

Overall Analysis of the 2019-20 LCAP and the 2020-21 Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan

A description of how the analysis and reflection on student outcomes in the 2019-20 LCAP and 2020-21 Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan have informed the development of the 21-22 through 23-24 LCAP.

DJUSD facilitated thoughtful reflections with stakeholders and partners on the successes, challenges, and learnings from this year based on evidence related to student outcomes and experiences. The structure of stakeholder outreach was grounded in two prompts, including, 1) “What successes have we seen?” and 2) “What are the areas of need?” As a result, staff were able to analyze inputs to craft an instructional vision and direction for the 2021-24 LCAP.

DJUSD data and student outcomes reflect that over the course of 2019-20 and 2020-21, students overall, and especially our English Learners and Special Education students, made gains in literacy and reading. We believe this is correlated to several factors, such as actionable and timely data from the ELPAC, Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) and i-Ready assessments. The data sets focused the support of our instructional coaches, enabled targeted interventions in real time, and led to the development of appropriate learning scaffolds. This data also informed how case management and personalized instruction was provided by our Special Education staff, English Learner (EL) Specialists, and general education teachers. These types of gains, however, were not experienced by our earliest learners as school closures especially impacted first graders, which is a critical year for reading skill development. As a result, the 2021-24 LCAP maintains reading para educator positions at each elementary site. The DJUSD plan also dedicates resources to i-Ready K-12, has maintained EL staffing, and includes collaborative MTSS Conferencing between general education staff and specialists at all sites.

Additionally, DJUSD has supports for multilingual staff, students and families through language and interpreting services, including 40 trained interpreters on staff for eight different languages and contracts with interpretation providers. In 2021-2022 we will hire an Interpreting Coordinator/Family Liaison position to further support interpretation and outreach efforts.

As referenced in the 2020-21 LCP, DJUSD continues to assess pupil learning loss and implement mitigation strategies. Local data informs our interventions and scaffolds, and the mitigation strategies involve a multi-pronged approach. First, at the classroom level, teachers will address identified loss using classroom formative and summative assessments, including i-Ready data, EL Specialists, Special Education staff, and Reading Specialists provide further support to students individually and assist general education staff in planning. Additionally, each site has an MTSS team that facilitates site level data review and response. DJUSD will offer both an academic summer school serving students in grades 1 through 12. These academic programs identify students who need reading support, language acquisition support, continued Special Education services, or access to retake courses for A-G or graduation eligibility. Additionally, DJUSD is offering a robust summer enrichment program to address the social emotional needs for students to reconnect with peers, engage in activities for creativity, critical thinking, music, outdoor experiences, and play.

DJUSD students, staff, and families have expressed that the use of Canvas, the District Learning Management System, was a critical acquisition in making learning tasks and communication more visible. While learning to use Canvas, sites began calibrating and, in many cases, standardizing its use as a learning tool. For students, families, and support staff (paraeducators, administrators, and specialists), this utilization provided access to information, uniformity of experience, and clarity of expectations. As a District, we have been better able to support our community and improve practice when technical structures are used broadly and consistently. We acknowledge that teacher and school autonomy is valuable for personalizing learning experiences. It is also true that a united strategy and approach to implementation has a tremendous and positive impact on our students.

This same lesson of consistency was experienced in the implementation of our district-wide use of three signature CASEL Social Emotional Learning (SEL) practices, which was an expectation for all educators, explicitly modeled in staff meetings, and messaged weekly to all staff. Our stakeholder reflections speak to the attention to SEL and how it has been impactful and crucial during the past 18 months. As a result of the pandemic and these practices, there was consistent demand from stakeholders to continue and increase our SEL strategies with students into the future.

Our analysis also reveals that communicating clearly and accessing a broader cross section of the community has improved planning for our students. The Spanish-Speaking Partnership Network, for example, includes staff who communicate directly with Spanish-speaking families, and has provided rich analysis of student and family experiences. Their insights and outreach have deeply informed our understanding of why students might not return to school in a hybrid model, what technological needs would support their engagement in both distance learning and upon in-person return, and how early outreach (as done with summer enrichment registration) increased interest, offerings, and participation. Furthermore, our work of the full-time Homeless and Foster Liaison increased our understanding of how distance learning met the needs for some of our foster and homeless students. We also learned when launching small group cohorts for more intensive supports, many of our students who are traditionally furthest from opportunity benefited from focused attention and were better able to engage in learning. Our LCAP (and the 2021-22 Expanded Learning Grant Opportunities) includes small group tutoring offerings, Academic Center and Bridge support, classes designed for intervention at the Junior High, continued support of a foster and homeless liaison, and a position for a liaison to our English Learner families as well as coordination of interpretation.

The COVID-19 closures also led to an opportunity to reflect on grading practices. When schools initially went to remote learning, DJUSD chose to go to a “pass/no pass” grading option driven by our values of equity and inclusion. We believed that issuing letter grades during school closures would disproportionately harm our students who were furthest from opportunity. Grading structures are varied from class-to-class and teacher-to-teacher, but hold much power in the trajectory of our students and their sense of belonging or ability as a learner. Additionally, as a result of distance learning, teachers prioritized their content and how students might demonstrate learning. As a result, DJUSD plans to invest in a District-wide exploration of grading for equity and understanding of performance tasks. This is an opportunity for transformative change.

Similarly, we have known that our curriculum, pedagogy, and programs have been informed by a limited racial and historical perspective. DJUSD continues to engage the community in a discussion about introducing an Ethnic Studies program, and an Advisory Team is developing a program recommendation to bring before the Board in the fall of 2021.

We note that 29% of our students did not return to in-person school when it became possible. Some families continue to choose distance learning because it is working for their students, others for health and safety considerations. DJUSD understands Distance Learning may continue to be a need and is opening a Virtual Academy this fall to provide that option.

DJUSD also learned that the shift to a quarter block schedule for secondary students made managing classes during distance learning more manageable thereby reducing their stress during what was already a difficult year. As a result, we will convene a committee to explore secondary schedules and structures for DJUSD for a possible revision to begin in the fall of 2022.

Prior to the pandemic, DJUSD completed a comprehensive overhaul of Career Technical Education (CTE) programming. Despite school closures much work was done by CTE teachers to recruit and plan pathway curriculum. We currently see an increased demand for CTE courses, and will continue to grow the program in enrollment and supplemental activities, such as internships and a large career fair.

Finally, many of our efforts to respond to the needs of students and staff during the pandemic were driven by Action Teams that consisted of diverse staff roles and site leadership. It was clear during school closures that a distributive leadership model, with collaboration for frequent calibration and alignment, led to as thoughtful, well-designed, positive outcomes as possible, and broadened staff investment in the results. This approach engendered trust, transparency, and wide-reaching change in a very short amount of time. DJUSD believes that process should inform our strategies moving forward.