to take orientation Schoology tutorial. (This could be on a rotating basis with teachers much like we do with information meetings.)
- Streamline the Warning Letter process (ideally lead by supervising teacher, we've got other ideas too much to include here).

Parents
Parent feedback was gathered via survey. The goal was to ascertain how much families knew about their student both social emotionally and academically. The outcomes show a strong support in DSIS and a decent connection to their student's emotional state of being, but the disconnect occurs with academics. Next steps on educating parents is to 1) encourage parents to use Schoology more, 2) educate parents on Schoology through quarterly parent workshops to

help get them set up and teach them how to use it. Schoology is an ideal tool for teacher-parent collaboration.

See following pages for Parent survey and results

Conclusions and Recommendations:

DSIS has evolved in significant ways over the last few years as we transitioned from a paper-based one-on-one, traditional independent study school to a technology-rich, college mirroring, blended learning model. Our community is more closely bonded with the increased offerings on-site. Staff is collaborative, eager and willing to innovate and try new things. We have now entered the "now what" era. We are tasked with figuring out how to deal with the growing pains associated to all the changes. Perhaps most importantly, we are tasked with coming up with a solution to support our growing number of students coming to us that identity as suffering from anxiety and depression.

Areas for Growth
- Develop and implement a community service program to promote wellness and connection.
- Explore expanding online learning opportunities.
- Explore with the district the facility needs at our school and the advantages to a shared space with other alternative education programs.
- Develop a facility use plan that supports student learning and staff collaboration.
- Lack of space and funding to support adding more electives and foreign languages
- Recruitment efforts aimed at those who are good fits for our school

Top Priorities
1. Increase student achievement in Math and English Language Arts as measured by CAASPP scores, course grades, and district-wide common assessments by developing and implementing shared expectations and strategies.
2. Support student academic success by developing a sustainable iteration of our relationship-based model for delivering content instruction.
    a. Increase supplementary academic and emotional supports for students.
    b. Continue to look at additional program/strand to support students with anxiety.