

Teaching and Learning

We believe every child is born curious with an endless capacity to learn and explore. We believe that the teaching and learning practices of MPCSD professionals should continue to promote curiosity and exploration through inquiry and personalization while preparing students for the competitive and ever-changing global environment into which they will graduate. We find the California standards to be meaningful and age appropriate and believe they offer us a comprehensive framework as to what students should know and be able to do. When teaching and learning is built upon effective standards, delivered in an environment that promotes inquiry, and affords reasonable opportunity for personalization, every child can and will succeed. We believe equity of access and opportunity to be an undeniable right of all MPCSD families and seek to move every child to “exceeding standards” over time. We believe all of this can only be accomplished when our professionals are able to work in an environment that promotes innovation, collaboration, and reflection as well as training and support in high leverage instructional strategies¹.

Strategic Directions 2016-2022

In the domain of *Teaching and Learning*, the Menlo Park City School District will use its time, energy, and resources to...

1. Collaboratively design a “living” Universal, Guaranteed, and Viable Curriculum² in each subject and grade level aligned to the new California standards and supported by high quality print and digital materials that details *WHAT* students will learn and generally *WHEN* students will learn it emphasizing depth over breadth and inquiry over passivity.
2. Provide the highest quality professional development, support, and coaching around high-leverage, student-centered instructional strategies in order for teachers to develop their individual and collective approach to *HOW* all students will learn what is being taught.
3. Collaboratively develop universal common assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics that periodically measure what students know and can do at each grade level while providing relative predictability as to their future success on statewide assessments and readiness for the next unit, trimester, and grade level.
4. Develop district-wide understanding and effective use of learning data to inform instruction with appreciation for the power of formative assessment and a commitment to use the data we do collect and eliminate unnecessary assessments.
5. Create a culture that values and prioritizes thoughtful and data-driven collaboration among educators, including but not limited to a focus on four fundamental learning questions:
 - What do I/we expect students to know and be able to do as a result of our teaching?*
 - How will I/we know that students have learned it?*
 - What will I/we do when data indicate they have not learned it?*
 - What will I/we do when data indicate they have learned it?*
6. Build a greater understanding of mastery or competency-based models of instruction and provide the conditions for teachers, grade levels, departments and schools to innovate, including the implementation of Personalized Learning Platforms where possible and appropriate.
7. Design holistic and evidenced-based progress and summative reporting tools (a.k.a. “report cards”)

¹ High leverage instructional strategies is a common term in education that describes those instructional strategies that are most effective for their intended purpose.

² Universal Guaranteed Viable Curriculum is a term modified from one of the twelve Levels of School Effectiveness detailed in his 2003 book *What Works in Schools*. Marzano details the need for a “guaranteed” (what kids should know and be able to do) and “viable” (when and to what degree they should be able to do it) curriculum; MPCSD has added the term “universal” to describe our comment to the who--**all** students.

that better reflect what students know and can do and that emphasizes learning and growth more so than grade calculation and obedience, leaving students more informed and confident about their learning journey.

8. Expand district-wide understanding of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support³ while strengthening and aligning systems of diagnostic assessment, progress monitoring, and program implementation throughout the district ensuring that every child has the support they need to access grade level content and beyond.
9. Capitalize on the opportunity that the Next Generation Science Standards⁴, our location in Silicon Valley, and our commitment to inquiry learning provides to create a meaningful vertically aligned STEAM⁵ program that includes technology and coding courses, integrated science curriculum, and robust problem solving opportunities.
10. Redesign the English Language Development⁶ program to ensure effective instruction in the general education setting ensuring access for all non-native speakers of English to grade level curriculum and high-quality directed support by English Learner⁷ specialists.
11. Embrace a focus on global citizenship providing three elective tiers to the acquisition of World Languages—exploration, proficiency, or fluency—developing a strong K-5 program that matriculates to a strong elective program at middle school while also continuing to strengthen our Spanish Immersion and Spanish for Spanish Speakers program.
12. Allow sites the flexibility to use time (schedules and calendar) and resources differently to achieve better learning outcomes and programs.

³ Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a whole-school, data-driven, prevention-based framework for improving learning outcomes for every student through a layered continuum of evidenced-based practices and systems (Colorado Department of Education). MTSS is a relatively new term that is often used interchangeably with Response to Intervention and Instruction RtI2 and in conjunction with Positive Behavioral Intervention System (PBIS).

⁴ Next Generation Science Standards resulted from a state-led process in which new K-12 science standards were developed that are rich in content and practice and arranged in a coherent manner across disciplines and grades to provide all students an internationally-benchmarked science education. The NGSS are based on the Framework for K-12 Science Education developed by the National Research Council (www.nextgenscience.org)

⁵ STEAM is an acronym that refers to the greater focus on science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics and their relationship to one another in our K-12 schools.

⁶ English Language Development or ELD refers to the programs and services designed to achieve English fluency for those students whose native language is something other than English.

⁷ English Learner or EL refers to those students whose native language is something other than English and who are working toward achieving English fluency.