

Sausalito Marin City School District K-8 Comprehensive Education Program

Summary

SMCSD seeks to provide a comprehensive educational program and services for approximately 121 students K-8 at MLK. MLK currently educates 49 fifth through eighth graders. The District's K-4 students (72) are educated at a separate school at Bayside Elementary in Sausalito. The District must combine its schools to more efficiently and effectively serve the student population. A K-8 program allows for curriculum articulation and alignment, strong professional learning communities, mentoring for students and partnering with local community-based agencies and organizations to provide integrated school community services to children and families.

In order to establish a K-8 school program at MLK, four additional classrooms are needed, as well as playground equipment, improved pathways and landscaping on campus.

Our proposed master learning structure contains the following elements:

- Creating and implementing a comprehensive educational program and guaranteed, viable curriculum K-8
- Combining Bayside and MLK to form a Pre K-8 school beginning Fall 2013
- Addressing racial segregation and isolation by ensuring adequate opportunities for integration via partnerships with other schools and Districts, field trips and participation in countywide student activities
- Enhancing and sustaining a community school model that includes partnerships and services for improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities.

SCMSD Strategic Plan Summary

In Spring 2011, FSG Social Impact Advisors assisted the Governance Team in researching and developing recommendations for a strategic plan that would support SMCSD through a myriad of changes related to growth, politics and a growing student learning achievement gap. Building on those recommendations, the Governance Team and staff worked diligently during the last school year to foster/gain/develop consensus on its vision, mission, strategic priorities, core values, equity statement, a comprehensive educational program and guiding principles for facilities development. This work, as summarized below, represents the efforts of the Governance Team, District Action Team (A Team) and staff to analyze program needs, internal and external variables, and develop a quality educational program that has fiscal and organizational integrity. First and foremost, we make our decision in the best interests of student learning.

Vision

Our vision is to provide each child a world-class college preparatory curriculum that integrates communication, collaboration, creativity, inquiry and problem-solving skills and builds character through fostering strong relationships of mutual trust and respect.

Mission

The mission of the SMCS D is to academically and socially prepare students for success at each grade level and in high school on the path to college and career in a safe, healthy and culturally responsive learning environment. We provide a rigorous and challenging academic program with highly qualified educators in collaboration with parents and community partners. We will hold our learning community accountable for our progress.

Strategic Priorities

The five strategic priorities are:

- Provide safe, healthy, positive learning environments.
- Ensure that all students within SMCS D reach high levels of achievement.
- Maintain sound fiscal discipline and operations.
- Attract, retain and inspire highly qualified staff.
- Engage the community by building strong, constructive relationships with students, parents and local groups.

Draft Equity Statement

The SMCS D Board of Trustees is committed to the success of every student in each of our schools. Students should receive the educational programs and services they need to be successful. As such, the District has drafted an equity statement that is now before the Board for its third reading. Trustees are working towards consensus on this equity statement.

SMCS D Action Team Comprehensive Educational Program Vision

A community and staff District Action Team (A Team) has served as a District advisory in the development of the Comprehensive Educational Program vision. We are creating a culturally responsive Comprehensive Educational Program to achieve the following key outcomes and experiences:

- **Student Success**
We educate all students to become self-directed, academically successful, happy, social and ready to achieve their personal best.
- **Clear Definition of Quality**
Our high quality, culturally responsive, comprehensive education will produce/create a life-long learner who is a confident, critical-thinking, civic-minded, contributing member of their community, prepared to successfully navigate personal and career life-choices.
- **Parent Partnerships**
We create a welcoming environment that joins parents, students, and teachers in a partnership that promotes a high quality, meaningful education. Staff, parents, students and community build strong relationships and work shoulder-to-shoulder to create a positive, inclusive climate.

- **Community Partnerships**
Community, school, and parents develop a shared vision and assume mutual responsibility for ensuring that students have a love of learning and enriching experiences that lead to future success. Partners will engage in on-going collaborative planning and assessment of programs to ensure maximum effectiveness.
- **Necessary Resources, Services and Implementation**
Our world class community school sees our children holistically (academic, social and emotional), is guided by clear measures of success, and ensures sustainable resources for an integrated services model that prepares students to be global citizens.

Components of a Comprehensive Educational Program and Course Offerings

Components and course offerings will include:

- Robust curriculum - project/inquiry based
- Arts/enrichment/technology
- Foreign language offering
- Small class sizes
- Extended learning
- Parent engagement/center
- Preschool
- Integrated systems/case management (BSE/MLK)
- Health services offered at or near school (MLK)
- Integrated systems/case management (BSE/MLK)
- School social workers, counseling and social skills programs (BSE/MLK)
- Community service partnerships
- Student leadership training
- Organized sports
- Inter-District opportunities for students to promote diversity
- Middle to high school transition programs.

K-8 Program and Facilities Project Rationale

A K-8 Community School at MLK is needed in order to accomplish the comprehensive educational program and positive learning environment for students. The research on K-8 schools is overwhelmingly supportive of smaller student body enrollments. K-8 schools provide more opportunities for:

- Student learning
- Increased mentoring, cross-age tutoring, older students helping younger students
- Multi-age grouping
- Experience with more student population
- Fewer transitions, less anxiety associated with transitions, improved learning and self-confidence

- Relationships with teachers over time
- Nurturing environments
- Vertical alignment and articulation
- Professional learning communities with two teams of 4-5 teachers and specialists
- Differentiation/flexible groups
- Improved depth of curriculum and instruction - teachers have more opportunity to see what next grades do and study
- Attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing highly qualified staff in a school that is small but has opportunities for collaboration with more than just a few teachers
- Stronger professional learning climate/leveraging relationships
- Teaming, mentoring and professional growth
- Creating community/schools partnerships
- Centering in the heart of positivism
- Connections to health and human services, Marin City Community Services District (CSD) recreation, other support providers
- Increased parent participation and ease of access
- Increased number of support providers, mentors, and community volunteers due to proximity of school to community and residences
- Home visits
- Accessing the local transportation hub
- Strengthening partnerships with community providers and exploring collaborative funding opportunities that support community based programs and schools
- Increased field trips, joining other districts' activities, increased access and opportunities
- Maintaining sound fiscal and business operations
- Fiscal sustainability and less vulnerability to declines in enrollment
- Greater efficiencies in administration and support services, less redundancy
- Funds going more directly to student services and programs for students
- Eliminating split assignments for specialist and other administrators
- Co-location with District office a plus
- Economies of scale.

While the K-8 model is supported by 21st Century research, SMCS D must also acknowledge the barriers and ensure consistent focus on these challenges to overcome past inequities. The A Team worked on a series of statements that reflect discussions over time about the challenges in our educational community. These challenges can be met with humility, pride, perseverance and integrity.

Disparities in student experiences and outcomes for African American, Latino and low-income students compared to other students in Marin County - the Comprehensive Educational Program needs to address the following:

- Students, school staff and community do not always hold high expectations for students.

- Students need all staff to feel a total belief in, commitment to, and responsibility for their success.
- Students need to experience a more culturally inclusive learning environment, including curriculum that emphasizes students' own history and culture (African-American, Latino and other traditionally under-represented cultures) and culturally competent teachers and staff who reflect the demographics of the community.
- Students are impacted by high staff turnover of teachers and administrators.
- Students experience stress and unmet needs due to poverty, life circumstances, environment, and institutionalized racism and classism.
- Students need positive messages about education and learning from parents, school and community.
- Students have fewer experiences and opportunities in the world outside of Marin City, compared with students in other school Districts in Marin County.

Negative impact of racially segregated / mono-cultural District - the Comprehensive Educational Program needs to address the following:

- The ways that creating a single school in Marin City could create an insular culture for children.
- Those practices, policies and interventions that can make students feel criminalized.
- The perception by some students, families and community members that racial segregation is intentional in Marin City and Marin County.
- A commitment by the Board and District leadership to support the long-term development and equitable resources needed for the success of the school.

Student social-emotional needs and negative school climate - the Comprehensive Educational Program needs to address the following:

- A definition of social emotional development that recognizes the multiple ways that perceptions (including self-perceptions) and assumptions about students, parents, school and Marin City impact the social emotional development of students.
- An approach to student behavior by understanding the root causes of the behavior and recognizing that students are not their behaviors.
- A shared understanding and approach for the different levels of students' social emotional needs.
- The under-identification of students' social-emotional needs.

Low parent partnership - the Comprehensive Educational Program needs to address the following:

- Engaging parents through one-on-one interactions with the school.
- Building school/community/parent partnerships that support parent empowerment.
- Engaging parents with positive messages about the value of education.
- Working with parents to create clear expectations of the role of students and parents in school and the community.
- Supporting parents through opportunities for education and support systems.

K-8 Project Description

SMCSD will build a K-8 campus at MLK by expanding classrooms, creating outdoor learning environments and play areas, and physically integrating the existing preschools. Project funding is needed for four additional classrooms, landscaping, relocating current portables for preschool use and razing old unusable classrooms. SMCSD has been researching quality physical learning environments and is committed to creating an aesthetically pleasing campus so that students can be proud and feel safe and nurtured in their learning environment. The principles below will guide our project from start to finish and beyond.

Sausalito Marin City Guiding Principles for Design

The Sausalito Marin City School District is committed to providing a rigorous and challenging academic program for all children in a safe environment that values diversity. We commit to a climate of mutual respect. The guiding principles below will help provide design direction as SMCSD makes important educational, architectural and community decisions. To support the Comprehensive Educational Program, we will design facilities that provide:

Community Partnerships

- Partnerships with community resources expand opportunities for students.
- Integrated academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and civic engagement, lead to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities.
- We share space with partners and design for a variety of uses.

Zones of Opportunity and Positivity

- Hubs of activity, our schools are attractive and inviting learning environments that are safe, nurturing, and positive.
- Safely navigable, functional, and environmentally designed campuses welcome students, parents, seniors and community.
- Equitable, inclusive and culturally representative schools communicate *high expectations for all* via visual cues, strong relationships, rich interconnections, and team follow-through.
- Our entire community is considered one campus that offers a range of choices to students.
- We involve students in the development of our program and building designs.

Authentic and Culturally Relevant Curriculum, Training and Assessment

- Diverse staff, parents and community members foster a love for life-long learning.
- Curriculum, teaching methods, training and learning environments honor and support the diversity of the student body.
- High-interest curriculum actively engages students.
- Good nutrition, social-emotional health, movement, indoor-outdoor connections, and hands-on learning help students thrive.

- Students “show what they know” in an environment that supports performance assessment and project-based learning.

Vibrant Learning

- Learning is alive!
- Interaction with nature helps students make rich discoveries and learn to embrace and cultivate the beauty that surrounds us.
- Global connections are made daily, technology is used as a tool, and artistic creation is fostered.
- Enrichment activities and core learning are integrated into program and place.
- Intellectually rich environments are culturally-focused, approachable and fun.
- With courage and respect, we pursue learning fearlessly.

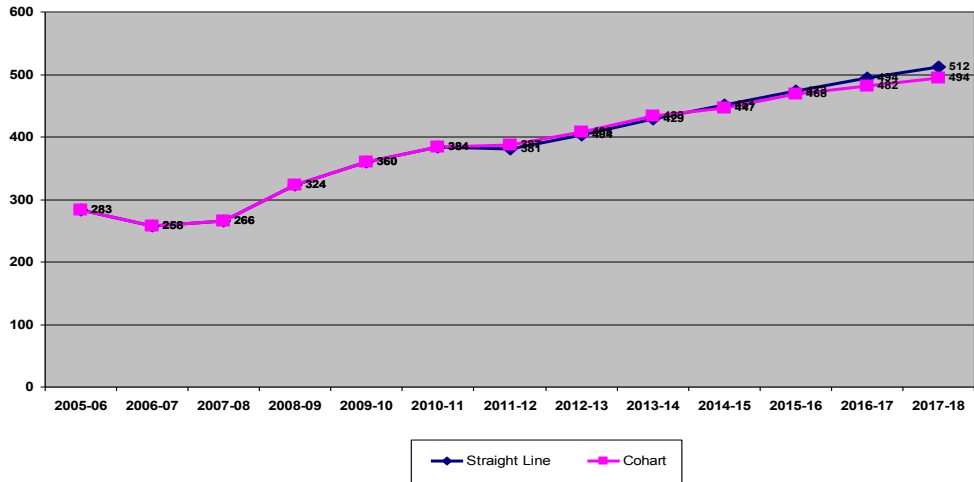
Flexibility, Adaptability and Collaborative Team-Building

- Varied and flexible spaces allow for a variety of teaching and learning styles.
- Collaboration is fostered and innovative technologies serve as resources.
- Attention is paid to colors, shapes, textures, and furniture to support various learning styles.
- A friendly, transparent and inclusive environment can convert, adapt, and evolve to changing needs.
- Multi-use designs allow everyone to work together as a team.
- Integrity is prized.

The Educational Facilities Specifications for a K-8 school of 121 students from initial programming meetings with the architect state that campuses should support the Comprehensive Educational Program. There should be 9 self contained classrooms for K-8 classes, 2 classrooms for visual and performing arts, counseling and literacy program spaces, preschools and parent resource areas. Outdoor learning environments will include age appropriate playgrounds. A K-8 campus will need to be flexible for all future possible school configurations.

Rationale for Project

Growing enrollment in the Willow Creek Academy Charter School and declining enrollment growth among other District programs creates a perfect storm: a need to house students in two K-8 programs instead of three schools on two campuses. The move to a two, K-8 school District is more sustainable and will allow greater program development and continuity in the District. See the projected enrollment trends below.



It is absolutely necessary for SMCS D K-8 students at Bayside and MLK to receive children and family health and human services support in addition to a strong and rigorous academic program. A school/community services model including a school-based health clinic can be implemented in Marin City, given the ideal location of Martin Luther King Jr. Academy. Such a service model cannot be expected to be as successful at Bayside – the facilities at Bayside will not support this approach. The district must make room, under the law, for in-district student growing enrollment in the Charter School. Housing all district students on one campus with the services needed creates an overcrowded school and many barriers for students and families needing to access those services. We must work on a solution that can support the community and students of Marin City as well as Sausalito. Two K-8 schools in the district (including WCA) can best address student needs.